

Oakland Mills Community Association

Education Committee Meeting

March 28, 2017 – The Other Barn

Guest Speaker: Dr. Bess Altwerger, Vice-Chair Howard County Board of Education and Oakland Mills Cluster Representative

Committee Attendees:

Jonathan Edelson (Chair)
Sandy Cederbaum (Oakland Mills Village Manager)
Patrick Harrington
Lena Kennedy
Peggy Skaggs
Stephanie Reid for Adona Wimberly

All day pre-K

All day pre-K cannot be expanded under the current budget. Dr. Altwerger and others on the BOE think pre-K should be a joint venture between Howard County and the school system since the school system is not funded for it. Pre-K students are not counted in the funding formula for county or state funding, so HCPSS needs to draw from other parts of its budget to fund current pre-K programs.

Pre-K students also currently do not count formally toward school capacity calculations, although school board members may take them under consideration.. Dr. Altwerger will look into this and follow up with Mr. Edelson.

Talbott Springs Elementary Replacement or Renovation

It will cost about twice as much to build a new school as it will to renovate and expand the existing TSES. The BOE considers the TSES renovation urgent and moved up its schedule. The upcoming redistricting will take into account the expansion of TSES and the construction of the new elementary school.

Redistricting/Attendance Areas

There will be another redistricting, which will take effect in two years. Residents should consider applying to be part of the HCPSS Attendance Area Committee.

<http://www.hcpss.org/news-posts/2017/03/members-aac/>

Dr. Altwerger commented that the next round of redistricting is critically needed to alleviate over-crowding at some schools, and to incorporate new school capacity. The redistricting process will need to take into consideration that many schools in the Eastern part of the county are relatively over-capacity, while schools in the Western part of the county are under-capacity. Dr. Altwerger and the committee attendees all agreed that updated school attendance boundaries need to balance students' demographic and economic diversity across different schools in Howard County.

Oakland Mills Proposed Transportation Policy

After the last redistricting, students on Basket Ring who used to attend TSES were redistricted to SFES, which is just under a mile away, meaning they have to walk or find other transportation to school. This had placed extra burden on families who have to take their kids to a school further away than the closest one to them, and it has placed extra burden on the community as Stevens Forest Road has increased traffic during arrival and dismissal. The Education Committee proposed a change to the HCPSS transportation policy, and the Oakland Mills Board of Directors voted to send this forth to the Board of Education as the community's response. Members of the previous Board of Education supported this. Dr. Altwerger asked Mr. Edelson to resubmit it for consideration of the current Board:

"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."

Middle School Outdoor Education

A resident raised a concern about whether middle schools were receiving comparable outdoor education time and experience. According to the resident, Oakland Mills Middle had a one-day outdoor education experience while other schools may have had overnight trips. Dr. Altwerger replied that last year, for the first time, all middle schools received outdoor education experiences, but she will look into whether the schools are receiving equal time.

Elementary School Model

ESM is in place next year at the current ESM schools. Going forward, the Board of Education is determined to have a full assessment of ESM including surveys to parents, teachers, and communities. This assessment will include the World Language (Spanish)

and Departmentalization components. The assessment is not about having ESM or not having ESM, but about adjusting it, if necessary.

Follow Up

Mr. Edelson will send Dr. Altwerger the proposed transportation policy.

Dr. Altwerger will get back to Mr. Edelson with information on Pre-K capacity calculations, outdoor education, the TSES/SFES walking and busing situation.