

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY

February 10, 2009

The Board of Education of Howard County held Public Work Session II on the Superintendent's Proposed FY 2010 Operating Budget on Tuesday, February 10, 2009, at 2:00 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
Sandra Erickson, Deputy Superintendent
Patti Caplan, Director, Public Relations
Arlene Conway, Recording Secretary

Chairman Frank Aquino called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m., and Ms. Bademosi led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Work Session II

Dr. Cousin stated that it is still unknown how much funding the school system may receive as part of the President's stimulus bill, which has not yet been passed. Additional information will be provided as soon it becomes available.

Operation of Plant

Program 7101 – Custodial Administration and Training

- Weekly random inspections have increased safety, which will allow staff to maintain safe environments in buildings even with the elimination of a Safety Specialist position.
- Increased costs for the IPM (Integrated Pest Management) program are due to costs associated with the pest control contract renewal.

Program 7102 – Custodial Services

- A specialist crew provides specific, non-routine services, which has been successful in helping to constrain costs.
- Floating custodians (8) are assigned each day by the lead supervisor to work at schools with the highest needs.
- The HCPSS Grounds Department works closely with the Department of Recreation and Parks in dealing with the needs of athletic fields.

Program 7201 – Utilities

- Budget includes funds to cover increases in the cost of energy.
- Closing all school system buildings during the winter break will result in a savings of approximately \$100,000. Details regarding sports or other activities during this time will need to be addressed at a later date.
- The strategic initiative targeting a replacement plan for telecommunications involves maintenance of effort of communications to schools, internet communications, and voice communications in cellular.
- Consideration is being given to installing devices that allow the control of lighting in order to reduce utility costs.
- Approximately 80 percent of school system buildings have some form of energy management system that is tied to the Central Office. Temperatures in different buildings can be adjusted from one location, which is significant in terms of comfort control and maintaining energy guidelines.

Program 7301 – Warehousing

- Two vans were purchased in FY 2009, which has resulted in a decrease in funds for equipment replacement in FY 2010.
- School system warehouses are located off Dobbin Road and McGaw Road in Columbia.

Program 7401 – Risk Management

- HCPSS participates with MABE (Maryland Association of Boards of Education) in a property and general liability insurance pool, which keeps premiums less costly.

Program 7501 – Other Operation of Plant

No discussion

Maintenance

Program 7601 – Buildings/Grounds Maintenance Administration

- Six schools were recognized with the Superior Maintenance Award from the Governor this year (Bryant Woods, Clarksville, Deep Run, Guilford, Swansfield, and West Friendship elementary schools).

Program 7602 – Building Maintenance

- The budget for this program is \$700,000 less than FY 2009.
- One maintenance worker will be moved to Program 7102 (Custodial Services) to reflect the actual work area and job duties of the position.

Program 7701 – Networks and Technology Support Services

- FY 2009 funds are being used to upgrade the network core.
- Staff is currently working with the county on a fiber optic network initiative and a service level agreement.
- Progress reports on various collaborative efforts with the county will be brought to the Board periodically.

Program 7801 – Grounds Maintenance

- Cooperative efforts with some volunteer groups also provide support in this area with planting and maintaining grounds, particularly at the elementary levels.
- Some GT programs also provide instruction and opportunities to participate in grounds maintenance.

Program 7901 – Environmental Maintenance

- This program also contains funds for hand sanitizers in schools.

Community Services

Program 9101 – Nonpublic School Transportation Services

- Efficiencies have been gained in this program by adjusting transportation times.
- HCPSS provides transportation to five nonpublic schools.

Program 9201 – Community Services – Grounds Maintenance

- This budget provides funds to maintain school system grounds that are used by community groups. HCPSS is currently prohibited from collecting funds from these users.

Program 9301 – Community Use of Facilities

- Staff is reviewing the permitting process, billing, and collecting revenue for the use of school facilities to find ways of improvement.
- Approximately 1,500 separate and distinct groups use school system buildings.
- By public law, HCPSS is allowed to charge for heat, lighting within prescribed limits, and custodial fees.
- The school system cannot charge for field use and does not charge youth-oriented activities a facility fee.
- All groups now pay for activities that cost the school system extra money, for example, custodial coverage on weekends and raising heat or lowering air conditioning outside set limits.

Program 9401 – Other Community Services

- This program funds positions for a specialist, secretary, and webmaster (located in the Public Information Office), as well as the transportation for infants as part of the Teen Parenting Program.

Program 9501 – International Student Services

- This program serves limited English proficient students from Prekindergarten to Grade 12 and their families. The program has grown considerably.
- The school system currently has students from 85 different counties speaking 75 different languages.
- HCPSS has a very comprehensive program, with bilingual liaisons speaking Korean, Spanish, and Chinese.

TransportationProgram 6701 – Pupil Transportation Office

- One Transportation Assistant position has been recategorized as a Supervisor to reflect current responsibilities.
- The addition of one substitute bus driver allows the school system to provide service to contractors on an as-needed basis.

Program 6801 – School Bus Operations – Regular

- Public testimony was received requesting additional pay for bus drivers. The school system pays bus contractors, who in turn pay drivers' salaries.

Program – Transportation – Other

No discussion.

Administration

Program 0101 – Board of Education

- The amount budgeted for the rental of voting machines for the Student Member election (\$8,000) has been reduced to \$2,000 because Scantrons will be used instead.

Program 0102 – Office of the Superintendent

No discussion.

Program 0103 – Staff Relations/Equity Assurance

No discussion.

Program 0104 – Legal Services Office

- The General Counsel position provides representation for the Superintendent's Office.

Program 0105 – Partnerships Office

- There are over 800 partnerships throughout the school system.
- This program formalizes partnerships and partners that work with student services, the GT office, career academies, etc.

Program 0201 – Business Services and Operations

- Increases in mileage costs are due to the additional position of a Chief Financial Officer.
- The Chief Operating Officer, Executive Director, and Chief Financial Officer all visit schools to help with employee and administration concerns.

Program 0203 – Budget Office

- Staff will work with the Operating Budget Review Committee (OBRC) on ways to develop a more comprehensive budget summary document to provide budget information in a more user-friendly format for FY 2011.

Program 0204 – Payroll Services

No discussion.

Program 0205 – Purchasing Services

No discussion.

Program 0206 – Accounting Services

- It is anticipated that lower costs will be associated with the audit contract renewal.

- Funds are included to provide intensive training for the integrated financial system.

Program 0302 – Public Information Office

- Official documents of the Board of Education office are archived as required by law. All other offices have their own particular requirements, which in some cases entail federal requirements.
- Additional information regarding requirements (if any) for transferring documents to state archives will be provided to the Board.

Program 0303 – Human Resources

- Only substitute teachers pay for their criminal background checks. The school system pays for all other employee background checks.
- HCPSS stopped accepting applications for substitute teachers for a period of time but will begin accepting them again in March.

Program 0305 – Other Support Services

No discussion.

Program 0502 – Student Assessment and Program Evaluation

- It is projected that this program will administer 781,500 evaluations during FY 2010.

Pupil Personnel

Program 6102 – Student Accounting Services

No discussion.

Mid-Level Administration Summary

Program 0304 – Central Office Instructional Personnel

- Updated organizational charts have just been prepared and will be provided to the Board.
- The position of Investigator handles issues related to safety, security, residency, and works collaboratively with all administrative directors.

Program 0411 – Curriculum & Curriculum-Based Assessments

No discussion.

Program 1503 – Media Technical Services

- Much public input was received praising media services, which touches all aspects of the school system and every student at every level.

Program 2701 – Cable Television/Video Production

- Congratulations were extended related to the strategic plan for service, as well as the creation of new programs.

Program 3204 – Temporary Services Office

- Funds are included for materials for substitute orientations, including providing all new substitute teachers with a copy of *The Substitute Teacher Handbook*.

Program 4701 – School-Based Administration

- An additional assistant principal will be assigned in the spring based on final enrollment projections.

Program 4801 – Professional and Organizational Development

- Congratulations were expressed regarding the efforts involved with providing professional development for staff, which has been recognized for ensuring that ongoing opportunities are available to staff to coordinate efforts in terms of instruction to students and the school system as a whole.
- This program also provides systemwide coordination and delivery of Cultural Proficiency programs.

Program 4901 – Professional Development Schools

- A systemic shift has been implemented to move some contracted labor to temporary help.

Capital OutlayProgram 0202 – School Construction

- No changes have been made regarding the schedule for future work at Atholton HS.
- The approximate difference in cost for a qualifying renovation that must be LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified is approximately 5 percent additional. This amount could vary greatly depending on the scope of a project.

Program 0212 – School Planning

- Staff was asked to inform Board members whenever community meetings and/or presentations are given to schools.

Fixed Charges**Program 8001 – Fixed Charges**

- This program funds the employer's share of employee benefits, Social Security tax, etc.
- Residual funds in this category may be carried over from year to year, unless otherwise requested by the County Council.

Restricted Funds**Program 8301 – Food and Nutrition Service**

- The food purchasing co-op contract is up for renewal next year.
- School menus now include whole-wheat pizza and pasta.
- Board members encouraged staff to consider various payment programs to allow more flexibility for parents.
- Staff was thanked for their continued efforts to look into healthy nutrition options.

Program 9713 – Printing Services

- HCPSS is moving towards an electronic process of submitting work with job tickets.
- Training is being provided to schools on how to send work electronically. Currently, approximately 80 percent of jobs are submitted as hard copy.

Program 9714 – Information Technology

- The Personnel Summary for this program is being revised due to repurposing of some positions, and an update will be provided to the Board.

Program 9715 – Health & Dental Self-Insurance

- Staff is working with consultants to update all health claims and experience, and more accurate and up-to-date information will be provided to the Board.
- Board members are currently afforded the option of obtaining health and dental benefits.

Program 9716 – Workers' Compensation

- Claims are processed through a third-party administrator.
- HCPSS has the use of two law firms for services, depending on the nature of a claim.
- The severity of injuries are down so far this year, but the number of claims is the same as in past years.

- Training is provided in a variety of ways to specific employee groups to help prevent injuries.

Grants Fund

- Grant funds total approximately \$25 million and are an integral part of the operation of the school system.
- It is expected that the school system will lose approximately \$1.3 million for Nonpublic Community Intervention due to a proposal by the Governor to change the cost-sharing percentage from 80/20 to 50/50.
- Grant funding for Fine Arts may also be reduced due to reductions at the state level.
- Information was requested from staff regarding any past collaborative/joint grants with Baltimore City.
- It was noted that staff works collaboratively with surrounding jurisdictions with common interests.

The Board will hold Public Work Session III on the proposed budget on Tuesday, February 17, 2009, at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned by the Chairman at 5:20 p.m.