



# Somerset County Public Schools

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## Board Members

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## County Parent Advisory Committee October 6, 2014 Meeting Notes

### Welcome and Introductions – Leo Lawson

*In attendance were Dr. John Gaddis, Jeania Lankford, Carrie Day, Dawn White, Chris Parks, Michele Horner, Jennifer Howell and Leo Lawson. Leo Lawson asked each person present to name one of their goals, beliefs or passions for the school system. Responses varied. Overwhelmingly there was much interest and hope in the future construction of the new J.M. Tawes Technology and Career Center and its additional course offerings. Parents also expressed concern for the quality of meals served at the schools and questioned what could be done to improve the variety and taste in the food served to the students. There was discussion about the lack of a salad bar. One parent expressed concern about the lack of parent involvement at Washington Academy and High School. Dr. Gaddis complimented the WAHS staff and the central office staff for how they responded to the nonspecific located bomb threat on October 6 at WAHS. He praised the efforts of the police and vowed to see the individual responsible brought to justice indicating that if the person were a student he would ask the authorities to prosecute the case as if the student were an adult. He praised the students for their calm demeanor during the event.*

### Review Notes- June 10, 2014 Meeting-

*Leo Lawson asked if there were any questions on the notes from the last meeting. Having none, the committee moved into the portion of the meeting which is characterized by narratives on numerous issues by the Superintendent and in depth questions and answer sessions between the superintendent and the committee members. As both a participant and at times an observer, I highly recommend that committee members plan to attend as many meetings as busy schedules will allow given the quality, sincerity and transparency of the exchange.*

### Board of Education – Dr. John Gaddis - Superintendent of Schools

#### Budget Status-

*Dr. Gaddis did not discuss the budget or its process formally. The time for that is forthcoming as we enter into the budget planning portion of the school year. Finances were discussed in the context of numerous grants, projects, capital projects and state and local funding of the same, etc.*

### **Digital Grant-**

*Dr. Gaddis informed the committee that Somerset County was one of only nine school systems out of the 24 that obtained a competitive digital grant (\$400,000) which will provide necessary funding to begin an extensive one to one technology initiative. Students in grades 10-12 will obtain android-based tablets for multiple educational uses including taking mandated tests. These tablets will be compatible with our present technology and our own SCPS Cloud is being developed. The school system hopes to provide all students in grades 8-12 with the tablets.*

### **Naviance-**

*Dr. Gaddis expressed passion about the value of Naviance. Committee members expressed concern that passwords had not gone home to parents at every school and some teachers were unaware that Naviance was available to our students. As most parents are aware, each school in the system will have partnered with Naviance to provide a variety of tools for student achievement through academic planning. These tools are located in Family Connection, a website for students and families to access online resources, communicate with school staff and collaborate on college and career readiness activities. Dr. Gaddis said that all parents would get passwords by the end of October.*

### **Sportsmanship-**

*Dr. Gaddis emphasized the importance of sportsmanship. He said our two high schools were ranked next to the last and last in the Bayside Conference in overall sportsmanship for 2013-2014. This includes fans, players and coaches. The fans were among the chief offenders often displaying poor sportsmanship to players, officials and coaches. Meetings have been held with the fall sports teams, coaches, parents and school administrators at both high schools at which an athletic sportsmanship contract (See Attachment Two) was signed by all participants and the MPSSAA Respect the Game Handbook was distributed to everyone. High school administrators and athletic directors provided structure and organization.*

### **Summer School-**

*Summer school was held for elementary students and secondary students. The elementary students had a 90% attendance rate and showed significant gains in reading and math achievement. The use of a trip to Frontier Town as an incentive to attend summer school was a strong motivator to the students. Students and staff enjoyed the trip on the last day of the program. Secondary summer school needs to be longer next summer to provide for adequate time for greater mastery of the subject-matter failed during the school year. Success in a longer program will justify the awarding of credit not obtained during the regular school year.*

## **Teacher of the Year- Anna Breland**

*Dr. Gaddis talked about the 2014 Teacher of the Year, Anna Breland, who is a foreign language teacher at CAHS indicating she was competitive on the state level having been chosen as a finalist. The overall winner will be announced Friday night October 10 at Martin's West in Baltimore at the Teacher of the Year Gala. The county has three tables in attendance amounting to thirty people.*

## **Parent Concerns-**

### **Accreditation Process- Status?**

*A strategic planning committee is meeting and is working on the Education by Design Model to clearly develop a mission statement goals and beliefs. Significant responses have been collected from staff students and parents on a variety of topics. Improving the lunch program is a concern that appears among all groups. Dr. Gaddis stated that the way to improve a system is to develop a strategic plan (Education by Design), improve early childhood education (Judy Center) and expand after school and summer enrichment and remediation (21<sup>st</sup> century Grant).*

### **Dual Enrollment-How many students at each high school applied to participate and how many are involved?**

*At the present 30% of our high school students are taking dual enrollment classes. Students are taking dual enrollment classes with UMES or Wor Wic. A number of our teachers have been certified to teach dual enrollment classes at the home high schools. As the program evolves, more and more students will graduate from high school with dual credit in high school and college credits with the goal of having enough college credits to graduate with a high school diploma and an Associate's Degree. There is not cost.*

### **New Discipline Policy- What has been the positive/negative impact of the new regulations and revised policy?**

*Several school system staff members and community leaders revised Board policy 600-17 Student Discipline. The policy reflects the changes in the Annotated Code of Education/COMAR. Dr. Gaddis said the enforcement of student discipline is much more consistent throughout the system and the incidence of infractions has decreased noticeably. The superintendent has added a step for more severe cases wherein the two assistant superintendents may gather information of an appeal as the superintendent's designees. This provides an additional step and the superintendent can listen to an appeal that may go beyond the assistant superintendent therefore helping make the process beneficial to the system and to the student.*

### **Elementary Alternative Classroom- Status?**

*The alternative elementary education class is operational at Marion Sarah Peyton School. The High Roads School and the Alternative School are at MSP. It presently has two students assigned and is structured to have a maximum of eight students at one time. The students placed in the class are not placed there to stay for extended periods with one month being the maximum time. Helping each student to prepare to return to his/her school and function more appropriately is the end goal. Research-based practices are being used.*

**J.M. Tawes Technology and Career Center-** Renovation/Rebuild status? Time Line?

*We are presently in the feasibility phase of the J.M. Tawes renovation/rebuild process. Three new programs will likely be added including diesel mechanics, agriculture/horticulture and cosmetology. At present \$34 million will be paid by the state which will cover construction and equipment. The commissioners have agreed to pick up architectural fees, and planning. The school system will break ground on the project in 2016. The building phase will take 18 months. Dr. Gaddis believes that our attendance at J. M. Tawes will be at or near 600 students. He said the scheduling process at the high schools will have to be different to ensure that students who want to enroll in Career and Technology Education will be able to do so. He believes this will impact enrollment for the AFJROTC program.*

**Judy Center-** Status?

*The Judy Center program has been funded by the state of Maryland in Somerset County. Our school system was the last to have this program. This program is designed to work with families and their young children who are not in school in order to better prepare them for school readiness for Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten. There will be a Judy Center at Princess Anne Elementary School this year and opened at Woodson Elementary School next year. Dove tailing nicely with this news is the creation of two all day Pre-Kindergarten classes at Princess Anne Elementary and one at Woodson Elementary School. All positions have been filled for the Judy Center including the program coordinator, part time literacy teacher and an administrative associate.*

**Capital Projects-** What is the status of the projects at GES, CAHS, PAE, DIS, SIS, and JMT?

*The Greenwood Elementary School capital upgrade on the roof, HVAC and interior changes was budgeted at 5.2 million dollars. The school system is asking for another \$880,000 to complete the project. All wells have been dug to provide geothermal energy to the school. The campus will be repaired and grass sown once the contractors give the go ahead. The second phase of the project will be next summer. 2015. The commissioners have approached the school system about building an additional edifice at Crisfield High School to house Head Start. The commissioners have \$1,000,000 for the project. Having these students housed at CAHS will increase building utilization thus decrease the possibility of state officials expressing concern over low building utilization. An extensive renovation at Princess Anne Elementary School is scheduled to begin in 2020 at a cost of \$16.3 million. In the near future, work will need to be done at Somerset Intermediate School due to a projected enrollment increase.*

## **21<sup>st</sup> Century Grant-Status?**

*The school system has obtained a \$1,000,000 grant to provide after school enrichment and remediation for students at all the schools. LMB has obtained a grant as well. We are in the process of communicating the difference in how our grant monies will be used. There will be STEM activities and numerous other opportunities for students. Transportation home will be provided and it has been written into the grant.*

## **Websites- Status?**

*Dr. Gaddis stated the school websites and county websites will be operational between the end of October and the middle of November.*

## **Next Steps:**

### **Meetings for the year**

*Our next meeting will be November 19 at 6:00 p.m. in conference room A. at J.M. Tawes Technology and Career Center.*

### **Topics for next meeting-**

*Title I/Digital Grant One to One Initiative*

## **Attitude of Gratitude-**

*See attachment three.*

## **Adjournment-**