

CENTRAL AREA EDUCATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Baltimore County Public Schools
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To: Baltimore County Board Of Education**Date: October 21, 2004****From: Central Area Educational Advisory Council****RE: Pre-Budget Hearing Report**

The pre-budget hearing for the Central area was held on October 18, 2004 at Ridley Middle School.

We have prepared this report for your review and consideration. We have organized the report into the following three sections and attached an appendix that contains the written testimony of any speakers who provided such testimony:

- I. Introduction -States the purpose and highlights major issues of concern
- II. Information and Summarized Testimony -Statistical information about the hearings and excerpts from the testimony of individual speakers by school category or issue where appropriate.
- III. Summary and Recommendations

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose—The Central Area community voiced their concerns about what they believe the priorities should be for the next operating budget for their school system. The pre-budget hearing serves as the primary opportunity for citizens to express their opinions directly about the budget. We urge the Board to give careful consideration to the testimony and recommendations in this report. Giving serious consideration to citizen input maintains the Board's connection to the community it serves and contributes to a high quality educational system for our children.

B. Issues-- We have listed the issues presented in priority order, provided a rationale along with the Council's recommended action for that issue. We believe these items require the Board's immediate attention and should be considered priority items for funding in the next operating budget.

1. **Equity among schools** – This was a common thread that ran through the comments. Smaller schools feel penalized for their size because it limits their funding. No extra sources of special revenue are available for most of these schools. Baseline staffing requirements for all schools should be reviewed. All elementary schools do not have full time Physical Education (PE) teachers and Assistant Principals. These positions are based on student population and smaller schools are disadvantaged. Kindergarten classes are felt to be large and because our smaller schools do not qualify for extra dollars to hire Instructional Assistants (IAs) like other schools, these students are penalized. This same argument of the inability to merge dollars to boost hiring affect the ability of the smaller elementary schools to secure at least a halftime technology position. Some elementary schools have a science-math resource teacher to assist with student achievement. All elementary schools should have this resource

- ③ **Recommendation: Review elementary school baseline staffing requirements**
- ③ **Recommendation: All elementary schools should have an Assistant Principal**
- ③ **Recommendation: All elementary schools should also have a fulltime gym teacher**
- ③ **Recommendation: All elementary schools should have a Science-Math**

Resource teacher

- ③ **Recommendation: Consider making the technology position a half-time position for all elementary schools**
- ③ **Recommendation: Review the use of IAs in Kindergarten**

2. **Reduction of class size/adequate staffing-** Class size continues to be a concern of our community. While acknowledging the reduction in elementary school class size that began for grades KG-2, many are still concerned over class size and having adequate staffing. The dollars spent to reduce elementary school class size may well be offset by minimizing the need for remediation in middle and high school.

- ③ **Recommendation: Reduce class size by funding more classroom teachers and either change the formula used to calculate class size or, at minimum, provide a means to add more teachers in schools where particular grades experience large class sizes.**
- ③ **Recommendation: Have a community forum to discuss class size and its formulation so that community is aware of the many aspects that influence class size ratios. Class size reduction is an ongoing subject at pre-budget meetings. To best serve our community and address its concern over this issue; more information needs to be disseminated.**

3. **Salary Increases for Teachers and School Staff** - In order to attract and retain quality staff in a time of increasing competition salary increases for teachers and staff are needed. The state of Maryland hires approximately 8,000 teachers a year. The colleges in MD produce only 2,500 teachers a year. We recruit in 17 different states, hiring approximately 1,000 teachers each year. We are in fierce competition for hiring the brightest and best for our children not only within Maryland but outside of MD as well. It is essential that salaries keep pace with other area school systems if Baltimore County Public Schools are to remain a quality system.

- ③ **Recommendation: Provide funds for salary increases for teachers, administrators, and staff to attract and retain quality personnel**

4. **Career and Technology Education** – The number of students participating in the Career and Technology programs has grown. Funding has remained static. Funds need to be preserved at current level at the very minimum to maintain program.

- ③ **Recommendation: Fully fund the requested 2005-2006 Career and Technology Education budget in order to maintain the quality of the CTE programs.**

5. **Technology Needs** – Many comments from our speakers were about various technology needs. These included updating software to be compatible with the new Dells, upgrading computer labs, meeting peripheral equipment needs, classroom televisions, expanding the use of email as a communication tool between home and school, and hearing testing equipment.

- ③ **Recommendation: Review the technology needs of all schools to create a prioritized list of needs and begin funding**

6. **Limited English Proficiency** –the growth of the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program in elementary schools is having an impact on adequate staffing for the program. Rodgers Forge Elementary School has 67 ESOL students (45 students last year) with 1.2 ESOL teachers. Adequate staffing of the ESOL program at all levels is needs. As this very

diverse population continues to grow, BCPS needs to assess how to best meet the needs of this population – especially in light of NCLB.

③ **Recommendation: Increase staffing for ESOL programs at all levels**

7. **Special Education** – Based on the Special Education Audit BCPS needs to improve its Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Funding is needed to implement these recommendations and to provide adequate and trained staffing for the students in their LRE.

③ **Recommendation: Fund implementation of Special Education Audit recommendations.**

8. **Funding** – The parents and community request that *ALL* of the dollars needed be requested in the budget. Our children needs are not driven by politics and funding, to the contrary, their needs are what should drive politics and funding.

③ **Recommendation: Request the funds needed to maintain BCPS as a quality school system and serve our students well by maintaining high quality staff, facilities and supplies.**

On a final note, several schools addressed facility issues that need to be addressed by the Capital budget. We forward these concerns as well and ask that the appropriate personnel review them.

We commend the Board for their continuing support of the Advisory Councils and for their commitment to an open, inclusive budgetary process. As always, we thank you for your time and effort on behalf of all the students in the Baltimore County Public Schools.

cc: Dr. Joe Hairston, Superintendent
Dr. Christine Johns, Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
Dr. Robert Haines, Deputy Superintendent of Business Services
Rita Fromm, Chief of Staff
Dr. Kim Whitehead, Central Area Executive Director
Barbara Burnopp, Executive Director of Fiscal Services
Executive Director of Physical Facilities
Vicki Schultz-Unger, Coordinator of Area Educational Advisory Councils
Jim Smith, Baltimore County Executive
T. Bryan McIntire, Third District County Councilman
Vincent J. Gardina, Fifth District County Councilman
Joe Bartenfelder, Sixth District County Councilman
Kevin Kamenetz, Second District County Councilman
Kenneth Oliver, Fourth District County Councilman
Samuel Moxley, First District County Councilman
John Olszewski, Sr., Seventh District County Councilman

II. INFORMATION AND SUMMARIZED TESTIMONY

A. Statistical Information

Central Area Educational Advisory Members Attending:	5
Total Number Attending:	57
Number of Speakers:	17
Number Submitting Written Testimony Only:	2
Number of Schools Represented:	11
Number of Special Groups Represented:	4

B. High Schools

1. Carver Center for Arts and Technology

- ☞ Software needed for Dell computers
- ☞ iMac lab needs to switch to Dell computers

2. Dulaney High School

- ☞ Increase teacher salaries to hire and retain highly qualified teachers
- ☞ Overcrowding of school – 4 relocatables
- ☞ Technology needs – classic wing is wired but needs TV DVD's
- ☞ Small vs. larger schools – minimal requirements for both need to be met
- ☞ Ask for all funding that is needed to provide a first class education for students of Baltimore County Public Schools

3. Towson High School

- ☞ Overcrowding of school – 5 relocatables
- ☞ Class size
- ☞ Technology needs – new scanner, copiers, tape recorders,

C. Middle Schools

1. Ridgely Middle School

- ☞ Consistent use of technology as means of communication between home and school
- ☞ Additional staff for library

D. Elementary Schools

1. Fifth District Elementary School

- ☞ Equity issues – due to small size PE position reduce to .7
- ☞ Need fulltime PE instructor – meet national recommended standards, not an

2. Hampton Elementary School

- ☞ Continue to fund new student to teacher ratios to lower class sizes
- ☞ Increase teacher, administrator and support staff salaries to hire and retain highly qualified personnel

3. Jacksonville Elementary

- ☞ Assistant principals needed in all elementary schools
- ☞ All elementary schools need SMART teachers
- ☞ Increase administrators salaries to hire and retain highly qualified administrators

4. Pleasant Plains Elementary School

- ☞ Equity issue – some schools have dollars to fund extra positions
- ☞ Kindergarten needs teacher aides
- ☞ Class sizes too large

5. Pot Spring Elementary School

- ☞ Continue to fund new student to teacher ratios to lower class sizes
- ☞ Increase teacher salaries to hire and retain highly qualified teachers
- ☞ Continue support of technology position and needs

6. Stoneleigh Elementary School

- ☞ Increase in ESOL population means a need for increase in funding and staffing
- ☞ Need full-time reading specialists

7. Timonium Elementary School

- ☞ Increase funding to new Instructional Technology positions so that every elementary school has at least a ½ time position
- ☞ Equity issue- smaller schools can't combine funds as well to optimize use

E. Career and Technology Education Advisory Council

- ☞ Continue funding Career and Technology budget at current level in order to maintain CTE programs.
- ☞ Additional funds needed – Woodlawn High needs teaching position, Randallstown High need textbooks for Finance Academy
- ☞ Funds needed to upgrade and replace equipment

F. Citizen Advisory Council for Special Education

- ☞ Set aside funds for beginning implementation of the Special Education Audit recommendations.
- ☞ Increase funding for closed captioning to comply with FCC reqs
- ☞ Funding needed for disability awareness programs
- ☞ Funding for alternate format of curriculum materials
- ☞ Funding for hearing and testing equipment

G. Baltimore County Education Coalition

- ☞ Salary increase needed for staff
- ☞ Ask for dollars needed from both local and state officials to meet NCLB requirements

H. TABCO

- ☞ Increase teacher salaries to hire and retain highly qualified teachers and staff
- ☞ Improve pension benefits
- ☞ Reduce class sizes to optimize student learning

III. FACILITY CONCERNS

A. **Dulaney High School**

- ☞ Auditorium needs new pit cover & carpeting

B. **Hampton Elementary School**

- ☞ Window replacement

C. **Pleasant Plains Elementary School**

- ☞ Needs air conditioning
- ☞ Completion of renovations

D. **Ridgely Middle School**

- ☞ Needs auditorium

E. **Timonium Elementary School**

- ☞ Needs new windows and doors

F. **Towson High School**

- ☞ Lights need to be replaced in auditorium

IV. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With the submission of this report and attached testimony, the Central Area Educational Advisory Council strives to fulfill its mission. We have provided community input to the Board of Education as requested with the expectation that the community's concerns will be heard. In our advisory capacity, we urge the Board of Education to do the following as it formulates the operating budget for next year:

- **Review elementary school baseline staffing requirements**
- **All elementary schools should have an Assistant Principal**
- **All elementary schools should also have a fulltime gym teacher**
- **All elementary schools should have a Science-Math Resource teacher**
- **Consider making the technology position a half-time position for all elementary schools**
- **Review the use of IAs in Kindergarten**
- **Provide funds for salary increases for teachers, administrators and personnel to attract and retain quality personnel**
- **Increase staffing for ESOL programs at all levels**
- **Reduce class size by funding more classroom teachers and either change the formula used to calculate class size or, at minimum, give flexibility to provide additional teachers in schools where particular grades experience large class sizes.**
- **Have a community forum to discuss class size and its formulation so that community is aware of the many aspects that influence class size ratios. Class size reduction is a subject consistently raised at pre-budget meetings. To best serve our community and its concern over this issue, more information needs to be disseminated.**
- **Fully fund the requested 2004-2005 Career and Technology Education budget in order to maintain the quality of the CTE programs.**
- **Review the technology needs of all schools to create a prioritized list of needs and begin funding**
- **Fund implementation of Special Education Audit recommendations.**
- **Request the funds needed to maintain BCPS as a quality school system and serve out students well by maintaining high quality staff, facilities and supplies.**