

# MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY

February 5, 2008

The Board of Education of Howard County held Public Work Session II on the Superintendent's Proposed FY 2009 Operating Budget on Tuesday, February 5, 2008, at 1:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the Department of Education, located at 10910 Route 108, Ellicott City, Maryland. The following were present:

Frank J. Aquino, Chairman  
Ellen Flynn Giles, Vice Chairman  
Lawrence H. Cohen  
Sandra H. French  
Patricia S. Gordon  
Diane B. Mikulis  
Janet Siddiqui, M.D.

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

Chairman Frank Aquino called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m., and Mrs. Mikulis led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Mamie Perkins, Chief of Staff, stated that Human Resources will be providing the Board with descriptions of position titles in response to a request by Mrs. French.

## **Operation of Plant**

### Program 7101 - Custodial Administration and Training

No discussion.

### Program 7102 - Custodial Services

- The current standard base ratio of square foot per employee, including relocatables, is 19.7 sq. ft.
- Two additional custodial positions are in the budget for Elkridge ES and Glenelg HS.

- Uniforms worn by custodians help identify them in the event of an emergency.
- Maintenance vehicles have been logoed for security and safety reasons.
- Summer pay workers who are normally 10 month employees are not counted twice in the total number of school system employees.
- Board members expressed appreciation to the custodial staff for their work over the summer months.
- Green cleaning supplies are being used as much as possible.

#### Program 7201 - Utilities

- An additional \$250,000 in the utilities line for energy initiatives has been proposed by staff.
- Travel expenses for the energy manager are included in this account.
- HCPSS is a member of a three-team purchasing cooperative to purchase gas and electric.

#### Program 7301 - Warehousing

- Replacement is anticipated for two vans.
- Three rented warehouse facilities are located at 6655 Dobbin Road in Columbia, Maryland.

#### Program 7401 - Risk Management

- Hepatitis B vaccinations are given to employees.

#### Program 7501 - Other Operations of Plant

- Paper recycling dumpsters are placed in the parking lots of some schools.
- A full report on recycling in HCPSS will be presented to the Board in the near future.

### **Maintenance**

#### Program 7601 - Buildings/Grounds Maintenance Administration

- Minor repairs of office equipment for the maintenance administrative office are included in this budget.

#### Program 7602 – Building Maintenance

- An additional \$750,000 for contracted repairs has been proposed by staff for dance studios for Centennial and Hammond high schools and a reconfiguration of space at Oakland Mills MS (including the band room).

- The new Control Specialist position requested will be responsible for all EMS (Energy Management Systems) and temperature control systems.
- Summer pay wages are paid to part-time students and interns who provide assistance to various maintenance departments.

#### Program 7701 – Networks and Technology Support Services

- An additional \$305,600 (not including benefits for the positions) has been proposed by staff for:
  - A project manager position at \$79,600.
  - A network engineer position at \$69,000.
  - LanDesk licensing for \$69,000.
  - Additional wiring at two high schools at \$70,000.
  - A new vehicle at \$18,000.
- The number of technicians on staff is not adequate for the number of facilities being serviced so remote management services will increase the contracted services general budget.

#### Program 7801 – Grounds Maintenance

- An additional \$250,000 for improvements to sidewalks and pathways has been proposed by staff and includes:
  - Glenwood MS – improvement of the parent drop-off loop.
  - Elkridge ES – connecting a staircase from the developer's land to the school's land.
  - Hammond ES – playground paving.
  - Atholton ES – concrete curb replacement.
  - Bollman Bridge ES – parking lot paving.
  - Triadelphia Ridge ES – parking lot expansion and paving.
  - Mt. Hebron HS – paving and home-side bleacher repairs.
  - Cradlerock School – concrete repair.

#### Program 7901 – Environmental Maintenance

- An additional \$250,000 for asbestos testing/abatement has been proposed by staff.
- The EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) Region Three has changed their interpretation of the laws on how material can be declared asbestos free.
- Implementing this change has increased the cost of routine sampling and testing of school system buildings on a regular basis.

## **Community Services**

### Program 9101 - Nonpublic School Transportation Services

- According to the County Charter, HCPSS provides transportation services for some nonpublic students in Howard County to the following five sites:
  - OLPH (Our Lady of Perpetual Help) School.
  - St. Augustine School.
  - Bethel Christian School.
  - Resurrection School.
  - St. Louis School.

### Program 9201 - Community Services – Grounds Maintenance

- Current law does not allow HCPSS to collect fees for the use of playfields by outside groups.
- In response to an HCPSS request for the requisite enabling legislation, the Howard County delegation to the General Assembly asked for a proposed fee schedule. The school system and major community user groups are working cooperatively to develop an appropriate fee schedule for consideration by the delegation and support for authorizing legislation.

### Program 9301 - Community Use of Facilities

- The event management software system will be tested first by the Activities and Athletics Managers in the high schools.

### Program 9401 - Other Community Services

- The Public Information staff is split into two categories: Public Information in Administration and Other Community Services.
- The webmaster is a content-generating position, not a technical maintenance or computer person.

### Program 9501 - International Student Services

- An additional undesignated bilingual liaison position is proposed by staff.
- The current budgeted position is for Spanish.
- There are at least 77 different languages spoken in the school system.
- Interpreting services and translating services are contracted to provide and support the bilingual liaisons.
- HCPSS utilizes community groups and hires within those groups.
- The largest group of non-English-speaking students and families that HCPSS works with is the Spanish-speaking group.

## Transportation

### Program 6701 - Pupil Transportation Office

- Four additional employees to drive school-system-owned buses are included in the budget.
- Other duties of these four employees would include:
  - Fill in as substitute bus drivers.
  - Provide support to area supervisors.
  - Answer phones.
  - Compile data.
  - Develop and deliver driver training programs.
- On an average day, an additional ten bus drivers are needed.
- Current ways to handle bus driver shortages include:
  - Doubling up on trips.
  - Doubling back on trips.
  - Rescheduling trips.
  - Reconfiguring routes.
- Currently, HCPSS has two contractors who will provide a substitute bus daily (which is a total of two buses daily).
- An accounting adjustment has been made to correct the error of the overcharge from the special needs account and the undercharge to the career academies account.
- The impact of full-day kindergarten transportation has actually been a cost savings for HCPSS.

### Program 6801 - School Bus Operations – Regular

- As bus contracts are renewed, HCPSS pays the increased costs associated with new contracts.

### Transportation – Other

- The nonpublic transportation budget that is governed by state category levels comes under Community Services, not Transportation.
- Budget includes money for 250 students who are in nonpublic placements, including in-state and out-of-state residential placements.
- Board members asked for better clarification of the special education transportation budget, including which funds come from the category of Nonpublic and Community and which funds come from Program 3392.

## **Administration**

### Program 0101 – Board of Education

- \$1,500 was added to the supplies account for office equipment.

### Program 0102 – Office of the Superintendent

No discussion.

### Program 0103 – Equity Assurance/Staff Relations

- Negotiations with HCAA, HCEA, HCEA/ESP, and AFSCME begin in the fall.

### Program 0104 – Legal Services Office

- The travel mileage account has been adjusted for accuracy.

### Program 0105 – Community Partnerships

- Every school now has a community partnership.
- The school system has more than 650 community partnerships.
- To keep an up-to-date list of community partnerships, in May/June of each year, principals are sent a list of their active partnership(s), and are asked to respond with any additions or deletions.
- The Partnerships and Educational Foundation is a separate 50C3 corporation, so it was suggested that a record of staff's time and all expenses regarding the foundation be documented.
- Staff was congratulated on their coordination of the partnerships.

### Program 0201 – Business Services and Operations

- This budget adds two new help desk positions.

### Program 0203 – Budget Office

- Funds for consulting services could be used to support changes in the production of the budget if needed.

### Program 0204 – Payroll Services

- The Position Control Specialist duties include interacting with a number of different levels/departments within the school system, including:
  - Instructional Personnel
  - School Administration
  - Budget
  - Payroll
  - Human Resources

- The Position Control Specialist position has been transferred from the Business and Operations budget to the Payroll Services budget.

#### Program 0205 – Purchasing Services

- Board members thanked the purchasing department for the low negotiated price that is paid for the purchase of new vans.

#### Program 0206 – Accounting Services

- A half-time food services position remains in this budget since the employee that was filling the position left the accounting department, and the food services department opted not to have the assistance of a dedicated half-time employee from the accounting department.
- The anticipated increase in outside auditing fees is based on the new auditing standards issued that require a greater level of internal control testing and documentation of all audit firms.

#### Program 0302 – Public Information Office

- Staff proposed a change in the title of the Assistant Superintendent of Communications to Communications Specialist, which also reduces budgeted funds.
- The position of Assistant Superintendent of Communications, a recommendation of the audit and study group, is being withdrawn at this time.
- The main goal of the Assistant Superintendent of Communications is to find better ways to communicate internally and externally to everyone in the Howard County community, whether or not they have children in the school system.
- This budget includes two new positions to implement the results of a study of the school system's communications process.

#### Program 0303 – Human Resources

- The Alternative Teacher Preparation Program that is housed in Human Resources has twelve mentors, which allows each person enrolled in the program to have their own mentor.
- By law, third-year non-tenured teachers are assigned either a secondary content mentor (a resource teacher) or a retired contracted teacher.
- It is estimated that between 500 and 550 new teachers will be hired for this school year.
- The hiring of teachers and instructional assistants is done by specialists, managers, and summer help that assists the specialists and the managers.

- Teacher certification is tracked by the Certification Office and reported to the state on a yearly basis.

#### Program 0305 – Other Support Services

No discussion.

#### Program 0502 – Strategic Planning, Assessment and Program Evaluation

- Staff was congratulated on the informative data reports that are produced by the team.
- This fiscal budget includes a specialist position that was transferred from Program 9714 - Technology Fund.
- The specialist position job duties include learning how to prepare state files and helping to develop an internal reporting system.

#### Program 6102 – Student Accounting Services

- Board members thanked staff for the important and informative reports produced by the team.

### **Mid-Level Administration**

#### Program 0304 – Central Office Instructional Personnel

- An additional position of coordinator for programs and services that support students with learning disabilities/attention deficit hyperactivity disorders (LD/ADHD) is included in this budget.
- This position will work with the school psychology department, which has the broadest knowledge of these types of learning problems. This structure will provide site-based help at every school.

#### Program 0411 - Curriculum and Curriculum-Based Assessments

No discussion.

#### Program 1503 - Media Technical Services

- Board members have visited schools and are pleased with the job that is being done with the resources available.
- Contracted labor provides consultants to manage the web-based Central Audiovisual program that allows media specialists and teachers to search, list, and order AV materials online, ensuring that collections are current.

Program 2701 - Cable Television – Video Production

- An additional \$60,000 for video integration equipment has been proposed by staff.
- Video streaming and Web TV will enable people from all over the country to view school system broadcasts.
- Accomplishments for FY 2007 include the SAT Prep 2400 verbal series for DVD, which is a tutorial series for students. A math series is currently in production.
- A new cable production vehicle is included in the capital budget for this program. The current vehicle in use is approximately 17 years old.

Program 3204 - Temporary Services Office

- The school system utilizes approximately 330 substitute teachers on any given day.
- The substitute pool consists of approximately 1,500 teachers, but those teachers are not available for work every day.
- Staff is considering the development of a cadre of substitutes who are trained in specific critical needs areas to work as teachers or instructional assistants.
- Long-term substitute assignments are now posted on the school system's website, which has helped recruitment.
- The number of substitutes required for professional development activities has been reduced by 50 percent by moving training opportunities into the summer months.
- A series of summer institutes covering a variety of topics are planned for 2008.
- A new computer system allows teachers to self-select areas in which they want to substitute.
- Over 50 percent of substitute jobs are prearranged, often by the primary teacher who selects an individual they feel will be able to continue the instructional program.
- Funds for substitute positions are also included in Program 3201- Other Regular Programs, special education, and various other categories.

Program 4701 - School-Based Administration

- Proposed additions also include five Leadership Interns at a cost of \$225,000.
- An additional security assistant for the ARL provides the school system with one position for every high school program.
- A small increase is included in contracted services for the investigation of residency issues.

- The Office of Pupil Personnel screens approximately 500 families each year to determine residency. Of those, the School Security office finds cause for withdrawal of approximately 25 students per year.
- An appeal process exists for parents regarding residency issues.
- The addition of ten Leadership Interns will provide administrators with additional services to handle the responsibilities and increasing requirements of NCLB (No Child Left Behind).
  - These positions will not be responsible for observing or evaluating other professional staff and will not take on any responsibilities for which they are not certified.
  - These positions will be included as part of the administrative pool and will provide an opportunity for teachers to explore interests in administration.
  - Funds included in the budget for these positions are based on average salaries and are only an estimate of actual costs.

#### Program 4801 - Professional and Organizational Development

- Staff is moving toward assuming more responsibility for cultural proficiency training and becoming more independent of consultants in the future.
- Due to oversight requirements, consultants will continue to work with the cultural proficiency coordinator, facilitator, and others.
- This program requires a maintenance of effort over a long-term period, which will eventually lessen.
- Cultural proficiency services are also being offered to the community.

#### Program 4901 - Professional Development Schools

- There are currently 37 schools in the PDSP (Professional Development Schools Program), with plans to increase by five for the coming school year.
- HCPSS is engaged with five schools in the PDS model: Johns Hopkins University, University of Maryland, University of Maryland at Baltimore County, Loyola University, and Towson University.
- HCPSS partners with over 27 institutions in terms of traditional placement.
- One in five teacher candidates were hired for this school year from the PDS program. Of new teacher hires, 45 percent came from the PDS program, which is an increase over past years.
- Candidates from the program may never apply with HCPSS due to residence locations and/or the desire to work for other school systems.

## **Capital Outlay**

### Program 0202 - School Construction

- Staff was congratulated on the accomplishments of this office with the current level of staffing, which has not been increased in years.
- It was suggested that a representative from this program be included on the school calendar committee to provide suggestions on ways to accommodate summer construction projects, maintenance, and custodial activities that are also impacted by the use of facilities as well as the instructional calendar.

### Program 0102 - School Planning

- This program includes an increase of \$620 related to salaries.

## **Fixed Charges**

- Changes will occur in this category as additional positions are approved elsewhere in the budget.
- Current calculation shows approximately \$424,000 in additional benefits-related items.
- Contingency funds were never used in FY 2006 or FY 2007. Unspent funds are rolled back into the general fund balance or used to balance other accounts as needed.
- Unless the Board has a definite use for unspent contingency funds, money will be used for other purposes as needed by the school system.

## **Restricted Funds**

### Program 8301 - Food and Nutrition Service

- This budget eliminates a half-time accountant position that was previously charged under this account for a position in the Accounting Office.
- Participation in the school lunch program is down slightly, primarily due to the economy.
- Information regarding the use of ingredients, purchasing, services provided, nutrient analysis, and allergens are included on the school system's website and on each monthly school menu.
- Positive feedback has been received regarding the variety of information regarding food services that is available on the HCPSS website.
- HCPSS has some kitchens designed as preparing kitchens and some designed as satellite receiving kitchens. Preparing kitchens send various meal items to satellite locations for final preparation.

- Dietary Guidelines for Americans for 2005 increased the percentage of daily fat intake from 30 to 35 percent.

#### Program 9713 - Printing Services

- A new line item for Maintenance-Hardware has been included for more accurate accounting purposes.

#### Program 9714 - Information Technology

- Proposed addition of a software developer at a salary cost of \$79,600 is requested to help with the conversion effort that must be undertaken once a new student information management system is implemented.
  - This addition will replace some of the costs associated with outside contracted services.
  - This position will also support a staff request to look at legacy systems in transportation, food service, and school planning to address operational needs.

#### Program 9715 - Health and Dental Self-Insurance

- Benefit plans were changed this year, which required employees to submit enrollment papers to continue or change plans.
- HCPSS was originally able to estimate a reduction in the contribution for this program by \$7 million, but more accurate information will be available at the end of February.

#### Program 9716 - Workers' Compensation

- Staff agreed to provide statistics on the number of individuals who draw on this fund in a year and the average length of time out of work.
- HCPSS currently has an excess insurance retention balance of \$450,000.

#### Grants Fund

- A loss of some Title V grants is anticipated, and staff will provide updated information to the Board as soon as it is available.
- The State Superintendent has assured continued grant funding of the STEM program in the amount of \$150,000.
- A reduction is also expected in funding for the Judy Center, but the amount is only an estimate at this time.
- Staff will provide an update to the Board on medical assistance funding as soon as information regarding special education is reviewed.

**Budget Schedule**

- Wednesday, February 13, 2008, 7:00 p.m. – Public Work Session III. Topics will include:
  - Pupil Personnel (with the exception of the Student Accounting Program).
  - Health Services (with the exception of Health Services/Athletics).
  - Special Education (with the exception of Psychological Services).

Mrs. French suggested that Public Work Sessions III and IV be combined in an attempt to eliminate a fourth work session. Mr. Aquino agreed with the suggestion as long as any unresolved issues could be determined beforehand and addressed in one session.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned by the Chairman at 4:45 p.m.

\*NOTE: The Public Work Sessions (III & IV) scheduled for February 13, 2008, were subsequently rescheduled for February 19, 2008, due to inclement weather.