

**Cambridge Association of Neighborhoods (CAN)**  
**Unofficial Notes on Dorchester County Board of Education Meeting**  
**December 18, 2024 - Dorchester Career & Technology Center**

*Submitted by Tom Puglisi*

*Note: Supporting documents may be found on the DCPS Board Docs website at <https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/dcps/Board.nsf/Public>.  
Dr. Morgan's closing statement may be found at <https://susanmorganschoolboard.com>.*

President Michael Diaz convened the public meeting at 6:00 pm with Board Members Susan Morgan and Sheri Hubbard present.

The Superintendent reviewed the Board Calendar (see below) and acknowledged Maryland School Board Recognition Month.

Mr. Gaven Parker, Principal of Choptank Elementary School (ES), delivered his Mid-Year Presentation, reporting that the school is making big changes to improve outcomes and behaviors. The Reading goal for this year is to reduce the number of students below grade level by 21% (from 71% in school year (SY) 2022-23). Choptank ES is regrouping students and using reading intervention coaches to help address reading issues. The Math goal is to reduce the number of students performing two levels below grade level by 30% (from 44% in SY2022-23). Other goals include decreasing out of school suspension hours by 25% compared to 5670 hours in SY2022-23, and increasing daily attendance from 84.5% to 90%. A number of after school activities are being offered to strengthen student engagement. Individual and group counseling, case coordination, and agency referrals are being offered to address students' mental health needs. Mr. Diaz noted that he and Dr. Morgan visited Choptank ES recently and were impressed by the improvement in atmosphere compared to previous years.

Dr. Jodi Colman, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessments, presented an Instructional Update Data Review. Dr Colman reported that overall Kindergarten readiness has improved with 39% of students demonstrating readiness in Fall of SY2023-2024 (versus 32% in SY2022-2023 and 29% in SY2021-2022), with 42.4% of students who had been enrolled in pre-kindergarten demonstrating readiness. Dr. Colman noted concerns across the District about chronic absenteeism, and that some high school students are not taking the courses needed to complete their program tracks.

The Board approved the consent agenda, consisting of the minutes of the December 4, 2023, Regular Board of Education Meeting

The Board approved the personnel actions discussed in Executive Session. The Board also approved an amendment to the FY2024 General Operating Budget to reflect funds received from the State for a Blueprint Coordinator (\$101,702); receipt of grants from the Maryland State Department of Education to support school safety (radios, \$25,000, assessment/evaluation, \$47,500, and cell boosters, \$200,000); and \$238,486 in bus contracts to replace services from a vendor who is resigning from selected routes. The Board deferred purchase of approximately 230 Dell Latitude Laptops for teachers and staff (approximately \$270,000), pending receipt of a specific purchase price from the vendor.

The Board approved the First Reading of the following revisions to its policies on Board of Education Powers and Duties; Relation of Board Members to the Board; Personnel Medical Procedures; Introductory Employment Period; Employee Calendar, Workday, Work Week; and Rejections, Termination, Suspension, and Promotion. The Board deferred consideration of revisions to the policy on School Board Member Attendance at Meetings Via Electronic Communication.

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Ms. Sandy Green, Chief Financial Officer, presented informational reports on Fiscal Year 2023 Compliance, Appropriations & Expenditures, Capital Projects and Technology, and Quarterly Grants. She reported that the compliance report received a clean audit, and that the most significant variance involves greater than anticipated charges for legal services.

There were no oral or written Public Comments presented at the meeting.

Mr. Diaz described the process for filling the District 2 Board vacancy, which involves an application to the County Council. Interested persons should contact the Council directly for additional information. Mr. Diaz noted that two recent incidents in the schools have required strong disciplinary actions that the Board fully supports.

Board Members and the Superintendent delivered closing remarks, noting the recent death of District 2 Board Member, Dr. Theresa Stafford, and thanking all those who participated in the meeting. Dr. Morgan remembered Dr. Stafford as a force for good in the schools and in the community, whose thoughts were always for the children. Superintendent Bromwell remarked that he had known Dr. Stafford for over 40 years and that she pushed him and everyone for success for all students, and especially for minority children.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:21 pm.

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

January 29-30, 2024	No School for Students – Semester Break
Monday, January 29, 2024	Half-Day Report Card Prep Staff Half-Day PD for Staff
Tuesday, January 30, 2024	No School for Students PD Day All Staff Countywide
Friday, February 16, 2024	Half-Day for Students Parent/Teacher Conference
Thursday, February 22, 2024 6:00 p.m.	Regular February Meeting of the Dorchester County Board of Education at DCTC
Monday, February 19, 2024	Schools/Offices Closed Presidents’ Day