

APPROVED
5-2001

Rockville, Maryland
January 23, 2001

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in regular session at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Tuesday, January 23, 2001, at 7:45 p.m.

ROLL CALL Present: Mrs. Nancy J. King, President
 in the Chair
 Mr. Stephen Abrams
 Mr. Kermit V. Burnett
 Ms. Sharon Cox
 Mr. Reginald M. Felton
 Mr. Walter Lange
 Mrs. Patricia B. O'Neill
 Mr. Christopher Lloyd, Student Board Member
 Dr. Jerry Weast, Secretary/Treasurer

Absent: None

or () indicates student vote does not count. Four votes needed for adoption.

RESOLUTION NO. 36-01 Re: **CLOSED SESSION**

On recommendation of the Superintendent and on motion of Mr. Abrams seconded by Mr. Lange, the following resolution was adopted unanimously by members present:

WHEREAS, The Board of Education of Montgomery County is authorized by the *Education Article* and *State Government Article* of the *Annotated Code of Maryland* to conduct certain meetings or portions of its meetings in closed sessions; now therefore be it

Resolved, That the Board of Education of Montgomery County conduct a closed session on January 23, 2001, in Room 120 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. to discuss matters that relate to collective bargaining negotiations, as permitted under Section 10-508(a)(9) of the *State Government Article* and Section 4-107(d) of the *Education Article*; and be it further

Resolved, That this meeting continue in closed session until the completion of business.

RESOLUTION NO. 37-01 Re: **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

On recommendation of the Superintendent and on motion of Mr. Felton seconded by Mrs. O'Neill, the following resolution was adopted unanimously by members present:

Re: **WORKSESSION ON THE SUPERINTENDENT'S
RECOMMENDED FY 2002 OPERATING BUDGET**

Dr. Weast and Mr. Bowers gave an overview of the recommended FY 2002 budget with the issues and new initiatives, including trend bender quality improvements and the multi-year budget initiatives plan.

Re: **BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS**

Mrs. King noted that last year and this year the Board had input into the formation of the budget based on the Board's goals and priorities. Therefore, it is important for the public to understand that this is the Board's budget.

Mr. Felton commented that the budget reflected the academic priorities of the Board. He thought that was crucial since many districts change priorities frequently which is confusing to constituents and raises the fears of many groups. The commitment to the *Call to Action* is a logical progression to shift funding. The real measure of the school system is accountability and the performance of students. He thanked the staff for creating a budget document that is easy to understand. Throughout the development of the budget, there has been support from the community.

Ms. Cox thanked staff for the budget documents, and she thanked Mr. Bowers for inclusion of the key results and performance measures.

Mrs. O'Neill thanked the community members who testified before the Board. It is overwhelming that there is a clear understanding, appreciation, and acceptance of the Board's vision and priorities. Most Board members realize the magnitude of the operating budget, which adheres to the *Call to Action* and Board priorities. She hoped that the community would support this budget before the County Council. Support for the school system also should be conveyed to the legislators in Annapolis.

Mr. Burnett noted that there was interest in the initiatives put into the budget last year and the continuation of those priorities in this year's budget. It is important for the community to support the budget before the Council.

**Mr. Lloyd joined the meeting at this point.

Mr. Lange thought the budget went a long way to support the needs of all students. He was heartened by the diverse representation of citizens who support the budget. Also, he appreciated the assistance of staff and the cooperation of the Board.

Re: BOARD MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Mr. Felton observed that it would cost \$120,290 to add a fourth day of outdoor education in the schools that now had only three days. He was concerned with the inequities in the implementation of the program. To assure equity, he asked if the program could alternate between three and four days every other year. Dr. Weast responded that this was a philosophical and a practical question. On the practical side, he had observed that the transition into the program limits its effectiveness and to cut back one day would have an impact on instruction. Philosophically, MCPS has an approach that "one size does not fit all." Staffing schools at different levels, depending on the needs of the students, is an example of that approach. While some students are not exposed to the full program, students are getting other programs at a higher rate based on academic need.

Mr. Felton reiterated that it was the intention of the Board that the outdoor education program would become a four-day program, and he was trying to deal with the inequity now that the program had not been fully implemented. Dr. Weast agreed that was the Board's intent, but he recommended that those funds be expended for lower class sizes, more classroom teachers, and targeting areas to get a better return on the performance investment.

Regarding outdoor education, Ms. Cox noted that students pay \$68 each. Was there a discussion to raise the fee to \$75? What would that buy? Would there be interest? Mrs. O'Neill asked if there would be enough volunteers to staff outdoor education, and does that create an equity problem in some communities? Could students afford the fees in the schools that do not have the fourth outdoor education day?

Mr. Felton wanted clarification on the Parent Outreach program and the Asian community. There is \$350,00 in the budget to support four positions for program. Dr. Weast noted that did not mean that amount is totally directed to Asian students, and the \$350,000 is in the budget to encompass 140 different nationalities in different areas.

Mr. Abrams asked about the allocation of resources for the non-immersion students, and he used Sligo Creek Elementary School as an example. He asked about whether the educational load allocation for non-immersion students is equal to the resources that have been committed under the initiative from last year in terms of focusing on ESOL and FARMs students. What would be the quantitative differences?

Mr. Abrams referred to the startup costs for the French Immersion program at Gaithersburg Middle School. He reasoned that \$50,000 would be needed, but he was confused by the transportation costs. MCPS currently has magnet school transportation provided in the same area, and was that taken into consideration? Dr. Spatz replied those transportation routes were taken into account based on locating the program at Gaithersburg Middle

School.

Regarding outdoor education, Mr. Lloyd recalled that the testimony emphasized the skills that students learned through this program. He asked Dr. Weast what the purpose of the outdoor education program was and if he thought that teachers were a better investment. Dr. Weast answered that outdoor education sought to stimulate and augment a student's experiences. However, a first grade teacher in a small class teaching reading fundamentals creates a solid educational foundation. Both concepts are good, but Dr. Weast recommended lower class size because there had to be a decision between the two concepts.

Mr. Lloyd asked if the fourth day of outdoor education could be used for learning experiences, such as study skills and group work. Dr. Weast stated that if the fourth day was eliminated, he would recommend the hiring of more psychologists and/or counselors.

Mr. Lloyd inquired about junior varsity lacrosse, players providing their own equipment, and MCPS providing an equal opportunity for all players. Dr. Spatz stated that the coaches' budget was based on students buying their own equipment; however, MCPS does not view that as equitable and therefore cannot budget on that basis.

Mr. Lange asked about the realignment of bus routes and the reduction of service areas, and he asked for a re-estimate of the costs of safe bus routing. Mrs. O'Neill clarified that the Board had received correspondence from the Frost community regarding the rotating of clusters for evaluating transportation. Mr. Bowers replied that the situation at Frost is not a budget issue, and the issue has been and will continue to be evaluated through the established countywide practice of providing safe walking routes or transportation to school.

Mrs. O'Neill inquired about special education transportation and the cluster model. What has caused the increase in costs? Parents also question the number of special education buses in their neighborhoods picking up children. What can be done to make special education transportation more efficient? Mr. Bowers reported that he had talked with these parents, and there had been a misunderstanding about which students were going to what program, and how long a student is required to be on the bus. The cost of transportation will increase by 3 percent next year due to replacing vans with buses, replacing buses after 12 years of service, and paying higher fuel costs.

Mrs. O'Neill asked about elementary school assistant principals. How many schools fall just short of receiving an assistant principal allocation? What is the educational load or staffing of those schools, not just enrollment? If six assistant principals were added, which would be the next six schools to receive them, based on the criteria used for allocating assistant principals?

Ms. Cox asked about the Global Ecology program at Poolesville High School. The program's funds are \$24,800 and other schools with special programs have funds of \$27,500. Is there a particular rationale for the difference (outside of staffing) based on the number of students served?

Ms. Cox asked about the staffing in the community-based programs versus the Stephen Knolls and Longview programs. The community-based programs are staffed at 6 to 1 and Stephen Knolls/Longview are staffed at 8 to 1. What are the numbers of students in those classes, and what is the difference between community-based programs and the Stephen Knolls/Longview program?

Regarding shared accountability, Ms. Cox asked if the Board would get a review of program effectiveness. Dr. Weast replied that after the budget is approved and the staff is hired, there will be a plan of work brought to the Board.

Ms. Cox asked about Title I staffing and the net decrease of instructional assistants with the same number of students. Dr. Spatz replied that principals have an option on how the funds will be expended, and there has been a movement to use more teachers.

Ms. Cox asked why Seneca Valley High School, which has the second highest program for ESOL, does not have an ESOL counselor. There are 4.3 ESOL counselors at the high school level. What is the allocation of those counselors?

Ms. Cox inquired about the Chinese Immersion Program, and whether the grant was ongoing. Would there need to be a new grant to expand the program?

Mrs. King asked how the upcounty International Baccalaureate program compared to the program at Springbrook High School. Is it the same program at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School? Ms. Muntner replied that it would be an additional high school baccalaureate program in the upcounty.

RESOLUTION NO. 38-01

Re: **ADJOURNMENT**

On recommendation of the Superintendent and on motion of Mr. Abrams seconded by Mr. Lange, the following resolution was adopted unanimously:

Resolved, That the Board of Education adjourn its meeting at 9:15 p.m.

PRESIDENT

SECRETARY

JDW:gr