

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY

January 31, 2006

The Board of Education of Howard County held a Public Hearing on the Superintendent's Proposed Operating Budget on Tuesday, January 31, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the Department of Education, located at 10910 Route 108, Ellicott City, Maryland. The following were present:

Joshua Kaufman, Chairman, arrived 7:03 p.m.
Diane Mikulis, Vice Chairman
Patricia Gordon
Mary Kay Sigaty
Courtney Watson
Jeff Lasser, Student Member, arrived 7:03 p.m.

Sydney L. Cousin, Superintendent, Secretary/Treasurer
Sandra Erickson, Deputy Superintendent
Raymond Brown, Chief Operating Officer
Patti Caplan, Director, Public Relations
Florence Jackson, Recording Secretary

Vice Chairman Mrs. Mikulis called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., and Lime Kiln MS students led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Alicia Stanley, Student, Lime Kiln MS

- Discussed usefulness of the research databases, particularly Student Resource Center.
- Requested continued funding for this database.

Mr. Griffin Varner, Student, Lime Kiln MS

- Spoke about funding for research databases.
- Explained that Sirs Knowledge Source is a very effective research tool.

Ms. Samira Nourbakhsh, Student, Lime Kiln MS

- Requested continued funding for all of the research databases.
- Discussed the advantages for students using the World Book Online and Culture Grams.

Mr. Blayne Fox, Student, Centennial HS; Student Representative, Science Advisory Committee

- Expressed concern with lab class sizes and facilities and how that affects lab safety. Noted that guidelines from the Maryland State Department of Education, say classes should not be larger than 28 students.

Approved – February 9, 2006

- Overcrowded classes result in students inability to perform hands-on science.
- Supports Superintendent's recommendation on staffing.

Ms. Sung Kim, Student, River Hill HS

- Spoke about the budget allocation for media supplies.
- Student access to a variety of databases help in during research.

Mr. Alex Fast, Student, River Hill HS

- Discussed the positive effect the county's Theatre Arts program has had on him.
- Thanked the Board for supporting the budget page for Theatre.
- Encouraged support to fully fund the Superintendent's operating budget with special attention to line items that support the Fine Arts and specifically Theatre.

Mr. Nolan Smash, Student, River Hill HS

- Thanked the Board for recognizing the need for a budget page for Theatre.
- Spoke about the positive affect Drama has had on his life.
- Encouraged support of all the line items related to the Arts in the Superintendent's operating budget.

Ms. Katherine Davis, Student, Atholton HS

- Addressed equity funding for all schools.
- Media centers need up-to-date sources for student use.

Ms. Ve Leandre, Student, Atholton HS

- Media center provides a vital source of research for students.
- Supports continued allocation of equity money to purchase current reference and other books.

Ms. Laura McDaniel, Student, Glenelg HS

- Spoke about her involvement in the resources of the media center.
- Media center provides a safe environment to research information.

Mr. Dominic Cross, Student, Oakland Mills HS; President, Student Government Association

- Requested Board support to finish funding of television studio program.
- Students feel very strongly about having a fully functioning television studio.

Mr. Jonah Meyers, Student, Oakland Mills HS

- Oakland Mills HS was renovated in 2003.
- A television studio in the media center was built at this time.

Student, Oakland Mills HS

- Thanked the Board and requested their support for funding for Oakland Mills HS.

Ms. Yeniriam Marcela, Student, Howard Community College; Graduate, Oakland Mills HS

- Sister attends Wilde Lake HS.
- Feels that there was better Hispanic intervention services for students at Oakland Mills HS.
- Would like to see similar Hispanic liaison for students and parents at Wilde Lake HS.

Mr. Richard Duarte, Student, Oakland Mills HS

- Supports ESOL program and the parent liaison at Oakland Mills HS.
- Concerned about students, who do not speak English, being able to pass the High School Assessments.

Ms. Shinee Park, Student, Mt. Hebron HS

- Voiced support for the bilingual liaisons program and the outreach program for international parents.
- Thanked the Board for providing these valuable services and requested continuation and expansion of the program.

Mr. Michael O'Donnell, Mathematics Advisory Committee

- Spoke about the need for more Mathematics Instructional Support Teachers or MISTs.
- MISTs play a vital role in mathematics education.
- Individual schools need the support.

Ms. Yanitza Navas, Conexiones

- Asks for funds to be included in the budget for the establishment of an Office of Spanish Affairs.
- Hispanic students are not achieving at the same rate as other immigrant groups.

Ms. Marcella Phillips, Conexiones

- Supports request of Conexiones to establish Office of Hispanic Affairs.
- Office will provide communication link from schools to students and families.
- Office should be part of the school system table of organization.
- Human Resources needed to run the office.

Mr. Fernando Viera, Parent

- Testified in support of the ESOL Outreach Office and the Office of International Student Services.
- OISS was very helpful in providing information necessary for registering his children in school when they arrived from Bolivia.
- Requests that the Board continue to support and expand these very valuable services.

Mr. Murray Simon, President, Conexiones

- Asks for support and approval of funds for Office of Hispanic Affairs including adequate staffing.
- Feels the current strategy has not worked for Hispanic students and they remain at the bottom rung of academic ladder at the high school level.

Ms. Aija Schmidt, Guidance Advisory Liaison, Hollifield Station ES

- Supports the inclusion in the budget of a 1.0 school counselor to be shared between Pointers Run ES and Hollifield Station ES.

Ms. Linda Johnston-Lloyd, School Health Council

- Requests the Board continue support for the Superintendent's proposed Health Services budget.
- The need for skilled nursing treatment has increased over the past several years.
- Asks that workshop wages, supplies and materials for staff training also be supported to provide for a school safe environment.

Ms. Sara Beach, Library Media Advisory

- Spoke about the need for equity funding for media centers.
- Schools with lower enrollment have lower funding.
- Strongly supports the increase in the per-pupil allotment in the 2007 budget.

Ms. Courtney Moore, Media Specialist, Glenwood MS

- Supports protecting the FY 2006 Library Media budget which includes funds to purchase databases for next year.
- With the databases funded, media centers can use funds to purchase print resources.

Ms. Debra Foley, Volunteer, Media Center, Running Brook ES

- Running Brook does not have a large parent volunteer pool.
- Requests funding for a media assistant.

Ms. Jiangzhen Fu, Parent, (Mr. Ming Sun, Interpreter)

- Spoke about the challenge of enrolling her children in school.
- Office of International Student Services and a bilingual liaison provided the help needed in the registration process.
- Expressed thanks to the Board of Education for providing these invaluable services.

Mr. Russ Poch, Chairperson, Science Advisory Committee; Professor, Howard Community College

- Asked that the Board support the modest increase in the K-5 science budget to prepare students to pass the MSA 5th grade assessment in 2008.
- Budget has not been increased in over 5 years.
- Middle School instructional team leaders need to have a planning period to perform their many duties.

- Requests Board support of the Superintendent's recommendation.

Ms. Caryn Lasser, Representative, Educational Technology Advisory Committee

- Urges continued support for the Technology Standardization hardware plan with funding for the additional two technology support teachers.
- This support personnel is needed to implement this technology initiative.

Ms. Petronila Rodriguez, Parent (Ms. Yonta Lyness, Interpreter)

- Thanked the Board for supporting the ESOL Family Outreach Program.
- Spoke about the support she has received from the International Family Outreach Office and the Spanish-speaking liaison.
- Asked for continued support of these vital programs.

Ms. Kyung Sook Park, Parent (Ms. Jamie Kim, Interpreter)

- Asian population is over 13% of the entire student population.
- More Korean liaisons are needed in the schools.
- ESOL Outreach Office helps connect parents to schools to resolve issues and communicate with staff.
- Requests more bilingual liaisons be added and the Outreach Office expanded.

Ms. Jessica Pearsall, ARC of Howard County

- ARC has a history of improving the life of students with disabilities.
- ARC supports the 2007 budget requests of the Office of Special Education.
- Specifically supporting students with significant needs in their neighborhood schools in general education classrooms.

Ms. Marlany Espinoza, Parent (Ms. Rosa Maria Gamble, Interpreter)

- Thanks the Board for its support of the ESOL Outreach Office and the bilingual liaison program.
- Before the bilingual liaison intervention program, parents had difficulty communicating with teachers.
- Parents can now be involved in their children's schools thanks to the bilingual liaison.

Recess: The meeting was recessed by the Chairman at 8:30 p.m. and reconvened at 8:40 p.m.

Ms. Debbie Clutts, Co-President, Howard County Autism Society

- Strongly supports the budget request made by the Special Education Department.
- Noted that ASA supports the goals of the Special Education Department to increase the number of students educated in their neighborhood and in county schools as opposed to nonpublic special education placements.

Ms. Jessica Pearsall, President, PTSA, Howard HS

- Supports additional guidance counselor position at Howard HS.
- Noted positive interactions students have with their counselor from helping them decide on choosing classes to the college application process.

Mr. Gary Toller, Science Advisory Committee Parent

- Voiced concern over some science classes being taught in nonscience classrooms.
- Fewer labs are taught due to lack of water, gas access, lab tables, and storage spaces.
- Supports portable science labs and retrofitting classrooms to make them conducive for science lab instruction.
- Also expressed concern that some classrooms are over the guideline of 28 students per class.

Ms. Carolyn Bonnett, President, CTB Government Relations, Lobbyist on behalf of the Maryland School Bus Contractor's Association

- Spoke in support of the Howard County's School Bus Contractors' Association's need for a 12% increase in the FY 2007 school transportation budget – not 1.8%.
- Noted that the budget has not included an increase for contractor reimbursement since 2001.

Mr. Keith Mullinix, President, K.A.M. Enterprises; President, Howard County School Bus Contractors Association

- Twenty eight bus contractors transport 75% of the Howard County students.
- Average pay of a bus driver is less than \$15,000.
- Requested restoration of lost funds by supporting the 12% increase.

Mr. Samuel Parsons, School Bus Driver for Jubbs Bus Service

- Stated that the bus drivers do not make enough to earn a decent living.
- Noted that the split shift negates other employment during the day to have a second job.
- Transports students to and from the Cedar Lane School and enjoys an attachment to the students and their families.

Ms. Heidi Strominger, Student Services Advisory Committee

- Supports the Superintendent's 2007 proposed budget for health, counseling, psychological, and pupil personnel services.

Ms. Soonae Lee, Parent (Interpreter)

- Spoke in support of the ESOL Outreach Office and the bilingual liaisons program to support international families.
- Interpreting services have improved over the years thanks to this program.

Ms. Sue Webster, President, Howard County Administrators' Association

- HCAA is pleased that the budget is focused on what is needed to maximize student achievement from providing a continuous framework of interventions, providing school-based services, school safety, proper maintenance of buildings, and technology support.

Mr. Ben Dorman, Parent

- Endorses the Superintendent's budget for its attention to children with special needs and autism, in particular, but feels need for greater funding to provide consulting services.
- Spoke about the positive aspects of including children with disabilities in the regular classroom setting.
- Noted that projections indicate increase in secondary school children with autism.

Mr. Allen Lefcourt, Science Advisory Committee

- Thanked the Board for funding the third year of the computer equity program.
- Supports the proposal of using lease agreements to provide computers and support to schools.
- Voiced concern regarding large laboratory classes.

Ms. Sandra Rosenberger, Parent

- Spoke about positive experiences working with school psychologists.
- Requested consideration of funding an additional half-time school psychologist position.

Ms. Deborah West, Parent Volunteer and Liaison

- Requests media assistant at Bryant Woods ES.
- School has few volunteers due to number of working parents.
- Enrollment number should not be the only determining factor in staffing but needs of the population should be considered as well.

Ms. Ann DeLacey, President, Howard County Education Association

- Thanked the Board for funding the second year of the negotiated agreement and increased pay for substitute teachers.
- Workload continues to be a serious concern.
- One Pupil Personnel Worker is in the budget – additional staff is needed to meet the demands of the population.

Ms. Katharina Boser, GT Advisory Steering Committee

- Testified to the value of the budget awarded to the GT Education Program.
- Commended the Special Education program and the non-profit group, Individual Differences in Learning, Inc. that has had a positive impact on children who are both gifted yet learning disabled.

Mr. Michael Klatzkin, Chairperson, Special Education Community Advisory Committee

- Strongly supports the Superintendent's 2007 Budget particularly as it relates to Special Education.
- Spoke positively of the Coteaching program that is being added to high schools.
- Suggested a future focus of transitioning youth from school into employment.

Ms. Brenda Hussey-Gardner, GT Advisory Steering Committee

- Supports the Superintendent's proposed budget.
- Spoke about the positive experiences of a child in the GT program and GT Intern Mentor Program.

Ms. Lenore Shift, School Psychologist, Bellows Spring ES

- Thanked the Board for supporting psychological services staffing and asked for an additional .5 school psychologist position at the new elementary school.
- Noted that children face issues of poverty, violence, bullying, harassment, and more.
- Involvement of the psychologist at an early age is critical to promote positive well being.
- Data shows decrease in number of discipline referrals and unsafe behaviors with psychologist intervention.

Ms. Ellen Giles, Citizens Advisory Committee

- Supports the Superintendent's budget as fiscally responsible and essential for the continued excellence of the school system.

Ms. Ana Arriagada, Parent (Interpreter, Ms. Diana Thesing)

- Supports ESOL and parent liaison programs at Oakland Mills HS and feels Wilde Lake HS should have the same services.
- Expressed concern about class of 2009 graduation requirements which include passing the High School Assessments.

Ms. Karen Jack, Parent

- Spoke in support of Psychological Services.
- Psychological Services help children achieve balance in their world.
- This service helps promote understanding between the student, parent, and teachers.

Ms. Shel Kelley, President, Atholton HS PTSA

- PTSA Executive Board voted unanimously to support the addition of a fifth guidance counselor and any other specific or general items that will benefit their students.
- Increase in enrollment necessitates funding of additional staff and resources.

Ms. Laurel Conran, ESOL Teacher, Bollman Bridge ES

- Supports funding for the bilingual liaison.

- Explained how the bilingual liaison has helped in crisis situations at Bollman Bridge ES.
- Liaisons help bridge the gap between home and school.

Ms. Jill Messier, Parent

- Spoke in support of the bus drivers and their request for a 12% salary increase.
- Talked about the excellent care her son had when he went to Cedar Lane School through the intercession of a very dedicated bus driver.

Mr. Brian Gray, Mathematics Advisory Committee (Mr. Gray did not speak, but he left testimony.)

- The Coteaching Intervention Model Program has afforded mathematics and special education teachers the opportunity of collaborating to ensure student success.
- Program has expanded to other schools.
- The Coteaching Intervention Model has been an effective strategy for preparing students for the Algebra/Data Analysis High School Assessment.
- Would like to see further expansion of the Coteaching programs as they have proved to have a positive impact on students across the county.

Mr. Kaufman noted that there are four work sessions scheduled on the following dates:

1. February 7, 2006.
2. February 14, 2006.
3. February 16, 2006.
4. February 21, 2006.

The budget will be adopted on February 28, 2006.

Adjournment

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 9:55 p.m.