

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY

February 16, 2006

The Board of Education of Howard County held a Public Work Session on the Superintendent's Proposed FY 2007 Operating Budget on Thursday, February 16, 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
Diane Mikulis, Vice Chairman
Patricia S. Gordon
Mary Kay Sigaty
Courtney Watson
Jeff Lasser, Student Member

Sydney L. Cousin, Superintendent, Secretary/Treasurer
Sandra Erickson, Deputy Superintendent
Patti Caplan, Director, Public Relations
Arlene Conway, Recording Secretary

Chairman Joshua Kaufman called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Pupil Personnel

Program 6101 – Pupil Personnel Services

- Includes Home Instruction Program – HCPSS provides support and resources to home school instructors, reviews lesson plans, and performs biannual progress reviews.
- Budget includes funds for computers for Pupil Personnel Workers and School Psychologists as part of a replacement cycle.

Staff will provide information on the number of home school instructors and trend data on the number of homeless students.

Program 6102 - Student Accounting Services

- Program is part of the Assessment Office and is located in this category due to state guidelines.
- Specialist handles the reporting of student attendance to the state and federal government in addition to other duties.

Program 6102 – Teenage Parenting and Childcare

- Four positions were previously grant funded.
- Budget includes one additional position to expand services to 15 infants.
- Possibility may exist to recoup funds from Purchase of Care money.

Approved – March 9, 2006

HealthProgram 6401 – Health Services

- Budget adds three cluster nurses to help address staffing ratios.
- Nurses perform assessments and prepare individual health care plans to allow for specialized treatments for students throughout the county.

Program 9601 – Health Services/Athletics

- Athletic Trainers are contracted to work between 20-25 hours per week.
- One trainer is assigned to each site holding an extracurricular athletic event.

Special EducationProgram 3320 – Countywide Services

- 36.5 teaching positions are part of support services and include adaptive physical education, work study, resource, vision, etc.
- Positions rotate among schools.

Program 3321 – Special Education School-Based Services

- Upon budget approval, four teaching positions will be moved into this program, which are shown in error in Category 02 – Instruction (mathematics).
- Budget adds two teachers and two instructional assistants to expand the Alternate Maryland School Assessment program to all high schools.
- Funds are included for substitute teachers to cover absences of regular teachers, including absences for professional development.
- Increases over the last few years also include positions for the implementation of full-day kindergarten, the opening of Marriotts Ridge HS, enrollment growth, a shift from temporary employees to student assistants, and the opening of the new elementary school.

Mrs. Watson commented on the success of co-teaching, as well as the expense associated with the program, and asked if other means of achieving the same results are being explored. She questioned whether the need for co-teaching could be eliminated in the future as teachers gain more experience and expertise with the program and indicated a need to track data to ensure the most effective use of future funds.

Ms. Patricia Daley, Special Education Coordinator, noted the importance of the structure of the co-teaching intervention model and stated that staff is examining professional development offerings for both general and special education teachers to enhance teaching.

Ms. Gordon indicated her preference to continue the co-teaching program in its most effective form and expressed concern that changes in structure might affect the efficiency or effectiveness of the program. Mr. Kaufman commented that the student/teacher staffing ratio of 10:1 could also prove successful in other teaching situations.

Staff agreed to provide information regarding the number of temporary positions that have been converted to student assistant positions.

Program 3322 – Cedar Lane Program

- Increase in transportation is due to both the relocation to the Fulton complex, which includes travel in the community as well as intercampus travel, and increased transportation costs.

Program 3323 – Bridges Program at Homewood

- Salaries are calculated using zero-based budgeting, which applies to all programs.
- Students eligible for Extended School Year (ESY) services attend an additional five weeks of school during the summer.

Staff indicated that they would provide information regarding the assignment of teachers and students in the ESY program.

Program 3324 – Regional Early Childhood Services

- Enrollment numbers are decreasing as students are placed in their home schools due to the implementation of full-day kindergarten.
- The use of contracted positions paid at an hourly rate is more economical than hiring part-time employees for some MINC (Multiple Intense Needs) classes.
- Budget adds one position for inclusion services, which provides itinerate staff to work in community programs with students who have IEPs.
- Increase in enrollment is due to increased birth rate, public awareness, and a 13 – 14 percent increase in referrals for infants and toddlers over the last few years.
- Early intervention is showing to reduce the amount of students continuing on to kindergarten with IEPs.

Program 3325 – Speech, Language & Hearing Services

- High expenditures in temporary help and contracted labor are due to difficulties in hiring speech pathologists, which may require the school system to consider changes in the salary structure for those positions.

Mrs. Watson commented on the importance of providing the right balance between allocating funds for staff development and funds for special education positions.

Program 3326 – Special Education Summer Services

- Less than ten children are enrolled for summer services as tuition-paying students each year.
- Many students are able to access summer services in their home schools, which reduces transportation costs and keeps students in the least restrictive environment.
- Fewer than 20 percent of special education students qualify for summer services.
- Funds for contracted labor pay for Extended Year Services to students enrolled in the Maryland School for the Blind and SOR (Social Opportunities and Relationships) programs sponsored through Howard County Recreation and Parks.

Program 3328 – Nonpublic and Community Intervention

- Past increases have resulted in providing necessary interventions to reduce and/or prevent nonpublic placements, which follows the law of serving students in the least restrictive environment.

- State formula has increased the percentage that local school systems must pay for nonpublic placements.
- New Cedar Lane School offers potential to decrease nonpublic placements in the future.

Program 3320 – Special Education Central Office

No discussion.

Program 3390 - Home & Hospital

- HCPSS maintains a roster of approximately 65 teachers and hires on a per-student basis.
- 168 students have been served this year; maximum served per year has averaged around 300 for the last few years.

Program 3391 - Psychological Services

- Program delivers services to students in special education programs.
- School psychologists are also provided for both general and special education students in the Instruction category under Program 5701 – Psychological Services.

Areas for Discussion at Next Budget Work Session (Tuesday, February 21 – 1:00 p.m.)

- Guidance Counselors - Staffing
- Physical Education - Alternate Activities
- Media Centers - Supplies
- TV Studios in High Schools – Setting Up and Funding
- Athletic Gate Receipts – Revised Projection for End of FY 2006
- Related Arts Team Leaders
- Accelerating Hispanic Student Achievement – Fiscal Impacts
- Transportation – Bus Contractors
- Pros and Cons of Adding Additional Funds for Co-Teaching
- Athletic Director Positions
- Fund Balance – Consistency with Policy
- Technology Contingency
- Chinese Language Enrollment – Staff and Students
- High School Security Positions
- Board of Education Office Budget
- Home Access to Computer Programs for Intervention and Tutorials – Equity Issues

On behalf of the Board, Mr. Kaufman commended staff for their work and input into the budget process.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned by the Chairman at 8:25 p.m.