

APPROVED
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Rockville, Maryland
January 28, 1998

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in a special session at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Wednesday, January 28, 1998, at 7:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL Present: Mrs. Nancy J. King, President
 in the Chair
 Dr. Alan Cheung
 Mr. Blair G. Ewing
 Mr. Reginald M. Felton
 Mrs. Beatrice B. Gordon
 Ms. Ana Sol Gutiérrez
 Ms. Mona M. Signer
 Ms. Debra Wheat
 Dr. Paul L. Vance, Secretary/Treasurer

Absent: None

Re: **WORKSESSION ON THE FY 1999 OPERATING
 BUDGET**

The Board members asked the following questions during the worksession:

Enterprise Funds

1. There is a statement under strategies on Page 18 that speaks to implementing a cost accounting system to monitor and project cost reimbursements. Mr. Ewing asked about status of that project.
2. Mr. Ewing observed that there was a no description in the budget of what is done for students who cannot afford to pay for field trips.

Office of the Superintendent

3. Ms. Signer referenced Page 5-9 where there was an increase of \$200,000 for legal fees. How does this compare with this year's experience? (Total amount for FY99 will compare to FY98.) In the next few days, Ms. Signer asked for the total amount and the comparative amounts.

Office of Financial Management

4. Ms. Signer stated that one of the recommendations from the Budget Review Committee (BRC) was to deal with the upgrading of the information systems in the

Division of Insurance and Retirement. She recalled that was being handled as part of the Year 2000 project. She asked if that still was the case.

5. Mr. Ewing observed that one of the ways the public and Council could increase an understanding of the budget would be if there were an exhibit under Financial Management that illustrated where the school system was on all business systems, including (1) list one by one, (2) present status, (3) future plans, and (4) additional resources in this budget and subsequent years.
6. Ms. Signer asked about the \$2 million that the school system drew out of the retirees' health benefit trust fund last year. She noticed in the budget that there is a recommendation to replace that \$2 million, and in addition there is \$1.4 million in interest from that fund. It was always intended that that trust fund would be drawn down, but, with the replacement of \$2 million and the interest of \$1.4 million, that fund is being increased.
7. Mr. Ewing asked if the grants specialist had generated enough funds for the school system to make that investment worthwhile.

Office of Pupil and Community Services

8. Ms. Gutiérrez observed that at the presentation of Outcome J there had been a recommendation for an additional psychologist in a supervisory role. What would be the impact on the budget?
9. Mr. Ewing noted that there was a statement that immigration has stabilized. What are the numbers for the last several years? Have those numbers gone up or down? What level of education do those international students have when they arrive in Montgomery County?
10. Dr. Cheung asked what percentage of international students pay tuition. How much does the school system receive, and where is it in the budget?
11. On Page 26, Ms. Gutiérrez observed that residency has a double meaning and the statement gives the implication that MCPS is checking immigration status. She suggested that "residency requirement" be changed to "place of residence of students."
12. On Page 4-30 and 31, Ms. Signer noted that the superintendent had added \$271,000 to expand existing alternative programs by 45 slots and establish one additional program. How many slots will there be in the additional program?

13. On page 30, Mr. Ewing observed a statement about working with OIPD to revise SAT course content. What does that mean? (Mrs. Gemberling answered.)
14. Mr. Ewing asked about the second bullet and working with OIPD to recruit and train additional SAT teachers. Who does one recruit for this kind of task?
15. Regarding technology support for the alternative programs (including Noyes Children's Center), Ms. Gutiérrez asked how much it would cost to provide three workstations for instructional use for each program and the applicable software for instruction.

Office of Global Access Technology

16. Based on the meeting with student leaders, Mr. Ewing pointed out that there needs to be a statement that the investment in technology has been wise and the program will address the technology needs of students and staff. Will the analysis of technology be available for inclusion or to accompany the budget?
17. Dr. Cheung asked if Global Access has a policy on purchasing computers regarding Apple computers and IBM-compatible computers. Would concentrating on one platform be more efficient?
18. Mrs. Gordon asked how training is provided for Global Access, what is the expectation from staff for school-based staff, and what is the follow up to assure that the expectation is carried out. To carry out the training and expectations, there needs to be a directive from administration that those expectations are carried out.
19. Mr. Felton asked to what extent does Global Access staff procure existing software.
20. On Page 3-6, Ms. Signer asked for clarification on the decrease of contractual services of \$633,000 and an increase of \$728,000 in supplies and materials.
21. Ms. Gutiérrez wanted the basis for estimated amounts listed under contractual services and which have a relation to the Year 2000 project. She is looking for an explanation of the current request as well as the increases and decreases from last year.
22. Ms. Gutiérrez asked for information on the Global Access effort from the educational perspective. She asked staff to pull from the different places in the budget where there is Global Access money and put them together on a page. This would include training, equipment, communication and network costs, and a differentiation between school based and central office based.

23. Ms. Gutiérrez requested a summary on the computer inventory.
24. Mrs. Gordon asked if the school system was moving in the direction of having such functions as report cards and scheduling put on a PC base.
25. Regarding COTS, Ms. Gutiérrez asked how much it cost in contractual dollars and staff time to customize the software. (Answered.)

Office of Supportive Services

26. Ms. Signer asked for an updated breakdown of transporting students for regular education, magnets and special programs, and special education. What is the savings for transporting special education students using the cluster based model?
27. Related to the possible change in bell times, Ms. Signer requested information on (1) contract out high school bus service and costs, if it is possible, (2) combining middle and high students, (3) pilot changing bell times in a couple of clusters and whether that can be done with the current bus fleet, and (4) what is the lead time to purchase or lease buses?
28. Mr. Felton asked about the costs for transporting students to the Maryland School for the Deaf, where that would be in the budget, and what budget would it appear in?
29. Mr. Felton requested information on the analysis of purchasing versus leasing buses.
30. Ms. Gutiérrez asked for assurance that there were enough funds in transportation so that there will not be added walkers, especially with opening new schools.
31. Ms. Gutiérrez observed that overtime was budgeted at the same rate, and she thought there were some initiatives to reduce overtime. Is there an opportunity to reduce overtime and what is it?
32. Dr. Cheung asked what happens to the old buses?
33. Mr. Ewing suggest that the Board President write to the County Executive and request accelerated replacement of two-way radios to be given to the school system by the police.

34. On Page 52, Mr. Ewing noted that addition funds totaling \$26,000 will be transferred from substitute accounts to special education transportation. Where is that shown in the budget pages? Ms. Gutiérrez asked for a page that breaks that down.
35. On Page 51, Mr. Ewing asked how much it costs to transport 83,000 regular education students and students with disabilities.
36. Ms. Signer requested the cost of providing bus service so that students do not miss any academic time because they have to leave early to ride a bus to athletic competitions. Will that require additional buses?
37. Ms. Gutiérrez noted that all-day kindergarten is being proposed. What would be the transportation savings?
38. In the past there have been discussions about various student mixes for transportation, Mr. Ewing asked to what extent is the school system making such mixes, will it be pursued further, and what are the possible savings?

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

PRESIDENT

SECRETARY

PLV:gr