

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF BALTIMORE COUNTY  
WORK SESSION ON THE PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR '04 OPERATING BUDGET

Tuesday, February 4, 2003

President Donald L. Arnold called the meeting to order at 6:58 p.m. In addition to President Arnold, the following Board members were present: Ms. Sarah D. Bormel, Ms. Phyllis E. Ettinger, Mr. Thomas G. Grzynski, Ms. Jean M. H. Jung, Mr. Michael P. Kennedy, Ms. Janese Murray, Mr. James R. Sasiadek, and Mr. Sanford V. Teplitzky. In addition, Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent of Schools, and staff members were present as was the media.

Dr. Hairston described the budget process to date. He also highlighted some of the built-in costs and redirected funds included in the proposed budget.

Ms. Burnopp reviewed the definition of six (6) terms used frequently in the proposed budget.

Mr. Hayden entered the room at 7:08 p.m.

Ms. Johns reviewed the four (4) Elementary Programs initiatives included in the proposed budget.

Mr. Kennedy inquired about State funding for full-day kindergarten in 2007.

Mr. Walker entered the room at 7:11 p.m.

Ms. Johns described the new Secondary Programs initiatives proposed in the '04 budget.

Ms. Grant described for Ms. Ettinger how the CollegeEd program will be implemented next school year. She noted that the program is currently being piloted in eight (8) schools and will take place during the school day. Ms. Grant indicated there would be no staffing implications and could be incorporated through pull-out programs, infused in one curriculum strand, or rotated in multiple content strands. Ms. Ettinger shared her excitement about CollegeEd, but expressed her concern about time being taken away from academic subjects to accommodate the time needed for this worthwhile program.

Dr. Hayman entered the room at 7:23 p.m.

Ms. Bormel asked why 7<sup>th</sup> grade was chosen for this program. She suggested offering CollegeEd in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Ms. Grant replied that The College Board determined the program should be offered at this grade level. It is desired to offer this program to 7<sup>th</sup> graders before they and their parents start making decisions about high school course offerings. Ms. Johns added this initiative will also help students who may not have the same supports as other students and who may not be aware of the importance of getting started early in the right career tracks. Ms. Johns stated this is being built into the day school to ensure that all children are able to meet the high expectations established. She acknowledged that scheduling does matter and staff will work with the Executive Directors of Schools to make this program succeed.

Ms. Ettinger shared her concern that since the pilot program is just starting this semester, there will be no information available before the budget is adopted to determine its potential success. Ms. Grant responded that studies by The College Board show this program helps to close the achievement gap and is a visionary measure that will give all students the same information so they can plan for 8<sup>th</sup> grade and high school.

Dr. Hayman expressed a desire to know how the College Board program already in place and the AVID program mesh with this new initiative. Dr. Hayman shared his uncertainty that all 7<sup>th</sup> graders need this program. He also noted there was nothing in the narrative to explain how this program will narrow the achievement gap. Dr. Hayman was troubled by the selection of one teacher per middle school becoming a facilitator for this program and not knowing teachers' reactions to being given that responsibility. Finally, Dr. Hayman voiced his concern about relying on new Thornton Funds for several of the new initiatives, when that funding is uncertain.

Ms. Johns described the new initiatives in Professional Development.

Mr. Teplitzky asked about staff's plan in the event we do not receive all that is anticipated in the way of new Thornton Funds. Ms. Audette indicated that should we not receive all the Thornton funding expected, staff will have to establish priorities and determine which programs we are required to implement.

Ms. Ettinger inquired about the availability of any data or information with regard to the impact on teachers' performance and retention after attending the New Teacher Language Arts Academy. Ms. McMahon indicated that at the end of the year, those issues could be examined. Ms. Ettinger shared her disappointment that this type of information would come too late in terms of the budget process.

Dr. Hayman suggested there should be more emphasis and more funding in Professional Development in the areas of improving attitudinal skills and changing the culture of the teaching and learning environment. He also suggested strengthening professional development in the area of continuing teachers and not just new teachers. Ms. Johns noted that about \$2.2 million dollars is proposed for the Office of Professional Development next year. Dr. Hayman commented that the amount proposed for Professional Development includes salaries, not just funds for new and continuing programs.

Ms. Johns reviewed the new initiatives in Federal and State Programs.

Ms. Jung questioned the large amount of money proposed for non-public placement. Mr. Boone shared a number of reasons for the increase:

- An increase of 80 students over the past year,
- Increasing non-public placement costs,
- An increased need for one-on-one assistance,

- An increase in the level of severity of intensity placement (more students needing psychological services, more children moving from day services to residential services, etc.), and
- An increased number of students moving into Baltimore County who are already in non-public placements.

Mr. Kennedy expressed concerns shared with him by parents and administrators that a significant amount of time and energy is expended on agency placed children with special needs, and while those children deserve to have their needs addressed, the time and energy focused on those students takes away from the educational focus of the other students.

Dr. Hayman noted that it appears that IDEA will get additional funding, if it goes through as proposed.

Ms. Johns described the new programs proposed for PreK-12 Special Programs.

Mr. Grzynski expressed his pleasure with the continuation of library funding. However, Mr. Kennedy questioned if this is enough to keep us from falling behind in keeping collections updated and diversified. While recognizing the difficult economic times, Mr. Kennedy hoped more funding would be requested for library funding in FY '05.

In response to a question by Ms. Jung, Ms. Johns indicated repairs and the purchase of some additional musical instruments were included in the proposed budget.

Ms. Johns briefly described the new initiatives proposed for Student Support Services.

Mr. Hayden stated we must step up our efforts to deal with disruptive students and proposed keeping it at a high level for next year's budget. Mr. Kemmery responded that issue is being addressed through Evening High School, by offering a higher salary to teachers which will mean a better educational experience for those students. He also stated there are after school programs for elementary, middle, and high school students.

Dr. Hayman shared his concern that there are no alternative programs for elementary children and requested data on the number of elementary students expelled. He also expressed a desire for staff to look at creating an alternative program for these particular students.

Ms. Johns explained how Redirected State Funds would affect certain initiatives, both existing and proposed.

Mr. Teplitzky voiced his concern that the new technology teachers in elementary schools would not have adequate support, oversight, and training. Ms. Johns stated that money has been allocated to provide training for these teachers. Their main focus will not be repairs, but on implementing the Essential Curriculum. Ms. Johns also noted that in the Superintendent's

budget two years ago, 10 positions were requested to address repair and maintenance of equipment in schools. More of those positions are needed, but require additional funding. Ms. Bailey added that in the Office of Instructional Technology, each area has one resource teacher providing professional development.

Mr. Teplitzky inquired about the school system's long range plan for providing this type of position to middle and high schools, noting that the support drops off after elementary school when it is as important, if not more important.

Mr. Kennedy questioned how the mentor proposal will work. Ms. Fleischmann stated mentoring teachers will be placed in schools where there are large numbers of first and second year teachers. In addition, those schools will be determined by FARMS data and achievement data. In response to a question by Ms. Jung, Ms. Fleischmann responded there will be a reduction of 23.8 mentoring positions.

Mr. Walker expressed his concern that mentors should be required to stay in a position for an extended period of time, rather than be promoted after only one year. Ms. Johns indicated the Superintendent shares the same concern and has charged Ms. Fleischmann with stabilizing mentors. She noted that mentors become excellent principals.

Mr. Hayden disagreed with Mr. Walker sharing his view that it could be beneficial for new teachers to learn from more than one person. Mr. Teplitzky also disagreed stating the mentor position should be a career ladder. He also stated the school system should be providing more incentives to keep people closer to the students when they've demonstrated an ability to teach students well. Mr. Teplitzky stated that he would support any initiative to provide an incentive to get teachers to stay in challenged schools so inexperienced first and second year teachers wouldn't be placed in those schools.

Ms. Ettinger inquired about the elimination of the Academic Intervention Team. Ms. Johns responded that the Team did an excellent job. However, staff felt that reducing the student/teacher ratio in K-2 would have a greater effect on more students. Dr. Hairston commented that in better economic times, the Team could have been expanded. However, with the range of diversity in our school system and the range of challenges, academically, for students, the Superintendent stated this is an investment in K-2 to make certain foundation skills are in place.

Dr. Hayman and Mr. Grzymiski expressed the need to communicate with the public on how the student/teacher ratio is calculated. Dr. Hayman expressed the hope to his colleagues that they don't place too much focus on the economics of the changes when there are certain instructional or educational reasons for making the changes.

Mr. Haines reviewed the proposed programs for Human Resources.

Ms. Ettinger expressed her joy with the Enrichment and Accelerated Programs proposal. She stated it makes sense to provide incentives to schools to provide these programs. Mr. Hayden shared his distress that there are schools who have no identified Gifted/Talented students.

Mr. Kennedy stated he was glad to see the restructuring for CASE members. He also stated how important it is for the school system to attract the best people.

Dr. Hayman concurred with Mr. Hayden's comment on the schools that have no identified Gifted/Talented students. Dr. Hairston voiced his agreement with Dr. Hayman and Mr. Hayden. He stated that is the direct responsibility of the Executive Directors of Schools, and he will hold principals accountable.

Ms. Jung asked for information about the BACE reclassification and its fiscal implications.

Mr. Hayden expressed his hope that the Superintendent and staff would make a sincere effort to include salary increases for staff. Ms. Ettinger stated that it is in everyone's best interests to provide funding for salary increases.

Mr. Haines reviewed the initiatives in Information Technology.

Mr. Grzymiski asked for clarification of the costs for Item #34. Mr. Barlow indicated the \$1.5 million is for the Student Information System (Phase 1 of 2). The \$642,000 is the sum of Items 35 and 36. Mr. Grzymiski asked if, when in place, all teachers and administrators would have access to computers. Mr. Barlow indicated that type of funding is not included in this request. He stated that the school system is still maintaining a 1/5 ratio but acknowledged the computers are aging. There are Internet connections in 95% of the classrooms.

Mr. Haines described the initiatives in Fiscal Services.

Mr. Walker asked if the number of assistant principals at New Town High School would be increased to 3, to which there was an affirmative response.

Mr. Haines reviewed the Planning and Support Services initiative.

Dr. Hayman shared his concern about depending on Thornton funding for buses and bus drivers at New Town High School.

Mr. Haines reviewed the initiative from Physical Facilities.

Ms. Jung asked how much money is currently spent in this area and whether this request will supplement the current budget.

Ms. Burnopp reviewed the remaining timeline for the operating budget process.

Mr. Arnold thanked staff for its hard work, the excellent presentations this evening, and the documentation provided to Board members. He noted that each year the documentation provided gets better and is clearer. Mr. Arnold noted that funds are very limited on the county and federal levels.

The work session was adjourned at 9:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Joe A. Hairston  
Secretary-Treasurer

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