

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY

January 4, 2007

The Board of Education of Howard County held a meeting on the Superintendent's Proposed FY 2008 Operating Budget on Thursday, January 4, 2007, at 7:30 p.m., in the Board Room of the Department of Education, located at 10910 Route 108, Ellicott City, Maryland. The following were present:

Diane Mikulis, Chairman
Frank Aquino, Vice Chairman
Lawrence Cohen
Sandra French
Ellen Giles
Patricia Gordon
Wossen Ayele, Student Member

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

Chairman Mikulis called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m., and Mr. Ayele led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Mikulis noted that the only order of business was the presentation of the Superintendent's Proposed Fiscal Year 2008 Operating Budget.

Dr. Cousin pointed out that there is a summary in the introduction page which gives the highlights of the proposed budget. There will be work sessions and a public hearing in the near future. He added that staff is negotiating salary and other improvements with the school system's four bargaining units, and the hope is to have the bargaining sessions completed this month. Dr. Cousin also noted that in a recent Money Magazine article, Columbia/Ellicott City was named as the fourth best place to live in the nation because students perform well on state tests. Being a premier school system, adds benefit to businesses and the community. The school system budget is an investment in the educational future of the students and the economic future of Howard County.

Fiscal 2008 Funding

The proposed budget totals \$581.6 million which is an increase of \$30.1 million or 5.5% over fiscal 2007.

Funding Sources

- County Government.
- State of Maryland.

Approved – January 25, 2007

- Other sources – mainly the Federal Government.

The county's contribution has increased by \$7.9 million or 2%. The state increase is \$20.8 million or 13.7%. Other sources or Federal contributions is \$1.4 million or 24.3% overall increase.

Fiscal 2008 Revenues

- County share is 69.0%.
- State share is 29.7%.
- Other share is 1.2%.

These numbers will change when negotiations are finished, and the expectation is that the county's share will increase considerably as a result of finalizing negotiations.

Fiscal 2008 Expenditures

- Instructional – 43.6%.
- Pupil Services – 0.4%.
- Health Services – 0.8%.
- Transportation – 5.4%.
- Operation of Plant – 6.5%.
- Maintenance of Plant – 3.2%.
- Fixed Charges 17.5%.
- Mid-Level Administration – 7.6%.
- Community Services 0.9%.
- Capital Outlay – 0.2%.
- Special Education 12.2%.
- Administration 1.7%.

Expenditures represent 70% of the budget when totaled.

Some Major Cost Increases

- Salary increases – not included (under negotiation).
- Benefits (health insurance), fixed charges (social security, insurance) - \$12.3 million.
- Transportation – \$1.5 million.
- Utilities – (fuel and petroleum-based utilities) \$2.9 million.
- Full-day Kindergarten - \$2.5 million.
- New school opening - \$1.8 million.
- Total - \$21 million (more than half is in benefits).

Administration

- Includes full year's cost of expanded, seven-member Board of Education.
- Adds 5 positions – for payroll, position control, accounting, and human resources.

Administration represents 1.7% of the total expenditure.

Instruction

- Includes last phase of full-day kindergarten.
- Supports opening of Veterans ES and Bushy Park ES replacement.
- Adds technology teachers in elementary schools (provides additional teacher planning time).
- Completes staffing all elementary schools with at least one media assistant each.
- Adds positions required by enrollment growth.
- Restores staffing pool to fiscal 2005 level.
- Supports growth of high school Advanced Placement courses.
- Provides targeted support for schools in mathematics and reading.
- Expands in-school alternative education programs.
- Supports growth of career education.
- Replaces texts and instructional equipment.
- Supports ESOL enrollment growth.

Pupil Services, Health Services, Transportation

- Adds a pupil personnel worker and a health assistant to support the new school.
- Continues phase-in of initiative to staff one nurse for every two schools.
- Adds a substitute nurse position.
- Compensates bus contractors for rising costs (in addition to fuel cost adjustments).
- Includes new bus routes and increased bus contract costs.

Operation and Maintenance of Plant

- Adds custodians, grounds, and maintenance workers for existing, new and expanded facilities.
- Funds contracted building repairs, grounds, and maintenance projects.
- Includes increases in utilities costs.
- Adds computer technicians and technology support costs.

Fixed Charges

- Includes health insurance increases.
 - \$2.2 million for new positions in the budget.
 - \$1.6 million to offset fiscal 2006 year-end funds.
 - \$6.1 million in projected cost increases.
- Covers cost of state pension enhancement.
- Funds Workers Compensation reserves.
- Includes increased employee tuition costs.

Mid-Level Administration

- Adds assistant principals for new and existing schools.
- Includes teachers secretaries for new school and to phase-in formula-based staffing at existing schools.
- Adds data clerk liaison to assist schools.
- Funds state-required service learning program.

Community Services and Capital Outlay

- Creates the International Student Services program to serve students and families.
- Includes additional costs to support community use of schools and grounds.

Special Education

- Adds positions to support full-day kindergarten, new school, and enrollment growth.
- Includes new student assistant positions.
- Adds middle school instructional support teachers.
- Provides services to community preschools.
- Adds staff to serve young children with autism and students in Multiple Intense Needs classes.
- Includes new speech language and psychological services positions.

Unknowns

- Salary negotiations to be added.
 - Fiscal 2007 cost was \$21 million.
 - Fiscal 2008 negotiations underway.
- Health insurance.
 - New projections in February.
- Revenues.
 - State funding continues to change – through end of legislative session.

Conclusion

This budget request:

- Serves the needs of the students and the community.
- Helps propel the school system along the pathway from a very good school system to a great one.
- Is an investment in the education of Howard County's students and the economic future of Howard County.

Timeline

- Thursday, February 1 (7:00 p.m.).
 - Public Hearing.
- Tuesday, February 6 (7:00 p.m.).
 - Work Session covering:
 - Revenues.
 - Instruction.
 - Plus – Health Services, Athletics, Special Education, Psychological Services.
- Tuesday, February 13 (1:00 p.m.).
 - Work Session covering:
 - Operation of Plant.
 - Maintenance.

- Community Services.
- Transportation.
- Administration.
 - Plus – Student Accounting.
- Mid-Level Administration.
- Capital Outlay.
- Revolving Funds.
- Thursday, February 15 (7:00 p.m.)
 - Work Session covering:
 - Pupil Personnel.
 - Except Student Accounting.
 - Health Services.
 - Except Health Services/Athletics.
 - Special Education.
 - Except Psychological Services.
- Tuesday, February 20 (1:00 p.m., if needed).
 - Unresolved issues and tentative budget decisions.
- Tuesday, February 27 (9:00 a.m.)
 - Adopt budget request.
- Saturday, May 5 (9:00 a.m.).
 - County Council hearing.

Discussion by Board members included:

- Board members were in consensus to make Mid-Level Administration the first item in the Work Session on Tuesday, Feb. 13 (1:00 p.m.).
- The question of state funding was raised, and it was explained that the Thornton recommendations for funding are based on wealth and enrollment in the county. As the wealth of the county increases, the funding goes down. As the enrollment increases, funding goes up.
- Staff will provide information about the growth and trends in the International Student Services area.
- Gate receipts will be discussed during the session about athletics. Also, information will be provided on what has been collected so far this year. There will also be more information during the general revenue work session.

Adjournment: The chairman adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

