



**MARYLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Meeting Minutes
May 10, 2013
Frederick Campus**

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*Frederick Campus
Established 1868*

*Columbia Campus
Established 1973*



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MEMBERS PRESENT: Benjamin Bahan, Ph.D.; Sheryl B. Cooper, Ph.D.; John Ertel, Ph.D.; Ernest Hairston, Ph.D.; Roslyn Hannibal-Booker; Sandra Harriman; Ricardo Hernandez, Ph.D.; Robin Kittleman; David Martin; Cynthia Neese-Bailes, Ph.D.; Khadijat Rashid, Ph.D.; Joseph Smail, Ph.D., NCSP

MEMBERS ABSENT: Laurie Corcoran; Angela McCaskill, Ph.D.; Heather Zeolla

SUPERINTENDENT: James E. Tucker

ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL: Demetria Tobias, Esq.

RECORDING SECRETARY: Jennifer Lake

INTERPRETERS: Myra Foley and Bobbie Quinn

At 10:24am President Bahan called the meeting to order.

A **MOTION** was made to approve the Agenda – **SECONDED – PASSED.**

A discussion on improving the format of the minutes when the Board enters a closed session took place. Ms. Lake will check with Ms. Tobias. Ms. Harriman commended everyone on the 100% attendance at the February 2013 meeting.

A **MOTION** was made to approve the February 2013 Minutes– **SECONDED - PASSED.**

Dr. Hernandez recommended that the first sentence in the second paragraph of the closed session minutes be reworded by placing superintendents in quotes and adding Columbia and Frederick Campuses respectively.

A **MOTION** was made to approve the February 2013 Closed Session Minutes with corrections discussed– **SECONDED - PASSED.**

President’s Report: President Bahan commented on a letter received but it will be discussed later under old business. Two new nominations have been appointed to the Board, Ms. Julie Bourne and Dr. Dennis Galvan. The Board still needs to recruit 2 additional members.

Since the Board’s last meeting there have been some issues with Columbia that required the development of a letter to be sent out to the MSD staff. The Board asked the school to look the letter over, some factual changes were made and then the letter was sent out. President Bahan stated that he hasn’t heard from anyone in the community but he did hear from Mr. John Snavlin who wasn’t satisfied with the Board’s response to the school so Mr. Snavlin is asking for more clarification.

President Bahan handed the request off to Ms. Tobias for her response. The Board will hold elections today.

Vice President's Report: No report.

Secretary's Report: No report.

Treasurer's Report: Dr. Ertel stated that the Board received a collection of statements from Ms. Lake and the Foundation. The rate at which the Board's funds are accruing is dismal but that is the case for everyone. Dr. Ertel recommended the Board stay with the current funds manager. The Board will need to pay their share of the audit again in the fall. It will probably be more than what the Board has earned in interest but it will be close to breaking even.

Superintendent's Report: Superintendent Tucker shared with the Board that MSD will get a 4% increase for the FY14 budget, most of which will go towards salaries which is long overdue. MSD staff have not had a salary increase in over 4 years but the COLA will not hit until January 2014 and the step will occur in April 2014. When the increase happens it becomes part of the employee's salary base.

The Academic Bowl team went to Annapolis and they were recognized by the full Senate and full House. The odds of winning the Academic Bowl 4 straight years in a row are 40 million to 1. It is amazing what the team has accomplished and what Ethan Sonnenstrahl has done, 4 years on the team, 4 wins, that record will never be broken, it may be tied but never broken. The Board will also recognize a group of MSD staff today who came to the aid of their co-worker and helped save her life.

Enrollment is wonderful at 510 students. The MSD open houses being offered are going well. With the growing enrollment, come challenges. Family Education is really growing and staff are being moved around to fill those needs.

MSD has been trying to expand our ES program to include kids with autism. It's a huge funding commitment. The community will need to be trained; classrooms will need to be set up, etc. MSD has an ally in Dr. Jennifer Reesman from the Kennedy Krieger Institute. Dr. Reesman estimates that there are 10-15 deaf and hard of hearing children with autism. Perhaps a working group can be established between MSDE, Kennedy Krieger, and MSD to work all of it out.

The new bus loop at the Frederick Campus will hopefully be finished by this fall.

There is an AD Hoc committee called Student Life Reform and they are reviewing all areas of student life including the Incident Reports (IR). The Incident Reports will now be on-line and the same form will be used for both campuses.

Dr. Beth Benedict will be MSD's commencement speaker this year and there will be a reception for her Friday night. Please notify Ms. Lake if you would like tickets for graduation.

Dr. Cooper stated that she has heard concerns from Columbia Campus staff that they are not satisfied with the letter they received from the Board. Superintendent Tucker shared that he has community forums with the staff, with the most recent one being held last Tuesday for all day

time staff and one last Friday for all overnight staff. The school made some hard decisions but Superintendent Tucker stated that he thinks the anger has settled down a bit. He added that Principal Jennifer Yost Ortiz is working hard to promote and grow the Columbia Campus and her efforts are paying off as Columbia has the highest enrollment number they have ever had. President Bahan stated that it was agreed in the handbook meeting this morning that beginning in 2014-2015 there would be one handbook instead of the traditional 2 which promotes separateness. Ms. Kittleman stated that it appears that the 2 principals have been working together and presenting a united front which is a very positive step. President Bahan urged Dr. Cooper to tell any MSD staff that they should talk to the Board or to the Superintendent with any issues or concerns.

Mr. Martin questioned the parking situation at the Frederick Campus. Superintendent Tucker explained that after construction there should actually be more parking available.

A discussion took place on the school's succession plan. The Superintendent's job description is 20 years old and needs to be revisited. Dr. Hernandez suggested that a draft succession plan be created. Mr. Martin suggested the task of drafting a succession plan be given to the Personnel Committee. President Bahan suggested that Superintendent Tucker work with the Personnel committee on the plan. Superintendent Tucker will ask Ms. Currin as the Director of Personnel to help as well. A motion will be made under new business to begin the process.

President Bahan stated that the handbook review was not finished at the morning meeting so the committees will meet during lunch.

Recognition by the Board: Ms. Bonheyo introduced MSD staff members who assisted a substitute teacher who had a heart attack last Thursday while teaching class. Ms. Julie Hemstreet, Ms. Nancy Verdier, Ms. Julie Ross, Ms. Lisa Brinks, Ms. Lisa Smith and Ms. Leah Lou Allen. Mr. John Jones also assisted that day but he is not here today. Ms. Bonheyo explained that the group saved Ms. Setzer's life. As soon as it was apparent something was wrong with Ms. Setzer the call to 911 was made and a communication system was set up to get the information up and down the hall. Ms. Brinks and Ms. Smith administered CPR until medical help arrived. Ms. Setzer is now home and recovering. She texted all of the staff as soon as she was able to, to thank them for saving her life. President Bahan thanked everyone for their quick thinking and for working together as a team. Certificates signed by the Board members were handed out and pictures were taken. Ms. Verdier stated that Principal Strachan should not be overlooked for his contribution to the process. Ms. Verdier shared that Principal Strachan made sure that someone from MSD accompanied Ms. Setzer to the hospital so that she did not travel alone and that word was gotten to her family so that they knew what happened. Ms. Verdier expressed that it was commendable of Principal Strachan to think of those details.

The Academic Bowl team members and the coaches were introduced to the Board. In attendance were Ethan Sonnenstrahl (Senior), Jehanne McCullough (Junior), Sam Lundquist (Senior), Tayla Newman (Sophomore), Eren Boden (Coach) and Tavian Robinson (Coach). President Bahan congratulated the team on their feat and said if such a feat can be repeated, hopefully MSD will be the school to do it. President reminded everyone that a few years ago a book was purchased for the Academic Bowl team because they missed one question. The same question came up

again this year and the team had the answer this time so the Board did help the team a little. Coach Boden explained that the team set some records this year, the team went undefeated, Ethan became the first player ever to win 4 times, 4 years in row and Coach Robinson became the first person to win as a player and a coach. President Bahan asked the team how they prepared for the competition. The team explained that they practiced a lot. Coach Boden explained that Ethan did not make the coach's job easy because he remembers everything. The coaches created PowerPoint mock matches and then the team would compete. Coach Robinson explained that the key is that MSD offers outstanding academics and the team's annual retreat really helps the team to prepare. President Bahan handed out certificates and pictures were taken.

OPEN FORUM: No one signed up.

Student Life Committee Report: Mr. Martin shared that the committee had a good meeting. The Board will tour the Columbia Campus in the fall at the September meeting. The committee met this morning to review the handbook. It was a good meeting.

Trusteeship: Dr. Cooper explained that there are still 2 vacancies that need to be filled. Dr. Rashid will try to meet with Mr. Stephen Hlibok next week to ask him to consider joining the board. The Board needs someone from Western MD. The committee will work on the orientation for the 2 new members, Ms. Julie Bourne and Dr. Dennis Galvan. Mr. Tucker will give the new members a tour of the Frederick Campus and Jennifer Yost Ortiz will give them a tour of the Columbia Campus.

Personnel Committee: Dr. Hernandez stated that the committee was asked to look at some changes in the personnel handbook. Many of the things that are in the personnel handbook are required by state law so those things are not really an issue as the Board cannot say yes or no to them. For example changes in the recruitment procedures are due to a new state on-line system. There are a few grammatical changes to the certification policy but otherwise it is the same policy the Board already approved regarding a deduction in pay if teachers do not get their certification. All the other changes are required by the state. Dr. Hernandez shared that the committee did not discuss any of the happenings at Columbia because there were only 2 committee members present.

A discussion on why the school is required to submit a Staffing Plan every year took place. Superintendent Tucker explained that the school must demonstrate that the Federal Funds received by MSD are used for special education programs. While every program at MSD is considered special education a request for a waiver to not provide the staffing plan was denied so the plan is submitted annually with the Federal Funds application.

Fiscal Matters/Facilities Management: Dr. Ertel explained the Board's portion of the audit expense will probably equate to what the board's funds earned in interest so the value of the board's funds is hovering. To try and reduce the cost of the audit would mean that the Board would have to break away from the Foundation but by having the board's money merged with the foundation's money produces a higher yield so Dr. Ertel recommended keeping things as

they are. If anyone knows someone who is an expert in finances perhaps they could review the Board's statements.

Education: Dr. Hairston stated that the committee had a lively discussion and one of the items discussed was the Common Core State Standards Curriculum. MSD leadership has contributed a lot to how the school is progressing. Another topic discussed was the school's bilingual policy. When MSD staff are asked what does bilingual mean, different responses are given. The committee would like to propose a motion to support the efforts to bring the two campuses together to investigate the current practices in order to develop a working model. The committee would like for the Board to provide the school with the resources to do this. The teachers need a resource person for ASL like they have for math, social studies, English, etc.

Executive Committee: No meeting.

Old Business: Review Board Retreat Summary - Copies of the summary of the Board's retreat held in the fall of 2012 were distributed and discussed. Dr. Ertel stated that some of the Board felt that they could learn more about what Ms. Schwertman does and how she does it, as long as the Board is not interfering with her job.

President Bahan pointed out the actions and characteristics on page 4. Is the Board doing any of those now and if not what should the Board be doing. Accreditation requires the Board to do several items and the Board needs to follow through with those requirements.

Superintendent Tucker explained that there were 4 goals the school chose for Accreditation. Both campuses chose to improve reading and math. The 3rd goal is for Frederick only and that is to improve academic behavior (less behavior issues). The 4th goal is for Columbia only and that is to improve language. The 4 goals were set by the school and they were approved by the accreditation team. Frederick is weaker on behavior management and Columbia is stronger in that area. Frederick is stronger with language and Columbia is weaker in that area. Ms. Ortiz explained that when students have better language skills, it helps with behavior. Some students arrive with no language. Dr. Ertel stated that it would be nice looking to the future if data sets were collected to show the progression of language. President Bahan asked if the Board should move those actions to committees so that the committees can follow those items. Present Bahan stated that part of the Board's action should be to help identify is there a deficit and if there is, how can it be fixed.

The suggestion was made to ask local universities to use their resources to study MSD and provide MSD with the data. It would be a mutually beneficial relationship as it will help the universities meet their requirement to conduct research and MSD will get the data needed.

A discussion took place regarding Characteristic No. 4 "Effective school boards have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and establish a strong communications structure to inform and engage both internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals." Dr. Hernandez stated that the Board has invited MSD staff to join the committee meetings so the Board has made changes to meet parts of this characteristic. In order to accomplish other parts of this characteristic the Board will need to set hard dates. It was

suggested that the Board should pick 2 dates in the 2013-2014 school year to host open forums. President Bahan stated that the Board has changed the level at which they are working with the school and it appears to be good thing. Dr. Hernandez suggested that the Retreat Summary be put on the agenda from time to time as a reminder of what the Board should be working on. Ms. Kittleman suggested that the goals be put on the back of the agenda from here on out.

Update on Letter received: President Bahan stated that at the last meeting he shared with the Board that he had received 2 letters, 1 from Columbia Campus staff and 1 from a parent. The letter from the parent listed some issues with decisions made by MSD. Ms. Tobias assisted with the response letter that was sent to the parent and the parent has not sent any further communication.

A **MOTION** was made to close Old Business – **SECONDED – PASSED.**

New Business: Approval of 2013/14 Frederick & Columbia Campus Parent/Student Handbooks – **MOTION** to approve as written and with the suggested changes the Frederick and Columbia Campus handbooks currently separate documents but moving to a single document for the 2014/15 school year - **SECONDED – PASSED.**

Approval of 2013-14 Employee Handbook – Dr. Hernandez stated that the edits are still out there and the committee is discussing them with Ms. Tobias. **MOTION** to approve the employee handbook pending the edits that are being worked on – **SECONDED – PASSED.**

Approval of 2013/14 Out-of-State Tuition - MOTION made to approve the 2013/14 Out-of-State Tuition – **DISCUSSION** – Any student who does not reside in the state of Maryland is charged Out-of State tuition. **MOTION** to close discussion- Approval of Out-of-State tuition – **SECONDED – PASSED.**

Approval of Staffing Plan - MOTION to approve staffing plan – **SECONDED – APPROVED.**

BOT Elections - President Bahan explained that all the terms are up for President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Nominations for President were asked for. Dr. Ertel nominated current President, Ben Bahan. President Bahan respectfully declined the nomination. Dr. Neese-Bailes nominated Mr. David Martin, Mr. Martin accepted the nomination. Dr. Ertel nominated Ms. Laurie Corcoran. The decision was made that only members present should be nominated so that they can accept or decline the nomination. A **MOTION** was made to accept the nomination of Mr. Martin for President – **SECONDED – PASSED.** President David Martin is the first MSD alumni to ever be the Board President therefore this is an historical election.

Nominations for Vice-President were asked for. Dr. Rashid nominated Dr. Ernie Hairston, Dr. Hairston respectfully declined the nomination. Dr. Neese-Bailes nominated Dr. Kubby Rashid, Dr. Rashid respectfully declined the nomination. Dr. Hairston nominated Dr. Cynthia Neese-Bailes, Dr. Neese-Bailes respectfully declined the nomination. Dr. Ertel attempted to call Ms.

Laurie Corcoran to see if she would be willing to continue to serve as Vice-President. Ms. Tobias clarified that during a vacancy the position is filled by the executive committee until the annual meeting like today when the vote is taken. Ms. Tobias advised the Board that they could table the election to September for that position. Dr. Neese-Bailes nominated Ms. Roslyn Hannibal-Booker for Secretary; Ms. Hannibal-Booker accepted the nomination. Dr. Joseph Smail was nominated for Vice-President, Dr. Smail accepted the nomination. Dr. John Ertel was nominated for Treasurer, Dr. Ertel accepted the nomination. A **MOTION** to accept all those by acclimation was made – **SECONDED- PASSED.**

Executive Committee members are – Mr. David Martin, Dr. Joseph Smail, Ms. Roslyn Hannibal-Booker, Dr. John Ertel, Dr. Ben Bahan, Dr. Sheryl Cooper and, Dr. Ernie Hairston

Proposed BOT Meeting Dates for 2013-2014

- September 6, 2013 at the Columbia Campus
- November 15, 2013 at the Frederick Campus
- February 7, 2014 at the Columbia Campus
- May 9, 2014 at the Frederick Campus

There was some discussion on when to have the first meeting in September due to the Jewish holiday. Ms. Tobias advised the Board that they did not need to change the bylaws to make one exception due to the holiday. Ms. Tobias proposed that the Board could meet on another day in that first week of September to avoid the holiday conflict. Also discussed was the September deadline for the FY15 Budget proposal. The proposed FY15 budget has to be submitted to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM); however the Board has to approve the proposed budget first. The Board elected to have the Executive Committee meet to approve the proposed FY15 Budget on Wednesday, September 11, 2013 at 6:30pm at the Columbia Campus. The full Board will then meet on September 20, 2013 at the Columbia Campus.

Approved BOT Meeting Dates for 2013-2014

- September 11, 2013 at 6:30pm the Executive Committee will meet at the Columbia Campus to approve the proposed FY15 budget.
- September 20, 2013 Columbia Campus
- November 8, 2013 Frederick Campus
- February 7, 2014 Columbia Campus
- May 9, 2014 Frederick Campus

A **MOTION** was made to close New Business – **SECONDED – PASSED.**

The Board evaluated itself upon the conclusion of the meeting and the scores ranged from 4 to 5.

The strengths that the Board expressed regarding the meeting were the review of the handbooks, the amount accomplished, the benefit of building time into the day for the committees to meet, and the discussion of the Board Retreat Summary.

The weaknesses that the Board expressed regarding the meeting were not always utilizing the time wisely and not always staying on topic.

MOTION to adjourn – **SECONDED - PASSED**. Meeting adjourned at 3:32pm.

Respectfully,

Roslyn Hannibal-Booker