

REPORT OF THE WORK SESSION ON THE PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2006
OPERATING BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

Tuesday, February 1, 2005
Greenwood

The Board of Education of Baltimore County, Maryland, met in open session at 7:00 p.m. at Greenwood. Board Member Mr. Michael P. Kennedy and the following Board members were present: Mr. Donald L. Arnold, Mr. Luis E. Borunda, Mr. Nicholas P. Camp, Ms. Frances A.S. Harris, Dr. Warren Hayman, Mr. Rodger C. Janssen, and Ms. Joy Shillman. In addition, Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent of Schools; staff members; as well as the media were present.

Mr. Kennedy reviewed the purpose of tonight's work session.

Dr. Hairston remarked that tonight's work session was a follow-up to the presentation made to the Board on January 11th and the public hearing held on January 26th. Dr. Hairston noted that the school system's accomplishments are clearly the result of the investment made as the *Blueprint for Progress* is implemented. Dr. Hairston stated this budget will allow Baltimore County Public Schools to continue to provide our children with the opportunity to succeed. By putting the emphasis on quality – with highly qualified employees and top-notch programs, we will drive student achievement to higher and higher levels.

Ms. Barbara Burnopp, Executive Director in the Fiscal Services Department, provided a brief overview of the plans to fund the FY2006 proposed operating budget. She reviewed the Maintenance of Effort (MOE) graph noting the increase to \$24 million above MOE or 4.3 percent, which is the largest since FY2002. Ms. Burnopp noted the MOE level will not increase for FY2006.

Next, Ms. Burnopp shared with Board members the comparison of all general fund revenues chart, which shows an increase of State funding from 37 percent in FY2005 to a proposed 39 percent in FY2006.

Finally, Ms. Burnopp explained how the budget book was developed and the technical adjustments made for this work session. She stated that all revisions would be in the final proposed operating budget documentation, which will be presented to the Board for approval at the February 22nd meeting.

Mr. Kennedy opened the floor for Board members to ask questions or express concerns regarding the proposed operating budget.

With the expansion of kindergarten, Mr. Arnold requested consideration be given to include adding aides for kindergarten classes in the proposed budget. Dr. Christine Johns, Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, responded with two scenarios and the cost: 1) \$9 million for paid parent helpers and instructional assistants for 293 classrooms; or 2) \$2.9 million for paid parent helpers. Dr. Johns proposed that the staff take this item under advisement, research the information, and place the item under consideration in the FY07 budget process.

Regarding Woodholme Elementary School, Mr. Janssen inquired if the schools would have pre-Kindergarten and full-day Kindergarten. Dr. Johns responded affirmatively based on the requirements of *Bridge to Excellence*.

Ms. Shillman inquired about instructional salaries under Performance Goal 2 in the proposed operating budget book. Ms. Burnopp responded the figure includes start up costs and salaries.

Mr. Kennedy recommended phasing in aides for kindergarten teachers over a period of time. He also stated that the Board should look at the need for differentiated staffing in the future.

With regards to two additional FTE positions in Fiscal Services (Additional Internal Control Analysts), Mr. Janssen understands that those positions are related to the needs of the Legislative audit. But he stated the Budget & Audit Committee approved two other positions for the Office of Internal Audit and he would request that those positions also be added into the FY2006 operating budget. Mr. J. Robert Haines, Deputy Superintendent of Business Services, responded that should the Board feel strongly about these two positions in this budget, then a motion from a Board member would need to take place when the budget goes before the Board for approval.

Dr. Hayman commended the Superintendent and staff for the presentation and easy to follow format. He echoed Mr. Janssen's request to add the two FTE positions in the Office of Internal Audit. Dr. Hayman asked this item be included in the budget that will be brought to the Board at the February 22 meeting so that a motion by the Board would not be necessary. He also expressed support for instructional assistants at pre-K and kindergarten levels. Dr. Hayman stated this would help increase the performance level of younger students while meeting standards or consider reducing class size.

Dr. Hayman inquired about reading intervention at the middle school level, particularly beyond the 6th grade and the assessment process. Dr. Johns responded there was no request for additional staffing from staff during the budget process in this budget and that current resources, if available, would be utilized. She noted there is no opportunity to put a FTE in at this time.

With regards to item #14 (College Readiness Liaison Counselor), Dr. Hayman applauds the effort; however, believes it is narrow in focus on students transitioning to community colleges. He expressed concern that one individual cannot do all that this position is requiring. Dr. Hayman stated the focus should be on getting students into four-year institutions and establish the same type of relationship with four-year institutions as with two-year institutions. He noted there is no budgetary recommendation; however, he is recommending this position be reviewed further.

Regarding item #15 (Pilot Grade 9 Concepts of Physics as Applied to Biology Course), Dr. Hayman hopes there is preparation at the middle school level for students to advance to these courses. He stated the school system needs to apply an equitable standard as well as an equality standard. Dr. Hayman pointed out that Baltimore County Public Schools is taking a major step in math and science.

Ms. Shillman inquired about the special education mid-year enrollment growth amount. Ms. Burnopp replied the figure of \$944,104 includes benefits.

Ms. Shillman asked about the increase to the special education calculation and separation of the baseline. Ms. Burnopp responded there are two different formulas. The baseline formula is tied to all students and the special education formula is tied to a specific group of students.

Ms. Shillman inquired about the four ESOL teacher positions. Ms. Burnopp responded four FTE's are being added to the operating budget and three positions are in special revenues for a total of seven positions.

Ms. Shillman asked whether the amount allotted for Praxis II Math Certification (item #27) is sufficient. Ms. Pat Baltzley, Director of Mathematics PreK-12, responded this money has been sufficient to support the number of teachers.

Ms. Shillman inquired about the Loyola Program of Secondary Certification in Math. Ms. Patricia Baltzley, Director, of Mathematics PreK-12, replied this grant is for elementary teachers who wish to earn certification in secondary mathematics and highly qualified status for teaching high school.

While reviewing the budget history, Ms. Harris questioned why administrative service budgets have increased when specific school budgets have decreased. Ms. Burnopp responded there are two categories of funding that are allocated to schools later in the year: magnet and holdback dollars. She stated that a footnote would be added to future budget books for clarification.

Ms. Harris expressed concern that the school system spends too much money on meals, particularly legislative dinners. Mr. Kennedy responded that such meals are infrequent.

Mr. Borunda inquired about the AVID program. Dr. Gwendolyn Grant, Executive Director of Secondary Programs, provided an overview of the program and noted it is an ongoing year-round program. Mr. Borunda asked if the AVID program was utilized in summer schools. Dr. Barbara Dezmon, Assistant to the Superintendent, Office of Equity and Assurance, replied the school system does not have summer school for AVID students. Mr. Borunda inquired about collaboration between the AVID Program and the Maryland's Tomorrow Program. Dr. Johns responded the needs between the Maryland's Tomorrow Program and AVID students are different.

In response to the switching of positions to the passthrough grant, Mr. Borunda asked for clarification of "time and effort certification." Mr. Ronald Boone, Executive Director of Federal and State Programs, replied BCPS is required to show that those funds are utilized specifically for the program and the program descriptions including salaried employees. Mr. Borunda asked if funds were being redirected to eliminate reporting. Mr. Boone responded when personal assistant temporary employees are placed in the operating budget, time and effort reporting does not need to be completed. Dr. Johns noted that if BCPS does not document time and effort properly, the grant could be in jeopardy.

Mr. Borunda was pleased with the cost of leasing 20 trucks. Ms. Burnopp stated this is a lease through the County with a good rate and is part of the ongoing (rolling) lease program. Mr. Borunda inquired about a separate line item for maintenance. Ms. Burnopp responded the maintenance budget would fall under Transportation for buses and Physical Facilities for trucks.

Regarding alternative education dropout prevention funding, Mr. Janssen applauded staff for the increase; however, stated it is a tremendous cost.

Ms. Harris inquired about accountability of Thornton funds. Dr. Johns responded there are several areas that BCPS is required to fund. For example, she stated the school system continues to work on pre-Kindergarten, full-day Kindergarten, closing the achievement gap as required by *Bridge to Excellence* by focusing on gifted and talented, special education, career and technology education, minority groups, and the English language learners.

Mr. Kennedy requested Gifted and Talented/Magnet Program funding continue to be monitored. He would also like to see additional funding in the curriculum and instruction area in the future. Ms. Shillman echoed Mr. Kennedy's comments.

With regards to professional development and the focus on math and science, Dr. Hayman suggested looking into partnerships with Johns Hopkins University and Coppin State University. He also noted that the special education report suggested a strong need for professional development of teachers in special education; however, this is not reflected in the proposed budget. Dr. Hayman pointed out that Professional Development needs also to focus on teacher learning, improving the Aspiring Leader program, and increasing the number of administrators within the system.

The work session was concluded at 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe A. Hairston
Secretary-Treasurer

bls