

**Glenmont Exchange, Inc.**  
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### **Minutes of the April 4, 2018 meeting**

Attendees: Ian Rothman, Eric Leinhard, Dorinda Danneman, Josh Goodman, Janelle Jackson, John Bogasky, Jill Ortman-Fouse, Vaughn Stewart, Steven Cename, Charlotte Crutchfield.

The Agenda was approved. The Minutes were approved. Treasurer reported revenue received, projected expenses include renewal of Post Office Box and rental for meeting room tonight.

Jill Ortman-Fouse, Board of Education, At-Large Member spoke about Montgomery County Schools. All members of the Board are elected by the entire county; some members are elected to represent specific districts.

Montgomery County Schools are the 14<sup>th</sup> largest school district in the county, with 205 schools and 162,000 students. The number of poor students has doubled since 2009, with 55,000 students impacted by poverty. The number of Free or Reduced Price meals is used to measure poverty, a student in a family of four making less than \$35K would qualify for the program. Some other school districts in Maryland are losing students and closing schools.

Students come from all over the world, 150 countries, with 157 languages spoken. 4 of the most diverse cities in the country are in Montgomery County, Silver Spring, Rockville, Gaithersburg and Germantown.

Maryland legislature passed the Seal of Biliteracy bill in 2016. If a student tests literate in a second language a seal is placed on the diploma. Having a second language is a valuable asset. Goal is for half of graduates to test as biliterate. Montgomery County had 75% of the students receiving the seal last year.

Montgomery County beat all of the state and country in AP scores last year, but there is a gap with students under-represented in challenging classes. "Equal Opportunity High Schools" support schools in poverty challenged areas.

The school system can now track the progress of each student in each school. The student population has grown at a rate of about 2500 students per year for the past 7 or 8 years. That is the size of a new high school each year, so class sizes are increasing. \$90M has been cut from the 6 year budget. There is a backlog of \$180M in system wide repairs. The school system has been underfunded by the state; Montgomery County has 17% of Maryland's population, and gets 12% of school funding. The school budget is \$5B; the county's population is 1 million. Funding from the Lottery was supposed to go to education, but has been diverted, legislature should allocate more Lottery funding to education. The last tax increase of 8.7% was supposed to be for schools, but only half went to schools. The Kerwin Commission has developed a new funding formula for Maryland schools, including universal access to Pre-K, afterschool programs, and teacher training.

Buses make four runs per bus, twice a day. There are 1300 buses, and bus parking is becoming an issue. Buses travel a distance of 4 times around the equator each day. Buses serve the high schools first, and then the middle schools, then tier one elementary schools, followed by tier two elementary schools. Residents are always requesting new stops. Write to Todd Watkins, Transportation head. There is an appeal process also; Roland Ecoloa will guide you through it. Buses are provided – for elementary students that would have to walk over 1 mile, middle school students that would have to walk over 1.5 miles and for high school students that would have to walk over 2 miles.

To change boundaries, request a boundary study. Boundaries are changed to rebalance as population changes. Clusters consist of a high school and its feeder schools. A neighborhood or an area can request a boundary study to redraw/change school boundary. Try to get everyone on board, i.e. submit one petition. Competing testimony makes it hard for the board. Grandfathering may be available for those who don't want the change.

They are opening up the process to choose the high school you attend. You can appeal, appeal to Superintendent and finally appeal to the Board. The new Wheaton high school is one of two hardest schools to get into. The other one is Blair. Wheaton opened overcrowded. 40% of Kennedy students are not in boundary, students choose it for

the programs. There are educational sessions about How to Advocate for Your Child. Reach out to the Office of Parent and Family Support and Engagement. Reach out to your principal, then the area director above the principal.

School buildings – they used to knock-down the buildings and start over, will change to refresh or additions. Col. E. Brook Lee will probably still get its planned refresh. Expansions are planned for four elementary schools that will reduce some overpopulation. Jill is a fan of smaller schools, but the school system need economies of scale. Funding constraints result in larger schools.

Highly gifted centers – they are rolling out a pilot program to take some middle school magnet classes to other schools.

Glenallan Elementary school’s principal, Peter Moran was principal of the year in 2016. He is leaving at the end of the year; the new principal should be announced in April. Classrooms have ‘Maker spaces’ in each room.

Foreign languages are not currently taught in elementary schools. The new superintendent hopes to start language experience in elementary schools starting in Kindergarten. Spanish immersion program – The largest cohort is Hispanic. They flip back and forth between English and Spanish in each class in elementary and middle school.

ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes – students test into and out of them. 40% of ESOL students are born in the US, their parents speak another language.

Career tracks – students need to have living wage job skills at graduation. There are about 30 occupations to choose from, starting in middle school.

School safety – They are not arming teachers. There is one armed school resource officer (SRO), a police officer, for each cluster, spending most time at the high school level. There are guided entranceways, with a bell and camera, and sign in at the office in all but 20 schools. They have studied all the schools, the second study will be reviewed at the next meeting, April 10, 2018. There are video cameras in some hallways, they plan to add more. They are sharing best practices with other school districts. A large supplemental grant has been received from the county for security.

Schools are getting less per student from the state and county than they received in 2009. MOE (Maintenance of Effort) means they can’t provide less than the previous year, but does not include salaries, cost of doing business.

The special needs populations in schools as stable at 12% of students. A lot of resources are provided. Some people come to the county specifically for the special education.

Note: Glenmont Exchange officers met electronically to change the date for this meeting to accommodate the schedule of our guest.

Our guest for our next meeting will be Keith Compton, Program Manager, Wheaton Triangle Revitalization Project

**The next Glenmont Exchange meeting will be held on Monday, April 23, 2018**

**Meeting location: Poplar Run Clubhouse, 13500 Stargazer Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20906**

Minutes submitted by Dorinda Danneman, Secretary.