

# BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Verletta White ♦ Interim Superintendent ♦ 6901 North Charles Street ♦ Towson, MD ♦ 21204

## RESPONSES TO BOARD MEMBER QUESTIONS September 12, 2017

### PROCESS

1. Process and Priorities Questions 11 and 12. What has been asked repeatedly to be understood by Board members, community stakeholders, elected officials including County Council members, State Delegates and Senators is how the “proposed request” is developed and modified over time?

*The development of the state capital budget involves a continuous process that includes discussions with the superintendent’s team and fiscal partners. The process includes, but is not limited to, the consideration of several factors, as well as feedback received from the Board meetings and fiscal partners. The priorities are determined by the need for seats, central air conditioning, and infrastructure in support of academic programming and demographic needs.*

2. Who, when, and how are priorities and “proposed request” developed? Where are supporting documents? [See example from [Anne Arundel County Public Schools](#).]

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3. How is the calculation made to benefit the most students with the most effective use of taxpayer dollars?

*Collective professional judgement, experience, and wisdom are utilized by all participants to develop the best program for BCPS.*

4. Who from County Executive office and staff?

*Staff from the budget, administrative, and planning offices.*

5. Who from County Council?

*The Baltimore County Council reviews and approves the county capital budget, but is not directly involved in the development of the plan.*

6. How is community input included?

*Annually, the public is invited to provide input during the capital budget hearing. Additionally, the Board of Education's area education advisory councils hold hearings in order to gather stakeholder input. Public input is always welcomed at the Board of Education's regularly scheduled meetings or in writing.*

7. Who from the superintendent's staff?

*Teams consisting of members from the Division of Business Services, Division of Curriculum and Instruction, and Department of Research, Accountability, and Assessment.*

8. Was this list agreed to by Dr. Dance before his resignation or before he left the school system?

*The capital budget is a dynamic process that extends over multiple years and is updated annually.*

9. Was list modified by Interim Superintendent Ms. White or anyone from her staff?

*The capital budget is a dynamic process that extends over multiple years and is updated annually. The sitting superintendent has the responsibility of presenting the recommended capital budget to the Board of Education in accordance with Board Policy 3111.*

10. Why is Board the last to know?

*The Board is continuously involved with the process via capital budget hearings and area education advisory council meetings. Many projects listed in the current budget proposal are those that have been previously approved by the Board in previous years.*

11. Why is the Board only given a one page spreadsheet that represents \$167,434,000 State funding share and possibly additional \$300 million County share that Board will not know until December?

*The one-page spreadsheet represents a summary of the supporting documents that were used to identify and prioritize recommended projects. See response to Question 2 for other details.*

12. As pointed out by another Board member, some of the schools with the worst building scores are not on this list, who decided that other schools were more important?

*The condition of buildings is only one factor when determining capital priorities. As previously stated, other factors include the need for seats, central air conditioning, and infrastructure in support of academic programming and demographic needs.*

13. Dulaney and Towson high schools– according to Process Question and Answer #2, the Board would have to ask for planning money six years in advance of project completion for a high school project. So how can Dulaney and Towson high schools be left off the list completely? Towson High School is already significantly overcrowded and Dulaney High School is projected to be overcrowded soon and has unaddressed structural deficits, mechanical failures, and no air conditioning? That means projected completion date would be 2023?

*As stated at the August 8, 2017, Board of Education meeting, the interim superintendent is committed to requesting additional planning funds in the county capital budget in anticipation of the need for high school seats. While we are aware of some emerging needs at the high school level, we know long-term solutions will require planning for all areas of the county with the addition of at least 2,500 seats to meet the needs of the population.*

14. Dulaney High School was listed as the 17<sup>th</sup> priority on previous state and county requests. How is it not on the list at all? The answer that “nothing has been done” since the Board unanimously rejected an inadequate contract is irresponsible.

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15. The Board voted in the winter 2017 for a secondary school enrollment study related to facilities and overcrowding for middle and high schools. But before that was even started, in April 2017, the County Executive announced the construction of the New Northeast Area Middle School of 1,500 seats, even though state MSDE recommendation is for 900 seat middle schools. But now the excuse for not adding planning money for Dulaney High School is that we need to wait for a “high school” study? How does that make sense?

*The greatest systemic need for seats has been, and remains, at the elementary level. As of last year, the elementary enrollment exceeded the number of available seats by 4,000 students. The roughly 3,900 seats that are being added (Southwest – 679; Northwest – 1480; Northeast – 1074; and, Southeast 663) are aligned to projected elementary growth by region.*

*From 2020 onward, BCPS is projected to have a maximum of 36,582 high school students (2025). Currently, there are 34,279 seats at the high school level. The deficit, systemically, is 2,573 seats. This is a systemic need that extends beyond any single region of the county; however, our Southeast area high schools are projected to be the most overcrowded as a region. Given the systemic need for high school seats, a study is warranted to establish, and vet with the community, a variety of potential solutions to address the systemic need for additional seats.*

*Fortunately, there are 27,211 seats available at the middle school level, which is in excess of the projected middle school enrollment. Unfortunately, there is insufficient excess seat capacity adjacent to the most crowded middle schools in the Central and Northeast areas. The new Northeast middle school and the addition of seats at Pine Grove Middle School make seats available in the specific communities that have insufficient seat capacity at the middle school level.*

### **New Northeast Area Middle School**

16. How many seats are dedicated to Magnet program?

*There are approximately 270 seats that are planned for the magnet program.*

17. How many seats will relocate Golden Ring Middle School students out of their community school to the new Northeast Area middle school?

*The allocation of seats to the new Northeast area middle school will be done through the boundary process as outlined in Policy and Rule 1280, Boundary Changes and Policy and Rule 1290, Closing of School Buildings.*

18. How many seats are dedicated to relieve overcrowding at Perry Hall Middle School?

*The allocation of seats to the new Northeast area middle school will be done through the boundary process as outlined in Policy and Rule 1280, Boundary Changes and 1290, Closing of School Buildings.*

19. What studies were done on increased transportation time for students and increased transportation costs?

*The work is in progress and will be completed after the building study is finalized.*

### **Pine Grove Middle School Addition**

20. Why addition that takes to over 1,500 seats, while state MSDE recommendation is for 900 seat middle schools? How will this provide for highest academic achievement and community support and engagement when students and parents travel farther? Impact on increased transportation needs?

*Academic achievement is determined by the quality of teaching and learning. While MSDE commissioned a school study that demonstrated a great deal of variability in school size, there is no policy that mandates school size.*

21. From what schools will students be redistricted to fill the additional capacity at Pine Grove Middle School? Only Ridgely and Perry Hall middle schools, elsewhere??

*The allocation of seats to the addition at Pine Grove Middle School will be done through the boundary process as outlined in Policy and Rule 1280, Boundary Changes.*

## **Golden Ring Middle School (GRMS)**

22. What studies were done that support relocating students from their community school to the new Northeast Area middle school? How will this provide for highest academic achievement and community support and engagement when students and parents travel farther?
23. Will all Golden Ring Middle School students go to the new Northeast Area middle school? If not, where will they go?
24. What considerations have been given to community impact on Golden Ring Middle School being relocated?
25. What will be purpose of building after relocating students?
26. What community input has been considered? When? How? Documents?

*The future schools for GRMS students will be established through the boundary process as outlined in Policy and Rule 1280, Boundary Changes (Response for 22 – 26). The future purpose of GRMS has yet to be determined.*

## PRIORITIES

27. Question and Answer # 11-and # 12 are incomplete.

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28. See above: What has been asked repeatedly to be understood by Board members, community stakeholders, elected officials including County Council Members, State Delegates and Senators: is how the "proposed request" is developed and modified over time?

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30. It was the County Executive that prevented the Board from considering window air conditioning in any classrooms, as timely, less expensive way to provide for air conditioning in some schools through our operating funds. This could have freed up tens of millions for other capital construction needs, including schools with the lowest building scores that are not even on this priority list, and the replacement of Dulaney and Towson high schools. See Letter from County Executive to Board member Romaine Williams dated November 4, 2015. Also, the Board amended FY2017 Operating budget to include \$10 million for air conditioning, but the County Executive cut it from the budget presented to County Council. Shouldn't the Board and BCPS administration take a close look and a longer view in future construction planning to provide the most benefit for the most students in the most cost-effective and timely way?

*The school system's construction program is designed to benefit students in the most effective way.*

## INFRASTRUCTURE

31. Question 26. Has no dollar figure or list at all. Please provide information.

*While the complete data is not readily available, BCPS has had very good success in the funding of systemic projects. In cases where the state did not fund the projects, the county funded the projects.*

## HIGH SCHOOL RENOVATIONS

32. Question 31 – Please explain how the staff cannot take any action on a school project that had previously been #17 on the priority list? And that has dangerous and worsening conditions?

*As stated at the August 8, 2017, Board of Education meeting, the interim superintendent is committed to requesting additional planning funds in the county capital budget in anticipation of the need for high school seats. While we are aware of some emerging needs at the high school level, we know long-term solutions will require planning for all areas of the county with the addition of at least 2,500 seats to meet the needs of the population.*

33. Especially when the staff has presented the New Northeast Area Middle School as a 1,500 seat school, without prior input from the Board or community.

*The proposed new Northeast area middle school is in response to the need for targeted middle school seats. As you are aware, there has been substantial community input for the need for relief of Perry Hall Middle School.*

34. How can the staff present the new Northeast Area middle school as a building that will relocate Golden Ring Middle School students, effectively closing Golden Ring Middle School, without prior input from the Board or community?

*The future schools for GRMS students will be established through the boundary process as outlined in Policy and Rule 1280, Boundary Changes. The future purpose of GRMS has yet to be determined.*

35. The vote by the Board was for a “secondary school study.” And yet, the County Executive announced the new Northeast Area middle school in April 2017 before any study was done?

*The study proposed is only for high schools at this time.*

36. Why is administration delaying the “high school study” until May 2018? Approximately 15 months after the Board voted for the “secondary school study?”

*The timeline for the study is based on the following: (1) alignment to the projection cycle for the 2017–2018 academic year, and (2) to provide time for community engagement and feedback tied to proposed systemic solutions to meet the systemic need to address overcrowding at the high school level. While Towson is clearly the most overcrowded school in the system, regional overcrowding will be more extensive outside the central area.*

37. Who has decided the timing and scope and deliverables of the now named “high school study?”  
Please forward those documents to the Board.

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38. Question 32 - That answer is quite incomplete.
39. Other questions submitted prior to the August 22, 2017, Board meeting have not been answered.
40. From state guidelines there are three levels of feasibility studies:
- a. Level One: evaluate the building and building systems
  - b. Level Two: evaluate the use of the building: i.e., are the classrooms large enough, adequate for student population growth, adequate for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, collaborative spaces, including current and future technology, special programs, music, Career and Technology Education, STEM, HVAC program, enough spaces for school and community use, auditorium, gyms, parking, recreation fields, compliance environmental impact, energy efficiency, etc. What additions or renovations could bring building up to standards? Costs?
  - c. Level Three: when needs are extensive compare the costs of renovation/addition and life cycle costs (over 15–30 years) with replacement school facility costs and lower future costs, (less maintenance of newer facility, greater energy efficiencies, etc.)
    - i. Can a replacement facility be built on site while using current facility?
    - ii. Or is there swing space for students at another location to allow demotion and then new construction?
    - iii. Or is there site available elsewhere?

*BCPS utilizes the Public School Construction Program (PSCP) Administrative Procedures Guide for the State of Maryland (revised February 2017). Feasibility studies are defined in Section 203 (and Appendix 203). They are required in any school capital improvement project that may include a replacement school or one including demolition of more than 50% of the existing facility. This feasibility study (including a 40-year life cycle cost analysis) must be submitted and approved by the IAC designees.*

- iv. *Was a Level Three Feasibility study ever done for Lansdowne, Patapsco, Dulaney, or Towson high schools?*

*No.*

v. *If not, why not?*

*The project started as an A/C project and was expanded as a limited renovation from the state, but the county provided additional funds to go beyond the limited renovation. The study was to define the scope of work.*

vi. *If yes, why never given to the Board? Please provide study document.*

*The results of the scope of work study were posted on the BCPS Web site.*

### **Lansdowne High School**

41. Answers are quite incomplete and yet the Board is supposed to vote for this to be sent to the state with our approval? See above.

*The answers provided are based on information available at this time.*

## FISCAL ISSUES

42. Exactly who, when, and how will FY2020 state capital budget be developed?

*The development of the state capital budget involves a continuous process that includes discussions with the superintendent's team and fiscal partners. The process includes, but is not limited to, the consideration of several factors, as well as feedback received from the Board meetings and fiscal partners. The priorities are determined by the need for seats, central air conditioning, and infrastructure in support of academic programming and demographic needs.*

*The capital budget will be developed next year utilizing a process consistent to this year's, beginning with a public hearing in May 2018.*

43. What is the condition of Orem Elementary School's roof? What is the projected completion date of new roof replacement project?

*The condition of the roof is being maintained according to safety standards. It is the highest priority roof systemic project in the FY2019 request.*