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

The committee met at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 7th, in The Other Barn.

Town Hall

Most of the agenda and meeting covered a discussion of the upcoming "State of Our Schools" Town Hall on April 29th from 7 to 9 in The Other Barn. The Village staff created flyers to be distributed to the schools on paper and electronically. Mr. Edelson also requested that the PTA representatives in attendance continue to publicize the event through their communications channels and solicit questions. Village staff will issue a press release and more promotional material to the broader public following a planning meeting with HCPSS on April 14th.

The committee discussed questions already received and ideas for other questions and topics. There is a lot of interest in the Elementary School Model, including outcomes and lessons learned from this year, plans for changes or expansion, plans for how students will transition from ESM schools to middle school, etc. There is also interest in providing more extracurricular opportunity at the middle school level. Committee members should send specific questions to Mr. Edelson to ensure we record them correctly.

Mr. Edelson and Ms. Warren will meet with HCPSS officials on April 14th to finalize plans. Mr. Edelson will provide an oral summary of the meeting at the OMCA Board meeting the same night as time will not permit a written summary between meetings.

Policy Proposal

Mr. Edelson raised an ongoing concern with the travel, time, and transportation costs certain Oakland Mills residents bear since the elementary school redistricting. Families that once went to Talbott Springs very close to their homes now must travel nearly a mile to go to Stevens Forest. This has created hardships for them and has increased traffic and pedestrian congestion at and around Stevens Forest. At the same time, the school system buses students to Talbott Springs from points further from the school than where the redistricted students live.

In a meeting with HCPSS, SFES PTA, and police officials, Ms. Cederbaum suggested providing a bus to the main Verona complex to alleviate these conditions. HCPSS transportation officials indicated this would require an exception to policy as the impacted students live within a mile of Stevens Forest. Mr. Edelson suggested the following policy proposal to the committee, and those in attendance unanimously agreed some policy should be implemented: "Any HCPSS student who, due to a Board of Education policy or school system determination, attends a school further from his or her home than the nearest school serving his or her grade level shall be entitled to transportation provided by HCPSS regardless of distance from home to school."

Mr. Edelson brought this before the SFES PTA at their April 8th general meeting, and all in attendance agreed that such a policy should be pursued on behalf of impacted families. Mr. Edelson will request OMCA Board support for taking this policy to the Board of Education,

perhaps through the Community Advisory Council, as part of New Business at the April 14th board meeting.