

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY

February 13, 2007

The Board of Education of Howard County held Public Work Session II on the Superintendent's Proposed FY 2008 Operating Budget on Tuesday, February 13, 2007, at 5:00 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 1:08 p.m.

Mid-Level Administration

Program 0304 - Central Office Instructional Personnel

- Contracted services are being used to assist the school system's current Grants Facilitator.

Program 0411 - Curriculum and Curriculum-Based Assessments

No discussion.

Program 1503 - Media Technical Services

- One Software Specialist has been moved from Networks and Technology (Program 7701) to this program to ensure better alignment with curriculum.
- The software approval process has several parts, which include a technical aspect, COMAR compliance, and curriculum alignment.

Program 2701 - Cable Television/Video Production

- In FY 2007, the county government ended its funding of cable television operations in the separate Grants Fund. Former grand-funded positions and expenses have been combined into this General Fund program.

Approved – March 22, 2007

- Staff is reviewing the capital budget and technology as a way to address some of the needs in this particular area, and a taskforce will identify additional resources required to enhance program capabilities in this area.
- The school system's cable channel will be available on Verizon's cable alternative in approximately one month or sooner.

Mrs. Mikulis pointed out that staff of the Cable Television/Video Production program developed a video/DVD with a spotlight on Maryland students that included talent and academic achievement across the state. This DVD was shown at the MABE (Maryland Association of Boards of Education) conference in October and will be used again this coming October. Copies were also provided to the state board of education as well as to Dr. Grasmick, State Superintendent.

Board members expressed appreciation to staff for their work in this program area.

Program 3204 – Temporary Services Office

- Substitute teachers are predominately funded in Program 3201 – Instruction.
- The web-based substitute assignment is working very effectively for the benefit of substitutes as well as for each of the individual schools.
- The annual substitute workshop provides valuable information on a variety of issues that to help teachers during the school year.
- Anywhere between 250 to almost 500 substitutes are hired during the school year. Some work until obtaining full-time employment, and some work during their college breaks. A shortage of substitutes still occurs on particular days during the school year, but the new web-based program is helping to improve this situation.
- Substitutes holding degrees currently receive \$85 a day, which is less than some surrounding counties. A substitute bonus is provided twice a year for those who work 50 days or more during a semester.
- Substitute pay increases after five days on the job and then again on the 16th day.

Program 4701 – School-Based Administration

- Additional teachers' secretaries are for all school levels and are included to meet the staffing formula.
- Summer pay was reduced to zero when assistant principals were converted to 11-month positions.
- Contracted consultant services pay for random audits of high school student eligibility records based on a rotating cycle.
- Contracted labor related to school accounting efforts has been moved to Program 0206 – Administration, since the direction for their services are controlled by Accounting Services.
- Once updated enrollment projections are received, the assignment of an additional assistant principal will be determined. Reservoir HS will also receive a fourth assistant principal next school year.

Program 4801 - Professional and Organizational Development

- Cultural proficiency training is provided for Instructional Team Leaders (ITLs) who then hold retreats to train other staff members as needed.
- Retired teachers are hired on an hourly basis as part-time mentors at the secondary level in core content and critical needs areas. Partial funding is also included in another area of the budget.
- Support for non-tenured teachers is provided in a variety of ways, but currently not enough capacity exists to assign a mentor for every non-tenured teacher.

Program 4901 – Professional Development Schools (PDS)

- There are currently almost 800 participants in this program.
- Approximately 48 percent of new hires this year were PDS interns.
- PDS partnerships include Towson University; University of Maryland; University of Maryland, Baltimore County; Loyola College; and Johns Hopkins University.
- All high schools have Future Teachers of America clubs, with a liaison in every school. Staff is currently working to get participants to a state and national conference next year.
- Enhanced professional development opportunities for current teachers that are aligned with school improvement plans include graduate courses, workshops, and resources to provide time for teachers to collaborate on the needs of their schools. Topics include math and writing interventions, infusing technology into the curriculum, etc.
- Currently 35 schools are engaged in PDS partnerships.

Operation of PlantProgram 7101 - Custodial Administration and Training

No discussion.

Program 7102 - Custodial Services

- Although the budget adds 13.5 custodians to accommodate increased square footage related to new buildings, additions, and expansions of buildings, a deficit still remains in the appropriate number of staff assigned per square footage.
- Hiring custodians continues to be a problem. Few applicants come from Howard County, and there is a transportation issue for those outside of the county.
- Travel mileage has been consolidated into Travel-Conference Regular under Other Charges.

Mr. White agreed to provide additional information on the reduction of maintenance workers from three positions to two.

Program 7201 – Utilities

- There are currently 12 schools involved with Green Schools programs, with more expected to participate in the future.

- Printing – Outside Services covers costs for items that are not printed in the HCPSS Print Shop. Payment to the Printing and Duplicating Fund was previously consolidated into Program 7501 - Other Operations of Plant.
- Contracted labor is part of the energy efficiency program and involves lighting upgrades, temperature control systems, transformer upgrades, and addressing portable classroom control systems. These go through the bid process and are services beyond the duties of regular maintenance workers.
- The old Bushy Park ES and Glenwood MS are currently the only schools using fuel oil. The Bushy Park replacement school will not use oil.

Program 7301 - Warehousing

- One location houses a main warehouse, a supplemental warehouse, and a middle warehouse that is being used for maintenance and the Science Resource Center.
- This program includes new services being handled by the warehouse that were formerly contracted out.

Program 7401 - Risk Management

- Funds for defibrillators are included in Program 7901 – Environmental Maintenance.

Program 7501 - Other Operation of Plant

- The school system does not receive any money for the recycling program, although individual schools may have arrangements to collect funds for recycling materials.
- Funds are required for the disposal of obsolete computer equipment due to hazardous waste materials contained in the computers.

Maintenance

Program 7601 – Buildings/Grounds Maintenance Administration

No discussion.

Program 7602 - Building Maintenance

- The supplemental list includes a proposed \$600,000 addition to contracted building repairs.
- The hiring of apprentice mechanics is a new initiative. These are entry-level personnel who are trained and cross trained in various trades. They are then placed in positions that best suit their particular talents.
- Generally, all mechanics are asked to be involved in the design of renovation projects so they can be part of the review component. Not all participate, but the school system also provides in-house training that teaches post analysis of projects.
- County rules allow for flexibility in the determination of whether funds for projects are included in the capital or operating budgets. The determining factor should be the life of the contracted item. The capital budget includes \$3.7 million

for systemic renovations, and the operating budget includes \$1.7 million for systemwide needs, including maintenance.

Mr. Ray Brown agreed to provide a list of maintenance projects, including backlogged items. He clarified that the public had requested that information regarding Mt. Hebron HS and other school system renovation projects be posted on the HCPSS website.

Program 7701 – Networks and Technology Support Services

- A recent HCPSS restructuring and reorganization to meet increasing technology needs is reflected in these two major budgets.
- The Office of Information Technology will handle most of the school system's information systems and will collaborate with Networks and Technology support.
- Budget includes funds for two replacement vans. Funds to equip the vans with tools, etc., are included in computer technology supplies.
- Funds for training include offsite training for specific devices, inservice training with technicians, and courses for certification through professional colleges in the area.
- Most technicians gain experience with both MAC and PCs through cross training and support through the school system.

Mrs. Erickson agreed to provide an updated organization chart for Information Technology personnel. Mrs. French asked for confirmation that the level of service to schools would not be lowered due to the movement of technicians. Mr. Glascock agreed to provide detailed information regarding positions in the FY 2007 budget, changes that have occurred, and the FY 2008 increases.

Program 7801 – Grounds Maintenance

- HCPSS expends more efforts in this area than grounds departments in other school systems across the country. This diversified group of grounds workers perform many types of operations and handle a variety of issues.
- The attrition rate is expected to persist, and recruitment of qualified grounds workers continues to be difficult. In-house training is provided specific to HCPSS needs.

Mr. Cohen expressed an interest in having the school system pursue some type of recruitment of students who may not be college bound to work for HCPSS in the areas of grounds and/or maintenance. Mrs. French noted that the work study program also provides an opportunity for students to explore employment with the school system.

Program 7901 - Environmental Maintenance

- Hand sanitizers will be placed in the cafeterias at the entrance of the lunch lines and will be easily accessible to all students.
- Each high school has two external defibrillators, and the Homewood Center and Cedar Lane each have one unit. Additional costs will be incurred in 2009 when replacement batteries will be necessary.

- Over 150 staff members have been trained in the use of external defibrillators, which includes at least ten people in each high school.
- Legislation has been proposed to expand the requirement of external defibrillators to all schools at all grade levels. Revised regulations to support existing legislation are circulating for feedback from school system staff.

Mrs. Mikulis indicated the need for a notation in the budget related to the location of funds for external defibrillators. She also cautioned the public about the possibility that hand sanitizers may only kill bacteria and not viruses.

Community Services

Program 9101 - Nonpublic School Transportation Services

- HCPSS provides insurance for bus use for transporting nonpublic school students and charges for some overhead costs related to recruiting drivers, etc.
- Transportation is provided for five nonpublic schools. No new schools have been added in the last 10 to 15 years.
- A change in the process of determining costs has resulted in more realistic funding allocations.

Ms. Gordon asked about issues raised regarding transportation of regular students along with special education children on the special education buses. Mr. David Drown, Transportation Director, explained that six bus routes have been redesignated to transport both special needs and regular education students. Efforts are being made to increase this proposal, but there are some drawbacks related to longer bus rides due to the particular special needs of some students, for example, loading and unloading children in wheelchairs. Overall, this initiative has been well received within the community.

Program 9201 – Community Services – Grounds Maintenance

- Currently there are no provisions to recoup any portion of funds that are expended for grounds maintenance related to community use.

Mrs. Giles noted the need to continue to pursue ways in which to collect fees from individuals or groups using HCPSS facilities.

Mr. Cohen expressed appreciation to maintenance, grounds, and custodial staff for their hard work in keeping up with the multitude of school system facilities. Mr. Tom Kierzkowski, Director of School Facilities, stated that HCPSS is very fortunate to have a dedicated staff to keep up with the buildings at the level they are maintained.

Program 9301 - Community Use of Facilities

- There are built in charges for technical services for sound, lighting, etc., related to auditorium rentals.
- Security deposits are not required, but school system policy states that charges will be made for any damages that may be incurred by renters. Occasionally there are problems identifying guilty parties.

- Budget includes funds for training and support for the maintenance agreement for the event management software system, which is in the beginning of phase two and working very well. It is hoped that the system will eventually be web based.

Mrs. Giles also noted the need to continue to look at ways to recoup costs in this area while still accommodating the needs of the community.

Program 9401 - Other Community Services

- Budget includes \$20,000 as part of the last contribution to assist with start-up costs for the Educational Foundation. There are still expenses involved in finalizing the foundation, including issues of legal fees, etc. No contributions from the school system will be required beyond FY 2008.

Dr. Cousin pointed out that this foundation has the potential to raise and contribute potentially millions of educational dollars to children in the county.

Program 9501 - International Student Services

- Two additional bilingual parent liaison positions are listed on the supplemental sheet for consideration.
- Bilingual community liaisons are school based. International liaisons are located at the Faulkner Ridge Center, along with the International Student Registration Center. International liaisons facilitate the registration process for international students, and bilingual community liaisons are school based. Services are provided for 16 schools.
- There is a program for particular international students and parents to attend athletic events at no charge in order to provide opportunities to learn about different aspects of American culture.

Transportation

Staff noted the need to include a line for dance transportation under Other Charges in the amount of \$5,600, which would be an addition to the budget.

Program 6701 - Pupil Transportation Office

Mr. Drown stated that this budget includes transportation for the Gateway and Passages programs at the Homewood Center. He agreed to provide information to the Board regarding the location of funds for transportation for the Bridges Program, which is also housed at the Homewood Center.

Program 6801 - School Bus Operations – Regular

- Budget includes funds to accommodate increased costs for contractors to replace older buses.
- HCPSS currently has 56 bus contractors, but contractors continue to have problems getting enough certified drivers to cover all the bus routes. There are also very few substitutes to accommodate absences of regular drivers.

- All buses are inspected regularly, and random brake inspections are also performed.

Mr. Drown agreed to provide information on the average transportation cost per pupil in this program.

Transportation – Other (incorporates specific programs throughout the budget)

- Transportation for Dance is included in this budget in the amount of \$5,600.
- Transportation for prekindergarten also includes the RECC Program (Regional Early Childhood Center). Increased costs reflect expansion of the RECC program.
- Increased costs for special education transportation is driven by expensive contracts for out-of-county programs, as well as high replacement costs for special needs buses.
- A cost savings has been realized in this budget due to the final phase out of the Technology Magnet program, which is indicated in the amount for Centralized Career Academies.

Mr. Drown agreed to provide information regarding the number of children and the locations that students are transported to for out-of-county programs.

Mrs. Giles suggested that the language in the Program Highlights section be changed to state “The budget reflects cost reductions due to the end of the Technology Magnet Program and implementation of the Centralized Career Academy Programs.”

Recess: The meeting was recessed by the Chairman at 2:55 p.m. and reconvened at 3:08 p.m.

Administration

Program 0101 - Board of Education

Mrs. Mikulis noted that details regarding the types of conferences employees attend could be provided by the Board’s Executive Assistant.

Program 0102 - Office of the Superintendent

No discussion.

Program 0103 - Equity Assurance/Staff Relations

- Decrease in contracted services is due to the anticipation that no employee contract negotiations will take place in FY 2008 and due to a reduction in special events where consultants worked with focus groups and held community meetings in the past.

Board members asked staff to check the accuracy of Equity Assurance staffing numbers.

Program 0104 - Legal Services

- Budget is for the HCPSS staff attorney and does not include contracted services, which are located in the budgets for the Board and Special Education.

Program 0105 - Community Partnerships

- Budget includes funds for the Educational Foundation.

Program 0201 - Business Services and Operations

- The supplemental list includes a request to add a Business Process Manager position.

Board members asked staff to check the FY 2006 staffing numbers for accuracy.

Program 0203 - Budget Office

No discussion.

Program 0204 - Payroll Services

- Program includes funds for the completion of the payroll portion of the new financial/human resources/payroll system (IFAS).

Program 0205 – Purchasing Services

- No change in staffing from FY 2007.

Program 0206 - Accounting Services

- Budget includes the addition of one Junior Accountant.

Program 0206 - Public Information Office

- The supplemental list includes \$100,000 for contracted services for the implementation of a communication study.

Program 0303 - Human Resources

- Budget includes one new secretary and one new specialist position.
- Funds have been reduced in Contracted-Consultant services due to the delay of IFAS.
- Decreases for Contracted-Labor are a result of charges related to fingerprinting of substitute teachers.
- 133 teacher candidates accepted open contract offers.

Mrs. Erickson stated that the annual retirement celebration will be held on June 5, 2007, at 7:00 p.m., at Ten Oaks.

Program 0305 - Other Support Services

No discussion

Approved – March 22, 2007

Program 0502 - Student Assessment and Program Evaluation

- Budget includes the addition one Program Evaluation Specialist.

Program 6102 - Student Accounting Services

- This budget is located in the Pupil Personnel category.

Capital OutlayProgram 0202 - School Construction

- The facility study is included in the Capital Budget.
- The manpower to oversee the educational specification modernization equity implementation study is included in this budget.
- HCPSS receives revenue back from capital projects to help offset some costs.

Mrs. Giles pointed out that the school system does a wonderful job of managing construction projects on time and under budget.

Program 0212 - School Planning

No discussion

Restricted FundsProgram 8301 - Food and Nutrition Service

- Staffing level is able to accommodate new schools at the same amount budgeted for FY 2007.
- One clerical position has been reclassified as a Technical Assistant.
- Although the budget reflects a deficit in the fund balance for FY 2008, it may be possible to avoid a deficit if all funds are not depleted this year.

Program 9716 – Workers' Compensation

- Claims are increasing and future increases are also projected, although the school system is doing a good job of controlling expenses,
- Additional funds are included to return this fund to a positive balance.

Program 9715 - Health and Dental Self-Insurance

- Self-funding requires that a larger claims reserve be maintained, which is incorporated in the budget.

Program 9714 - Information Technology

- Budget includes five developers to support current student information systems and begin development of a new student information system. Staff is working with Human Resources on recruitment efforts in this area to include employees at all levels of experience.

Program 9713 - Printing Services

- Staffing increased by one position between FY 2006 and FY 2007 and remains the same for FY 2008.

Grants Funds

- Additions include grants for Bridges over Cradlerock and an extension of Bridges over Wilde Lake.

Mrs. Mikulis announced the following budget meeting schedule:

Thursday, February 15 – 7:00 p.m.

Pupil Personnel
Health Services
Special Education

Tuesday, February 20 – 1:00 p.m.

Discussion of Board Requested Information
Unresolved Issues
Tentative Budget Decisions
Superintendent's Feedback/Recommendations

Tuesday, February 27 – 9:00 a.m.

Adoption of FY 2008 Operating Budget

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by the Chairman at 3:40 p.m.