

BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PROPOSED FY 2018 OPERATING BUDGET

Responses to Board Members' Questions January 24, 2017

MANAGING GROWTH

- 1. Please let me know what, if any, emphasis is being placed on hiring counselors, particularly at the middle and high school levels?**

Elementary schools:

- 1 counselor per school, with schools projecting enrollment over 700 students receiving 2 counselors

Middle Schools:

- Projected enrollment 701 to 999 receive 2 to 3 counselors based on need
- Projected enrollment 1,000 to 1,500 receive 3 to 3.5 counselors based on need
- Projected enrollment over 1,500 receive 4 counselors

High Schools:

- Projected enrollment 1,050 to 1,400 receive 3 to 4 counselors
- Projected enrollment 1,401 to 2,000 receive 4 to 5 counselors
- Projected enrollment over 2,000 receive 6 counselors

- 2. The new northeast elementary school is expected to open in August 2018. The FY 2018 budget includes a principal and secretary (\$148,840) for the new school. Wouldn't this be an FY 2019 expense, as the school will not be open in FY 2018?**

To ensure school readiness, the principal for a new school is staffed 12 months in advance and the secretary 6 months in advance.

- 3. "Most General Fund revenues are driven in some manner by changes in enrollment." Given a projected 1% increase in enrollment, why are General Fund revenues increasing by 4.5%? Can this be explained by Employee Compensation and Benefits increases?**

83% of the operating budget is compensation and benefits, so the largest increase in the operating budget is typically made up of increased employee compensation and benefits.

- 4. How is the planned reorganization of the Office of Transportation expected to impact the safety and efficiency of student transportation? Is it a two-year or three-year reorganization (references are made to both timeframes)? Please comment on the duration and immediate benefits. How will an increase of \$484K for position reclassification support the goals of safe and efficient student transportation?**

The planned reorganization of the Office of Transportation impacts the safety and efficiency of student transportation in five primary areas, as outlined in the Transportation Update provided to the Board in May 2016.

Safety & Training: The new safety and training manager will have direct oversight over driver and attendant training, ongoing professional development, and COMAR compliance. This position will establish and monitor additional quality control measures for increased safety and service delivery.

Focused Customer Service Unit: The customer service manager and customer service clerks will respond directly to e-mail and phone inquiries, and provide follow-up to customers. These positions will enable more comprehensive, timely, and proactive customer response and correspondence.

Recruitment and Retention: In collaboration with the Department of Human Resources, Transportation will have staff dedicated to ongoing talent acquisition for highly qualified driver and attendant team members. Staff will also focus on effective and sustainable retention strategies.

Special Education: This liaison will further improve delivery of service to students with special needs, attending both BCPS and nonpublic schools. This will be accomplished through more specialized driver and attendant training, and collaboration with the Office of Special Education, school IEP chairpersons, and external organizations (MSDE, etc.).

Maintenance: Additional maintenance positions are necessary to enable Transportation to continue to fully maintain the current fleet of school buses and consistently meet the required inspection deadlines as required by COMAR. The additional staff also repairs other vehicles operated by BCPS staff, as opposed to outsourcing at a higher cost and lengthier repair times. The staffing ratio achieved by the additional technicians is congruent with the vehicle national recommended standard.

The reorganization has been planned as a three-year phased implementation. The first phase began in the current fiscal year (FY 2017). The second phase will be FY 2018, and the third and final phase will be FY 2019.

The \$484K increase for position reclassifications will support this more robust structure, focused on safety, efficiency, and customer service. The positions will be assisted by various technology solutions, such as electronic routing (already implemented), the new BCPS Serve, and an Automated Vehicle Location system, all of which will increase safety and efficiency.

5. According to the proposed budget, the cost of nonpublic placement is \$39.7M annually and serves 546 students – or \$72,710 per student. What efforts are being made to reduce the cost to serve this population?

Efforts are being made to increase staffing to ensure that schools are able to provide appropriate specialized services to students inside and outside of the general education setting. Additionally, regional programs at the secondary level designed to meet the needs of students with complex social-emotional learning needs and high functioning autism have increased. These regional programs are designed to meet the needs of students who would have potentially received an IEP team recommendation for services to be delivered in a nonpublic setting.

Efforts continue to be provided to support professional learning for school based staff to ensure that specialized instruction and services can be met in the public school setting for students with complex social-emotional and learning needs.

BCPS continues to receive an increase in special education enrollment, inclusive of students with autism and multiple disabilities whose needs are complex and require intensive supports and services. An increase in special education staffing will ensure that services for students with complex needs can be met inside and outside of the general education setting and in specialized programs.

6. While it is a growing population, is the number of students able to be served by BCPS directly growing as a result of new hires?

BCPS continues to receive an increase in special education enrollment, inclusive of students with autism and multiple disabilities whose needs are complex and require intensive supports and services. An increase in special education staffing will ensure that services for students with complex needs can be met inside and outside of the general education setting and in specialized programs.

7. What, if any, increase in the number of bus seats (system-owned and/or contractor-owned) for transporting students has been proposed for the FY 2018 budget?

The Office of Transportation has not proposed funding for additional buses, drivers, or attendants for F 20Y18. However, \$1.14 million is proposed for 12 additional contracted routes, along with \$150,000 proposed for additional transportation for athletics. Within the current driver and attendant staffing allocation and fleet of vehicles (BCPS and contractor), the Office of Transportation plans to fully serve the projected growth in student enrollment and respective programs.

RAISING THE BAR AND CLOSING GAPS

1. Please ensure adequate funding will be available to continue to provide the programs that allow students who will need to graduate in the summer.

Operating budget funding is requested to support eLearning, EDLP, EYLP and SPARC. These programs provide credit recovery and credit acceleration options that allow students to graduate on time or during the summer.

2. What is the budgetary focus to hire/retain foreign language teachers?

The Office of Staffing allocates funds from the office's budget for recruiting purposes. Funds allocated for recruiting are not only for the recruitment of foreign language teachers, but all subject matters. Throughout the year, the Office of Staffing holds recruitment events at locations throughout Baltimore County, as well as colleges and universities throughout the United States and U.S. territories. Throughout each fiscal year, recruitment events are held to help build viable candidates for each of the many "pools" for specific subject matters.

As for retention efforts, the Department of Human Resources works in conjunction with the Departments of Organizational Development, Curriculum and Instruction, and schools to provide feedback from employees that participate in the exit survey process. The various departments also work closely with school-based administrators to address concerns through school visits and conversations with teachers and other staff members to provide the utmost support to teachers prior to teachers exiting the district.

3. Seven million of the \$8.8 million budgeted amount in this area is associated with instructional materials and resources. Expand upon the strategies and investment that will be used in this area? Secondly, what metrics are established so that the effectiveness of our efforts can be tracked?

The materials requested are strategies to address the following systemic needs:

- Interventions for struggling readers
- Implementation of Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) SY 2017-2018
- Growth in ESOL student population
- Expansion of magnet/STEM programming
- Increased reading options with text complexity for advanced learners
- Primary sources for increased rigor and preparation for Advanced Placement social studies
- Music texts in alignment with fine arts standards

Evaluation process for instructional materials and resources:

- Multiple measures are analyzed to evaluate instructional resources. Typically, a combination of quantitative student achievement data and qualitative teacher feedback/perception data are collected and used to develop a balanced approach in determining the effectiveness of materials.

4. Please comment on the one-time request for instructional materials and resources (\$6.1M). What does this include? Were open educational resources considered?

- ELA: Leveled literacy intervention for Grades 4-5; novels at a variety of complexity levels so students have choice in Grades 2-5, 6-7, and 11; reading intervention materials for Grades 7-8; Collections materials (anthology for standards alignment) for Grade 7; Just Words; Running Records for Grade 6; Conscious Discipline for Kindergarten.
- Science: Science material kits for Grades 3-5; field test science equipment for Grades 7-8; field test science equipment for Earth Systems; field test science equipment for Living Systems; field test science equipment for Physics and Chemistry.
- Social Studies: DBQ project materials in the form of printed primary source documents that strengthen claims and evidence, argumentative, reading, writing, and speaking skills that prepare students for rigorous courses.
- Advanced Academics: Novels for advanced academics learners that provide increased text complexity.
- ELL: Development texts for high school EL students that provide English learners access to curriculum; intervention materials for high school EL students; Wonders materials for EL students; interpreting headsets for EL families and students; Spanish language assessment.
- World Languages: Headsets for second language acquisition in additional Passport schools.
- Digital Learning: Tri-casters for TV studios to ensure equity across schools.
- Music: Texts for elementary music program to replace texts that were purchased in the 1990s.

5. What, if any, of these funds are for new curricula and what curricula would be generated? If new curricula would be generated, how would similar curricula for visually-impaired student be generated?

General operating funds are used to conduct annual curriculum writing workshops. Annually, curriculum workshops are conducted to generate new curricula as well as for curricula revisions. For the summer of 2017, nine new curricula will be developed along with fifty-five curricula revisions.

Students with visual impairment access the general education curriculum through modifications made by Teachers of the Visually Impaired. The Teachers of the Visually Impaired work in collaboration with the classroom teachers to support students' participation in the curricula. It is the responsibility of the case manager assigned to the student to support the general education teacher in making modifications to materials for the student with a visual impairment per their IEP. These modifications may include enlarging materials, changing backgrounds of materials, or providing alternate materials (such as braille) based on the requirements of the IEP. Teachers of the Visually Impaired train the classroom teachers on use of varied strategies to allow for the students to be provided with access to the curriculum and instructional materials.

6. If contracts have already been Board-approved and/or are pending Board approval for these instructional textbooks and/or supplies, what companies and contracts are or will be paid with this \$7.3 million, and does this exact or approximate number appear elsewhere in the budget?

For some of the instructional supplies, there are existing Board-approved contracts. Others are proposals for FY 2018, and consequently, a contract may not exist. Contracts will be brought before the Board for approval after being reviewed by the Curriculum and Building and Contracts committees as they are developed and only if funding is appropriated. BCPS partners with many vendors to support the various content areas. Specifically, we are requesting funds to purchase from the following vendors: McGraw Hill, Houghton-Mifflin-Harcourt, Permabound, Bookrack, Heinemann, Fisher, Vernier, Flynn, CDW, National Geographic, Washington Sound, and Ballard Tighe.

7. Is it an accurate statement that nearly all school and student performance measures are trending downward, as indicated on Page 103 of the FY 2018 budget book?

It is true that students are consistently entering BCPS less prepared for Kindergarten. That trend continues this year, as well. Given that fewer students are entering Kindergarten ready, it has become even more important to focus on student growth. Our youngest students must actually grow more academically just to keep up with the academic benchmarks achieved by their peers who had historically entered Kindergarten ready for school. This underscores the importance of our investments in early literacy assessment and intervention tools, as well as our investments to increase the number of students to whom we can offer preschool.

The board was provided a memo last year (May 18, 2016) which showed that our students exceeded national growth expectations for both reading and math in Grades 1-8. So, although only 43.5% of the Kindergarten class of 2012-2013 were at or above the national average, by the time those same students started third grade in 2015-2016, they had caught up with their national peers; and by the mid part of the 2015-2016 year, nearly 57% were at or above the national average. This cohort, despite starting behind in Kindergarten, had caught up and had exceeded the performance of the prior three cohorts of students who had taken the third grade reading MAP assessment (the only consistent national measure over this window of time) in BCPS.

The scale for the SAT changed last year. Unfortunately, the change in scale makes it impossible to compare the scores from this year to prior to past years. This is a new baseline for the SAT for BCPS, the state, and the nation. BCPS is one of only a handful of school systems that tests all juniors on the SAT.

While the proportion of students earning a “B” or higher has fluctuated over the past 4 years, the average score on the MAP assessment for all eighth graders has remained remarkably stable (exactly the same for 3 of the past 4 years).

This underscores the importance of bringing stability and validity to grading as one would expect that (on average) students who are receiving similar scores on a national norm referenced assessment would by and large be receiving similar grades.

Finally, the graduation rate for BCPS has climbed consistently, and gaps in the rate of graduation have significantly closed since 2013. This year’s graduation rate is nearly 90%, with gaps closing.

8. If this is an accurate statement, what, if any, general and/or specific budget changes are reflected in the FY 2018 budget as compared with the FY 2017 budget, and/or earlier budgets, in an effort to address these downward trending school and student performance measures?

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment:

- Prior to this year, this assessment was administered to every student, regardless of whether or not they attended a BCPS PreK program. This year, it was administered to a random sampling of students; again, regardless of whether or not the student attended a BCPS PreK program.
- Strategies to strengthen BCPS PreK programs include: professional learning in the areas of mathematics and language arts; collaboration with the Office of Special Education for programmatic support for classes outside general education; provision of resources and professional learning to support students' social-emotional learning and to support their executive functioning; collaboration with the ESOL office to provide professional learning to PreK students with language needs; and use of diagnostic assessments to inform targeted small group instruction.

Grade 3

In the fall of 2015, a workgroup was formed specifically to develop and implement a strategic plan to support students reading on grade level by Grade 3. Since the inception of the workgroup, the following strategies have been implemented:

- The development of an assessment framework including the systemwide implementation of the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System to diagnose causes of reading deficits.
- 18 hours of professional learning in Literacy Essentials for Teaching Reading and Spelling.
- Professional learning and the implementation of Guided Reading.

Algebra

The following strategies have been implemented to support student success:

- Additional funding in FY 2018 has been allocated for the Summer Math Academy. This summer, middle schools will offer an academy for students who are scheduled to take Algebra 1 next year.
- Office staff in collaboration with identified teachers will develop Summer Math materials for students to use this summer. (Priority Grade 3 – Pre-Algebra)
- Office of Mathematics PreK-12 continues to prioritize professional development activities, Title II funding, for teachers in Grades 3 – Algebra 1.
- The Office of Mathematics continues to provide support for schools in the planning and implementation of the middle school mathematics curriculum through focused professional development sessions for an identified course lead teacher. This teacher works with the other teachers at their school as they plan for instruction.

9. In the alternative, what is the anticipated timeframe, if any, for reversing these downward trending performance measures?

Please see the above response to question 7 with regard to data trends.

10. What, if any, *additional* Double A's and/or Triple A's are proposed in the FY 2018 budget specifically for Crossroads-type schools?

Additional adult assistants are driven by students' Individualized Education Programs (IEP). Students may require additional adult assistance for complex academic, behavioral, medical, or physical needs. In most cases, one adult can work with more than one student, and in some cases one-to-one support may be required. In rare cases, two adults may need to be assigned to one student. Consequently, they are staffed based on need as identified through the IEP team process.

Since additional adult support positions are staffed based on individual needs per their IEP, no additional positions are proposed at this time.

11. What, if any, additional Double A's and/or Triple A's are proposed in the FY 2018 budget for music teachers such as those at our Perry Hall Middle School who have multiple, large chorale classes with special needs students?

Since additional adult support positions are staffed based on individual needs per their IEP, no additional positions are proposed at this time.

12. What, if any, additional Double A's and/or Triple A's are proposed in the FY 2018 budget for elementary schools with autistic students?

Since additional adult support positions are staffed based on individual needs per their IEP, no additional positions are proposed at this time.

**13. Raising the bar and closing gaps and investing in the future for our visually-impaired students
What, if any, additional funds are proposed in the FY 2018 budget for additional instructional staff, curriculum development and/or equipment purchases for visually-impaired students?**

Students with visual impairments, access the general education curriculum through modifications made by Teachers of The Visually Impaired, as per their Individualized Education Program (IEP). The Teachers of the Visually Impaired work in collaboration with the classroom teachers to support students' participation in the curricula. General operating funds are used to purchase equipment as identified on students' IEP. Therefore, no additional funds are proposed in the FY 2018 budget for additional instructional staff.

**14. Raising the bar and closing gaps and investing in our future with our magnet programs
What, if any, funds are proposed in the FY 2018 budget for magnet programs at our Golden Ring Middle School and Stemmers Run Middle School?**

For FY 2018, \$120,785 of the \$307,000 will be used to support Stemmers Run Middle School: \$41,700 (\$150/Grade 6 student) for consumable materials and program-related student activities/experiences; \$13,400 for IB application and candidacy fees; \$44,500 for IB training for teachers and administrators; and \$21,185 for curriculum and instructional lesson development.

While Golden Ring Middle School is not currently a magnet school, an Allied Health program is planned for the 2018-2019 school year. Those funds will be requested in FY 2019.

15. Raising the bar and closing gaps and investing in the future through nutrition funding

Nutrition programs in our schools have been described to the Board as “self-funding.” What does this mean, and what, if any, new funding is provided in the FY 2018 Budget for nutrition programs?

Revenue from the federal and state free and reduced-price lunch program and funds collected from the sales of meals children fully support the food and nutrition program at BCPS. No general operating funds are used.

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

- 1. How is BCPS doing with teacher pensions and accepting a greater portion of the payments. Additionally, how does the County stands on bonding ability and how these recent project proposals have and will affect their bonding limit (NS).**

Teacher pension cost sharing began in FY 2013 under state law and has been fully funded at the state and local level each year since, increasing incrementally over each of the past five years as required by state law. This year (FY 2017) the current funding of \$32.2 million is fully phased in and becomes part of maintenance of effort. Future increases will be the responsibility of local governments unless the law is amended. Because this year's amount is higher than originally legislated in 2012, \$2.2 million in state funding was provided to bridge the gap. This funding became sequestered by the governor and then released by agreement between the governor and legislative leaders.

Baltimore County general obligation debt may not exceed 4% of the assessed value of all real and personal property subject to taxation. This debt limit was lowered from 10% to 4% effective July 1, 2006. The increased debt service reflects the additional funding and forward funding for school projects over the past two years and which has also been supported by PAYGO and other resources. The portion of current outstanding debt is approximately 2% of assessed value or half the legal limit under current law. Baltimore County has an active and effective debt management program to monitor and maintain debt at sustainable levels. For example, the projected debt service for FY 2018 will be approximately \$1 million lower than listed in the FY 2018 proposed budget.

- 2. Combined utility costs are reported to increase 3%. Is this the net increase after any cost avoidance due to energy efficiency improvements? When should we expect to see a net decrease as a result of investment in energy improvements?**

Yes, that is correct. Energy savings offset the cost of the associated capital projects. At the same time, BCPS energy needs will increase annually due to increased consumption associated with new central air conditioning projects.

- 3. Please confirm the amount of funds designated for musical instrument replacement and repairs as \$322,500 – seems low. Teacher feedback is that funds are depleted by the end of September. Does BCPS recognize this as an area for increased future funding?**

The figure is accurate, and it is also true that funds can be depleted by end of the first quarter in order to put instruments in the hands of students for as much of the school year as possible. The Office of Music cannot meet every need, but instead approves the most important and cost effective requests to benefit the greatest number of students. The district office purchases nearly all replacement instruments.

- 4. Would you please comment on the 14% reduction in Capital Projects (\$46M) as compared to the FY 2017 adjusted budget? This is the only category showing a reduction.**

Please note that the FY 2017 adopted budget reflects capital expenditures of \$246,174,430. Later in the year, a supplemental appropriation was approved to reflect the availability of PAYGO funds the county was able to direct to capital projects, increasing the FY 2017 adjusted budget to \$330,224,930. In addition to supplemental appropriations, the year to year differences in the capital budget are driven by the timing of county debt sales to public and the availability of PAYGO funds for supplemental appropriation. State capital funding availability also varies each year based on the financial position of the state.

a. Was this reduction a direct offset of the increased Employee Compensation and Benefits (\$47.4M)?

No; the capital budget is funded independently of the operating budget.

b. It appears no other areas were reduced; please explain and provide specific examples of any other major expenditure items that were reduced in order to offset increased operational costs (incurred for STAT or any other increases).

The system redirects several million dollars annually to support current priorities. Funds previously identified for projectors, ScholarChip and Advance Path have been redirected for FY 2018.

c. Given the urgent need to address overcrowding as well as aging facilities in many areas of the county, particularly in the central and northeast areas, what is the justification for this reduction? With systemwide enrollments projected to increase every year through 2023, and many schools at or in excess of capacity, why the reverse trajectory for capital expenditures?

As noted above, the availability of capital funding varies each year, with state funding relatively constant and county funding highest in every other year in alignment with their biennial bond issuance cycle. Baltimore County is currently in the middle of investing 65% of the \$1.3 billion Schools for Our Future initiative, which is delivering new schools and additions, while adding seats to eliminate elementary overcrowding and modernize our schools. Accordingly, county capital funding has increased steadily since 2013 and remained at higher levels. Only 13 schools will not have central air conditioning once the 2017-2018 school year begins, and the remaining schools are all planned to be centrally air conditioned in the next couple of years.

d. Moving forward, at what level should the Board expect capital project funding requests in FY 2019, given the reduction for FY 2018?

Once final approval for FY 2018 request is received, discussions on FY 2019 will follow after FY 2018 cycle is complete.

e. What specific level of funding will be requested in FY 2019 for additional northeast middle school seats? Replacement of Towson High School?

Discussions will begin regarding the FY 2019 capital budget at the scheduled May 24, 2017, capital budget public hearing.

5. Please comment on the BCPS One expansion (\$300K). What features/functionality will be added? Will parents be able to access AVL data through BCPS One?

The funds requested are for two contractor positions to enhance BCPS One functionality for ADA. A quality assurance tester and Web developer are required to meet the needs of the ongoing development and assurance of Web accessibility and to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in accordance with the signed Office of Civil Rights (OCR) Agreement. Parents will not be able to access AVL data through BCPS One.

- 6. The budget document (“Understanding the Budget Process” – p. 39) states, “The total principal financed in any one calendar year is kept below \$10M in order to ensure favorable interest rates and to comply with regulatory limits.” Yet FY 2018 debt payments are \$53.9M (3%). What strategies are being employed to reduce BCPS’ dependency on financing for annual expenditures as well as to reduce its overall debt? What is the overall trajectory for debt payments? Long-term financing strategy?**

The \$10M above relates to the purchase of major operating budget equipment, not capital expenditures for construction. Lease purchase debt is presently used only for vehicle replacements and the 12-year replacement cycle is structured to remain with the \$10 million limit. BCPS has no taxing authority and may not issue debt instruments. All school construction-related debt is issued by Baltimore County. Baltimore County general obligation debt may not exceed 4% of the assessed value of all real and personal property subject to taxation. This debt limit was lowered from 10% to 4% effective July 1, 2006. The increased capital debt service reflects the additional funding and forward funding for school construction projects over the past two years and which has also been supported by PAYGO and other resources. The portion of current outstanding debt is approximately 2% of assessed value or half the legal limit under current law. Baltimore County has an active and effective debt management program to monitor and maintain debt at sustainable levels. For example, the projected debt service for FY 2018 will be approximately \$1 million lower than listed in the FY 2018 proposed budget.

- 7. Please comment on the FY 2018 proposed beginning and ending Capital Projects Fund Balance (\$1,976,820).**

The Capital projects fund balance reflects an accrual of pollution remediation costs that are estimated to be incurred during certain school construction projects. It is anticipated that this deficit will be eliminated, over the construction periods, by funding from local sources.

- 8. Please comment on the FY 2018 proposed beginning and ending Internal Service Fund Balance (\$8,293,189).**

The internal service fund balance results from estimated workers’ compensation claims, including the transfer of estimated worker’s compensation claims from the Baltimore County Government in September 2013. It is anticipated that this deficit will be funded by the County government as these claims are finalized and the liabilities are liquidated.

- 9. Many of the FY 2016 Performance Measures are indicated as ‘Pending.’ When should the Board expect to receive updated, complete performance measures?**

All updated performance measures are included in the adopted budget book, which is distributed in July.

- 10. In the evaluation of S.T.A.T. how will academic progress be measured? What data will they use?**

Both growth and achievement measures will be used. This includes Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) and PARCC.

11. I'm most concerned (especially considering the expense of S.T.A.T.) that examining the achievement of student outcome goals is not a part of the report. When will JHU be able to assess if learning is actually increasing from the use of the devices?

As demonstrated in the literature (e.g., Silvernail, Pinkham, Wintle, Walker, & Bartlett, 2011) the benefits of technology immersion (especially increases in achievement) is evident after the third year of implementation as students and teachers became accomplished users of the technology. We are on target to measure achievement results in the elementary Lighthouse schools Grades 1-3 at the conclusion of this academic year. While S.T.A.T. certainly addresses core content standards, it also extends to media/informational literacy, innovation, and life/career skills. Over the course of the past few years, we have been able to effectively gauge student engagement and the effect of this work on addressing 21st century skills.

12. I'm also concerned that so much emphasis is placed on the "measurable outcome"

The evaluation is structured as a linear progression. In order to reach the goal of improved student achievement, there must be changes in teaching and learning first which is captured within the "measurable outcomes" of the evaluation model.

13. I'm concerned about JHU conflicts of interest. The JHU School of Education partnered with a major trade organization, the Education Industry Association (EIA), which represents private providers of education services. How can the STAT evaluation be rigorous, independent, and honest if JHU represents the interests of ed-tech vendors?

BCPS defers to JHU's ethics board in reviewing and determining any conflicts of interest.

14. How does the BCPS roll-out plan of devices reconcile with the Maryland's education technology plan, as offered in MABE's 2016-17 Continuing Resolution on Technology, which calls for a 1:1 computing ratio at the secondary level and a 3:1 at the elementary level?

While the MABE Continuing Resolution calls for a 3:1 ratio at the elementary level, it does not state that a 1:1 ratio is inappropriate. BCPS' Theory of Action is directly in line with MABE's primary interrelated objectives, particularly improving student learning through technology and improving equitable access. To truly achieve equity, every student must have access to a digital device when he/she needs it.

OTHER QUESTIONS

- 1. Why did BCPS fund STAT over competing priorities? Hundreds of millions spent on STAT so far while funding for instruction flat. STAT crowding out poverty programs, driver pay increases and critical capital projects to improve student environment.**

S.T.A.T. aligns with the BCPS Strategic Plan, *Blueprint 2.0*, which was approved by the Board. The initiative was evaluated by the Board and funded along with other critical educational priorities. Bus drivers received pay increases in addition to their regular COLAs and steps in FY 2017 and through FY 2019. Capital projects are funded outside of the operating budget, so are not impacted by S.T.A.T.

- 2. P. 122 tally STAT & Digital Learning teachers = 277 FTEs. Need more classroom teachers to improve teacher:student ratio. Request clarification of “other” \$255M on p. 138. Restructure Superintendents. Cost went up by \$2M+?**

The 161 digital learning teachers are media specialists that were formerly identified as librarians. There are 168 S.T.A.T. teachers who work directly with classroom teachers every day to provide training and ensure that they are continually improving their strategies for classroom learning. Other charges are primarily fringe benefits for staff.

- 3. The increase in debt service, by 12%, +\$5.8M. Should refinance existing debt. \$45M, 13% decline in capital expense?**

Though BCPS has no authority to issue long-term debt, and, as such, has no contingent liability for long-term debt payments, the debt service fund is included because capital assets are reported on the Board's financial statements. For FY 2018, debt service payments will increase 12.2% from \$48.1M in FY 2017 to \$54.0 million.

- 4. BCPS has registered nurse at every school. Nurse are requesting medical software line item be kept in the budget. There would be huge time savings with electronic health records.**

\$399,106 in the budget supports Health Services immunization software and training.

- 5. HS ratio shot up 3 years ago when 200 teachers were cut? This needs to be addressed.**

The ratio change occurred in FY 2012, and resulted in a decrease of 271.2 FTE. The change is as follows:

	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
Grade 3 to 5	1:23.9 students	1:24.9 students
Art, Music, PE	0.55:3 classroom teachers	0.53:3 classroom teachers
Middle School	1:18.7 students	1:19.7 students
High School	1:18.7 students	1:20.7 students for schools with enrollment >1,000, and 1:19.7 for schools with enrollment <1,000
Dept Chair (M/H)	1:36.6 classroom teachers	1:40.0 classroom teachers

6. What specifically are the Superintendent’s plan for an Interactive Classroom Projector initiative systemwide?

a. An update needs to be brought to the full Board so we can discuss if it is in best interest of system and its students, when there are so many needs and limited resources.

b. And discuss the numerous concerns the Board had about JMI-605-16.

RGA-107-07 is the contract is used to purchase a wide variety of technology related equipment for the school system. This contract is not the proposed contract presented to the Board of Education in February of 2016, which would have been used exclusively for projector and sound enhancement leases in the amount of approximately \$41M.

DoIT receives 2-5 calls or e-mails per week for new and replacement request projectors for classrooms. The requests range from adding a projector to a new classroom without a projector and/or a broken projector in a classroom. Examples of school recently requesting projectors are Vincent Farms, Fort Garrison, Rodgers Forge, Dogwood, Joppa View, Norwood, Woodbridge ES, Fort Garrison ES, Franklin ES, Logan ES, and many others. Many of these requests come through the Special Project Request process, where the principals of the schools sign off on the request.

Two projector options offered for purchase by schools are interactive projectors tested and vetted by BCPS teachers, technology professionals, and administrators. The projectors for purchase include bulbs over the life of the projector as well as a 5-year warranty. The other two options for purchase are cart based, noninteractive projectors at a much lower cost but with the 5-year warranty and bulbs over the life of the projector. The value for the projectors is equal to or greater than previously purchased projectors of any model – Mitsubishi, Epson, Infocus, Promethean, etc. DoIT and C&I continues to evaluate technology alongside our teachers and staff to ensure we are purchasing what is appropriate for the classroom at the lowest cost possible.

The projectors offered for purchase are not a lease, but purchase using general funds. Members of the Technology Support Team rarely can walk into a building without a conversation with a principal or teacher surrounding when they will receive projectors or projection systems including sound enhancement.

DoIT continues to evaluate audio visual related technology with stakeholders, at the board’s request, to find the most appropriate technology for our staff and students. DoIT intends to bring additional information, including a recommendation, to the Board of Education once the evaluation and research is complete. During the interim, schools have been offered the opportunity to purchase projectors to continue the seamless operation of the school system through an existing contract to help with maintenance/replacement of existing projectors, and the purchase of new projectors.

7. If this is an actual “pilot” it is a pretty expensive, wide reaching. Please explain.

The current purchases affect three schools directly – Catonsville, Westowne, and Westchester. That is three out of 173 schools. DoIT also had to provide a mechanism for schools to purchase projectors as their current projectors were unrepairable or as new classrooms were added but were missing projection. DoIT routinely hears that a single classroom without a projector, when the rest of the school has projectors, has a negative impact on the students.

8. How is BCPS potentially purchasing over \$500,000 of equipment NOT approved by Board of Education? When and what purchasing mechanism was used to purchase Boxlight systems for Catonsville, Westowne?

The projector systems for Catonsville and Westowne elementary schools were purchased using RGA-107-07, which was originally Board approved November 8, 2006. In both schools, funding was provided through their FF&E budgets in June and July respectively, working with the principals and staff at the schools.

9. Are Boxlight projector systems installed in newly renovated Westchester ES? Is that equipment installed in other schools or instructional spaces? How and when purchased?

Projectors are currently being installed at Westchester Elementary School as part of the renovation under FF&E, and as part of the school's principal's request for installations in areas that were not part of the renovation. Dates vary based on the need of the school and availability of school funds.

10. Which BCPS staff were involved in this decision to install projector equipment in newly constructed Catonsville Elementary School and Westowne Elementary School? (I do not believe Principals are accountable, since their purchasing authority has been curtailed over recent years.)

Please see answer in number 8 above.

11. Are Boxlight projector systems being purchased through NJPA Contract # RGA-117-13?

No. Contract RGA-117-13 is a Job-Order Construction contract. The Office of Engineering and Construction would provide specifications to the contractor including any brand or system requirements; the contractor would then include those in the project. The project manager for a specific project would need to provide that detail level for this information.

12. Are Boxlight projector systems being purchased through NJPA Contract # RGA-107-07?

Yes, both of the current projector options available to the schools for purchase through RGA-107-07.

13. Are these systems being purchased or leased?

Purchased.

14. Please explain the Footnotes on BCPS Proposed 6 Year Instructional Digital Conversion Plan Updated 1/6/2017.

- a. * Funding is dependent upon budget approval process year by year. Deployment schedules may need to be adjusted in accordance with approved budgets.**

A budget appropriation is made for one year only. Future expenditures are subject to future appropriations.

- b. FY2016 County contribution for projector leases (\$2,528,658) not approved by Board of Education and funds returned to county in fund balance. FY2018 projector amount is redirected to 1 to 1 devices, lowering the requested county contribution.**

No projector lease was approved by the Board, and any unspent appropriation automatically reverts to fund balance.

- c. County contribution of \$8,000,000 for wireless equipment and BCPS One in FY 2014 is redirected to leased equipment in FY 2016.**

Local funding included in maintenance of effort was redirected as the wireless network and BCPS One were placed in services.

- d. What was role of County Executive and County Council in approving and/or funding newly installed Boxlight projectors systems; or what was their role in ending funding? Who exactly was involved?**

None. The Board decision to defer projector leasing was dispositive. The county executive and council budget made no associated changes.

- 15. How are newly installed projector systems working in Catonsville, Westowne, and Westchester Schools? What is the feedback from teachers, administrators and parents?**

DoIT is completing the installation of the projectors at the three mentioned schools. This involves a room by room evaluation of the system with the teacher's device and adjustments/training to the teachers as needed. Once the installation is complete, DoIT will solicit additional feedback from the schools.

- 16. BOE Policy 3231 and Superintendent's Rule 3231 relate to "Vendor Performance Evaluation" with specific requirements for evaluations of Contracts over \$500,000 to be done within 30 days of completion.**

- a. Was a Vendor Performance evaluation completed? If so, please provide a report to the Board.**

The installation is not complete, so no vendor performance evaluation was completed. In addition, the contract with CDWG is not specifically for projectors, but for a whole host of IT-related purchases.

- b. If not, why not?**

See above.

- 17. Please provide the Board a listing of major public and private grant opportunities for which BCPS has applied and the amount, outcome and purpose of each (instruction, technology, school safety and security).**

All grants are detailed in the special revenue section of the budget book, beginning on page 287.