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BOARDROOM CHATTER

Prepared by Public Information Officer

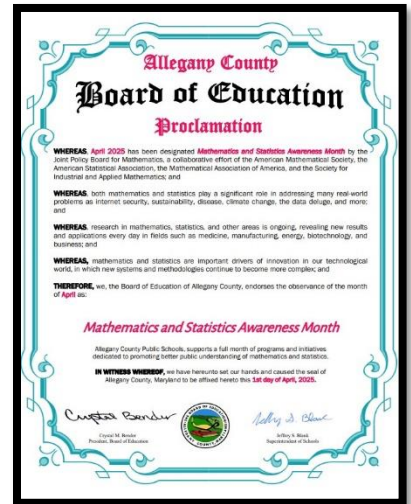
April 1, 2025

The Board Office of Allegany County Public Schools

Superintendent's Report

Present Proclamation Recognizing April as Mathematics and Statistics Awareness Month

- Presented by Dr. David Bohn
- Presented to Dr. Stephen Thompson, *Supervisor of Math*



Recognition of ACPS Accomplishments in Mathcounts

“This year we actually hosted the Math Counts Competition, after decades of going to Hagerstown and more recently to Frederick County. We hosted it this year at Washington Middle School. We had seven area schools. Five from Allegany County, two from Washington County that participated. We were able to forward quite a few students and one of our school teams to the math counts competition. For this year, all four of our middle schools had students in the state math counts competition.”



Pictured left to right: Kahlan Chojar, Connor Sheehe, Nolan Pillai, and Kara Breedlove, Braddock Coach



Pictured left to right: Teresa Norris, Mount Savage Coach and Joshua Georgeson

- Dr. Stephen Thompson, *Supervisor of Math*

Superintendent's Report cont.

Present Proclamation Recognizing April as Library Media Month

- Presented by Mrs. Linda Widmyer
- Presented to Mr. Jeff Avey – *Assistant Supervisor of Fine Arts*

“This is only my first year as library media assistant supervisor. If you ever want to go to an elementary school and receive a breath of fresh air, walk into the media center of any of our schools. I’ve observed all of them and the engagement, the relevant content, even kindergarten students are learning about safe browsing on the internet, safe searches, responsible use of computers and it’s all being taught in an age appropriate fashion. Every time I visit them, I learn and that’s why I envy the students that are in our schools, because of what those teachers offer.”

- Mr. Jeff Avey, *Assistant Supervisor of Fine Arts*



Recognition of All-State Junior Chorus

- Over 900 singers auditioned from all over the state
- 135 were accepted into the all-state junior chorus

“When she auditioned, Charlotte had to learn some very challenging music and demonstrate a significant amount of skill at site reading. When she showed up at the event, she had to re-audition to prove that she actually learned the assigned music at home. The concert was a smashing success and I’m thrilled that we have finally renewed a tradition to bring students back here.”

- Mr. Jeff Avey, *Assistant Supervisor of Fine Arts*



Pictured: Charlotte Gaumer

Superintendent's Report cont.

Recognition of Allegany County Association of Student Councils (ACASC) Award

- Karen L. Crawford Regional Advisor of the Year Award presented to Mrs. Kara Kennell

“Our secondary student council programs and our service learning programs are outstanding. They’re well run, they’re engaging for the students. And every minute of every activity is in keeping with the best interest of our future leaders in Allegany County, which brings me to Kara Kennell. I’ve been sharing office space with Kara for almost 3 years now, but I was just assigned as her direct supervisor this year and as a result of that, I discuss the responsibilities that she shoulders and the judgements that she makes almost daily. But the truth is, she is so savvy and experienced and thoughtful in what she does that she needs very little supervision. Anytime that I go to an event that Kara organizes, I’m beyond impressed by the pace, the engagement, the teamwork, the educational value and it’s all a result of her thoughtful approach to details and leadership style. She’s earned the respect of her subordinate teachers and the mutual respect of her peers at every level. She’s very respected by her student council members. Guest presenters are impressed by her work. She’s poised for every problem and every responsibility thanks in no small part to over 23 years experience working directly with the Maryland Association of Student Councils.

I think this award is overdue and to be honest with you, as a daily witness to her work ethic, her problem solving ability, her long-term and short-term planning and her overall friendly demeanor as she facilitates teachers and students, Kara could win this award every single year.”

- Mr. Jeff Avey, *Assistant Supervisor of Fine Arts*

“Mrs. Kennell had such an impact on my life and so many others. Her leadership made a truly lasting impact and again, just a well-deserved honor.”

- Mr. Max Green, *Member of the Board*

“I’ve known Kara a very long time and I remember when you were hired to do this. I don’t think we would ever find a more positive person to be an example for our kids in our school system. I’ve always known Kara to be friendly and positive. I have just never seen anything but a smile on Kara’s face. So Kara, this is well deserved, and congratulations.”

- Mrs. Linda Widmyer, *Member of the Board*



Pictured: Kara Kennell

Superintendent's Report cont.

Recognition of Allegany County Association of Student Councils (ACASC) Award

- Outstanding Student Leader Award presented to Miss. Eowyn Hansrote

“Eowyn was also recognized in Ocean City for the Outstanding Student Leader award. The Maryland Association of Student Councils asks each of the school systems to recognize a student who makes a difference through their leadership and extraordinary commitment to improving their school or community while excelling in their academic pursuits. Eowyn was the perfect fit for this award. In addition to being highly involved in our community, she is an exceptional student who is dedicated to her academics in the classroom. She cares about all students and strives to be their best voice to help them be successful in life. She goes above and beyond her duties as student board member and is respected by her peers. She expresses loyalty to her group and is always courteous of others. Her strongest and most obvious leadership quality is her compassion. She would like other students to learn as much as they can to enhance their leadership skills and become more involved in their community. Eowyn demonstrates dedication and is a positive role model for all ages. She brings fresh ideas, a well thought out point of view and an insight into the lives of many young individuals. Most importantly she is a true leader.”

- Mrs. Kara Kennell, *Service Learning Coordinator*

Recognition of Community School Coordinator-Western MD Champion

- Mrs. Autumn Symons named Western MD Community Schools Champion
 - 25 total nominees from the state

“Autumn was ultimately selected for a number of reasons. She had an abundance of nominations from school staff, parents, students, and community partners. Autumn also works with attendance field trips, where she selects students monthly and treats them to a field trip somewhere in the community, that they've earned, as well as creation of Wednesday night clubs for Legos, literacy, robotics, cooking, fitness, and art. She also has worked with the Maryland Extension Office to create a gardening program that helps educate and address food insecurity as well as growing these fresh foods. These were the highlights that Towson recognized and ultimately selected Autumn for this award.”



- Mrs. Jenny Ramsey, *Administrative Coordinator of Community Schools*

Pictured left to right:
Shannon Green, Autumn Symons, and Jenny Ramsey

“This is my 5th year as the community school coordinator at George's Creek and it's an extra special role for me. I have grown up in George's Creek my entire life. I went through George's Creek Elementary, as do my children. So, this job is more than a job to me. I love it. I love every part of it and I appreciate the nomination and recognition.”

- Mrs. Autumn Symons, *Community School Coordinator*

Superintendent's Report cont.

Recognition of Allegany County Teacher of the Year

- Nominations are a school-based process that began in December
- This year 14 teachers were recognized, with 5 finalists:
 - Brenda Bauer – Cresaptown
 - Katie Everly – Beall
 - Bryan Hansel – Allegany
 - Kelly Miller – Flintstone
- Jeannette Milburn – Braddock named Teacher of the Year
 - Presented by Lori Lepley



Pictured left to right:
Jeannette Milburn and
Jenny Ramsey

“It is a pleasure to stand before you tonight as the 2025-2026 Allegany County Teacher of the Year. I’m deeply grateful for this opportunity to represent our incredible educators and to continue advocating for the diverse students that we serve each day. This recognition is not simply a reflection of my work, but a celebration of the collective dedication of my colleagues, my mentors, and most importantly, my students who inspire me daily. Throughout my teaching journey, I’ve had the privilege of witnessing the brilliance and the resilience of our students. They come to our classrooms with unique experiences, perspectives, and strengths that enrich our school communities. From multilingual learners, who bring the gift of multiple languages to students who persevere through challenges with unwavering determination, every child has a story worth celebrating. It is our responsibility as educators to create spaces where each student’s voice is heard, valued, and empowered. Some of my most cherished moments as a teacher come from watching students embrace the power of their own voices. I’ve seen the quiet student find confidence through a math discussion, the struggling learner experience the joy of a break-through, and classmates rally around one another to celebrate successes both big and small. These moments are a reminder that growth is not always linear, but it’s always possible when students are given the support, encouragement, and belief they deserve. In my own classroom, fostering a culture of belonging has always been at the heart of my teaching. I strive to ensure that every student sees themselves reflected in our learning. By encouraging mathematical discourse and critical thinking, I have seen students grow not only in their academic abilities, but also in their confidence - to question, reason, and contribute. It is this empowerment that turns learning into a lifelong journey. As Allegany County Teacher of the Year, I’m committed to expanding this impact beyond my classroom walls. I will continue to advocate for equitable educational opportunities, ensuring that every student has access to the resources, support, and inspiration they need to thrive. I will work alongside my fellow educators to promote culturally and linguistically responsive practices, creating inclusive learning environments where all students can succeed. Additionally, I hope to collaborate with families and community partners, knowing that when we work together, we create stronger pathways for student success. Furthermore, I will remain dedicated to uplifting the voices of our students and families, partnering with them to better understand and meet their needs. True educational excellence is achieved when we embrace the diversity of our community and recognize it as our greatest strength.”

- Jeannette Milburn, *2025-2026 ACPS Teacher of the Year*

Finance Update

Superintendent's Operating Budget

- Fiscal 2026 Board Budget Priorities
 - Maintain and enhance resources and programs for early childhood development utilizing various funding streams and/or re-allocation of facilities where possible
 - Maintain and enhance student safety and mental health by providing appropriate working support and specialized programming based upon demonstrated student need and increasing school safety where possible considering local law enforcement recommendations and the Maryland Center for School Safety Policies and Regulations
 - Make every effort to provide employees with cost effective negotiated benefits, including salary and health insurance, that incorporate changes established by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and provides pay increases where possible
 - Provide summer educational support programs across all grade levels in addition to credit recovery
- School System Budget Considerations
 - The Local Board's Role
 - Preparing the school system budget in accordance with the state requirement for submitting its budget to the county
 - Sets the parameters for employee compensation and other terms of the pending collective bargaining agreements
 - Identifies educational goals and objectives for the superintendent to implement
 - Engages the public in identifying budget priorities
 - Other budget requirements or considerations
 - Maryland School Systems do not have the authority to bond debt, levy taxes, or raise revenues on their own
 - The state provides revenues to the district based on the district's enrollment demographics and the district's relative wealth
 - Local government is obligated to fund their local district annually
 - The school system must prepare and present a balanced budget
- Fiscal 2026 Superintendent's Budget
 - Student Enrollment Considerations
 - K-12 enrollment decreased
 - Even though the district is now CEP district wide, FARM eligibility is still a consideration for aid such as Compensatory Education. This enrollment demographic decreased
 - Multilingual learners within the district increased
 - The Special Education population for the district increased significantly

Finance Update cont.

Superintendent's Operating Budget

- Revenue Assumptions
 - Request from County government will be an increase from last year
 - State revenues are estimated to show a slight increase
 - Other revenues show an estimated reduction
 - Budget also shows the district utilizing money from fund balance
- Personnel Assumptions
 - Meets the original contractual obligations with all four bargaining units
 - Middle school afterschool programs will continue with COP funds
 - Funds five additional Special Education positions based upon student needs
 - Additional resources for increasing multilingual learner demographic will be available to meet student need
 - ESY summer program previously paid for with CARES funding is being absorbed with the unrestricted budget
- Non-Personnel Assumptions
 - Transportation costs are increasing slightly
 - Slight decrease in nonpublic placements within special education
 - Provides additional funding for increasing utility costs
 - Corresponding increase to fixed charges relating to teacher pension
 - Provides support for increasing healthcare claims and other fixed charges
 - Capital outlay projects have been reduced
 - Provides for the continuation of outdoor school programs
 - Continues to provide ESY and summer school programming
- Additional Non-Personnel Assumptions
 - Provides funding for school level supply allocations
 - Appropriate funding for staff development opportunities as requested
 - Prepare a budget within the parameters and priorities outlined by the Board
- Fiscal 2026 Budget Considerations
 - PSSAM and MABE are monitoring several bills that could potentially impact school system finances
 - A shift in the rank and make-up of Title I schools which may have staffing implications within those schools

Hearing of Constituents

Public Comment

- Donnell Keech

New Business

Vote to approve Superintendent's Operating Budget

- Approved

Consider First Reading of Resident and Nonresident Student Eligibility Policy

- Approved

Consider First Reading of School Attendance Areas Policy

- Approved

Reports of Special or Advisory Committees

Board Member Updates

- Max Green
 - Local Advisory Council for Career and Technical Education met at ACM with a focus on expanding apprenticeship and training programs in Allegany County
 - Attended the Addiction and Recovery Simulation hosted by Leadership Allegany and AHEC West, which offered a powerful and eye-opening look into the challenges individuals face during the transition from addiction treatment to long-term recovery
- Dr. David Bohn
 - Would like to make a motion to have the policy committee look at the current cell phone policy to see if it could be amended in such a way that cell phones are not being used in the classroom