

APPROVED  
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Rockville, Maryland  
January 28, 2004

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in special session at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Wednesday, January 28, 2004, at 7:35 p.m.

ROLL CALL Present: Ms. Sharon Cox, President  
in the Chair  
Mr. Reginald M. Felton  
Dr. Charles Haughey  
Mr. Walter Lange  
Mrs. Patricia B. O'Neill  
Mr. Gabe Romero  
Mr. Sagar Sanghvi, Student Board Member  
Dr. Jerry Weast, Secretary/Treasurer

Absent: Mr. Kermit V. Burnett

Re: **WORKSESSION ON THE SUPERINTENDENT'S  
RECOMMENDED FY 2005 OPERATING BUDGET**

Ms. Cox announced that after the review, the Board would take final action on Tuesday, February 10. The review of the budget will be done section by section as outlined in the table of contents for each budget chapter. She urged staff to point out pertinent issues that may be of concern to the Board. Board members were free to ask questions and request that staff provide pricing information on specific issues.

Re: **BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE SUPERINTENDENT'S  
RECOMMENDED BUDGET**

Dr. Weast and Staff gave a brief overview of the recommended budget. On December 10, 2003, he presented the Recommended FY 2005 Operating Budget totaling \$1,587,373,378 to the Board of Education. On January 14, 15, and 21, 2004, the Board of Education held public hearings.

Ms. Cox asked staff to describe the categories, especially positions listed in administration and mid-level administration. Dr. Spatz replied that there are two state-mandated categories:

Category 1 – Administration with 328 positions (67 administrators, nine professional, and 252 support), including central office positions in the Board office, superintendent's office, Human Resources, accounting, budget, technology resources, payroll, procurement, and supply.

Category 2 – Mid-level administration with 1,531 positions (504 administrative, 50

professional, and 977 support), including principals, assistant principals, school secretaries, curriculum support, and school performance staff.

Mr. Felton asked if there was a standard formula for comparison with other jurisdictions not in Maryland. Dr. Spatz explained that it was difficult to compare, since not all jurisdictions budget by categories. Furthermore, the positions are carefully audited by the state.

The Board of Education made inquiries about the following chapters:

**Re: K-12 INSTRUCTION**

Mr. Bowers indicated that the elementary school enrollment is declining, and there will be positions in reserve if the projections are low. Mr. Felton thought it was difficult to tell the community that the figures are correct when they see portables at schools and houses being built in their community. He thought the school system must reassure the community that resources will be realigned to meet the needs.

Ms. Cox thought the community was reacting to the reduction in teachers to address large classes and to the upward creep in class size. Mr. Bowers replied that the projections have been very close to the actual number of students in the past, and the numbers are based on the best estimates that can be made based on years of experience. Dr. Weast mentioned that the County Council had asked for a freeze to save up to \$8 million every year for the last three years. Those are the funds that could have been used for staff since the budget is largely personnel costs.

Mr. Romero noted a projected decrease of 909 students in regular education and an increase of 52 special education students in elementary schools. Dr. Spatz said that referred to the projected enrollment for grades K-6. Mr. Romero questioned the number of teachers listed in the budget. Dr. Spatz replied that there was a number of rotating positions that would be realigned to handle enrollment shifts.

Mr. Romero asked about insurance and employee benefits (\$771,000) in this portion of the budget, and he wanted to know what is covered since this is also a large line item under the chief operating officer's budget. Dr. Spatz responded that the amount was for grant-funded positions in the elementary school budget.

Dr. Haughey noted that the enrollment count in January or May is not the same as it is in September. When that happens in a school, the impact can be substantial. Stability is an issue and the fluidity dimension must be kept in mind.

Mr. Lange noted that a number of psychologists and counselors were assigned to elementary school staffing. He asked if there was coordination with their supervisors and school-based

staff. Dr. Spatz replied that the supervisors monitor school activities.

Mr. Lange asked about minority over-representation in special education and if staff was coordinated to meet those needs. Dr. Wright replied that the Collaborative Action Process (CAP), based in 26 schools, reduces referrals to special education. The Mental Health Task Force is determining ways to expand CAP to all schools (CAP is a national model). One of the pieces is staff training in curriculum-based assessment, data collection, interventions, and evaluation.

Mr. Lange asked for the cost of adding assistant principals in four schools. Mr. Bowers replied that it would cost approximately \$369,000 for salary and benefits.

Mr. Romero asked why there was an increase in elementary school equipment. Dr. Spatz replied that the increase was due to all-day kindergarten.

Mrs. O'Neill asked what had been done over the past few years in art, music, and physical education positions in elementary schools. Dr. Spatz answered that positions have been added over the past four years, but the only new positions this year are for increased enrollment. Mrs. O'Neill asked about the amount of time for these subjects. Mr. Fulton stated that there are recommended times by content and grade level.

Mr. Romero wanted to know why two elementary schools still have sixth grades.

Mr. Sanghvi wanted to know how textbook funds were allocated. Dr. Spatz stated that the allocation is sent to schools at a per-student cost, but is not related specifically to textbooks.

Ms. Cox asked about math support teachers in middle schools and if they have a positive impact on the school system's ability to increase student success in eighth grade algebra. Dr. Lacey replied that program evaluation has been a concern, and a logic model has been established with Westat, Inc. to assess programs. Ms. Cox thought it was important for the community to know how programs were evaluated and expanded or eliminated. Staff trained in the logic model will assure quality control.

Mrs. O'Neill noted that the Middle School Foreign Language Workgroup had reported and that there was nothing to stop a middle school from offering an additional foreign language. Mr. Fulton was pleased that middle schools were adding foreign languages based on the community's involvement and interest.

Mr. Burnett hoped that the Board would address issues concerning the Chinese Immersion program at the elementary level. With two new middle schools, he hoped that the same approach used at Newport Mill will be used for students to transition into their new schools.

Mr. Burnett asked about the ratio for school counselors and if the goal of 250 to 1 would be realized. Dr. Spatz replied that there has been steady progress toward achieving that goal and the goal will be integrated with the CAP as plans are developed.

Mr. Romero asked why special education staffing was reduced by 12.8 positions. Dr. Spatz said these are regular education teachers assigned to help middle schools that had a large number of special education students, especially with the issues of least restrictive environment and inclusion.

Mr. Lange inquired about the future of media centers and interdisciplinary learning. Mr. Fulton mentioned that the media literacy framework will be brought to the Board for final approval. The changes will be in access to technology, but staffing has not been addressed. Dr. Thornton added that staff will contract for an external evaluation of interdisciplinary learning and technology needs, especially in middle schools.

Mrs. O'Neill suggested that the Board have a discussion on evening high school and summer school. Ms. Cox asked that the Board be provided with the charges and timelines for the workgroups.

Mr. Felton inquired about the community superintendents and the revised structure. Will there be an opportunity to evaluate that system? Mr. Kress thought the appropriate time to discuss whether or not it is the right organization of personnel is now. Mr. Felton looked forward to a discussion on the community superintendent structure.

Ms. Cox noted that the performance measures do not include all departments. She asked if the Office of School Performance was monitoring the implementation of the Baldrige tools for school improvement planning. Mr. Kress stated that 30 schools this year are using the Baldrige model; next year 40 more schools will be added with the remaining schools added the following year.

**Re: OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT**

Mr. Lange asked what resources were identified in the budget for outreach and partnerships. Dr. Thornton responded that the most significant change is the reorganization of the MCPS Family and Community Partnerships Unit which provides a seamless support for parents to work with their children.

Mr. Romero thought there was a task force to address issues in instruction and improving minority achievement. Dr. Thornton stated that there were several work groups focusing on the issues involved in Title I, summer school, and minority student achievement.

Mr. Felton referred to technology for security and safety in the schools. Is the bulk of the

investment in the capital budget? Mr. Bowers replied that the investment is in the capital budget, and there is a grant for security technology.

Mrs. O'Neill asked about the status of radios for the buses. Mr. Bowers replied that the police radios will be transferred to MCPS after they have been removed from the police cars so the police can initiate a new system. Mr. Bowers added that the new buses have radios.

Ms. Cox invited Mr. Clarke to report on the educational facility officers. Mr. Clarke stated that the school system was pleased with the initial 12 officers in the schools, and the program will be expanded by 12 additional officers next year through the Montgomery County Department of Police. There will be an interim evaluation of the program, which has been well received by principals, security staff, teachers, and students.

Mr. Romero asked about the efficiency of the public address (PA) systems in certain schools. Mr. Clarke replied that there is a systemwide evaluation to identify the locations within the schools that cannot hear the PA, and it is a priority for FY 2005.

Mr. Romero asked if all schools use an electronic folder to file their crisis plans. Mr. Clarke stated that they did and that MCPS is in the third year of implementation.

**Re: OFFICE OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION  
PROGRAMS**

Mr. Burnett inquired about the programs for the Downcounty Consortium. Mr. Fulton replied that the course work for the academies will come to the Board in early March.

Ms. Cox was pleased that staff had developed stakeholder groups and was incorporating any feedback.

Mr. Lange wanted to know more about the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Project, which has a total of two positions. He asked about the survey on which to develop appropriate supports and curriculum. Mr. Fulton replied that the survey, a project of Health and Human Services, has been tabled. The idea is to align services better to serve students. Mr. Lange wanted to talk informally to staff about the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Project.

Mrs. O'Neill mentioned that the state of Maryland mandates two surveys – one on tobacco use and one on alcohol use. There is legislation to abandon those surveys and use the CDC survey about risky behaviors for youth. Ms. Cox asked staff to describe to the Board how federal funds are allocated for drug-free education.

Ms. Cox noticed that training is differentiated to nurture gifted education and asked if that was a strategy to address consistency in gifted education. Mr. Fulton thought it was to ensure that

the best program was at the local school level, which had to include strategies for differentiating instruction to be fully effective.

Ms. Cox was interested in a continuum of career education for all students since there is a perception that special education students are not supported. Mr. Fulton stated that this issue has been addressed, but the goal is to increase the rigor in those courses to change perceptions about career education. Mr. Lange knew the courses were for all students, but he was concerned that staff was not encouraging students to take career education courses.

Ms. Cox noted that demographics are changing the county, and she asked if there were increased numbers of schools eligible for Title I funding. Is the school system changing the criteria for eligibility? Mr. Fulton said the federal statute states that a school with 70 percent of its students on free and reduced-priced meals is eligible for Title I funding, and the local school district sets the cut-off number. At the present time, a work group is looking into what happens when a school is not eligible for Title I funding. Ms. Cox was impressed with the performance measures and strategies for mastering the curriculum and not just for meeting the requirements of *No Child Left Behind*.

**Re: OFFICE OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. Romero asked how performance measures are determined when it is a complex issue and tied to other offices, such as staff development. How is that information conveyed to the community? Ms. Merry replied that there are performance measures that relate to goals and objectives, and the office work is defined by the projects.

Mr. Felton said there was no difficulty in providing highly qualified teachers for Title I, but there was some concern about paraprofessionals. How does the school system support those individuals? Ms. Merry replied that the career ladder for supporting services has very specific training. Mr. Bowers stated that at the next meeting there would be information outlining the specific support for paraprofessionals to meet the federal requirements to work in a Title I school.

Mr. Lange asked about training for diversity, bullying and sexual harassment. Dr. Thornton replied that there has to be a systemic approach under the umbrella of mental health. Currently, existing programs are being identified and best practices from around the country are being evaluated. The intent is to provide a prevention program. Mr. Burnett was interested in a comprehensive review of bullying, and he looked forward to the recommendations from the work group.

Mr. Lange inquired about the education for teachers, and he asked if MCPS was communicating its needs to colleges and universities. Ms. Merry replied that MCPS has partnerships with 35 universities. Since MCPS is their client, it is imperative that the

universities address the school system's needs.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

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PRESIDENT

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SECRETARY

JDW:gr