

APPROVED REPORT

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2007 OPERATING BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

Wednesday, January 24, 2007
Ridge Ruxton School

The hearing was called to order by President Donald L. Arnold at 7:03 p.m. In addition to President Arnold, the following Board members were present: Ms. Frances A.S. Harris, Mr. John A. Hayden, III, Dr. Warren C. Hayman, Mr. Rodger C. Janssen, Ms. Ramona N. Johnson, Ms. JoAnn C. Murphy, Ms. Mary-Margaret O'Hare, Mr. Joseph J. Pallozzi, Mr. H. Edward Parker, Jr., and Ms. Joy Shillman. Additionally, Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent of Schools, staff members, as well as media were present.

The following persons offered testimony:

- 1) Ms. Sharon Demoss, Bus Driver – Asked the Board to consider salary increases for bus drivers, attendants, and routing assistants, and to convert bus driver positions from 10-month to 12-month. As the cost of living is steadily increasing, bus driver salaries remain the same.
- 2) Mr. David Basler, Grounds Crew Chief – Asked the Board for a \$1.3 million increase for groundsmen to make their positions compatible to other county and private sector positions. He also stated there is a need for a career ladder for workers in this group, and that reimbursement for college classes could be part of the solution. Supports improvements to bus lots to improve working conditions.
- 3) Ms. Lora Williams, President, AFSCME Local 434 – Asked for funding of upgrades, step increases, or consider reclassification for custodians and three groups in transportation (attendants, bus drivers, and routing assistants). There is a difference in pay of the private contractors and neighboring jurisdictions.
- 4) Ms. Mary Koch, BACE Negotiation Chairperson - Asked the Board to increase paraeducator salaries. The salary increase would recognize paraeducators since they are now required to be highly qualified. There is also a need to recognize the additional financial support being placed on elementary school secretaries to support school financial accounts.
- 5) Mr. John Fontinell, Mathematics Department Chairman, Pikesville High School – Asked the Board to increase AVID funding in existing schools and add funding for the program in all schools.
- 6) Ms. Leah Mullen, PTA President of Ridge Ruxton School - Asked the Board to revisit the staffing at Ridge Ruxton. If the proposed operating budget is approved, the school will lose two teachers and two instructional assistants.

- 7) Ms. Maggie Kennedy, Chair of the Baltimore County Education Coalition – Urged the Board to support the Superintendent’s proposed operating budget. The budget is a reasonable budget focusing on students’ needs. Everyone needs to continue to focus on clear academics, challenging curriculum, and strong school leadership.
- 8) Ms. Lealie Perry, Johns Hopkins University – Asked the Board for funding for the acquisition, installation, and maintenance of sound enhancement systems.
- 9) Mr. Stephen Crum, Chair of the Career & Technology Education Advisory Council – Asked the Board to completely fund the career and technology education program.
- 10) Ms. Claire Holmes, Parent – Urged the Board to evaluate paraprofessional positions. Parents rely heavily on paraprofessional support. Currently, personal assistants do not receive benefits or special education training, and the positions are difficult to recruit and retain.
- 11) Ms. Kim Willard, Parent – Asked the Board to revisit salaries for personal assistants (PA) and consider sufficiently increasing this amount. Currently, personal assistants’ annual salary is under \$10,000, and PAs do not receive benefits, paid vacation, or sick days. She also suggested that the reliance on personal assistants should be decreased.
- 12) Ms. Michelle Douglas, Parent – Urged the Board to revisit salaries for personal assistants (PA) and include benefits and incentives to retain employees.
- 13) Mr. Andy Belt, Parent – Asked the Board to allocate funds to institute full-day pre-kindergarten for the autistic program.
- 14) Ms. Julie Belt, Parent – Asked the Board to allocate funds to institute full-day pre-kindergarten for the autistic program. She also asked the Board for additional funding to increase salaries for personal assistants.
- 15) Mr. Gary Willow, AVID Coordinator, Woodlawn High School – Would like the Board to consider expanding the AVID program at Woodlawn High School (WHS). WHS currently has 100 students on its waiting list.
- 16) Ms. Carol Hallinan, Parent – Asked the Board to consider converting therapist positions from 10-month to 12-month.
- 17) Ms. Jan Thomas, Chair, Special Education Citizens’ Advisory Committee – Asked the Board to support reasonable increases and benefits for personal assistants. As chair of the Central Area Education Advisory Council, she stated some students do not have biology textbooks, or they have to review it on-line and the access code does not work. She also stated it was difficult to find the proposed operating budget book on-line.
- 18) Miss Rosa DeLeon, Student – Supports the proposed operating budget recommendations for the AVID program.

- 19) Mr. Benjamin Dubin, Advocate – Asked the Board to convert audiologist positions from 10-month to 12-month.
- 20) Ms. Suzanne DeMallie, Advocate – Asked the Board to support the acquisition of sound enhancement systems for all schools. The proposed budget would only cover approximately thirty-five classrooms.
- 21) Mr. Kevin Able, Member of the Advisory Committee for Alternative Programs – Supports the proposed operating budget for the continuum alternative programs such as Maryland’s Tomorrow and Secondary Academic Intervention Model (SAIM). He commended the Board for taking proactive steps.
- 22) Ms. Maureen Callaghan Lau, Parent – Supports the increases for the Infants and Toddlers program.
- 23) Ms. Becky McClure, Teacher, Cedarmere Elementary School – Asked the Board to add funding for aides in all kindergarten classrooms. She also stated that more funding needs to be allocated for assistants.
- 24) Miss Leila Jeen, Student, Woodlawn High School – Asked the Board to continue to expand funding for the AVID program.
- 25) Miss Melissa Parks, Student, Woodlawn High School – Supports the proposed operating budget recommendations for the AVID program.
- 26) Miss Desiree Conley, Student, Woodlawn High School – Supports the proposed operating budget recommendations for the AVID program.
- 27) Ms. Celeste Stivers, Parent and Teacher, Timonium Elementary School – Would like class size no more than 20 per class so teachers can help all students; warm and safe environment; all employees adequately compensated; computers maintained by technology specialist; kindergarten classes each have their own assistants; and employees work together so that all children in our system are educated and become productive members of our society.
- 28) Dr. Bash Pharoan, President, American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee – Urged the Board to consider adding a full-time employee to assist the Board and superintendent as the diversity “czar.”
- 29) Ms. Abby Beytin, Teacher, Timber Grove Elementary School – Asked the Board to add funding to place paid kindergarten assistants in all classrooms. Six kindergarten teachers stood with her to acknowledge this request.
- 30) Ms. Kelli Nelson, Parent – Urged the Board to revisit the needs of the Infants and Toddlers program, and funding of benefits and training for personal assistants (PA).
- 31) Ms. Julie Bravos, Parent – Supports the proposed operating budget for additional staffing of the Infants and Toddlers program. She also asked the Board to increase the budget for full-time occupational therapist.

- 32) Mr. Scott Olson, Teacher, Towson High School – Asked the Board for additional clerical support and an increase of teachers’ salaries.
- 33) Mr. Brody Fredericksen, Teacher, Towson High School – Asked the Board for a “substantial” increase in teachers’ salaries and health benefits.
- 34) Ms. Patricia Taylor-Mason, Paraeducator, Pot Spring Elementary School – Asked the Board to fund salary increases for paraeducators.
- 35) Mr. Bradley Eastham, Physical Education Department Chair, Towson High School – Asked the Board to ensure that co-pays for health insurance remain the same, prescription costs do not increase, and emergency visit costs do not increase.
- 36) Ms. Susan Katz, President, PTA Council of Baltimore County – Supports the proposed operating budget. The PTA Council supports the new loan program for students to go to college to teach at BCPS. Asked the Board to allocate adequate funding for technical support staff in each school and provide increased compensation for all employees.
- 37) Miss Lauren Session, Student, Pikesville High School – Supports the proposed operating budget recommendations for the AVID program.
- 38) Ms. Vanetta Session, Parent – Supports the proposed operating budget recommendations for the AVID program.
- 39) Ms. Debra Richmond, Teacher, Towson High School – Urged the Board to give teachers reason to come and stay in Baltimore County. She noted that cutting benefits gives teachers a reason to leave.
- 40) Ms. Beth Cushing, Parent – Asked the Board to “fully fund” the Infants and Toddlers Program. She also reiterated the need to compensative personal assistants.
- 41) Mr. Aaron Schnitzer, Student, Pikesville High School – Urged the Board to support the proposed operating budget for the AVID program.
- 42) Ms. Cheryl Bost, President, Teachers Association of Baltimore County – Asked the Board to provide a 6% increase in salary compensation for teachers. She also stated that there is nothing in the budget for kindergarten aides, technology aides, or any help for record keeping.
- 43) Ms. Allison Natrass, Teacher, Timber Grove Elementary School – Urged the Board to push for competitive teacher salaries and decrease teacher workload.
- 44) Ms. Gloria Collins, President, Baltimore County Instructional Assistants & Clerical Employees (BACE) – Asked the Board to be fair in the budget process and adequately increase salaries for BACE employees.

- 45) Ms. Denise Cutair, Teacher, Powhattan Elementary School – Asked the Board to look into expanding the parking lot at Powhattan Elementary School. The school presently has 32 parking spots; however, that is not enough for teachers and visiting parents.
- 46) Ms. Jennifer Hudson, Parent and PTSA Board Member, Stoneleigh Elementary School – Asked the Board to consider the importance of the sound enhancement systems when reviewing the budget. She applauded the sound enhancement system that was installed in the school last year.
- 47) Ms. Michelle Hart, Parent – Supports the proposed operating budget increased funding for the Infants and Toddlers program. She also asked the Board to support salary, training, and benefit increases for all personal assistants.
- 48) Ms. Mary Baskar, Vice-Chair, Special Education Citizens’ Advisory Council – Asked the Board to consider salary increases for personal assistants.
- 49) Ms. Marlo Lemon, Parent – Asked the Board to place additional funds in the Infants and Toddlers program.

The hearing was concluded at 9:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe A. Hairston
Secretary-Treasurer

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