

APPROVED
4-2009

Rockville, Maryland
January 29, 2009

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on January 29, 2009, at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Ms. Shirley Brandman, President
in the Chair
Mr. Christopher Barclay
Ms. Laura Berthiaume
Dr. Judy Docca
Mr. Philip Kauffman
Ms. Quratul-Ann Malik
Mrs. Nancy Navarro
Mrs. Patricia O'Neill
Dr. Jerry Weast, Secretary/Treasurer

Absent: None

Re: **WORK SESSION ON THE FY 2010
OPERATING BUDGET**

Pledge of Allegiance

Overview of the Superintendent's FY 2010 Recommended Operating Budget

- Revenue Issues
- Enrollment Changes
- Same Services Increases
- Program Reductions
- Productivity improvements

Mr. Kauffman asked about the process and whether there was an opportunity to make changes since there is fiscal uncertainty. Mr. Bowers stated that the Board could make any changes, but it was important not to increase the bottom line.

Regarding the state and federal funds, Ms. Berthiaume had read about "shovel-ready" projects. She asked about the process in place to put a project (for example, Gaithersburg High School) at the top of Governor O'Malley's list. Dr. Weast explained that the school system does long-term planning. Ms. Brandman added that the testimony before the Board of Public Works indicated the school system was ready for added funding, with 20 projects ready to go forward, which are prioritized. Dr. Weast thought that projects will begin, based on availability of the stimulus funds, and some projects are very expensive, such as the modernization of a high school. Therefore, projects will need to match the funding available, but it would take the pressure off more expensive projects.

**ALIGNING INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMS WITH
THE BOARD'S ACADEMIC PRIORITIES**

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

- Class-size Reduction
- Interventions for At-risk Students
- Rigor in Curriculum and Instruction

Re: DISCUSSION

Mrs. O'Neill inquired about the impact of the shift from teachers to paraprofessionals in the home school model. Dr. Wright replied that home school model has a ratio of 7 to 1, which is similar to the discrete programs. Therefore, the characteristics of students at home schools are similar to students in the Learning and Academic Disabilities (LAD) program, which is staffed at 14 to 1. Furthermore, resource teachers at the elementary schools are staffed based on enrollment, without a connection to special education. Therefore, the new model will count the resource teacher with a paraprofessional using the LAD staffing, which reduced the number of teachers.

Mr. Kauffman stated that, beyond the formulas, it still seems that special education teachers are being replaced by paraeducators. The question is whether the system is delivering the same level of services. Dr. Wright replied that there is not a substitution of one for another; but the staffing is the same as LAD. Furthermore, the general education teacher can also deliver services to special education students. Mr. Kauffman questioned the staffing at the home school model, and Dr. Lacey suggested that staff will share the data reviewed to make the staffing decisions. Mr. Barclay thought the evaluation process will determine if the home school model works with the new staffing and student ratios.

Ms. Brandman asked how many total home school models there were in MCPS. Staff explained that there were 61 schools. Ms. Brandman inquired about the different responsibilities that a resource teacher might have in home school model schools. Staff explained that, in a home school model, all teachers are responsible for IEPs, program delivery, and assessment.

Ms. Brandman asked about class-size reduction and focus schools. At the kindergarten level, the ratio is 15 to 1, now it would be raised to 17 to 1, which is comparable to Grades 1 and 2. This class size may need to "float" until every kindergarten class would get to the maximum, before there is another allocation of staff. Mr. Bedford replied that the classes will float to manage class size, with staffing starting at 15 to 1 and now 17 to 1. Staff stated that they allocate staff as soon as they see classes growing over the threshold; however, sometimes they wait until the actual enrollment is ascertained before they make adjustments in staffing.

Mrs. O'Neill noted that research showed that the class size should be below 17 to 1. She asked how will staff monitor to determine if there is a negative impact on achievement? Mr. Bedford replied that the expectation is to increase kindergarten rigor, especially in reading. As in the past, staff will maximize resources to all allocations. Further, there are other staff and resources that the focus schools have at their disposal.

Ms. Berthiaume wanted to know if the Board would get a quarterly report on class sizes of more than 19 in kindergarten. Mr. Bowers replied that staff will provide the class-size report to the Board in November, indicating those schools with class sizes over the guidelines.

Mr. Barclay questioned the level of academic interventions and reductions. He wanted to know the impact at each level. Ms. Brandman stated that it was 18 elementary schools, 10 middle schools, and 5 high schools. Mr. Barclay asked if the 110 remaining intervention teachers would work directly with students. Mr. Bedford explained that these teachers will work directly with students. Mr. Bowers stated that these positions are zero based every year, and the community superintendents identify the needs expressed by the principals and then allocate positions to the schools. Dr. Weast added that the system is committed to all students, and staff will closely monitor the situation.

Dr. Docca asked about student services. She wanted to know how student appeals will be handled. Dr. Wright stated that the calculations were done, and there is enough staff to handle to appeals and hearings. Dr. Docca was concerned about office space and adequate equipment for the psychologists and pupil personnel workers when they are housed in schools. Dr. Wright stated that they are working with facilities personnel to ensure that there is adequate work space for these positions.

Dr. Docca asked about the International Student Admissions Office (ISAO) and the added responsibilities to the administrator. She suggested that the position should be upgraded. Mr. Bowers stated that it would be reviewed.

Mr. Kauffman noted that there was a reduction of \$150,000 for contractual services for antiviolence programs. How are the contracts awarded, and how are those programs evaluated? Mr. Zagami replied that there is a grant process with criteria and reporting. At this time, a selected group will review the contractual services and grade the effectiveness of all programs, and then they will make a recommendation for continuance of a contract, based on available funding.

Ms. Malik asked about High School Plus and the cut of Evening High School. Mr. Bedford explained that this is the third year of High School Plus, and this was determined to be the last year for Evening High School. High School Plus has courses for students during the day as well as after school.

Ms. Navarro suggested reorganizing the Department of Student Services by combining

ISAO and Residency Compliance. The community identifies with the word “international,” so she suggested retaining that in the name of the unit. Hopefully, the grants have a proven track record and will be funded.

Mr. Barclay remarked that one of the issues was Algebra I and High School Plus. Has there been a reduction in the number of students? Staff volunteered to provide a list of courses and the number of students.

Mr. Kauffman asked if there were formal evaluations of the academic intervention staff. Mr. Bedford replied that there has not been a system wide analysis because principals make formal applications for the position from year to year. Community superintendents review the applications and priorities, and each principal reports on the effectiveness of the position within the school.

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

- Middle School Reform

Re: **DISCUSSION**

Ms. Berthiaume asked about the translation of new curriculum materials and whether it is the time to freeze curriculum rollout in order to reduce the burden on staff. Mr. Lang stated that there is very little new curriculum except for science, and they are at the end of the rollout.

Mr. Kauffman inquired about the high school consortia with an increase of 4 FTE positions. What are those positions, and what do the 60 positions do? Mr. Lang stated that these are for the teams at the ninth grade level, but he would get the exact information.

Mr. Kauffman asked about total high school consortia budget, and whether it included incremental transportation costs, application process, and extra costs in running the consortia. Mr. Bowers replied that it does not include transportation. The only cost is the central position for the selection process, and the ninth grade smaller learning communities.

Mr. Kauffman commented that the decision was made to increase the high school consortia, but delete the middle school consortia. Mr. Bowers stated that the positions are needed in order to provide educational opportunities within a variety of programs. If the consortia students went to their home schools, they would lose the opportunity to participate in different programs or be limited in choice or replicate the programs in all school at a significant cost.

Dr. Docca was supportive of an IB program at Watkins Mill High School. Please examine students from Clemente being sent to Seneca Valley instead of coming back to Watkins Mill. The community would like to have an IB Middle Years program at Montgomery Village

as well as at Neelsville.

Mrs. O'Neill asked how many students from Watkins Mill and Rockville (all IB programs) are going on to Richard Montgomery. What is the cost of transportation for those students going to Richard Montgomery rather than their home school?

Ms. Navarro thought that the consortia should be placed on the work plan for a committee.

Ms. Brandman requested how many schools that have magnet programs were subject to reductions last year on the release and are subject to additional reductions this year.

Mr. Barclay stated his opposition to the reduction of the middle school magnet consortia. Hopefully, there could be a way to keep the model since it has been successful. The piece that made it appealing to him was the positive impact on the student in the home school.

Ms. Berthiaume appreciated the response to Question 18 and the chart. To assess the two models and what works, she wanted to see the breakdown of the data MSA specifically for last year's crop of 6th graders where middle school reform has been implemented for those schools and also the magnets. How does the performance compare? Could staff also compare Parkland and Loiederman with Argyle? Staff indicated that the information is ready for distribution to the Board.

Mrs. O'Neill noted that the added funding for the middle school magnet was in this year's budget in the hopes of getting federal funding. What is the cost of the 8 period day? What is the cost to keep the richness of the program alive? What is the cost of changing coordinator to resource teacher? The answers will be provided to the Board by staff.

Mr. Kauffman inquired about the five out of eight saving money in reducing the need for substitutes and after school stipends. What is the savings? How much do substitutes and stipends cost in an average middle school? Dr. Weast stated that the costs of middle school reform school and the middle school magnet schools are not significantly different.

Academic Priority – Expand and Deliver Literacy-based Initiatives from Prekindergarten through Grade 12 to Support Student Achievement

- Early Childhood Education
- Special Education
- Literacy
- ESOL

Re: DISCUSSION

Mr. Kauffman asked about the Special Education Staffing Plan, and hours based staffing for FY 2009 with 463 students and 85.8 teachers. There is an increase in FY2010 of 695 students with the same number of teachers. Please explain the allocations. What is the

formula? Staff agreed to check on the number, but the allocation is done on the total number of instructional hours on a child's IEP.

Mr. Kauffman asked about the report on the phase out of the learning centers. Will the Board get the report prior to adoption of the budget? Ms. Berthiaume wanted the report before the vote on the budget. Staff stated that the report would be available in mid-February?

Ms. Berthiaume referred to Question 15 and the indication that CAPP (MPAC) will be eliminated. Is that correct? Dr. Wright explained that MCPS will add six additional programs to provide full-day options. Instead of placing 36 students in MPAC, Dr. Wright stated that 36 students will be placed in MCPS programs.

Ms. Berthiaume asked for the head count of students on the number of children to be enrolled with IEPs. How were the students under counted last year? What is the number of students receiving special education services? Dr. Wright agreed to provide the information.

Ms. Brandman noted the reduction in secondary intensive reading teachers. Staff volunteered to provide a list of all schools with reading interventions.

Ms. Berthiaume was concerned about the reduction in instructional materials as it related to copier costs. Mr. Bowers replied that the school allocations will be going up; the budget relates to central office purchases.

Ms. Berthiaume remarked about the reading specialists and staff development. For the smallest schools, especially those without assistant principals, the budget is removing essential staff. Could there be a hold harmless for these schools? Mr. Varga stated that support for teachers is differentiated. The specialists will need to redefine the work in order to get the work done through staff development specialists.

Mr. Kauffman asked how many course-related fees have been collected over the past two years. If there were a "no fee" formula, what would be the cost? Mr. Bowers stated that the dollar amount is large. It is not just the dollars, but the programs that might be lost. Mr. Kauffman asked if \$1.5 million will be enough to cover the fees without looking elsewhere for funds. Mr. Bowers stated that it was an educated guess, and schools are not expected to cut instructional programs.

Ms. Berthiaume asked for the amount collected by school for the 2007-08 school year. What is the impact on electives and arts?

Ms. Brandman inquired about the .5 staff development and .5 reading specialists. Please share staff thinking about this reduction.

Re: **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

PRESIDENT

SECRETARY

JDW:gr