

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY

February 3, 2009

The Board of Education of Howard County held a Public Hearing on the Superintendent's Proposed FY 2010 Operating Budget on Tuesday, February 3, 2009, 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:

Frank J. Aquino, Esq., Chairman
Ellen Flynn Giles, Vice Chairman
Lawrence H. Cohen
Allen Dyer, Esq.
Sandra H. French
Patricia S. Gordon
Janet Siddiqui, M.D.
Adejire Bademosi, Student Member

Sydney L. Cousin, Superintendent, Secretary/Treasurer
Patti Caplan, Director, Public Relations
Kathleen Hanks, Recording Secretary

Chairman Frank Aquino called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., and Grant Demaree, River Hill HS student, led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Hearing - Superintendent's Proposed FY 2010 Operating Budget

Arielle Fine, Student – Glenelg HS

- Thanked the Board for their support of the GT Intern Mentor program.

Grant Demaree, Student – River Hill HS - Member of the HCPSS Science Advisory Committee

- Indicated that additional funding could improve science education in the schools.
- Advocated for field-based environmental education.

Alex Kolodner, Student – Wilde Lake HS - Representing the Media Center

- Encouraged the Board to keep Media Centers up to date as they are the most valuable research tools for students.

Approved 2/12/2009

Julie Brinkley - Library Media Advisory Committee

- Asked that the Board support Program 1501 of the proposed budget and keep all budgeted line items, especially funding for contracted services (software maintenance), supplies and materials for Library Media collections and educational technology, and personnel salaries and wages. This portion of the budget impacts all Howard County students.
- Advocated for funding of current staffing levels.

Russ Poch, Science Advisory Committee Chairperson Committee

- Asked that the Board fully fund the FY 2010 Superintendent's proposed science budget.
- Stated that class size is a key issue and suggested that science labs be capped at 28 students.

Tim Woods, School Bus Contractor

- Advocated for budget funds to be included for the purpose of improving school bus driver and assistant pay so that HCPSS can remain competitive in retaining quality personnel.

Ellen Warsaw, GT Advisory Committee, Co-chair

- Advocated for support of the G/T education program.

Laura Shovan, GT Advisory Committee, Co-chair

- Supported full funding of the Superintendent's Proposed FY 2010 Operating Budget, especially the Gifted and Talented Education Program budget for all student groups.

Gary Toller, Science Advisory Committee Member

- Supported the Superintendent's Proposed FY 2010 Operating Budget.
- Advocated for science education at the elementary school level.

George Wilson, Fine Arts Advisory Council, Co-chair

- Advocated for budget support of Fine Arts programs in all schools.
- Advocated budgetary support for schedule modification that increases Fine Arts time for students across the spectrum of K-12 education.
- Requested increased "face time" for the arts in elementary schools, equal time for the arts in foreign language education in middle schools, and maintaining the arts focus in high schools.

Janis McNutt, Fine Arts Advisory Council, Co-chair

- Advocated for continued support of Fine Arts programs in the proposed FY 2010 budget.

Ann DeLacy, President of HCEA

- Advocated for increasing salaries, reducing class size, providing mentoring and greater support for all staff in the first five years, providing greater career opportunities, giving more support for National Board Certification, providing staff-driven professional development and additional pay for paraprofessionals who attain higher levels of education, and providing a technology teacher for every middle school.

Stephanie Maric, Board Member of Howard County Autism Society

- Expressed support for the Superintendent's proposed operating budget, particularly the Extended School Year Program (ESY).
- Advocated for the need for proper staffing.
- Advocated to improve elementary services for students with autism.

Kim Manning, Howard County Autism Society

- Expressed support of the Superintendent's proposed operating budget for special education.
- Especially advocated for the continued provision of assistive technology equipment for students with severe communication impairments.
- Expressed distress over the decrease in conference funding and hoped for restoration of funding in the future.

John Hannay, Howard County PTA Council

- Supported the Superintendent's proposed operating budget.
- Concerned about the budget being trimmed in the building maintenance area and encouraged restoration of these funds.
- Recommended restoration of funds for planned increases in staff salaries to the maximum extent possible.

Chris Wertman, Chairman, Community Advisory Council (CAC)

- Advocated for maintaining or if possible reducing class sizes.
- Stated that it is expected that the budget will undergo substantial modification and suggested that a second public hearing be held.

Steve Estomin, Policy Coordinator for CAC

- Advocated for not deferring maintenance of school system buildings as it will add significant costs in the future.

Marcia Soergel, CAC

- Suggested that the school system draw on the resources of the community at large. to assist in reducing operating costs.
- Indicated that the budget documents are not user friendly and strongly encouraged the school system to develop a user-friendly budget document by next year's budget cycle.

Kelly Meissner, Special Education Advisory Committee

- Supported the entire budget as put forth by the Superintendent.
- Advocated for continued smaller class sizes.
- Stated that additional teaching and support staff are needed to maintain the effectiveness of the Extended School Year (ESY) program.
- Supported the continued provision of assistive technology equipment for students with severe communication impairments.

Jane Chambers, Chairperson, Education and Youth Issues Committee of the Arc of Howard County

- Supported the Superintendent's proposed FY 2010 special education budget.

Brian Meshkin, Citizen

- Stated that he is fully invested in Howard County Schools.
- Echoed comments of the PTA Council and the Community Advisory Council in asking for the school system to "Use Our Village More."

Kim McKay, Howard County Special Education Community Advisory Committee

- Advocated for support of the Regional Early Childhood Centers (RECC) program.
- Supported expansion of the primary learners program, which is needed to insure that students have every opportunity to be as successful in the classroom as possible and reduces the need for more restrictive placements.
- Asked for support of early intervention programs.

Adjournment: The chairman adjourned the meeting at 8:18 p.m.