

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND,
PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2004 OPERATING BUDGET

Thursday, January 30, 2003
Dulaney High School

The hearing was called to order by Vice President James R. Sasiadek at 7:00 p.m. In addition to Vice President Sasiadek, the following Board members were in attendance: Ms. Sarah D. Bormel, Ms. Phyllis E. Ettinger, Mr. Thomas G. Grzymiski, Ms. Jean M. H. Jung, and Mr. Michael P. Kennedy. In addition, staff members were present as was the media.

The following citizens and employees offered testimony:

1. Marcella Kehr, President of the Baltimore (County Instructional) Assistants (BACE), encouraged the Board to include salary increases for BACE's members as well as funding for the reclassification. She shared her hope that any salary increase included in the proposed budget would be fair to all employees and requested the Board be considerate of BACE members' needs.
2. Cheryl Bost, a teacher at Mars Estates Elementary School, Baltimore County's Teacher of the Year, and Vice President of the Teachers Association of Baltimore County (TABCO), noted the highly qualified teaching staff at her school despite the large percentage of students participating in the Free and Reduced Lunch program and the high mobility rate of students at her school. Ms. Bost noted that as Teacher of the Year, she is learning the implications of ESEA. As TABCO Vice President, she urged the Board to support an increase in teacher salaries and full course reimbursement.
3. Ms. Angela Leitzer, Chair of TABCO's Staffing Task Force, spoke about appropriate and effective allocation of staffing. She stated that staffing allocations must count only teaching positions and take into account actual numbers of students. Ms. Leitzer expressed concern that the proposal for technology teachers in elementary schools will absorb special area time and not add to the total staffing allocation for schools. In another related concern, Ms. Leitzer spoke about the sometimes disproportionate allocation of resource positions or helping positions versus the number of teachers who are the primary providers of education for students.
4. Ms. Theresa Lochte, a speech/language pathologist and a member of TABCO's Staffing Task Force, shared her concern about the large discrepancy between the student/teacher ratios indicated in the staffing plan and the actual numbers of students who are on caseloads of special educators. She stated Baltimore County Public Schools needs to ensure that all special educators have manageable caseloads so that they can provide the Free Appropriate Public Education services in the least restricted environment as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

5. Mr. Mark Beytin, President of the Teachers Association of Baltimore County, strongly urged the Board to include in the budget a reasonable cost of living adjustment for all employees. He stated that Baltimore County Public Schools' starting salary for teachers ranks 15th statewide; Step 2 on our salary scale ranks 17th statewide.
6. Ms. Leah Reed, a Chase Elementary School parent, thanked the Board for funding computer equipment at Chase, but noted that most of their teachers are at a novice level with regard to technology issues. She voiced her support for a technology position at each elementary school to provide teacher assistance on a regular basis.
7. Mr. Joe Freed, Principal at Carver Center for Arts and Technology, thanked the Board for its continuing support of Carver. He also thanked Board members for the inclusion of money in the capital budget for a performing arts and exhibit hall. Mr. Freed noted the exhibit hall will be museum quality. He also expressed his hope that a large room for the instrumental music program will be part of this building.
8. Mr. Albert Walker, a PTA member at Pleasant Plains Elementary School, voiced parents' support of the recommended budget, particularly:
 - a. Class size reduction at the elementary level,
 - b. Technology teachers in elementary schools,
 - c. Expansion of full day kindergarten, and
 - d. Increasing teachers' salaries.
9. Mr. Bob Fiedler, President of the Dulaney High School PTA, offered his support of the proposed budget, but shared his concern that the issue of teacher recruitment is not addressed. He noted that Dulaney has 45 teachers with 25 years or more.
10. Ms. Adrienne Walicki, a Dulaney High School parent, urged an increase in teachers' and administrators' salaries. This is needed to retain quality teachers and administrators and to attract the best candidates. Ms. Walicki also noted that Baltimore County Public Schools' administrators rank 19th statewide in salaries.
11. Ms. Debbie Yokum, President of Hampton Elementary School PTA, thanked the Board for recognizing the urgent need for technology in schools. She also noted the recognition of the need for small school allotments. Ms. Yokum also voiced support for the proposed budget and the need to reduce K-2 student/teacher ratios. Finally, Ms. Yokum shared the PTA's support of a technology position in elementary schools.

12. Ms. Tammy Browning, Treasurer of the Pot Spring Elementary School PTA, supported full-day kindergarten. She expressed hope that the 10 schools selected for full-day kindergarten would have the facilities to house the students without displacing existing special classes—music, art, etc. With regard to technology, Ms. Browning suggested a focus on entering information into one common system to prevent redundancy. Lastly, Ms. Browning voiced her support of increased teacher salaries.
13. Ms. Nancy Drussell, a teacher and Pleasant Plains Elementary School parent, shared the need for a building level staff position to address technology needs. She stated that currently, the equipment in her building is underutilized.
14. Ms. Jan Thomas, a representative of the PTA Council of Baltimore County, commended Dr. Hairston and staff for creating a budget that serves the children in the Baltimore County Public Schools. She stated that while the proposed budget does not address salary increases for school system employees, it does address class size and technology support. The Board was urged to send the budget, in tact, to the County Executive. She expressed the Council’s desire to see more money for technology development. Ms. Thomas stated that a new student information system would allow the school system to meet the reporting requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, but would also lessen the use of valuable man-hours on the collection of data and provide more timely information. Lastly, she requested that announcements regarding hearings and rescheduled meetings be placed on the BCPS opening home page.
15. Ms. Susan Bardell, representing the Rodgers Forge Elementary School PTA, stated the PTA’s support of reducing K-2 class size and maintaining current student/teacher ratios for the intermediate grades. The PTA also supports the technology position for elementary schools. Finally, Rodgers Forge PTA supports an increase in salary for administrators and teachers.
16. Mr. Ozzie Taube, a Rodgers Forge Elementary School parent, echoed the comments made by Ms. Bardell. He noted we need to be able to attract teachers. Mr. Taube supported the proposed budget and urged the Board to include an increase in salary for teachers and administrators.
17. Ms. JoLynn Chadwick, Chair of the Citizens Advisory Committee for Gifted/Talented Education, congratulated the Superintendent for a clear, concise, and aligned budget. She did express concern that more money will be needed. Ms. Chadwick stated that in the future, advanced skills will be a necessity to address technological devices. Individuals will be needed with extensive skills and backgrounds to keep the system moving forward in this technological age.

18. Ms. Cindy Sabo, a representative of the Alternative Education Office, asked the Board to support an increase in Evening High School (EHS) teachers' salaries. She noted that many of the EHS teachers have no educational background or are not experienced in the content area they are teaching. Ms. Sabo stated that veteran teachers are needed in these classrooms and to assist new teachers in planning effective lessons.
19. Ms. Celeste Stivers, a teacher and Dumbarton Middle School parent, offered her support of lowering class size in grades K-2. She shared a few facts about the positive effects this proposal would have on our students.
20. Ms. Amelia Sifleet, a White Oak School parent, spoke of the positive changes she has seen in her son since attending White Oak. She voiced her support of the therapeutic support positions. Ms. Sifleet noted that adequate private mental health care is not readily available for many White Oak families, so these services are needed in school.
21. Ms. Cheryl Bishop, a White Oak School parent, also spoke of the positive effect White Oak has had on her children. She, too, expressed a need for more mental health services for White Oak's children and supported the therapeutic supports.
22. An unidentified White Oak parent asked the Board to fully fund White Oak's budget and not to decrease any special education or mental health positions at the school for next year.
23. Ms. Kerri Zurek, President of the Grange Elementary School PTA, requested new windows and doors for the school.
24. Ms. E. Cook, a parent from Grange Elementary School, shared with the Board the need for a technology position at the school.
25. Ms. Deidre Marlow, a Dulaney High School parent, shared her frustration with spending too much time and money on studies that indicate small class size has a positive effect on student achievement. She asked the Board to consider reallocating money to reduce class size at the secondary level. Ms. Marlow shared her concern that not enough technology positions are allocated. Finally, she asked the Board to consider reallocating funds to schools based partly on student population.
26. Ms. Vicki Schultz-Unger, asked the Board to support the proposed budget as presented and to consider additional funds to provide raises for teachers. She stated it is important for the Board to make a strong statement with this budget to our elected officials. Ms. Schultz-Unger noted her support of reducing K-2 class size, expansion of full-day kindergarten at 10 additional schools, providing

technology resource positions at the elementary level, and new technology to handle the reporting requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act*.

27. Ms. Mary Pat Kahle offered her support of the following proposals:
 - Salary increases for teachers,
 - The continuation of building new technology infrastructure for reporting data, and
 - A dedicated reading position in every high school.

28. Mr. Kevin Abell, a representative of the Advisory Committee for Alternative Education, requested an increase in salary for Evening High School teachers. He stated many of the EHS teachers do not have knowledge of the content area.

29. Ms. Mary Koch, an administrative secretary in the Baltimore County Public Schools, requested the same level of salary increases for clericals as for teachers. She also requested funding for upgrades for elementary school clericals, as determined by a reclassification study five years ago. Ms. Koch noted that teachers in high-risk schools have received bonuses each year because they work with challenging students, while instructional assistants, who work alongside them in the same room, receive no bonus.

30. Ms. Truda Fagan, Principal of Glenmar Elementary School, spoke in support of the “long overdue” funding of the reclassification study for elementary clericals. She delineated the many responsibilities of elementary school clericals.

31. Ms. Darla Evans, President-Elect of the Association of Elementary School Administrators, noted the positive effect of reducing the student/teacher ratio in grades K-2. She thanked the Board for its response to the need for a step scale for the Council of Administrative and Supervisory Employees (CASE). Ms. Evans asked for a greater commitment by the Board to the unique challenge of school-based administrators by placing them one level above what is currently indicated. She also voiced the need for appropriate compensation for teachers.

32. Mr. Michael Behrens, the nurse at Chadwick Elementary School, expressed his gratitude to the Board and Baltimore County for a school system that values the importance of health care in every school. He described the numerous jobs performed during an “average day.” Mr. Behrens stated that the nurses’ relationship with the Board has been professional and collegial. He also recognized the difficult problem being faced with respect to health benefits and wages.

33. Ms. Yvonne Nelson, Vice President of Edmondson Heights Elementary School PTA, spoke of the overcrowding at Edmondson Heights. She stated a kindergarten class currently meets in the library, and there are no art or music

rooms. The Board was asked to consider an addition in the future. Ms. Nelson noted a significant number of young families moving into the community. With respect to the heating system, she indicated the custodial staff appears to be untrained in operating, repairing, or maintaining the system. Finally, Ms. Nelson shared her support of teacher salary increases.

34. Ms. Sue Battle-McDonald, a Timonium Elementary School parent, stated her support of reducing kindergarten class size. However, she felt the limit should be reduced even further to 20. She noted there are 27 kindergarteners in her child's class.
35. Ms. Tracy Lavin, a Fort Garrison Elementary School parent, voiced her support of technology positions in elementary schools and a reduction of class size for K-2.
36. Ms. Lora Williams, President of Local 434 (AFSCME) and a bus driver, shared her hope that the following items would be included in the budget request:
 - An increase in shift differentials for third shift workers,
 - Funding the recommended upgrade for groundsmen,
 - Fund the upgrade for bus drivers, noting the approximate cost is the equivalent of a 1% pay increase for AFSCME members, and
 - Cost-of-living increases for all employees.
37. Ms. Paula Jones, President of Milford Mill Academy's PTA, urged the Board to support the budget as proposed. She noted an increase in Milford's enrollment next year and requested funding for additional teachers. Ms. Jones also noted the need for a school social worker at Milford and computers for every classroom.

The hearing was adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Zepp
Administrative Assistant to
the Board of Education