

**Open Work Session
Wicomico County Board of Education
October 17, 2017**

Dr. Donna Hanlin, Superintendent of Wicomico County Board of Education, came before Council. Dr. Hanlin said they have put together an agenda, which Council should all have in front of them, that is a combination of the things the Board wanted to bring to Council, and the questions Council forwarded to the Board. She said they will move through those items.

She said the first item is just a continuation of what she had shared with Council last year. She referred Council to the one-page attachment under the agenda. She said she shared with Council last year, probably on a couple of occasions, the vision points that were adopted by the Board that really are just the foundation for everything moving forward, including budget policy decisions, etc. She said what has come out of those four vision points are at the bottom of the page. She said she wants to share with Council what the three top priorities are for this school year, and into the next few school years. She said she will not take a lot of time, because they have a lot of items on the agenda, but she did think it was important Council knows what those three priorities are, because they will see plans around those three priorities in what the Board ultimately provides with their budget requests. She said the first one has to do with insuring students are reading on grade level by grade 3. There is a lot of research showing how critically important that is, and, in fact, students who are not reading on grade level by grade 3 are six times more likely to drop out of high school. She said in order to make sure students are reading on grade level by grade 3, their priority this year is going to be planning for the implementation of universal prekindergarten. She said right now, about 55 percent of their kindergarteners have also been served in prekindergarten based upon a threshold for eligibility for them to enroll in prekindergarten classes. Mr. Dodd asked if 55 percent is a high number, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, there are three systems in the State of Maryland that offer universal prekindergarten. She said, therefore, she can only say, off the top of her head, it is below that. She said it is probably in line with other systems that are not offering it. Mr. Dodd said pre-K would be great for everybody. Dr. Hanlin said it may actually be a little higher than some systems that are not offering universal prekindergarten who have a lower FARM rate in their community. Mr. Dodd asked if usually the FARM students are the ones who get first eligibility, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, correct. She said the threshold is \$45,000 for a family of four. She said Council may have read in the paper recently that there is a joint legislative committee recommending the threshold be increased. She said she believes there is a lot of momentum. It is not just in Wicomico County, but a lot of momentum around this idea that students really need to be reached much earlier. Mr. Dodd asked what the FARM percentage is in Wicomico County, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, about 61 percent. Mr. Dodd said it was 63 percent at one time. Dr. Hanlin said it is 61 percent now, but they are still in the process of verifying those numbers for this coming school year, with the cutoff being October 31. Mr. Dodd said it still seems like a high number. Dr. Hanlin said it is a high number. Mr. Kilmer asked, in reference to the 55 percent figure, if that is the children who are eligible for prekindergarten, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, it is the children who are eligible based upon the funding the Board receives through grants, and who they can serve. Mr. Kilmer clarified if a family makes under \$45,000, they are eligible for free prekindergarten. He asked if the 55 percent is of those in that category who are taking it up, to which Dr. Hanlin clarified, no. She said 55 percent is of all of their students who could be coming to them. She said they could serve about 1,100 students in prekindergarten. She said they are currently serving roughly 630 right now. Mr. Dodd said it sounds like they have room. Dr. Hanlin clarified, they do not have room. She said they need to be serving more students. She said their goal will be to serve approximately 80 percent, because there will still be

families who will choose to go to private prekindergarten programming in the community. Mr. Cannon asked Dr. Hanlin, when she says serving prekindergarten, for the public, what does that entail? When you have a child who is qualified and is in the prekindergarten program, where does it start, what age, and what is happening from day one? Dr. Hanlin said it is their 4-year-old program. Mr. Cannon said so it is no earlier than 4 years old. Dr. Hanlin said they do serve about 40, she believes off the top of her head, 3-year-olds in their Judy Center Program, which is a different grant-funded program. She said primarily they are talking right now about 4-year-olds in prekindergarten. She said when they are talking about universal, they are talking about all students, all day. Mr. Cannon asked if pre-K as a whole across the nation always starts at 3, never at 2, or any earlier than that. Dr. Hanlin said pre-K is 4 years old, but they do serve some 3-year-olds in their Judy Center Program. Mr. Dodd asked if that is over by East Salisbury. Dr. Hanlin said they actually have four locations for their Judy Center Programs. She said they have WELC (Wicomico Early Learning Center), Pemberton, Beaver Run, and Chipman. Mr. Cannon asked if the building on Long Avenue is just administrative. Dr. Hanlin said that is a Birth-to-Five Program. She said they also serve their special needs population as early as birth. She said they work with pediatricians for referrals. She said they are actually offering childbearing classes now in an attempt to make that connection with families. She said they have two on staff who have recently been trained to rock babies in the neonatal unit. She said they are making connections with families early on, because they need to reach students with disabilities early on and provide services through the Special Education Program, which is funded through federal programs. Mr. Dodd asked if the hospital is notified of the program, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, yes, pediatricians do. Mr. Dodd said Ms. Ashanti said her guest speaker was going to be Ms. Walston speaking about that at the NAACP meeting on Thursday night. Mr. Cannon asked if this is for disadvantaged children, and Dr. Hanlin clarified, it is developmentally disabled children. She said there is a lot going on from birth until they come to the school system in kindergarten. She said they are such critical years. Mr. Cannon asked if that was 100 percent funding through the Federal Government. Dr. Hanlin said some of the funding comes through the State. Mr. Dodd clarified it is mandated. Dr. Hanlin said, just in case you are speaking with individuals or your counterparts in other counties, some call Birth-to-Five the Infants and Toddlers Program, so you may hear it called that.

Dr. Hanlin said the second priority has to do with the very opposite end of the spectrum. She said right now they have a graduation rate of 82 percent, which is not acceptable in their eyes. She said they are working on a number of different strategies to increase their graduation rate. She said they are looking at nontraditional pathways to graduation. She said, as Council may know, the legislature changed the age at which a student can drop out of high school to 18. She said that sometimes creates issues for the schools when there are those students who are not engaged, and who do not want to be there. She said they are currently looking at strategies to engage a greater number of students in their high school education by looking at nontraditional ways to do that. She said, also, Mr. Rick Briggs actually has two task forces going on right now. She said one has to do with prekindergarten, and the other has to do with this increase in graduation rate. She said they are looking at signature programs and academy type programs in middle and high school, so students can select career pathways they are interested and stay more engaged in the work they are doing in middle and high school, in hopes of engaging them and keeping them in high school. She said there is a lot of talk about that. Mr. Cannon asked Dr. Hanlin, when she says career pathways, is that in a professional realm, or in a technical realm. Dr. Hanlin said it could be both.

Dr. Hanlin said the last priority has to do with their workforce. She said over a three-year average, they currently have a turnover rate of about 20 percent over three years. She said she believes they do a good job of recruiting, but over three years they have a high turnover rate, and they know they need to do something about that. She said they are doing a salary study, which Council may or may not be aware of, that just started in the fall. They are looking at all three of their employee unit groups, and they are

doing a number of other things, such as looking at how they can hold onto their teachers, and for the teachers to want to have roots on the Shore once they get here. Mr. Davis said he knows Dr. Hanlin has only been on the Board for two years. He said the previous Administration was always rotating principals. He said he is at a school now that has a whole new staff, and he has had problems just getting the kids' names. He said he does not even have all of the kids' names who ride his bus because of the rotation of principals and staff. Dr. Hanlin said, philosophically, she does not believe in moving principals often, and she told the Board that, but then she did it. She said there are circumstances where, for example, if there is a retirement in a large school, they would not want to hire a brand new administrator to be in charge, for instance, of James M. Bennett High School. She said sometimes those kinds of shifts are necessary. She said certainly if Mr. Davis is having concerns with a particular school, they need to make sure they are providing support there. She said if he wants to let her know where that is, she will be happy to work with him.

Dr. Hanlin said she wanted Council to be aware of what their three top priorities were this year. She said they are working on a lot of other things, but those are really their areas of focus, and Council will see plans that come through in the budget process related to those three things.

Dr. Hanlin said their second agenda item was an opportunity to hear from Mrs. Ashby. She said they have been invited to go before the Governor and the Board of Public Works tomorrow with the Board's Capital Improvement, and what their initial requests are going to be. She said this is different as it typically happens in January, but they have been invited along with other school systems to come before him now as he begins his budget process. She said the Board, first of all, wanted Council to be aware of what their State requests were going to be, and also they thought it would be important for Council to have a better idea of how the Board makes those decisions. She said she wanted Mrs. Leisl Ashby to have an opportunity to go through with Council how she and her team go about making those decisions.

Mrs. Ashby said the overall Capital Improvement Program consists of two main components, the Educational Facilities Master Plan, which is kind of the long-range plan, and then the Capital Improvement Plan, which are the dollars associated with that. She said the piece on the bottom is just to show Council it is a living, breathing document. It is never quite locked in time. She said it consists of gathering that information and data, analyzing it, and making those decisions. She said the Capital Improvement Plan is the plans they put in place, and then the implementation of projects. She said if none of Council has heard what the Educational Facilities Master Plan is, their acronym is EFMP. She said it contains six main categories to address eight topics that are required by COMAR. She said of most importance to the Board is the Facilities Inventory, which is their existing portfolio, as well as the Enrollment and Capacity. She said those two together are describing what their facility needs are. She said they had some independent facility condition assessments done several years ago. She said they began talking in terms of facility condition index instead of age of facilities. She said the next level of that is their Facilities Need Index. She said what that does is it takes all of those objective data indicators and creates a hierarchy to assist them in how they go about choosing what they are going to address to try to leverage dollars to the greatest extent possible. She said she will not read through all of them, and if Council wants to go into more detail, they can. She said, in short, their Facility Quality Index (FQI) is a combination of the Condition Index and the Program Index. She said the Program Index is really heavily linked to how they deliver instructional programs, and do they have adequate space to be able to deliver those educational programs. Mrs. Ashby said they always speak in terms of FTE, which is Full Time Equivalent. She said when Mr. Ford speaks in terms of budgets, they get head counts. She said they realize it is a difference. However, that is how their funding is allocated to them by FTE. She said their Utilization Percentage means basically is it overused or underused. She said, in short, their FQI, their Utilization, and their FTE are kind of the top three most important factors, and then those are

weighted for an overall weighted score. She said what they also are faced with is their Special Initiatives. She said those might be high-priority items that come up throughout the course of a year, new initiatives, such as universal pre-k, and those type of things. She said some of these are ongoing roof refurbishment programs. She said things happen, plumbing may fail, and they always have other issues that come up, so they are always tracking those special initiative pieces. She then showed an example of how they document what their facility needs are. There is a scorecard in their EFMP for every building they have. She said she used Beaver Run as an example, and she will walk Council through them. She said they have gone through a series of presentations with the building principals, because this is valuable information for them as they are making future plans with their individual buildings. She said, again, they have all of the individual indicators, and she will go through where they can be found. She said they did this with the Facilities Task Force on long-range planning back in 2014. She said they went with the colors of a traffic light, meaning green means good, yellow is caution, and red is look into it more. She said they have applied that to each individual scale, so those who are visual can get a quick check on where they are within their individual range. She said next is the Program Index for an overall combined index facility quality index, and this will show how they look at that holistically across their entire portfolio. She said utilization could go one of two ways. A building could be under-utilized, which is then a red category, or it can be over-utilized, which means it is overcrowded. She said in the right hand corner is the weighted score that she referred to earlier in the previous slide. She said this allows them to see where it is in relation to the other school buildings. She said they then look at the overall FTE enrollment in relation to the state rated capacity, so there is another visual of whether they are over or under. Then they look at if there are portables currently at the site, and what those are being used for. She said each one of the scorecards creates a link to the Capital Plans. She said when you pull the Capital Improvement Plan open, you can see similar project descriptions. However, it will be mapping it out over a multiple-year funding strategy, and how those projects are going to be addressed. She said they speak in FQI because it is the combination of whether they are meeting their instructional needs, along with the condition of the facilities. She said they create these maps. She said they have one for elementary and one for secondary, so it just gives you a quick visual of where the FQI falls with either a green or a red, and, as seen with the opening of West Salisbury, that has shifted from a red to a green dot moving forward. She said, going back to what she was talking about earlier, here is everything that is in their Capital Plan right now. She said now they are faced with how do they prioritize those needs. She said this is just the requests that are coming forward to the Executive/Council for funding. She said those do not include their capital outlay requests, that is a separate budget. She said they take those special initiatives, combined with what is going on with enrollments, as well as their Facility Needs Index, and they kind of are taking what they call a three bucket approach. She said this means there are systemic project needs, limited renovations, and then major capital improvements. She said she is sure Council is well aware systemic is an increasingly more expensive solution as you move down that list. She said, but this matches up fairly closely with what that Facilities Needs Index is telling them. She said they then ask what do they do with those pieces, and how do they go from plan to project. She said, in the Master Plan, there are a lot of different stakeholders involved in the process determining how the pieces are going to be prioritized. She said once taking on a major initiative, multiple options are developed for further consideration by the School Building Commission, and the Board and school-based committees, and then ultimately they go after dollars associated with that piece to implement a project. She said a lot of people ask why does it take so long. She said they tried to put this together to describe why they come to the County first. She said that is to cover costs that are not covered by the current Cost Share Formula with the State. They only participate on what is considered eligible construction costs. She said this is a good representation of how it takes a while to start getting the initial dollars, so the design can be completed before even moving into construction. She said they are requesting planning money from the County up front, and that has to happen almost two years ahead of

when they are requesting planning approval from the State. She said, just for comparison purposes, Beaver Run is sort of a good example of where they are in that process. She said they received some initial funding for planning, and they are currently proceeding with a planning request to the State, which she will show Council later on in the presentation. She said they always like to point out that it is about sixteen months between the time when their submission goes into the County, to when they actually receive bond funds, and it is about nine months when they go to the State. She said they are off on a fiscal year. She said they get State dollars approximately July 1 every year, and County dollars are available once they have gone to the bond market. She said they have to keep that in mind, because that is usually a cash flow gap that they need to make sure they are able to cover when they are working on projects. She said, when she talks about stakeholders, the many various organizations that are involved throughout the process from the Master Plan into the CIP, and, ultimately, once they do projects, there are many steps throughout that process as well. Mr. Dodd asked who developed the program Mrs. Ashby is using, to which Mrs. Ashby responded herself. Mr. Dodd said who asked the question about the portables. He said Mrs. Ashby mentioned portables and what they are used for. Mrs. Ashby said sometimes there is a misconception that portables are always being used as a classroom. She said they have several facilities where they are lacking, for example, intervention space, or Title I areas, so sometimes portables are used for other functions other than just a classroom. She added, but they may be faced with addressing a capacity issue, and they will ask how many portables they have there in case they really had to be using them for classrooms. Mr. Dodd said he guesses his point was that when talking about building a school, the funding is for the present day they start discussing the school, and they go with that current enrollment, and not future enrollment. He said by the time the school is built, the FTEs are much higher. Mrs. Ashby said, if you go back to that previous timeline, they are requesting funding based on a projected enrollment. However, they may be bringing a building on line a year after that projected enrollment piece. Mr. Dodd said, and then you are going to have more students, and that is where the portables come in. Mrs. Ashby said the whole point of the Capital Improvement Plan, the Master Plan, is planning not only for the current year, but planning for five years out, and that is because a lot of these projects require multiple funding requests. She said they have put this piece together just as a quick snapshot of the major things that are happening with Wicomico County in regards to the Capital Improvement Plan. She said, although a request may come in during Fiscal Year 2019 for a certain amount, they also indicate it is a multiple-year funding request, so everyone is aware there will be more funding requests associated with that project moving forward. She said that is just a quick reference piece. She said, as Dr. Hanlin mentioned, tomorrow they are going to the Board of Public Works. She said these are their five priority projects that are being brought forward to the State. She said in regards to West Salisbury, thankfully the Council and Executive were able to assist with forward funding a portion of that. She said that is their last year installment for that piece. She said next is Delmar's limited renovation, replacement of Beaver Run, and then roofing projects for Glen Avenue and Pinehurst. She said, just to make things even more complicated, the State priority list never exactly matches up to the local priority list for issues, such as West Salisbury where it is a last year funding request. She said she just wanted to show Council the top ten that are currently on the County funding request, which, for the most part, are similar at the top, and then there is more to continue down the list based upon those project needs that are mapped out on the funding year requests. She said, as mentioned, tomorrow is Board of Public Works, and she will now take any questions. Mr. Cannon asked, when the State agrees to the funding, they agree for the size the school is, or do they allow for percentage of anticipated growth when they approve funding for a new school? Mrs. Ashby said they will use the seven year projected enrollment. She said, however, they will take into consideration whether or not there is capacity available at adjacent schools, so they always have to take that into consideration as well. Mr. Matt Holloway asked Mrs. Ashby if it is a good sign they were invited up early this year. Dr. Hanlin said all school systems are invited, except two school systems who do not have any

projects. Mr. Matt Holloway said if this is out of the norm, what is the reason for being invited up early. Mrs. Ashby said the Governor has indicated that he wants to be hearing about what is coming forward as he works on developing what the budget will be for school construction. Mr. Matt Holloway said it sounds like it may be positive. Mr. Dodd said it looks like Mrs. Ashby is going to do a good job with her presentation. Dr. Hanlin said Mrs. Ashby is top-notch for sure. Mr. Cannon thanked Mrs. Ashby, and said she was very thorough.

Mr. Cannon said they would move on to the requested topics from the Council regarding traffic control at the schools. Mr. Rick Briggs said he can speak briefly on it. He said they have not heard of any specific issues. He said they know their administration and staff work hard to ensure safe and efficient drop off and pick up each day. He said, if Council has heard of any specific concerns, they would love to hear them. He said sometimes concerns bypass the Board and go straight to Council. He said anytime Council wants to make the Board aware, they can. Mr. Davis brought up the parking situation at Bennett where the buses park in the back. He said they still have a problem, because if they have a football game, the kids bring their cars and park back where the buses are, and buses cannot get in. Mr. Bruce Ford said the kids are not supposed to, to which Mr. Davis said well they do it. Mr. Ford said they may do it, but they are not supposed to. They are supposed to park out front. Mr. Davis said the reason they do it is because by the time they get back, it is dark up front. Mr. Briggs said, as principal of that school last year, they addressed the concern continually throughout the year. He said he will follow up with Administration again, because it is a continual issue, and he will look at it. He said they need to have that space for bus drivers to get in and out safely, so they will re-address it. Mr. Dodd said he sees it too, because he has to drop his kids off at school. He said this last week at Parkside, there was a gentleman out there kind of directing traffic. He said he did not have a vest on or anything. He said he did not see him today or yesterday, but he was impressed, and he was glad to see that because it kind of helped with the flow. He said a lot of times people will pull in there and park. He said then buses will try to get through, and then people are blowing their horns. He said he saw a fight one year at the old Bennett Middle, and somebody hit his car last year because they were in such a hurry to get in. He said he was trying to make a left turn and they went around him and kept on going. He said he sees it, he rides by Wicomico Middle and they are double parked inside there, and out on Main Street, and he sees a lot of close misses there. He said he has not seen what is happening now since they blocked off Route 50 where everybody was pulling in Davis Street or Ward Street to park. He said that was always hectic, but he does not know what it is like now. He said East Main Street is still bad, and he has heard deputies complain. He said he does not know why they cannot do something about it. Mr. Briggs said because it is not their street, it is a City street. Mr. Briggs said he will follow up on this. Mr. Dodd said a lot of parents complain, and he sees it. He said they probably do not want to complain to the Board because they do not know they can complain, but if he sees it or hears about it, he is going to complain. Mr. Briggs said it is at all schools. He said yesterday, he picked up his daughter for an appointment around 2:15 p.m. at Bennett Middle, and there were already parents lining up to beat the flow of traffic. He said they were lining up an hour early. Mr. Dodd said what will happen if there is an emergency at one of those schools and they have to get to the front door, and you cannot get an emergency vehicle in there because they are double parked. He said Mr. Briggs said it is at every school, and this is something to consider in the future. He said, especially when building new schools, they should come up with a better parking plan. He said there are so many people picking up and dropping off their kids these days.

Mr. Cannon said they would next discuss JMB lacrosse. Mr. Briggs said last year he was at Bennett in the spring and he never heard any specific complaints. He said he definitely acknowledges when there are lacrosse games, they have lacrosse balls flying around during those contests. He said, for player safety, obviously, the track athletes will either work on field events, which are not in the flow of lacrosse balls, or they will just move and run to a different part of the campus. He said they are pretty fortunate in that

they have such a large campus now. He said, to his knowledge, they have never had an issue or a complaint from a coach. He said the track athletes just move and participate somewhere else. Mr. Davis asked why the lacrosse team does not have their own field, to which Mr. Briggs responded, they have a practice field, but for the athletic contests, they play their games on what is called the Shipyard at Bennett, which is more of a contest field.

Mr. Cannon said the next item to be discussed are the lights at JMB. He said they were accidentally placed on the tennis courts instead of the football field. Mrs. Ashby said they were not accidentally placed, that would be a pretty big accident. She said for Phase 1, which was back in 2007, she pulled out what was base bid versus alternate. Lighting for athletic fields at James M. Bennett were a combination of base bid and alternates. Base bid included lights at the tennis courts, which was approved and included in the construction contract. She said the soccer, baseball, softball, and competition fields were an alternate, and were not approved as part of the contract. She said in Phase 3, which was in 2015, lighting for competition field #1 was an alternate. She said, however, it was not approved. Dr. Hanlin said the lights were purposefully put at the tennis courts in Phase 1. Mr. Cannon said he is not quite sure what initiated this. He asked if someone thought the lighting should have gone on the football field first. Mr. Ford said what he thinks happened was they considered the tennis courts as an athletic field, from his understanding. Mr. Davis asked if they play tennis at night. Mr. Ford said they are capable of doing it, but they do not do it. He said, again, he thinks it was a slip-up based on the School Building Commission, because they should not have been there, and because all of the lights for athletic fields were not supposed to happen. He said it is his understanding they did consider it an athletic field, and that is how it went through. Mrs. Ashby said it was clearly in the base bid. She said those do not just happen. She said the alternates are vetted and prioritized. Mr. Cannon asked if those tennis courts are open to the public, to which Mr. Ford responded, no. He said he thinks the coach uses it, but to keep the public from going in there, they keep it locked. Mr. Cannon said, going back to what Mr. Davis had suggested, does the tennis team play at night, and is there use for the lights? Mr. Briggs said most of their contests are immediately after school. He said he cannot say they have never extended into dark hours, but tennis is a spring sport, and normally lighting is not an issue. Mr. Dodd said it is usually lighter in the spring and lights will not be needed. He said his daughter plays tennis at Parkside, and he has never seen the need for lights. Mr. Briggs said he has seen the soccer team go on the tennis courts before and take advantage of the lighting, but those were the only times the lights were ever used last year. Mr. Dodd said maybe they can be relocated. Mr. Cannon asked Mrs. Ashby to clarify if what she is saying is it fell into some sort of category, and they just threw the lights in there, to which Mrs. Ashby responded, no. She said it was in 2007, and she is not able to determine exactly who specifically requested it. She said, to the level of detail things are vetted through at the School Building Commission, she can only say it was an intentional decision somewhere along the line to have them as part of base bid, because they were clearly base bid, and everything else was in the alternate. Mrs. Ashby said she is not sure if it was Rec and Parks, or a community need at the time. Mr. Briggs said his guess would be community need, because normally the community tennis courts are lit. He said the Wi-High courts have lights, as do the City Park. He said his guess is it was a community push so they could be used after school hours. Mrs. Ashby said those design decisions were even made before that 2007 timeline. Mr. Joe Holloway said Mrs. Ashby could go back to the minutes from the School Building Commission from that time. Mrs. Ashby said she was able to pull the alternate acceptance, and the review, but not who specifically requested the lights. Mr. Cannon said he guesses the key is to make sure it is not done again. Mr. Dodd said it was mentioned earlier the tennis courts are not open to the public, but it was a community decision. Mrs. Ashby said, however, Parks and Rec goes through the Board's Event Management System to use and coordinate fields. Mr. Joe Holloway said maybe they could put meters on the lights for people to use them, and they could charge like they do at the park. He said then they could get some of

their money back. Mr. Dodd said in the City Park, they have a switch where they come on between certain hours, and they shut down at 10:00 p.m., but they do not charge for them. Mr. Joe Holloway said they use to charge. Mr. Dodd said they may have, but now they do not. Mr. Cannon thanked Mrs. Ashby for following up on this.

Mr. Cannon said, moving on with ongoing topics, of course they always talk about the public-private partnerships, and where they can take advantage of that. Dr. Hanlin said she does not really have anything additional to add to that, except to tell Council, and she is sure they are aware, the Greater Salisbury Committee and the Chamber have joined forces to create an Education Foundation. She said this is still in the planning phases, but would allow the perfect opportunity for public-private partnerships. She said they are looking at some kind of alternative funding when they build the permanent location of Choices Academy with the community center there. She said, again, that is another opportunity. Mr. Cannon asked if it is focusing now on just overall basic funding, or is the focus going to be on specific products that the school might need, such as if they need laptops. He said maybe there is some way to put that in there. Dr. Hanlin said, the latter. Mr. Cannon said, in reference to the Choices Academy, he would like an update as to where that is. Dr. Hanlin said Mrs. Ashby and her team did a great job of getting that school up and running when school started, which was not what they were planning. She said they were planning to have those students temporarily be at the portables at Wicomico Middle School, and then relocate them again sometime between now and Christmas. She said but Mr. Joe Vignale, and other members of Mrs. Ashby's, team did a great job on fast tracking and working with the City to get the modular moved and open, and they did open the second week of school at Choices. She said that school is up and running, they did a great job, they have fresh paint, etc., and it looks beautiful. She said if Council has not had an opportunity to go over there, actually this afternoon the Board is having a joint barbeque with the City. Mr. Ford said Council is all invited. Dr. Hanlin added, Council is welcome to stop by. She said this is another one of the Mayor's initiatives where he moves throughout the community and talks about what they would like to see in a community center in their neighborhood. Dr. Hanlin said, because they are obviously very much a part of that project, they are going to be there also at this community event this afternoon at 5:00 p.m. Mr. Cannon said it is pretty impressive that the Board got Choices up and running already. Dr. Hanlin said the tours are from 5:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Cannon said the next item of discussion is the CTE efforts. Mr. Briggs said he would talk a little bit about that. He said recently they had three new Maryland State Department of Education courses approved for this school year. He said CTE programs are occasionally updated to reflect current industry trends, to update curriculum, and to provide ongoing PD for their teachers annually. He said, Mr. Bryan Ashby, who is the supervisor of CTE, submits to the Maryland Department of Education a revised five-year plan. Mr. Briggs said this year in early October, MSDE notified Dr. Hanlin of the following programs being approved as upgrades or additions to the current programs. He said they now have Certified Professional Horticulturalist, Business Management and Finance, and Project Lead the Way Pre-Engineering Program at Wi-High. He said they had that at Parkside, and they were able to expand that program at another school, and it is currently at Wi-High this year. He said each of these programs offers students the opportunity to gain articulated college credit and licensure certification when appropriate. He said they currently have 26 CTE options for all students. He said they are looking for opportunities for growth so they can provide a greater number of students with the benefits of CTE. Dr. Hanlin added, part of the task force Mr. Briggs was working on with the increase in graduation rate is looking at expanding Career Technology Education. Mr. Briggs said their 26 programs are great, but obviously they would like to expand on those programs and/or the opportunities for more students, because they believe more students could benefit from these programs. Mr. Cannon said he assumes there is a really strong ongoing relationship between the school system and Wor-Wic Community College as well. Mr.

Briggs said there is. He said he was actually talking today with Mr. Stauffer, the Director of Secondary Education, and they have a dual-enrollment meeting with Wor-Wic, with Dr. Hoy and his new Chief of Academics. He said they have that meeting in two weeks, and that is a great ongoing partnership there.

Mr. Cannon said he is not sure who put Magnet Program on the agenda. Mr. Briggs said he could give a brief update. He said first, referencing back to Dr. Hanlin's vision points, the first sentence in number three is "We aspire to be a public system dedicated to meeting the needs of each student, from the most gifted to the most challenged." Mr. Briggs said it is clearly articulated in that point there. He said this summer they realigned the duties of some of their elementary education supervisors, including Mrs. Ruby Brown, who was previous principal at North Salisbury Elementary, which houses the Magnet Program. He said Mrs. Ruby Brown is their supervisor of High Performing Learners and Gifted Education. She has already established an Accelerated Learners Committee to look for ways to strengthen their program. Mr. Briggs said next Wednesday night is their first meeting of that committee, which he will take part in, and he is looking forward to as a proponent of the Magnet Program. He said, not to speak for Dr. Hanlin, but they are both supporters of it and want to see it strengthen. Dr. Hanlin clarified, K-12, not just elementary school. Mr. Dodd said he knows they have K-12 in other counties, and that is a good idea. He said he thinks Mrs. Ruby Brown is a good choice. Dr. Hanlin said she certainly has the experience.

Mr. Cannon asked for an update on West Salisbury. Mrs. Ashby said site work, visitor parking, and bus loop areas have the base course of asphalt complete. She said masonry, exterior brick, and stone continues on the main entrance, as well as the media center. She said approximately 90 percent of the drywall walls are closed in, and they are finishing and framing bulkheads. She said hard ceilings are ongoing, the cafeteria ceiling has been painted, and all interior CMU walls are painted with the first coat. She said painting and drywall is scheduled in three to four weeks. She said standing seam roof panels are ongoing, and they are about 50 percent complete in Area B. She said spray foam insulation is around 95 percent complete, and they are finishing up this week, weather dependent. She said all in-wall plumbing is complete, refrigeration piping in Area A is wrapping up this week, and install of the same begins in Area B next week. She said buildout of the main mechanical room is ongoing, and duct work is approximately 85 percent complete in Area A, and 40 percent complete in Area B. She said sprinkler pipe is 90 percent complete in area A, and 50 percent in Area B. In-wall rough in for electrical and branch circuitry is 95 percent complete. She said finishing up pulling feeders to electrical panels will be done this week. All cable trays are installed, and overhead rough in continues in Areas A and B. She said status still remains the same, currently on schedule, and they anticipate substantial completion in June of 2018, with the Administrative Team moving in July 2018, and students in September 2018. Mr. Davis asked if they are going to put solar panels there like they did at Bennett. Mrs. Ashby said she believes there are some solar panels associated with the preheat of the water heater, but the solar field at James M. Bennett, and at Northwestern, are two different things. She said they are through their ESMEC Consortium piece, and they are helping reduce costs they have for electricity. She said West Salisbury's site did not meet the requirements they would need for that type of install.

Mr. Cannon said the next item is prekindergarten. He said even though they touched on it when Dr. Hanlin was going over her priorities, he thinks it would not hurt to re-review it. Dr. Hanlin said it is one of their major priorities. Mr. Cannon said he has been a somewhat reluctant advocate of pre-k. He said the biggest concern he has had, from a conservative perspective, is how far is the educational system supposed to delve into social matters as far as taking over for families entirely. He said it is expensive for the taxpayers. He said he will hear people say they are actually just becoming a daycare center, as opposed to just an educational center. He said, but as time is moving forward, he thinks they are recognizing very clearly an old thought process is that kindergarten is 5-years old. He said he thinks they

have to accept the fact, kind of what they would call a paradigm shift, that maybe it should be 4 or 3-years old. He said they all went to kindergarten at the age of 5, but that was a while back. Mr. Cannon said realistically he thinks they have to start thinking 4-year olds and 3-year olds. The question is where. He said what really shocked him at the United Way Symposium at Dove Point, was the fact of the potential overall costs. He said there were comments made, such as, well if the children need dental, we have to make sure we supply dental, and there were other things you would hear. He said talking to the basic taxpayer in the County, they would say, well how much are we talking about here. He said they just thought they were talking about educational pre-K where the kids are dropped off and go to school. He asked how much it crosses over between just pure education, and actually taking on the child as a daycare issue. He said even some daycare centers were concerned about business they were going to lose. Dr. Hanlin said, to her, that is a different issue. She said how they think about daycare now is not that the child takes their blanket in and plays and sleeps all day. She said there is an incredible amount of learning that goes on when children play, and they know a lot more now about brain development, how early brains are developed, and when students need to be exposed to language, literacy, and mathematical literacy, and so forth. She said she understands where people are coming from when they express those arguments, but she thinks they can clearly explain where the research is coming from as they continue talking about this need. Mr. Cannon said, to get to pre-k at ages 4 and 3, it has to be more all-encompassing, just because of the fact of the age of the child alone. Dr. Hanlin said they are concerned about communities where there are high levels of poverty, and there is not a lot of exposure to language development in the home. She said this is why they need the children as early as possible to be sure they are getting that background knowledge, and will be ready to learn. Mr. Cannon asked if it starts out as a half day or full day. Dr. Hanlin said they believe full day. Mr. Cannon said what about the expansion of the schools, or would it be a completely separate school. Dr. Hanlin said they have talked a lot about that, because not only are the dollars for operational costs higher, but there are the space issues in their public schools right now. She said as part of their planning, and looking at if they are going to do this, they ask how can they do it in terms of the space available to them now. She said perhaps purchasing modular buildings. She said they have talked about whether a center-type program would work. She said there have been feelings expressed about the previous first grade centers in the community, and they stopped having first grade centers because families did not want their children bused to a particular center. She said they are still looking at all of those options as the task force works. Mr. Joe Holloway asked if they can put a 3-year-old on the bus by themselves and get them to school, and is that how you are going to transport them? Dr. Hanlin said, no, there would be assistants on buses. Mr. Joe Holloway asked how many assistants per bus. Dr. Hanlin referred the question to Councilman Davis, stating he may be able to answer that better than she. Mr. Davis said they have seatbelts for them. Mr. Cannon said he thinks probably Joe is suggesting, when you go from a 5-year-old to a 3-year-old, a whole lot more things have to come into consideration just for the care outside of the education. He said it is the care as well. He said he cannot remember what 3-year-olds do by themselves. Mr. Joe Holloway asked if they would require them to be potty trained before they come. Dr. Hanlin said, she would imagine, yes, with 4-year-olds. She said they are not talking yet about 3-year-olds, although they do serve a very small population of 3-year-olds. Mr. Joe Holloway said they have been talking about them today, to which Dr. Hanlin said yes. Mr. Briggs said, just to clarify, when they are talking pre-k, they are talking specifically about that 4-year-old population. Mr. Cannon said he now understands, and he was thinking further down the road to the next step. Mr. Dodd said there are not that many 3-year-olds in the program. Dr. Hanlin said there are about 40. She said two of the Judy Centers have 3-year-old programs. Mr. Dodd said he happens to agree with Dr. Hanlin when she said kids can learn while they are playing. He asked, without talking about playing, is it a half day or full day? Dr. Hanlin said a full day is what she is talking about. Mr. Dodd asked how much of that time is actually structured to learning, sitting down and teaching the kids something, other than letting them play and

learn on their own. Dr. Hanlin said she cannot speak to those specifics at this point, but she would imagine a lot of it is structured play, and that is still learning time. Mr. Dodd asked if they will still be required downtime where they take a nap. Mr. Briggs said their current full-day settings have about a two-hour naptime in the afternoon. He said they keep that for most of the year, and then try to wean off it in the spring as they get closer to starting kindergarten the following year to aid in that transition. Mr. Dodd said, if he remembers correctly, it was either the afternoon or the morning that had naptime, but that was when it was half a day. Mr. Briggs said now the current half-day programs do not have naptimes structured in them. He said just the full day do. Mr. Cannon said he has not paid careful enough attention at the National or State level in regards to the progress as far as funding is concerned. He asked if they are beginning to decide to push it down to the local level. Dr. Hanlin said there is the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education, which is the Kirwan Commission that Council may be familiar with. She said they have been talking about building blocks, major tenants, around which to base funding formulas. She said it is her understanding that the one tenant they have agreed on is universal pre-K. She said she does not know what that is going to look like, and she does not know whether they are talking about just funding universal pre-k. She said her guess is no, that it will be looking at that threshold of the amount of funding school systems get based upon family income in terms of transitioning, or maybe evolving eventually to universal pre-k. Mr. Cannon asked, are they looking at addressing it from a needs basis first, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, but raising that threshold. She said that is her understanding. She said she has not read the minutes of the Kirwan Commission. She did provide testimony, but she has not been to the other meetings or read the minutes of the sessions. Mr. Cannon said, as a devil's advocate, he remembers reading about eight or more years ago when pre-k was first coming about, some of the arguments in place were people saying even in a pre-k student, by 5th grade everything levels out again. He asked Dr. Hanlin if she thinks that is true, or does she think it is a strong argument to say pre-k does extend long-term. Dr. Hanlin said she thinks it is long-term. Mr. Cannon said it has been a while, and he does not remember what the basis of that argument was. Dr. Hanlin said she would be curious to know what that was. Mr. Cannon said he will dig it out of a file somewhere.

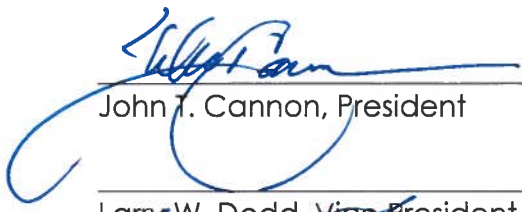
Mr. Cannon said the next item is the Mentoring Program. He said they have a brochure, and Council appreciates that. Dr. Hanlin said this is something they provide for the individuals who volunteer to mentor in their program. She said she is not sure specifically what Council was looking for. She said Mrs. Kim Miles was not able to be with them today, but did provide her with some information. She said they have about 260 mentors in their schools right now. She said they only work during the school day with their students. She said if mentors want to be involved with families outside of school, they then work with them to be involved with the Boys' and Girls' Club. She asked if there were other specific things Council was interested in knowing about the Mentoring Program. Mr. Cannon said he thinks it was just a general question as to how it is going. Dr. Hanlin said it is going well.

Mr. Cannon said the next item is the one-time funding projects. He said Council is asking where the Board is at with what was initiated after this last budget cycle, and maybe if there is any anticipation, which they know there is, for this year. Mr. Briggs said he cannot speak to this year, but he can say thank you for last year's. He said all of the technology that was approved is already in the hands of the students, and is being used effectively each day. He said just to give Council a couple quick examples, at Wi-High the cart is specifically being used for 9th grade English classrooms, where students are electronically submitting work and receiving feedback from their teachers electronically. He said at Mardela, 8th grade students have written original stories, and are now creating photo stories, or I-movies to bring those stories to life. He said at Bennett, 11th grade English students are taking some of their assessments actually online, which is providing immediate feedback to help drive instruction. He said at Westside Intermediate, 5th grade teachers have utilized the new laptops in a variety of ways to

assist in both reading and math. He said they are in the hands of the students and they are using them every day, and the Board greatly appreciates it. Mr. Dodd asked if all of this one-time funding was used for technology, because he heard somewhere along the line that it was not. Mr. Briggs said, yes, everything requested and approved was specifically for technology. Dr. Hanlin said, in fact, Council was specific by line item with the schools, and that is exactly what the Board did with those funds. Mr. Dodd said that is why he asked the question. He said he hears rumors out in the public. Dr. Hanlin said it was specifically used for technology. Mr. Briggs said he will reiterate; there was one cart for each of the middle schools, three carts for the city high schools' English Departments, one cart for the ELL students at Wi-Middle, additional laptops for CTE usage, two carts for Delmar Elementary, one cart for Westside Intermediate, three carts for Mardela, and two for Salisbury Middle. He said those were the specific ones that were funded, and that is who is using them. Mr. Dodd said he saw some of the students and the principals go to the budget hearing and specifically request those carts. Mr. Cannon said this is good because they knew the whiteboards were a priority, but Council thought this would hit a broader range. He said this is, of course, Mr. Matt Holloway's initiative in the budget process. Mr. Briggs said they appreciate it, and they are adding many laptops as they move away from the desktops. He said laptops can be used more effectively by their students and hit a greater number of students, as opposed to a desktop sitting somewhere. Mr. Cannon said he is glad the Board put it forward, and gave Council an option.

Mr. Dodd asked if someone could send Council the information on the Magnet Program. He asked if it was called Higher Learning now, or Accelerated Learning. He said he wants to know the dates and times for the committee meeting, because he would absolutely be interested in attending. He said he has gone before, and he thinks maybe Councilman Kilmer may be interested. Dr. Hanlin said they will send Council those. Mr. Cannon thanked everyone from the Board for being there, and said it was a very productive meeting. Mr. Ford said this is what it is all about, the Board and Council working together to get the best for the students of Wicomico County. He said he does not want to swell Mr. Cannon's head any, but it is going well, and he wants to keep it that way. Mr. Cannon said he thinks there is a lot of confidence in the School Board as well. He said in the community as a whole, he thinks the confidence factor has gone up quite a bit. He said he knows this Council has always been very open to working with the Board of Education. Mr. Dodd said he served five years on the Board of Education, and just listening to Dr. Hanlin's vision today, some of the things she said are like a breath of fresh air. Dr. Hanlin thanked Mr. Dodd. There was no further discussion.

Signatures are on the next page




John T. Cannon, President



Larry W. Dodd, Vice President, District 3



Ernest F. Davis, District 1



Marc Kilmer, District 2

Absent
John B. Hall, District 4



Joe Holloway, District 5



Matthew Holloway, At-Large



Laura Hurley, Council Administrator