

Cambridge Association of Neighborhoods (CAN)
Unofficial Notes on Dorchester County Board of Education Meeting
March 25, 2024 – DCPS Central Office

Submitted by Tom Puglisi

Note: Supporting documents can be found on the DCPS Board Docs website at <https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/dcps/Board.nsf/Public>.

The Board went into closed Executive Session at 2:00 pm to discuss personnel, negotiations, legal matters, and administrative functions. Board President Susan Mike Diaz opened the Public Meeting at 3:15 pm with Board Members Susan Morgan and Chris Wheedleton present. Board Member Sheri Hubbard attended virtually.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Student Board Representatives Dylan Ruppert and Trinity Murray presented highlights of recent activities at North Dorchester HS and Cambridge-South Dorchester (CSD) HS, respectively. Their presentations can be found on the DCPS Board Docs website at <https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/dcps/Board.nsf/Public>.

The Board unanimously approved Hazard, Young, Atte Associates (TYA), to provide **Superintendent Search** services for the Board.

Ms. Patricia Prosser, Principal of **Maces Lane Middle School (MLMS)**, presented a mid-year update on the performance of MLMS students: Only 13% of students were reading on Grade Level at the end of SY2022-23, while 37% are currently approaching grade level or higher. During SY2022-23, MLMS students were suspended for a total of 13,000 hours. So far this year, student suspension hours are about 29% lower than this time last year. Referrals for class-cutting and disrespect/disruption have gone down, but referrals for fighting have gone up. The Ron Clark House System has been implemented to promote student engagement and academic success. Additional activities are provided to support academic success and to promote student involvement.

Mr. Dave Stofa, Principal of **North Dorchester High School (NDHS)**, presented a mid-year update on NDHS that described the many Ron Clark Academy, Mental Health, and School Improvement initiatives taking place there. The School Improvement initiative stresses academic achievement in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math, readiness for post-secondary success, access to a well-rounded curriculum, programs to address chronic absenteeism, and parent/community engagement. He also cited the success of the internal and external Vision Quest Alternative Education programs in addressing the behavioral and academic challenges of certain students. Markedly increased engagement with students, parents, and the community has been made possible by the new DCPS website and communications platform that has supported 74,397 contacts overall and an average of 400-500 weekly views of the NDHS weekly newsletter that includes pertinent information in a centralized location. Mr. Stofa indicated that NDHS has instituted a new policy prohibiting cell phone use during instructional time, but noted the importance of teaching responsible cell phone and social media usage.

The Board unanimously approved the **Consent Agenda**, consisting of the minutes of the February 22 Board Meeting and the February 26 Open Work Session, as well as the Second Reading of Board of Education Policies on Immunity of Board Members, Maintenance of School System, Setting Policy, Appointment of Legal Counsel and Auditing Firm, Termination of Employment, and Performance Appraisal.

The Board unanimously approved the following items: Personnel for March 21, 2024; Proposed school calendar for SY2024-25; Creative Leadership Solutions instructional leadership learning, coaching, and support for DCPS Principals and Vice Principals (\$137,898 over 3 years); 100% State funding for Choptank, Maple, and Sandy Hill Elementary School security and visitor screening vestibules, contingent upon scope review and approval (Choptank, \$218,610; Maple, \$319,371; Sandy Hill, \$318,638); 220 Dell Latitude laptop computers for teachers

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and staff (\$234,520); and advancing the following proposed Board of Education Policies for a Second Reading: Board Code of Ethics, Number of Members, Legal Authority, Personnel Transfer, Classification of Positions, Americans With Disabilities Amendments Act, and Attendance and Punctuality.

The Board received the following information items: No cost Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Consortium Parent Encouragement Program (for parents and primary caregivers of children 5-18 years old), Appropriations & Expenditures Report, and Capital Projects Report.

Superintendent Thompson indicated that the Executive Team is reviewing MOUs to ensure that the external organization provides concrete value to DCPS. President Diaz directed the Policy Committee to develop a policy requiring Board approval of MOUs to ensure that external organizations provide performance and outcome data to DCPS.

There were no oral or written comments from the Public.

Dr. Morgan quoted Michelle Obama regarding success. Mr. Wheedleton thanked Mike Diaz and Sherri Hubbard for their dedication in continuing to work through their recovery periods. He noted that Career Coaches are making a great impact delivering concrete benefit to our students through collaboration with the community and local businesses. Mr. Diaz thanked Dr. Thompson for his vision and the innovations that he has already undertaken. President Diaz and Ms Hubbard thanked everyone for their kind words and support.

Dr. Thompson thanked Student Board Representatives Ruppert and Murray, Principal Prosser, and Principal Stofa for their presentations. He reminded everyone that success in the school system is something we all need to think about to identify what each of us needs to do to ensure the success of every student. He emphasized that ranking 23rd in the State on student performance is just not good enough, and it should keep all of us up at night. Teacher of the Year Awards Banquet is tomorrow night (March 22nd).

The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 pm.

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Dorchester County Public Schools

2024-2025 School Year Calendar *Recommended*

July 2024					August 2024					September 2024					October 2024				
M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F
1	2	3	4	5				1	2	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4
8	9	10	11	12	5	6	7	8	9	9	10	11	12	13	7	8	9	10	11
15	16	17	18	19	12	13	14	15	16	16	17	18	19	20	14	15	16	17	18
22	23	24	25	26	19	20	21	22	23	23	24	25	26	27	21	22	23	24	25
29	30	31			26	27	28	29	30	30					28	29	30	31	
4 Independence Day Offices Closed					12 New Teachers Begin 23 All Teachers Begin					2 Labor Day - School and Offices Closed 3 Grades 1 - 5, 6, and 9 Begin 4 Grades 7,8,10,11 and 12 Begin 5 Pre K and Kindergarten Begin					1 Interim Reports 7 No School for Students - Parent Teacher Conferences 10 MSEA Day - Schools and Offices Closed				
Teacher days: 6					Teacher days: 20 Student days: 20					Teacher days: 22 Student days: 21									

November 2024					December 2024					January 2025					February 2025				
M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F
				1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3		3	4	5	6	7
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	6	7	8	9	10	10	11	12	13	14
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	13	14	15	16	17	17	18	19	20	21
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	20	21	22	23	24	24	25	26	27	28
25	26	27	28	29	30	31				27	28	29	30	31					
5 No School for Students- and teachers (Election Day) 7 End of Term 1 11 Half Day for Students - Report Card Prep Teachers 26 - Half Day for Students 27- 29 Thanksgiving Holiday - Schools and Offices Closed					11 Interim 20 Half Day for Students 23 - 31 Winter Break - Schools Closed					1 Winter Break - Schools and Offices Closed 20 Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday - Schools and Offices Closed 24 End of Semester 1 27-28 No School for Students - Semester Break Report Card Prep and PD for Teachers					17 President's Day - Schools and Offices Closed 27 Interim				
Teacher days: 17 Student days: 17					Teacher days: 15 Student days: 15					Teacher days: 21 Student days: 19					Teacher days: 19 Student days: 19				

March 2025					April 2025					May 2025					June 2025				
M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F
3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4			1	2	2	3	4	5	6		
10	11	12	13	14	7	8	9	10	11	5	6	7	8	9	9	10	11	12	13
17	18	19	20	21	14	15	16	17	18	12	13	14	15	16	16	17	18	19	20
24	25	26	27	28	21	22	23	24	25	19	20	21	22	23	23	24	25	26	27
31					28	29	30			26	27	28	29	30					
7 Half Day for Students - Parent/Teacher Conference					2 End of Term III 18- 21 Spring Break - Schools Closed					5 Interim 26 Memorial Day - School/Offices Closed 28 Cambridge-South Dorchester High School Graduation 29 North Dorchester High School Graduation					10 End of Semester II Last Day for Students and Teachers - Half Day for Students 11 through 13 are potential make-up days 19 Juneteenth - Offices Closed				
Teacher days: 21 Student days: 21					Teacher days: 20 Student days: 20					Teacher days: 21 Student days: 21					Teacher days: 7 Student days: 7				

Holiday Observances	
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	September 2
MSEA Day	October 18
Thanksgiving Break	November 27 - 29
Winter Break	December 23 - 31
New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	January 20
President's Day	February 17
Spring Break	April 18 - 21
Memorial Day	May 26
Juneteenth	June 19

POTENTIAL MAKE-UP DAYS

The following days may be used to make up missed instructional days:
June 11 - 13

Please note that if a weather delay occurs on an early dismissal day, that day will transition to a full day of school after the delay.

	Holidays - Schools Closed
	New Teachers Begin
	All Teachers Begin
	First and Last Day for Students/Last Day for Teachers (Last day is subject to change and will be early dismissal for students)
	No School for Students
	Interims and End of Terms
	Early Dismissal for Students