



Jan. 10, 2012

The Central Baltimore County Democratic Club (CBCDC) supports a change in the selection process of the Baltimore County Board of Education. The current method of selection by *appointment only* has resulted in a school board that is neither accountable nor responsive to the public they serve.

Below are examples of the lack of accountability and responsiveness of the Board of Education. Each issue resulted in extensive testimony by the public at Board meetings; however, the Board continuously refused to acknowledge or correct these problems or to use its authority to demand appropriate action from the Superintendent. None of the problems below was corrected until our **elected** legislators demanded action:

1) Rule 1300 – the Superintendent’s rule that prohibited PTAs and community groups from using school buildings, a violation of state law. Nearly two years ago, this issue was discussed at hearings in Annapolis, and BCPS refused to change this rule until outraged legislators and the public put in countless hours to force the Board to rescind the rule.

2) AIM (Articulated Instruction Module): a system of student evaluation copyrighted by a former BCPS employee, which would have resulted in hundreds of extra hours of filling out evaluation forms by teachers, resulting in the loss of valuable instruction time. AIM resulted in hearings in Annapolis before the evaluation process was removed.

3) Lack of adequate climate control in schools: Less than half of the public schools in Baltimore County have adequate climate control. After temperatures in one school soared into the 100s for weeks directly after a multi-million dollar renovation in which air conditioning was cut from the budget, it took four years, and the intervention of several legislators, for BCPS to fix the problem.

4) Overcrowding and planning for growth in public schools: Elementary schools in Towson remain 565 students over capacity. West Towson Elementary, which was only built through the huge efforts of Towson Families United, is projected to be 150 students over capacity by the fall of 2012; the additions at Hampton and Stoneleigh will not open until 2013. BCPS did not plan adequately for the present population, or for the influx of students expected in the next few years.

A **hybrid** method of selecting nonpartisan school board members will result in increased interaction and responsiveness to the public regarding problems in our public schools such as those enumerated above. A **hybrid** board would result in a school system that can self-correct when problems arise, rather than requiring the constant intervention of local and state legislators.

A **hybrid** Board would consist of elected and appointed members. We propose that the Board of Education in Baltimore County consist of seven elected members, one from each Councilmanic District, four members appointed at large by the Governor, and one student member. All board members would be compensated equally and all would have equal powers.