Education Committee Report
Jonathan Edelson & John DiTomasso, Co-chairs

The committee met at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, November 3rd, in The Other Barn.

Special Guest: Ann DeLacy, Vice Chairperson, Atholton/Oakland Mills Cluster Representative, Howard County Board of Education

Ms. DeLacy responded to an inquiry submitted by Mr. Edelson regarding the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) test scores for HCPSS high schools, and, more specifically, Oakland Mills High School. In her response, Ms. DeLacy encouraged the committee to watch the Board of Education meeting that covered the OECD test. Several members of the committee watched the meeting, and Mr. Edelson followed up with reaction. In response, Ms. DeLacy offered to attend our meeting for face-to-face discussions about the Oakland Mills cluster.

Discussion covered a range of topics. HCPSS has hired a consultant to advise on considerations for future redistricting efforts. HCPSS is not considering the International Baccalaureate program for any of its high schools, but Oakland Mills High School may offer an early Associate's Degree program as soon as next year. OMHS would be the only high school in the county to offer this.

The committee again stressed equitable versus equal resources for schools so those with challenges have what they need. The committee also expressed its concern with the way HCPSS announced the OECD results versus what the BOE discussed at the meeting. At the meeting, the Superintendent and BOE members stressed that the OECD results were not about ranking or comparing our schools, nor were they about the average scores as there is a margin of error around the scores and there were other parts of the assessment not measured in these scores. However, the HCPSS news release was based on the average scores, and the data files accessible via the news release listed schools individually in a rank order against each other and other countries. The committee stressed that although test results are fact and should not be suppressed, it feels HCPSS needs to do a better job highlighting positive attributes of schools like those in the Oakland Mills cluster as it produces its weekly news releases. Ms. DeLacy agreed and said she would take this feedback with her to the BOE and Superintendent.

The committee also discussed with Ms. DeLacy holding another "State of Our Schools" education forum similar to the one held at The Other Barn with the Superintendent, HCPSS officials, and the 5 Oakland Mills cluster principals a couple of years ago. Ms. DeLacy agreed this is a good idea and suggested that we expand the forum to include all feeder schools to Oakland Mills High School (OMHS, Lake Elkhorn MS, Oakland Mills MS, Cradlerock ES, Jeffers Hill ES, Stevens Forest ES, Talbott Springs ES, Thunder Hill ES.) Mr. Edelson has begun working with the Oakland Mills Event Coordinator, Ms. Warren, to plan this event.

Next committee meeting: Tuesday, December 2, 6 p.m. at The Other Barn.

Other items of note

Stevens Forest ES is very grateful for the OMCA donation to the holiday adopt-a-family. The Assistant

Principal has requested we submit our donation as a Target or Wal-Mart gift card so the staff can shop for the designated families.

The Oakland Mills Village Manager is coordinating with the SFES PTA, the SFES administration, Howard County Police, Howard County Traffic, CA, and Councilman Ball to hold a meeting of all parties to discuss the traffic and parking situation at SFES during drop-off and pick-up. Efforts over the past two years have already led to the new crosswalk and pedestrian island, six-inch curbs in front of the school on Stevens Forest Road, and marked fire lanes inside the SFES carpool loop. Last week, Traffic added "No Stopping" signs further north on Stevens Forest Road to help combat parking and drop-offs between the carpool loop exit and Kilimanjaro Road.

Members of the Oakland Mills Village Board presented a donation to the Oakland Mills MS PTSA on October 28. We will do the same for the Oakland Mills HS PTSA on December 11.