

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY

February 20, 2007

The members of the Board of Education of Howard County held a regularly scheduled work session on Tuesday, February 20, 2007, at 1:00 p.m., in the Board Room of the Department of Education, located at 10910 Route 108, Ellicott City, Maryland, to consider its FY 2008 Operating Budget Request. The following were present:

Diane B. Mikulis, Chairman
Frank J. Aquino, Vice Chairman
Sandra H. French
Ellen Flynn Giles
Patricia S. Gordon

Sydney L. Cousin, Superintendent of Schools
Sandra Erickson, Deputy Superintendent
Raymond Brown, Chief Operating Officer
Mamie Perkins, Chief of Staff
Robert Glascock, Assistant Superintendent,
Curriculum and Instruction
Linda Wise, Assistant Superintendent,
School Administration
David White, Budget Officer
Patti P. Caplan, Public Relations Officer
Susan A. Shown, Recording Secretary

Chairman Diane Mikulis called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m.

Operating Budget Review Committee

Mr. Michael Klatzkin, Chairman of the Operating Budget Review Committee (OBRC), presented the committee's report and recommendations (see attached).

Mrs. Mikulis asked if the committee identified any items that could be cut from the budget. Mr. Klatzkin responded that there are no items recommended to be eliminated from the budget. However, the committee recommended that an analysis be conducted to determine which programs are the most effective. Mrs. Erickson expressed her agreement with the committee's recommendation. She noted, however, that additional staff is needed in order to accomplish the program evaluations. The school system's one program evaluator is currently reviewing the summer school programs.

Dr. Cousin added that programs that are funded with grant money also need to be evaluated to determine their effectiveness and whether or not they should be included in the operating budget.

Mrs. Mikulis stated that it could be useful to show technology in one place to determine if the technology equipment and programs are meeting the needs of the students and the school system. Mr. Brown pointed out that there is administrative technology as well as instructional

technology. Ms. Gordon agreed that technology funding should be shown in one place instead of throughout the budget programs.

Mrs. French commented that the OBRC is maturing and is reviewing the budget more in depth each year. Mr. Klatzkin stated that the committee owes a lot to current Board members who served on the committee in previous years.

Mr. James Hackett, Custodial Services and President of the Affiliation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), stated that the system needs 24 floaters, but three new floaters would make somewhat of an impact.

Mr. Klatzkin requested that the Board meet with the members of the OBRC to review the current process.

The meeting was recessed at 2:00 p.m. and reconvened at 2:05 p.m.

Administration

- Additions include:
 - \$72,000 (Program 0201 – Business Process Manager Position)
 - \$71,000 (Program 0502 – One Additional Program Evaluation Specialist)
 - \$100,000 (Program 0302 – Communications Study Implementation)

It was noted that a number of Board members had discussed the addition of a Program Evaluation Specialist as a very wise consideration.

Instruction

- Instruction Category includes Instructional Salaries, Instructional Materials, and Instructional – Other.
- Instructional Salaries - Additions total \$1.9 million, without benefits:
 - 4 math support positions
 - 30 additional technology teachers
 - 5.5 reading teachers
 - 13 instructional assistants
 - 3 additional transition assistants.
- Instructional – Other – Addition of \$60,000 for Contracted Group Counseling at Homewood (Program 3402).
- Addition of 10 teachers for High School Staffing would cover 50 sections and would address class size concerns.

Mrs. Erickson spoke about the difficulties in finding teachers, especially in critical areas such as science. She also acknowledged the need for staff to review the overall teacher staffing formula and make recommendations for improvement to the Superintendent for next year's budget cycle.

Board members noted the importance of reducing class sizes and the resulting benefits of retaining teachers and addressing safety issues.

Mr. Glascock explained that funds have been reduced for the repair of equipment in the area of music because it is more feasible and economically responsible to purchase new instruments at this time rather than repair existing ones.

Alternative In-School Programs (Program 3403)

Mrs. Erickson clarified that additional Pupil Personnel Workers designated to support Program 3403 did not make it into the proposed budget as previously stated. Although the program is being expanded to four additional schools, no additional Central Office support is being funded.

Board members discussed adding an additional resource teacher to Program 3403. Staff noted that this position was intended to be included in the budget but was inadvertently left out of the proposal. This position would allow for training and incorporation of the concepts coming from Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS). This program is working and impacts student's grades.

Counseling

Mrs. Erickson explained that the current staffing formula for guidance counselors is based on the number of students in each school, which is an improvement over past models. Testimony has been received regarding differentiation based upon other factors at various schools, including special needs populations. Staff will consider a more comprehensive and equitable approach for the FY 2009 budget cycle.

It was noted that two additional staff positions have been given to Murray Hill MS to use in a capacity that best meets the needs of the school.

Board members agreed with the suggestion of reviewing staffing formulas across the board to determine what is in the best interest of students.

Pupil Personnel

Pool positions have not been used to provide extra Pupil Personnel Workers (PPWs). A scoring system to help assist PPWs in scheduling workloads and allocating staffing with a more needs-based approach may address concerns about staffing in this program. Board members agreed to consider the recommendation of the OBRC to add one staff position that was cut from last year's budget request.

Staff agreed to provide additional information regarding child abuse training for staff members.

Health

Athletic Trainers – Contracted Services (Health Services - Program 8601)

Board members questioned whether there could be any savings associated with hiring Athletic Trainers in-house rather than contracting their services. Staff indicated that the current use of contracted services is the most cost effective way to implement this initiative. It was also suggested that Mr. Mike Williams, Athletic Director, provide more information regarding this issue and that any changes to the current practice be reviewed during the next budget cycle.

Transportation

There are currently six buses serving both special education and regular education students. Increased transportation time associated with this practice keeps the program from being more widely implemented.

Mr. David Drown, Director of Transportation, will be presenting a report to the Board in the spring regarding the efficiency of the school system's transportation program.

There were no recommendations for increases or decreases in this program.

Operation of Plant

Custodial Services (Program 7102)

Mr. Ray Brown stated that staff did not recommend an increase in the staffing pool for this program. There are many areas of personnel in Maintenance and Operation of Plants combined that are viewed as a higher priority. A systemic problem with absenteeism must be addressed, but the number of positions are very close to the recommended staffing ratio.

Maintenance

Building Maintenance (Program 7602)

- \$600,000 will be added to this category for repair of buildings based on a prioritized listing.

Fixed Charges

- Additions will be included based on discussions throughout the budget. Corrected numbers will be provided to the Board.

Mid-Level Administration

No discussion.

Community Services

- Two bilingual liaisons will be added for International Student Services (Program 9501).

It was noted that funding support for this program is significant but is also a good investment. Support to families will help lessen the achievement gap and is important to success on the MSAs (Maryland State Assessments) and HSAs (High School Assessments).

Capital Outlay

No discussion.

Special Education

Mr. Glascock stated that no additional funds are being requested for this program. Staff is reviewing needs of particular populations and how to accommodate those needs with current staff. Recommendations will be provided to the Board. In addition, staff will also examine the RECC (Regional Early Childhood Centers) Program, and provide more information to the Board.

Restricted Funds

Changes will occur in this category based on personnel changes, and revised numbers will be provided to the Board.

FY 2008 Capital Budget Request*Discussion highlights:*

- Current Board-approved capital budget request - \$99,600,000.
- The capital budget request will be updated to reflect the allocation of state-approved funds and projected transfer tax revenue to the capital projects.
- Maintenance/warehouse facility – Approximately 10 acres are needed for the site, which should be centrally located in the county.
- Former Cedar Lane School – Preliminary studies and sketches have been completed, including administrative workspaces, conference spaces, and some community-use spaces. No decisions have been made on the uses of the building. Planning funds will be used to conduct a feasibility study and develop plans. Recreation and Parks also has interest in using space in the building.
- Former Bushy Park ES – Only about 25 people can be housed in the building due to the limitations of the septic system defined by the Maryland Department of the Environment.

Mrs. Mikulis stated that the Board will meet on Tuesday, February 27, 2007, at 9:00 a.m. to formally adopt its FY 2008 budget requests. Dr. Cousin was optimistic that negotiations will be concluded and the salary dollars can be included in the budget. He cautioned that the numbers can dramatically change as a result of the negotiations.

Mr. Ken Roey, Executive Director of Facilities Planning and Management, stated that the school system would need approximately ten acres of land for a warehouse facility. A site is not

currently available, but the preference would be for a location close to Central Office and main highways.

Mr. Roey also reported that some preliminary sketches and studies regarding the use of the old Cedar Lane School have taken place. Discussions have also taken place with Howard County officials, but no internal staff decisions have been made with regard to the property. Any recommendations will come to the Board for deliberation and public hearing.

Dr. Cousin pointed out that the school system is in need of additional administrative office space for staff that are currently housed in inadequate facilities. There is also a need for countywide meeting space for large assemblies, all of which will be taken into consideration as discussions continue. Mr. Roey indicated that part of the preliminary studies has also concerned potential additions as well as renovating the inside of the old Cedar Lane School building.

Plans for the use of the old Bushy Park ES facility will also be discussed with the Board when more information is available.

Mrs. Mikulis thanked staff for responding thoroughly and timely to the Board's questions, and she thanked Mr. White and Mrs. Swinson for putting the information together.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned by the Chairman at 3:28 p.m.

Attachment – OBRC Report