

## APPROVED REPORT – 06/09/09

### REPORT OF THE PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2011 CAPITAL BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

Wednesday, May 20, 2009  
Greenwood

Board Vice President, Mr. H. Edward Parker, called the hearing to order at 7:00 p.m. In addition to Mr. Parker, the following Board members were present: Ms. Frances A.S. Harris, Mr. Rodger C. Janssen, and Ms. Valerie Roddy. In addition, Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent, staff members, as well as media were present.

The following speakers addressed the Board:

1. Ms. Martha Montgomery, Parent, Westowne Elementary School – Asked the Board to add a new heating and air conditioning (HVAC) system to Westowne Elementary School. She stated that teachers were already recording temperatures for April and May in the high 80's and 90's. Winter classroom temperatures are also unacceptable. Ms. Montgomery stated that a Superintendent's bulletin item provided suggestions on how to decrease exposure to pollen and other allergens by keeping windows closed. However, Westowne Elementary needs to keep the windows open because of no air conditioning.
2. Ms. Naseem Skaarenborg, Parent, Westowne Elementary School – Advocated for a proper HVAC system at Westowne Elementary School. She stated that air conditioning is not a luxury, but an essential element in providing the right environment for a child's education. Ms. Skaarenborg also stated that in the winter the archaic heating system kicks into overdrive in some classrooms and not in others. Therefore, windows are open in the really warm classrooms and are wasting energy. The county is proud of its new schools; surely it can provide proper conditions in order buildings as well.
3. Ms. Yara Cheikh, Parent, Hampton Elementary School – Asked the Board to fully fund the proposed addition for Hampton Elementary in the 2011 capital budget. She commented that Hampton Elementary is currently 130% over capacity. Ms. Cheikh's request included, but was not limited to, adding a bathroom in the library; separate computer room, music, and band room; expand gymnasium and cafeteria; air conditioning; increased staff parking; renovated staff lounge; and additional bathrooms throughout the school. Currently, three grades share one bathroom per floor. The traffic loop must also be expanded. She also asked that LEED standards be followed.
4. Ms. Cathi Forbes, Chairperson, Towson Families United – Asked the Board to fund the proposed additions to Hampton and Stoneleigh Elementary Schools in the 2011 capital budget. She stated that the new Towson elementary school was the first part of a three-part solution to Towson's overcrowding problem. Ms. Forbes noted that the entire fourth grade at Rodgers Forge Elementary School would be annexed to

- Dumbarton Middle School and that the additions are desperately needed. She hopes that BCPS can avoid delays and the need for annexation at Stoneleigh Elementary that was built in 1930. Ms. Forbes would also like improvements to the common areas at that school.
5. Ms. Vivian Montgomery-Walsh, Student, Westowne Elementary School – Asked the Board to place fans or air conditioners at Westowne Elementary. She stated that one day it was 94 degrees in classroom with the windows open. She got red and sweaty, and it was hard to concentrate.
  6. Mr. Daryl Walsh, Parent, Westowne Elementary School, and Teacher, Arbutus Elementary School – Asked the Board to add in the budget air conditioning for Westowne Elementary. His daughter was flushed and sweating while in the music room with the doors and windows closed.
  7. Ms. Carolyn Cook, Parent, Ridgely Middle School – Asked the Board to solve the health problem at Ridgely Middle School. As a member of the climate control committee, she stated that the new windows severely impede airflow trapping the heat inside the classroom. Students are experiencing headaches, heat exhaustion, and aggravated asthma. Ms. Cook stated that 103 degrees in a classroom is not a good learning environment. It took over a year to obtain permission for children to carry water bottles. State tests are administered in the air conditioned library; however, regular student testing occurs in the classrooms.
  8. Dr. Laurie Mitchell, Climate Control Committee, Ridgely Middle School – Asked the Board to address the heat problem at Ridgely Middle School. She stated that the bid alternate to install a chiller was not included in the final bid package approved by the Board in 2005. Dr. Mitchell believes that the Board was not informed of the non-funding of the chillers. She commented that the school is ineligible for state funding for the next 15 years because the state provided funds for the original renovation and air conditioning was not included. Dr. Mitchell stated that she would like the Board to provide leadership to the county executive on air conditioning.
  9. Ms. Laura Mullen, Chairperson, Central Area Education Advisory Council – Asked the Board to fund chillers for Ridgely Middle School. She stated that, because of the lack of proper ventilation, there is evidence that a high temperature in the school is a health issue that must be addressed. Ms. Mullen stated that parents have entrusted their children to BCPS and that trust has been breached.
  10. Ms. Ronnie Wheeler, Parent, Westowne Elementary School – Asked the Board to replace the HVAC system at Westowne Elementary School. Ms. Wheeler stated that during the winter, some classrooms are like a sauna. Some teachers have fans in the classrooms to circulate the air to make it cooler. She commented that is it uncomfortable for children and difficult to stay focused. Ms. Wheeler provided a petition with approximately 100 signatures requesting the HVAC system be replaced.

11. Mr. Mike Wheeler, Parent, Westowne Elementary School – Asked the Board to replace the HVAC system at Westowne Elementary School. Mr. Wheeler echoed the comments from the previous speaker. He also reports hearing complaints about the heat from children in his scout troop.
12. Ms. Laura Cunningham, Instructional Assistant, Westowne Elementary School – Advocated for a new HVAC system at Westowne Elementary School. She stated that part of her job is to travel with students to the special classrooms, such as music and art. These rooms are extremely hot despite the teachers' best efforts to open the windows and provide fans. Ms. Cunningham stated it is difficult for students to learn in a hot environment.
13. Ms. Catherine Fu, PTA Secretary, Westowne Elementary School – Asked the Board to update the HVAC systems for the older schools in the county. She stated that there is a growing disparity between conditions at the county's newest schools and those at the older schools. Westowne Elementary School has no air conditioning and rooms are like a sauna. At Johnnycake Elementary School, a number of students suffering from asthma, and windows cannot be opened; therefore, poor indoor air quality exists.
14. Ms. Tracy Horch, PTA President, Westowne Elementary School – Urged the Board to provide funding for a new HVAC system at Westowne Elementary School. She stated that Westowne Elementary lacks central air conditioning and little cross ventilation. During the winter, there are places within the school where the heat is so high that teachers are forced to open windows. Classroom temperatures could range from 88 degrees to 94 degrees on any given day. There are other rooms where students are forced to wear coats during instruction. Ms. Horch commented that students cannot reach their highest potential when exposed to extreme temperatures in the classroom. She adds that the state of New Jersey has adopted regulations on acceptable classroom temperatures.
15. Dr. Kent Steven, Parent, Hampton Elementary School – Asked the Board to fully fund and prioritize the necessary additions and improvements to Hampton Elementary School, which include, but are not limited to, the following upgrades: bathrooms for kindergarten and first grade students; additional bathrooms throughout school; air conditioning; separate rooms for music, art, and a computer lab; upgrade/expand library; enlarge the cafeteria; and widen the traffic loop. Dr. Steven explained that he moved from Mt. Washington so that his children could attend BCPS, and that the teachers and administration are outstanding although the facilities need improvements.

The hearing was concluded at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Joe A. Hairston  
Secretary-Treasurer

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