

APPROVED
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Rockville, Maryland
January 26, 2006

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in special session at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Thursday, January 26, 2006, at 7:30 p.m.

Present: Dr. Charles Haughey, President
in the Chair
Mr. Steve Abrams
Ms. Sharon W. Cox
Ms. Valerie Ervin
Mrs. Nancy Navarro
Mrs. Patricia O'Neill
Mr. Gabriel Romero
Mr. Sebastian Johnson, Student Board Member
Dr. Jerry Weast, Secretary/Treasurer

Absent: None

Re: **WORKSESSION ON THE SUPERINTENDENT'S
RECOMMENDED FY 2007 OPERATING BUDGET**

Dr. Weast stated that the Board and staff are making great strides in educating children in Montgomery County. In listening to people at the hearings, this budget should be adopted and funded by the Council to continue all initiatives. However, there is a shortfall in the amount the state has refused to provide local education.

Mr. Romero inquired about the enrollment at Mark Twain School with a decrease of staff. Dr. Wright replied that enrollment is one issue, and attendance is another. The number of students attending has dropped significantly. All schools are evaluated individually in order to be equitably staffed.

Mr. Romero asked if the administration has been informed of the staff reduction. Dr. Wright replied that the enrollment is monitored monthly, and one administrator wants to see a staff reduction. Those decisions are not made lightly. Mr. Bowers commented that the staffing of schools is done by the number of students and ratios. Many details and data are behind staffing decisions.

Ms. Ervin asked for the enrollment of Mark Twain School, the number of staff, and the staffing ratio.

Re: **OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT FOR
INFORMATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL
SYSTEMS**

Ms. Cox inquired about the Edline Project to assure that information is available to parents. Does the current budget cover what is needed to stay on schedule? Mr. Porter replied that there is a site license and it will cover all schools next year.

Ms. Cox said the Department of Shared Accountability is creating a process to evaluate policies in terms of fidelity of implementation, and whether the purpose of the policy is achieved. Is that ongoing and in the budget? Staff replied that it is a priority and ongoing, but adequate staffing has an impact on the mission. Ms. Cox inquired about the cost for the Department of Reporting and Regulatory Accountability to evaluate the implementation of Board policy.

Ms. Ervin noted the increased awareness of the value of using data-driven and research-based decision making. She stated that as a Board member she would like to look at data in different ways, and she wanted to know if that could be done by the department. Staff replied in the affirmative, and all reports are reported in percentages and numbers.

Mr. Romero noted the expansion of the Teacher Centered Model (TCM) technology initiative to support teachers in diagnosing and monitoring student academic progress. Who is getting the training? Staff replied that the training is targeted for Grade 1 and 2 teachers, including new teachers in those grades.

Mrs. Navarro noted there were professional substitutes for \$404,960. What are professional substitutes? Staff replied that when training is provided for teachers, they are paid a stipend during the summer. During the school year, substitutes are provided so that teachers can receive training.

Mrs. Navarro commented on the huge reduction in instructional supplies and materials. Staff responded that the instructional materials are now aligned with the training. Mr. Porter explained that zero-based budgeting requires an evaluation and redesign each year.

Dr. Haughey commented that there was a 9-percent increase in salary and wages, which is substantial. Why are the additions necessary? Mr. Porter replied that there is additional staff, the cost of benefits has risen, and substitutes are needed for training.

Re: OFFICE OF ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Cox said she was pleased with the inclusion of seeking evaluative data to determine the efficacy of the training, and this should be included in the office of the associate superintendent. There is a concern raised by foreign language resource teachers about training availability. How does the system budget for subject areas? Staff responded that some of the budgeting is done through curricular areas, especially if a new curriculum is being rolled out. Some training is driven by the school's improvement plan or the individual's professional development plan. Resource teachers have monthly meetings to

roll out new information.

Ms. Ervin asked about major mandates, such as eliminate barriers for student achievement by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. How is that tied to strategies? Staff replied that it is embedded in all professional development, but there is a specific focus on diversity training and development.

Ms. Ervin assumed that all MCPS teachers have had some form of diversity training. This is an important mandate, and she want to know when it will be implemented. Staff replied that courses HR-17 and HR-18 are job requirements. Dr. Weast stated that the system is trying to change hearts and attitudes in building standards. However, there is the ability to deliver all needed training, and it is balanced with the teacher's time.

Mr. Romero thought it was difficult to ascertain the realignment of funds for the middle school reform. Staff replied that lessons have been learned, and there has been a realignment of funds. Furthermore, with zero-based budgeting, all programs are reevaluated for effectiveness and funding each year. With middle school reform, there will be a lot of energy put into staff development. Dr. Weast replied that the need is so massive that the training will have to be sequenced. There is also the trade-off between speed of implementation and quality of instruction.

Re: OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Mr. Johnson asked about food and nutrition. What did they find through the student focus groups? Staff responded that they started with high school students to determine if there were things that could enhance meal service. Based on the feedback from students, different meal items were offered as well as different packaging. Last year, there was a focus group with elementary and middle school students.

Ms. Ervin inquired about the entrepreneurial fund, and what expertise and services MCPS offers. Staff replied that the system started with the science kits, which MCPS also sold to other school systems. Furthermore, warehouse and printing services are used by other agencies, such as the college. Now, technology is being explored for this fund.

Mr. Romero remarked about reimbursable travel expenses based on the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rate. Last year, that was a very fluctuating number. He noted that in other chapters of the budget, there was a small amount allocated for this purpose. Will that be enough for the year? Staff replied that this amount is based on the IRS-approved rate, and the request is based on experience.

Ms. Cox remarked about recycling and the 50-percent goal. Is there a strategy to meet that goal? Staff replied that the more MCPS recycles, the more MCPS is charged and fees have increased by \$100,000. MCPS performance in the county has leveled off at 30 percent. The county's goal of 50 percent appears to be unreasonable since food waste

cannot be recycled. At the present time, MCPS is doing an audit to determine what is in the waste stream.

Mr. Abrams thought the state funding will come in close to the Council's assumptions for the capital budget. Dr. Weast commented that each year the Council and the Board have to assume what the state will provide based on the needs of the system.

Mrs. O'Neill thought there should be a restructure of the hearing and worksession process to provide more time between the two. She suggested the two hearings be on consecutive nights. She was pleased that the staff took her suggestion and developed the campaign – *Ride to the Rules*. Will this be monitored to determine improvement of the bus service? Staff replied that there will be more discipline prior to improvement of the overall service. However, this campaign has been widely accepted and is appreciated for making safety a top priority.

Mrs. O'Neill commented on the increase in building service workers, and she was pleased that this issue was addressed.

Mr. Romero asked about complaints from citizens about the idling of school buses. Staff commented that there is new language in the department that has been distributed to employees on when they can and cannot idle buses.

Mr. Johnson inquired about student feedback on the campaign. Staff replied that most of the feedback is from parents and drivers. Drivers do report what the students are doing and saying which has been positive.

Re: OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Mrs. Navarro asked about the recruitment of bilingual teachers, and she want to know the outcome of this effort. Staff responded that they have worked with the local universities, and 5 percent of the new hires are Latino. Furthermore, staff is working in partnership with universities to promote diversity. Dr. Weast commented that there is a lot of effort without a great deal of results. Staff is now recruiting from MCPS staff to encourage diversity.

Ms. Cox asked if there were more hard-to-fill vacancies in the downcounty consortium. Staff replied that vacancies are subject specific across the county, but at the present there are more in the downcounty.

Ms. Cox said the perception is that teachers are avoiding the downcounty vacancies, and she wanted to know if the data supported that perception. Staff has reviewed the data, and it does not support that perception. There are other factors that affect those vacancies.

Re: **BOARD OF EDUCATION AND OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

Mr. Abrams noted that in the narrative of the Board of Education, there is no reference to the ombudsman. That is a significant function in the office. He wanted a comparison of other Board offices, the positions, and the functions performed.

Ms. Cox observed that other departments speak to Board policy, major mandates, and the Strategic Plan's goals and objectives. The Department of Communications speaks only to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Staff replied that they looked at federal and state mandates, and it was an underlying assumption that the Strategic Plan would be followed.

Ms. Cox said that in the performance measurements there a reference to brochures that are translated, but there should be a reference to the usefulness of the brochures. Staff replied there has been a lot of feedback on the use of the Web, and there is a response card for feedback.

Ms. Ervin noted that many communities have issues around literacy, and she stated that MCPS documents are very dense and readers must be highly literate. Also, there are people who do not have access to the Web, and there has to be more effort directed into outreach to provide information. Staff replied that there are multimedia communications and that information available on television is also available on tapes and DVDs in the school and county libraries.

Mrs. O'Neill asked that the Budget questions and answers be placed on the Web.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

PRESIDENT

SECRETARY

JDW:gr