

October 26, 2009

Board Members
Baltimore County Public Schools

Dear Board Members:

On Monday, October 12, 2009, the Southeast Area Educational Advisory Council held its monthly meeting which was open to the public. The topic of the meeting was the 2011 fiscal operating budget and as usual the turnout was significant. The speakers at this meeting brought forth very pertinent needs for our children. The council felt that there were issues that we would like to join with our speakers and endorse as viable needs to be included in the operating budget.

The Council and the speakers wish to thank all responsible for the new Dundalk – Sollers Point high school complex that is no longer a dream, but a true project that is beginning. We join with all of our parents, teachers, and administrators asking that we fully fund this project. We would not want to see any cuts that would diminish the ability of this complex becoming the flag ship school of the southeast area. This school will afford our area a bright future and our children opportunities to make a difference not only in their lives but the lives of their community and our county. Again we applaud the forward thinking of all those involved with this project. We stand ready as a board to assist in any way we can.

The council also endorses the idea of looking into staffing schools in a different format. A Differentiated Staffing model was suggested. The council agrees that alternative forms of staffing needs to be adopted. All schools are accountable to meet AYP requirements, however not all schools have stable student bodies. There are schools within our system that face dynamic issues that are not shared by other schools. These schools have transient populations and high withdrawal rates which put larger work loads on guidance staff to process and handle. The teaching staff is challenged with meeting requirements with changing classroom sizes and human social dynamics. For these reasons we the council believe that we need to look at alternative and realistic solutions to these challenges so that all of our children may prosper.

The council would also like to endorse the continuing support of the CTE (Career Technology Education) Program. In the southeast area, the council realizes that not all students may be college bound. With that being stated, the council feels that the very successful CTE program allows those students, who may not go on to college right after graduation, to learn content knowledge that will carry them into the work force prepared with skills that allow them to find career path employment. Many students who follow this course of training may eventually enter college to further their careers. We feel that this program provides an alternative avenue for students to follow which will allow them to graduate and become successful wage earners as well as productive members of society. This program has been working since 1999 with only a small increase while the cost has expanded well beyond the 1999 cost. It is for this reason that we endorse an overall dollar increase for the CTE program.

Finally, the Southeast Area Advisory Council would like to stand with our most valuable resource our teachers and school staff in requesting constant vigilance is kept with the salary structures. If we expect our teachers and staff to do a job and hold each to the high standard that we expect we must also be willing to compensate them for their efforts. Our society and economy continues to rise yet due to budgeting we ask our teachers to pay the price. This is an unfair and unrealistic expectation. It is a matter of basic economics you may love what you are doing and where you are doing it, however you must eat and pay your bills. If we want to maintain highly qualified and certified personnel we need to keep pay competitive.

In conclusion, many positive things are happening in our schools and it is our duty to facilitate a means and a way to promote and assist our teachers and staff to facilitate a successful learning environment for our sons and daughters. While we fully recognize the state of our economy, it is our responsibility to perpetuate our future through our children and they deserve the best we can give. With this in mind while increases may not happen we ask that the board not make any cuts, and stay in tune with our environment and meet the needs as it is warranted.

We the Southeast Area Educational Advisory Council respectfully submit these recommendations to you for consideration in the fiscal 2011 budget. The council would also like to thank the following board members for attending this meeting; Joe Pallozzi, Meg O'Hare, and Roger Janssen. The council also sends their sincere appreciation to Sollers Point Technical High School and especially to the Culinary Arts program teacher and students for hosting the event and providing an excellent dinner and inviting atmosphere to us all.

Sincerely,

C.O. "Bud" Staigerwald, Jr.
Chairman
The Southeast Area Educational Advisory Council