

**Open Work Session**  
**Wicomico County Board of Education Quarterly Work Session**  
**June 15, 2021**

Dr. Donna Hanlin, Superintendent; Dr. Micah Stauffer, Chief Finance and Operations Officer; Mr. Gene Malone, Chairman of the Board of Education; Mr. Rick Briggs, Chief Academic Officer; and Ms. Kim Miles, Assistant Superintendent with Family and Student Services, came before Council.

Dr. Hanlin said today is the last day of the 2020-2021 school year. She congratulated Mrs. Acle on her daughter Grace's graduation. She said they completed some graduations this past weekend at the Shorebirds Stadium, which went very well, and they got blessed with the weather that looked iffy in a couple of situations, but they made it through and all feedback was very positive.

*Enrollment Numbers*

Dr. Hanlin said the full-time equivalent (FTE) students for the 2020-2021 school year was 13,865 and she does not know if she previously gave Council the specific decrease, but that is a decrease from the previous year of 4.3%. She said she knows Council asked about where the decreases are coming from the last time they met, and they know that a significant portion of them are from students who went to homeschooling. She then asked Ms. Miles how many more went to homeschooling this year, to which Ms. Miles responded, about 251. Dr. Hanlin said, in regards to the students who transferred to non-public schools, the majority of those transfers were the younger students who stayed in private daycare facilities. She said Council also asked about how they know whether the enrollment will go up, and with pre-kindergarten and kindergarten enrollment, that is going very well. She said last year at this time they had 273 who had applied for enrollment, and this year so far they have 790, which is a significant bump, so they are seeing the reality in the prediction that enrollment will bounce back.

Mrs. Acle asked if they know the number of students in private schools who could be in public schools, to which Ms. Miles responded, they do not have the total because they do not have the enrollment numbers for all the private schools as they would be independent of their numbers. Mrs. Acle then asked if they know how many students they have lost, to which Ms. Miles responded, they have a category that is inclusive of students who went to private schools or transferred to a non-public school. She said this year it is approximately 200 students, and that is inclusive of those students who may have gone to a private daycare for kindergarten or pre-kindergarten, as well as other private schools.

Mr. Dodd asked if they have any students who are unaccounted for, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, they take care of that by the time they report their September 30<sup>th</sup> enrollment. Mr. Dodd said he knows that was an issue before because of the pandemic.

*Kirwan Implementation Coordinator*

Dr. Hanlin said Council should be familiar with the language that is in this year's Bill that just passed in Legislature. She then read the language in the bill as follows: "For each fiscal year 22 through 26 the governing body of the county and the local school system jointly shall appoint a single implementation coordinator responsible for the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, otherwise known as Kirwan, by all governing units operating in the county." Dr. Hanlin said they have been aware that this provision was in the Legislation and, obviously, superintendents across the State have been trying to figure out what this means, what the job description is, and those kinds of questions Mrs.

Hurley asked in an email. She said there is still very limited detail except that she knows through conversations between the Executive Director of the Superintendents Association, Mary Pat Fannon, and the Maryland Association of Counties Executive Director, Michael Sanderson, they have agreed that this position is a project manager so to speak. She said, until they get further direction, they see this as a continuation of the work they have already started since they have been receiving these kinds of funds for the last couple of years. She said their recommendation, initially, is to assign this to Dr. Stauffer as the Chief Finance and Operations Officer as it just makes sense to them since he is very familiar with all the work of Kirwan, and they have a strong working relationship with the County Executive's Office and Mrs. Oland. She said they will have monthly meetings with Mr. Psota and his staff to update the County on what is happening with the implementation of Kirwan and then, of course, when they meet with Council quarterly, they can review that information. She said basically, they need Council's agreement that Dr. Stauffer would be the most logical person at least initially until they have more guidance.

Mrs. Acle asked what the purpose of the position is, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, they are going on the premise that it is a project coordinator. She said, based on all the reading they have done with the Kirwan Commission, there are many reports that will be due and lots of different timelines for all the elements, not just with the funding reporting, but also all of the work with CTE, early learning, college and career readiness, and tracking that information, and also work in Human Resources with the career ladder. She clarified, until they get further information, they see this as being a project manager. She said Ms. Fannon and Mr. Sanderson talked about the fact that it is a project manager rather than anything to do with accountability because there is already going to be a high level of scrutiny. She explained, there is already the Accountability Board that is in the process of being formed right now at the State level, and they are going to have to turn in reports to that Board as well as the Department of Legislative Services and MSDE, so that is how they are interpreting it at this point.

Mrs. Hurley said the law says the local governing body along with the Board of Education is to appoint the Kirwan Implementation Coordinator, so Council may want to hear from Mr. Psota on this matter, to which Mr. Psota responded, he has spoken with Dr. Hanlin about this and he is in full support of Dr. Stauffer being named as the joint implementation coordinator.

Dr. Hanlin said obviously Dr. Stauffer will be working with lots of people on this. She said her own Board asked if they are changing his job, to which she responded, no, they are just giving him more to do.

Mr. Holloway asked if this means the County Executive's Office will have any oversight on the Kirwan matters, to which Mr. Psota responded, as far as oversight, he does not think it would be any more oversight than what the County already has. He said Dr. Hanlin has expressed that they have extremely open cooperative dialogue in communication, and he does not believe this will change anything.

Mrs. Acle said she would feel more comfortable on waiting until they have more guidance on what that position needs to be, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, the position needs to be implemented by the 1<sup>st</sup> of July. Mr. Malone added, that is part of the regulation. Mr. Cannon suggested they could have a special meeting to make that decision later.

Mr. Holloway said his question is why the Kirwan Commission would dictate the law in that manner.

Mrs. Acle asked why they made it the local governing body, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, they do not know. Mr. Psota clarified, that is a question for the State.

Mr. Holloway said the Kirwan Commission went on for a number of years and there was a lot of controversy over whether it was needed and whether it could be afforded. He said he is just wondering if at some point in time somebody on that Commission made the decision that they wanted to give oversight to the County Local Governing Body rather than just the School Board, to which Mr. Psota responded, he cannot presume where this came from.

Dr. Hanlin said she can only explain the conversations she mentioned earlier between the Executive Director of the Superintendents Association and the Executive Director of the Maryland Association of Counties that it is more of an implementation position rather than an oversight position.

Mr. McCain said he interpreted it that somebody has to coordinate it all as it is a big nut, so they are just making sure every County has someone coordinating it all.

Mrs. Acle asked if they have been able to speak to anyone in the Governor's Office for guidance on what this position should be, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, she does not know if anyone in the Governor's Office would know, but most school systems are appointing their CFOs. She said the only County she knows of that is doing something different right now is Anne Arundel, and they are hiring a position in the school system that will have oversight of Title 1 and Blueprint.

Mr. Dodd said he see this evolving over time because there are a lot of questions that need to be answered, but they have a deadline of July 1 of this year, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, obviously they will entertain coming back to this if they get some kind of indication that the position is something different than just coordinating or a project manager type of position. Mr. Dodd asked Dr. Hanlin if they will give an update at the next quarterly meeting, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, yes, or before. Mr. Dodd said it would not surprise him if it is changed before then.

There was then a consensus among Councilmembers to appoint Dr. Micah Stauffer as the Kirwan Implementation Coordinator.

#### Council Comments and Questions

Mr. Cannon asked if they are seeing more kids lining up for remedial learning, training, etc. this summer, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, they are offering different summer programs and are trying to engage students in lots of different areas of interest. Mr. Briggs said they do not have the exact enrollment numbers for Council, but student and family interest was not as high as what they thought. He said he thinks some families and students are burnt out, just like some of the teachers are burnt out right now, and he thinks everybody is looking to hit the reset button, but they have a lot of students engaged in summer programming to keep that learning going. He clarified, they know that they will continue to try to make up for the disruption of learning over the next several years.

Mr. Cannon apologized for not presenting his questions before the meeting to give them time to respond. He then asked what the transition percentages are to secondary education, or is it too early to know, to which Mr. Briggs responded, he does not know the exact numbers, but, anecdotally, what they heard from the senior class officers as far as going to a four-year college, two-year college, or the world of work, it seems to be in line with previous years. Mr. Malone added, he attended the Parkside High School graduation and he remembers they said that \$3.5 million dollars in scholarships was awarded to that senior class. He said, at the price of college, that may not be a lot of years, but it is a lot of money, and a lot of students going to college.

Mrs. Acle asked if there is a cost to the summer remedial programs, to which Mr. Briggs responded, they are all free. Mrs. Acle then asked what the compensatory education and recovery services are going to look like in the County as far as in the next budget year, and do they anticipate that being a high dollar, to which Ms. Miles responded, dollar-wise she cannot speak to specifically, but all families of students with IEPs have been contacted with regard to compensatory services. She said, if at any point the family feels differently than the direction things are going, they encourage them to get in touch with their case managers. She said they are prepared to fully deliver all services that are needed to keep the students moving forward, but, again, just to reiterate, that link between the family and the case manager or the school administrator is very critical because they do not want any student not to receive any services to which they are entitled and truly need. Mrs. Acle asked who reviews them, the case manager or the school administrator, to which Ms. Miles responded, the IEP teams have been in communication with all families with regard to what has been identified, and were in communication with the same families earlier in the year when they had one of the earlier transitions, so this has definitely been an ongoing process. She clarified, communication within Special Ed is ongoing, but has been heightened even more, which is a good thing as it is good to keep that communication going for the benefit of the students. Mrs. Acle then asked how many IEPs they have in the County, to which Ms. Miles responded, she does not have the exact number. Dr. Hanlin said she thinks it is 12 percent, to which Ms. Miles responded, 12 percent seems appropriate. Mrs. Acle then asked if the County is doing compensatory education or services, to which Ms. Miles responded, only those students who qualify would need compensatory. She explained, there may be students who have shown the progress and growth that they would expect, anticipate, and want for them, but, again, that is between the case manager and the family and meeting the needs of the students, so it will not be all students who would be receiving it. Dr. Hanlin added, in terms of a dollar amount for those expenditures, they would use American Rescue Plan funds.

Mr. Dodd asked if any post-graduate students came back to play sports for the varsity teams, to which Mr. Briggs responded, there was discussion about it, but it was never approved. Mr. Dodd said he thought the State approved it, to which Mr. Briggs responded, it was talked about, but it was never approved. Mr. Dodd said he thought it would have been very awkward, to which Mr. Briggs responded, they agree.

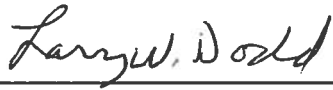
Mr. Dodd said Parkside High School's quarter final game was to be determined. He then asked if they have a time for that yet, to which Mr. Briggs responded, they do not, but lacrosse and baseball are playing today. Mr. Dodd wished them good luck.

Mrs. Acle asked if they have a timeframe as to when they will go back to the structure of their Board meetings as it was pre-COVID. She said she missed the deadline to register to give public comments, so she is wondering when the preregistration part will be removed, or if it will stay, to which Mr. Malone responded, it will probably stay, but most likely they will eliminate the maximum of ten because they never had a maximum before COVID. He clarified, they will probably stay with three minutes and have preregistration. Mrs. Acle asked if there will always be preregistration the day before the meeting, to which Mr. Malone responded, yes.

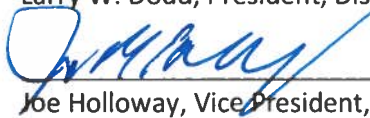
There was no further discussion.

*Signatures on the next page.*

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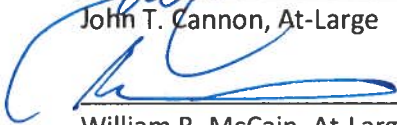
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Larry W. Dodd, President, District 3



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Joe Holloway, Vice President, District 5



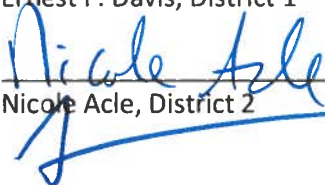
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John T. Cannon, At-Large



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William R. McCain, At-Large

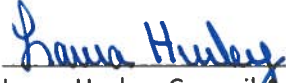
\_\_\_\_\_  
ABSENT

Ernest F. Davis, District 1



\_\_\_\_\_  
Nicole Acle, District 2

\_\_\_\_\_  
Josh Hastings, District 4



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Laura Hurley, Council Administrator