

# MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY

February 6, 2007

The Board of Education of Howard County held Public Work Session I on the Superintendent's Proposed FY 2008 Operating Budget on Tuesday, February 6, 2007, 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:

Diane Mikulis, Chairman  
Frank Aquino, Vice Chairman  
Lawrence Cohen  
Sandra French  
Ellen Giles  
Patricia Gordon

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

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 7:03 p.m.

## Purchasing Bid Recommendation

P-1	Internet Services	
	Friedman Computer Solutions, Inc.	\$66,048

Mr. Doug Pindell, Purchasing Officer, explained that approval of this recommendation would extend the current contractor for providing internet service to the Central Office, which could result in a 41-percent savings. In addition, this will provide continuity as the school system works through issues related to SIMS (Student Information Management System). There will also be an opportunity to rebid this contract next year in order to take advantage of additional cost savings.

*Action:* Ms. Gordon moved that the Board recommend that the award be made to the low bidder, meeting the specifications and the amounts indicated for P-1. The motion was seconded by Mr. Aquino and approved by the members of the Board (6/0). Mr. Ayele supported the motion.

FY 2008 Proposed Operating Budget – Work Session I**Revenues**

- Governor's current budget indicates a \$5.7 million increase in revenues that was not available at the time the Superintendent's budget was prepared.
- The Superintendent provided a list of additions to the budget in priority order to the Board in the event that the increase remains upon approval of the Governor's budget.
- A new agreement with the county government allows the school system to carry over some additional revenues from year to year.

**Instruction**

- Most areas contain a three-percent increase in MOI (Materials of Instruction), but some program managers were allowed to increase beyond that three percent, depending on the program.
- Textbook funds are based on actual costs, including shipping (which has increased dramatically), rather than reflecting a general percentage increase.
- An analysis of the past five years indicated that the average program lost 3.5 percent of its budget, and programs have not caught up to the most recent cuts made two years ago.
- The school system is researching the benefits of electronic textbooks in conjunction with the results of the taskforce on backpack safety issues.

Program 0601 – Art

- Elementary students receive one hour of art instruction each week, middle school students receive instruction for one quarter of the school year, and high school students who major in art are offered either a fine arts studio track or a photo digital strand of instruction.
- Travel and mileage costs have been reduced because teachers are assigned to a particular school for the day and generally do not travel between schools as they did in the past.
- One resource teacher is funded by both the operating budget and the Maryland Fine Arts Grant.
- This program provides art supplies to prekindergarten students, although art teachers do not provide instruction.
- Salary amounts in the budget may change based on recalculations of actual people on the payroll, rather than using projections from previous years.

Program 0701 - Elementary Programs

- 12 math support teachers provide job-embedded professional development at 12 elementary schools during the day. Support for extended-day and extended-year programs is included in workshop wages.
- The Science Resource Center is a warehouse facility with two staff members who write curriculum and fabricate hands-on science kits for HCPSS students.

Program 0801 - Business and Computer Management Systems (BCMS)

- 25 classes are offered in BCMS in the high schools and at the ARL (Applications Research Lab), including three levels of software applications, five levels of computer science classes, and many different business classes.

Program 0901 - Language Arts

- Increases in contracted labor include a complete program in all high schools, the ARL, and Homewood to address issues surrounding plagiarism. Staff is also committed to begin instruction on academic integrity at the elementary level.
- Workshop wages includes funds to instruct teachers on strategies to assist students with passing the High School Assessments (HSAs).
- Additional intervention opportunities are also available for students during the school day in preparation for all HSAs.

Mrs. Erickson explained how staffing is provided in the budget. She noted that “given” positions are placed in particular programs for precise needs, and regular staffing is included in general school staffing by instructional level.

Program 1001 - World Languages

- The Spanish V Advanced Placement (AP) course has been developed to meet the needs of students in preparing for a dramatic change in the format of the Spanish assessment.
- 17 teachers are included in the budget for the middle school program.
- HCPSS is exploring possibilities and considering various models of offering world languages at the elementary level.
- Students are taking advantage of opportunities provided in middle school, as reflected in enrollment increases. Some students continue to take advanced levels in high school, although some may switch to different languages that were not offered in middle school.
- A change in COMAR will include two credits of American Sign Language for graduation as part of the completer program.

Program 1002 – ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages)

- Students spend an average of three years in the ESOL program, although this varies depending on their academic preparation and the level of English they bring to the program.
- Some positions have been moved from this program to the International Student Services Office. HCPSS has students speaking 70 different languages, representing 77 different countries.
- An increase in funds for textbooks is partly due to growth and partly due to the purchase of bilingual dictionaries that students need for accommodations related to MSAs (Maryland State Assessments) and HSAs (High School Assessments). A new center is opening at Centennial HS for this purpose.

Dr. Cousin stated that a list of countries represented in the school system, the languages spoken, and the number of students from different countries would be provided to the Board. He noted that the population is growing, and the numbers change weekly.

Program 1101 – Health Education

- This program funds substitute teachers for required child abuse prevention curriculum training for elementary team leaders. Information regarding the completion of training is provided to school system staff.
- At the middle school level, children receive age-appropriate information regarding child abuse prevention in sixth and eighth grades. Information is provided to high school students in ninth grade, and elementary students receive instruction in every grade.

Program – 1201 - Technology Education

- This program includes the pre-engineering academy, which will be available at all high schools by 2009. Grant funds are provided by the state for the first three years. HCPSS picks up the cost of the fourth year of training.
- Due to changes in technology education graduation requirements for teachers, intensive recruiting is necessary to find qualified instructors.
- The textbook replacement cycle is rotating at four schools per year. Textbooks that are currently being bought are actually based on national and state standards.

Program 1301 – Kindergarten/Prekindergarten

- Increases in this program reflect the completion of full-day kindergarten in all elementary schools.
- HCPSS offers prekindergarten classes at 17 different sites. A liaison provides outreach to communities to identify families who should have access to the program.
- Staff continues to evaluate the process for early admission to kindergarten and prekindergarten in hopes of streamlining the process. Responsibilities have been reduced at the school level so that much of the process will be performed at the Central Office. The screening process is also being reviewed to determine its effectiveness and identify any improvements that can be made.

Program 1401 - Mathematics

- Positive feedback has been received regarding the allocation of additional resources to provide intervention services to students needing extra assistance in passing the high school assessments.

Program 1501 - Media and Educational Technology

- Funds for professional development for teachers are not included in this portion of the budget. Grant funds will be used initially to provide intensive professional development for technology teachers.
- It is anticipated that a large amount of strong candidates will express interest in the additional technology teaching positions.
- Staff encouraged the Board to place a high priority on fully funding the 23 additional technology teaching positions in elementary schools.

Mrs. French asked that media statistics and collection sizes be reviewed during the FY 2009 budget cycle to determine if the school system can achieve the 2000 or higher standard of textbooks and media collections for both software and books.

#### Program 1601 - Music

- Repair funds for instruments were included in the FY 2007 Operating Budget, which have been sufficient to accomplish the needs of the program.
- An increase in FY 2008 funds for supplies will help replace instruments that can no longer be repaired.
- As part of program improvement, staff will be undertaking an inventory of all music equipment across the county to provide the Board with information for the FY 2009 budget on the actual needs based on standards of equipment that need to be maintained.
- FY 2007 increase in Materials of Instruction is based on enrollment growth and the three-percent inflationary rate.

It was noted that Howard County was named for the last two years as one of the 100 best places in the United States for music instruction.

#### Program 1701 - Physical Education and Dance

- Budget increases funds to support continuation of the FITNESSGRAM health fitness assessment, where required countywide data is being collected specifically in grades 4, 5, 7, and 9. FITNESSGRAM is also recommended for all students in grades 4-9 and in any elective high school physical education class.

#### Program 1801 - Reading

- Classroom teachers have been reclassified as elementary classroom teachers (57), middle/high school classroom teachers (50), and reading recovery teachers (15).
- Reading support teachers provide embedded staff development, and reading recovery teachers are part of an intervention program for the lowest performing first-grade students, which continues through second grade if necessary. Interventions are provided in third grade through reading support or reading specialists within the classroom.

#### Program 1901 - Science

- The MSA for science is a cumulative three year exam and currently does not count towards AYP (adequate yearly progress).
- Hiring and retaining high-level science teachers continues to be a challenge. HCPSS Human Resources staff have been very aggressive in their recruitment efforts, which have yielded good results.
- Federal legislation is being proposed to help with recruitment efforts in this critical needs area.

Program 2001 - Social Studies

Staff and Board members commented on the exceptional learning experiences provided by simulated congressional hearings and other special social studies programs that take place throughout the school system such as History Day, Black Saga, etc.

Program 2201 - Theater

- Instruction for this program is provided through high school staffing.
- Increases in the budget are for replacement equipment at three high schools, with anticipation of addressing issues at three to four schools per year in the future.

Board and staff members acknowledged the need to address problems associated with high school staffing as a whole, in particular with physical education, art, theater, and some science classes. It was noted that changes will require substantial funding.

Program 2301 - Gifted and Talented (GT)

- Each secondary school is allocated two positions to support Gifted and Talented programs. Classroom GT resource teachers implement all programs offerings at the various levels for the GT education program. Content area teachers are subject-specific teachers at each of the levels.
- Participation in talent development offerings at the elementary and middle school levels for minority groups has increased by one to two percent each year.

Program 2401 - Summer School

No discussion.

Program 3010 - Elementary Staffing

- 13 additional instructional assistant positions will provide an instructional assistant at each school at each grade level.
- Large fluctuations in enrollment affect elementary staffing, and oftentimes 45 percent of pool positions are used to accommodate enrollment fluctuations at the elementary level. Extra staffing is needed to avoid having split classes.

Program 3020 - Middle School Staffing

- No changes in staffing.

Program 3030 - High School Staffing

- Budget includes 20 additional teaching positions to provide in-school intervention support for assessed mastery courses.
- Staffing from the FY 2007 budget is being used to lower class size so that teachers can provide more intensive support for students, which is proving to be very effective.

Program 3201 - Other Regular Programs

- The Staffing Pool consists of actual positions used for enrollment growth and differentiated staffing. The pool is also used to hire highly qualified teachers.

Approved – March 8, 2007

- Budget includes an increase of ten positions in the staffing pool, which is very important for flexibility in enrollment growth throughout the school year and for more flexibility in hiring some critical shortage area teachers who graduate in December.
- The additional ten positions would also address class sizes over the cap of 34 students for next year.

Mrs. French questioned the sufficiency of high school staffing. The need for additional staffing at the high school level in particular was noted, and Dr. Cousin indicated the need to increase high school staffing and use the pool as a contingency. There is a basic flaw in high school staffing, which does not account for planning time for teachers. Adjustments were not made in staffing when the school system changed from a four-period day to a seven-period day, so the school system is still trying to catch up with that change.

Mrs. Erickson suggested that a report be brought to the Board next fall before the budget process begins to discuss a new staffing formula and associated costs.

#### Program 3205 – Junior Reserve Officers Training (ROTC)

- Reimbursement funds from the federal government are reflected in Revenues (\$180,000).

#### Program 3401 - Saturday Evening School

- Increase in enrollment reflects initiatives to expand instruction for students 18 years and older through the use of evening school and expanding original course offerings not only for older students but for some existing students who need a different type of alternative learning.
- Services for students who had dropped out and requested a return to school were implemented this current school year, and this budget also includes funds to address the needs of those students.

#### Program 3402 – Homewood Center

- A list of possible additional items to the budget includes \$60,000 for contracted group counseling, which would continue a community counseling program that was previously funded through state and local grants.

Dr. Craig Cummings, Alternative Education Programs Coordinator, agreed to provide data related to the impact of counseling for the students in this program.

#### Program 3403 - Alternative In-School Programs

- Many of the services of this program are delivered within the regular classroom, although there are opportunities to pull students from class for special instruction.
- Alternative In-School Programs provide support for students who have difficulty establishing good relationships with adults. Students who do succeed in this program by improving their grade point averages and decreasing behavior incidents often continue to look to the professionals in the programs for support, mentorship, and guidance.

Program 3501 - Academic Intervention Services

- Three additional transition assistants are included on a supplemental list for consideration of adding to this program.
- Workshops are provided both to train outreach providers as well as to provide parent outreach programs. Workshops are provided for parents in the community and also for parents in the school.
- Temporary workers are assigned a caseload of 12 to 15 focus families per school, for which they keep detailed information on pertaining to contact data, types of services provided, academic achievement levels of their children, etc.
- Other outreach services are also provided at various times during the school year, which may result in services being provided to 40 or 50 families at a particular time.

Staff agreed to provide additional data to the Board regarding the services delivered through this program.

Program 3701 - Career Connections

- This program emphasizes career development through career awareness, career exploration, and career-related experiences, which are all part of the Career Research and Development (CRD) program.

Program 3801 - Centralized Career Academies

- The development of the Career Academy Program has resulted in the availability of more programs to more students.

Program 4401 - Family and Consumer Sciences

- Currently there are two fashion technology courses available at Howard and Reservoir high schools. It is anticipated that this course will develop into a design academy in the future, which would include both fashion and interior design technology.

Program 5601 - School Counseling

- Future plans involve the creation of a needs-based staffing proposal in addition to the current staffing, which is based solely on enrollment numbers.

Program 5701 - Psychological Services

- Budget provides one psychologist for every two schools.

Program 3391 – Psychological Services (Special Education Category)

- Psychologists are assigned to service all programs located within a particular school.

Program 8601 – Interscholastic Athletics

- 40 percent of high school students are involved in interscholastic athletics. Students served reflects the total number of participants, as many students participate in more than one activity.

- Budget includes funds to cover services provided by the Prince George's Sports Complex for athletic events, including security, ticket takers, and the actual running of the activity.
- Athletic trainers are available at all high schools, with service provided by two contractors.

Program 6401 – Health Services (Health Category)

- Funding for defibrillators is contained in the Risk Management Office budget.
- Funding for training in the use of defibrillators is included in Health Services, Risk Management, and Athletics.

Program 8701 - Intramurals

Board members asked that information be provided on the various programs provided at each school.

Program 8801 – Cocurricular Activities

Mrs. French noted that the Intramural and Cocurricular programs were created by the Board many years ago to ensure an equal emphasis at the middle school level on cocurricular, academic, or enrichment types of activities as well as athletics.

Staff agreed to also provide information on the various cocurricular activities to the Board.

Mrs. Mikulis announced the following schedule:

FY 2007 Proposed Operating Budget – Work Session II

Tuesday, February 13 - 1:00 pm – Board Rooms

Topics of Discussion:

- Mid-Level Administration
- Operation of Plant
- Maintenance
- Community Services
- Transportation
- Administration and Student Accounting
- Capital Outlay
- Revolving Funds and Fixed Charges

**Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned by the Chairman at 10:20 p.m.