

APPROVED  
4-2010

Rockville, Maryland  
January 27, 2010

The Board of Education of Montgomery County held a hearing at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on January 27, 2010, at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Mrs. Patricia O'Neill, President  
in the Chair  
Mr. Christopher Barclay  
Ms. Laura Berthiaume  
Ms. Shirley Brandman  
Dr. Judy Docca  
Mr. Michael Durso  
Mr. Timothy Hwang  
Mr. Philip Kauffman  
Dr. Jerry Weast, Secretary/Treasurer

Absent: None

**Re: WORK SESSION ON THE FY 2011  
OPERATING BUDGET**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Overview of the Superintendent's FY 2011 Recommended Operating Budget**

- Revenue Issues
- Enrollment Changes
- Same Services Increases
- Potential Budget Reductions
- Productivity and Budget Savings

**Re: DISCUSSION**

After the staff presentation, Mrs. O'Neill pointed out that the Board was in the beginning stages of the operating budget. There is a lot of uncertainty about revenue between now and June.

Mr. Barclay stated that he is modeling the behavior that he hoped his colleagues would follow in the months to come. He was referring to electronic documents at the Board table and using technology to make the work of the Board more efficient.

Mr. Kauffman inquired if there was a defined process for the Board to weigh in on non-recommended reductions. Staff explained that there are two times to discuss these options: (1) County Council reduction of the budget to the SAG (Spending Affordability Guideline) level, and (2) County Council deliberations and final funding in June.

Mr. Kauffman thought it would be helpful to prioritize the reductions prior to Council action.

### **Aligning the Operating Budget With the Board's Academic Priorities**

- What have we done in the past?
- What are we maintaining?
- What are we considering reducing, if anything?

### **Academic Priority – Align Rigorous Curriculum, Delivery of Instruction, and Assessment for Continuous Improvement of Student Achievement**

1. Class Size Reduction
  - Elementary and Secondary Class Size Reduction
  - Grades K – 2 Class Size Reduction in Focus Schools
2. Rigor in Curriculum and Instruction
  - International Baccalaureate, Gifted and Talented, and Special Programs
  - Career and Technology Programs
  - High School Consortia

#### **Re: DISCUSSION**

Mr. Barclay asked about focus and Title I schools. What is the FARMS rate for the schools? Staff replied that Title I schools have the highest FARMS rate, beginning at 56 percent; the next 36 schools begin at 36 percent FARMS.

Mr. Kauffman noted that there was a reduction of 10 FTE in the Title I schools. Staff explained that the final allocations are based on federal funding.

Ms. Brandman pointed out support for school that have fallen short of standards and targets. Will there be realignments for middle school math instruction? Staff stated that they are working with schools that have not met AYP to establish support teams. The Achievement Steering Committees support schools by reviewing instructional programs and creating plan in conjunction with the schools.

Mr. Durso noted that the academy structure is expensive. If the school system is faced with increasing class size, how can it justify the academies? Staff explained academies can be justified by what they bring to the schools. Programs are more engaging and students can explore interests while in high school. However, the school system will

need to decide on its priorities.

**Academic Priority – Develop, Pilot, and Expand Improvements in Secondary Content Instruction and Programs that Support Students’ Active Engagement in Learning**

3. Middle School Reform
  - Middle School Reform
  - Middle School Extended-Day/Extended-Year Programs

Re: **DISCUSSION**

Mr. Barclay noted the non-recommended reductions and the Middle School Magnet Consortium (MSMC). Parents and students comment on how exciting the magnets are in the middle schools. There is praise for the program, but there has been a fight for its existence. Staff explained that the problem was scheduling and staffing. There never has been a proposal to do away with the MSMC, but how is the program delivered in the schedule and the many classes the teachers teach? Mr. Barclay thought that the Board should have a more in-depth discussion of the benefits and drawbacks of the MSMC, especially the costs based on the model.

Mr. Barclay rhetorically asked if the Board is concerned about delivering to high schools the highest performing students, what needs to be done to direct the reform efforts and finances in a way to ensure that middle schools are structured to deliver. Staff replied that the middle school model was intended to expand to other schools; however, the finances are not there for expansion. There is a group looking at middle school scheduling, and rigorous courses are implemented in all middle schools without fiscal implications.

Mr. Kauffman thought there was an equity concern since many middle schools do not receive the extra benefit of professional development with math and reading content coaches. Could these positions be itinerant? Staff replied that central office staff is doing that to some extent.

Mr. Durso thought itinerant teachers may sound good, but it is not practical. Middle school scheduling is sound.

Mr. Barclay reiterated that the discussion should not pit one school against others. There is a need to have a better understanding of middle school reform with fiscal support since all middle schools deserve the benefit of rigorous courses.

Ms. Berthiaume noted that the MSMC has targeted a community to make school attractive. Mrs. O'Neill stated that the program was begun with a federal grant with specific guidelines.

### **Academic Priority – Develop, Expand, and Deliver Literacy-based Initiatives from Prekindergarten through Grade 12**

4. Early Childhood Programs
  - Full-day Kindergarten
  - Support for Focus Schools, Including Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO)
  - Prekindergarten Programs and Full-day Head Start
5. Special Education
  - Hours-based Staffing
  - Special Education Class Size Reduction in Learning and Academic Disabilities (LAD) Program
  - Least Restrictive Environment
  - Interventions (Literacy, Mathematics, and Behavior)
  - Psychologists
6. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
  - Support for ESOL Students with Interrupted Education (SEPA)
  - ESOL Counseling, Parent Outreach, and Bilingual Assessment
  - ESOL Proficiency Staffing
  - Translation Services

#### **Re: DISCUSSION**

Ms. Brandman was interested in a formula for the number of psychologists needed based on increasing enrollment. Staff replied there was no specific formula. Ms. Brandman noted that there is an increasing enrollment, students with intense needs, and reliance on psychologists for early intervention. Other jurisdictions have a formula or rubric, and MCPS might be interested in that approach as it moves forward.

Ms. Brandman inquired about the growing population of students on the autism spectrum. What are the resources needed to accommodate that population? Staff replied that the budget adds support for those students across elementary and high school students. Ms. Brandman asked if that was across the system or for classroom positions. Ms.

Brandman asked for the breakdown of the 30 special education positions added to the budget (elementary and secondary level).

Regarding the home–school model, Mr. Kauffman asked about the special education staffing plan and the numbers of staff based on increasing enrollment. Staff explained that the allocations are based on the school’s need and number of hours, not a ratio of staff to students.

Ms. Berthiaume requested that the Board receive the chart that pulls together the projection and positions for the home–school model.

Ms. Berthiaume thought SEPA was to be restructured since it was reported not to be working as planned. Staff reported that there is low enrollment and students come in and out of the program. The model has been changed to downcounty home schools for math and English, and then students travel to Edison in the afternoon. Ms. Berthiaume asked if there would be cost savings since the students were enrolled in regular METS classes. Staff agreed with downsizing SEPA staffing.

Mr. Durso asked how ESOL counselors were allocated. Staff replied that they were allocated by the need of the school, looking at AYP status and ESOL students.

Ms. Brandman pointed out that the exit criteria for ESOL with MCPS uses multiple factors, but the state is pushing for a single criterion. Staff replied that MCPS has concerns about exit criteria measured by a standardized assessment.

The work session adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

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PRESIDENT

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SECRETARY