

BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Date: October 11, 2001

To: BOARD OF EDUCATION

From: Dr. J. Hairston, Superintendent

Subject: Cancellation of Bids for Special Education Focus Groups

Originator: Christine Johns, Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction

Resource Staff: Ron Boone, Executive Director of Federal and State Programs

Recommendation

That the Board of Education approved special education focus group bid requests be cancelled in place of parent involvement programs in special education.

ISSUE OR INITIATIVE

Last year, members of the Special Education Citizen's Advisory (SECA) proposed to the Board of Education that constituent focus groups be budgeted to examine the operations of the Office of Special Education. This proposal was accepted, and a request for bids was issued. Two bids have been received, one for \$150,000.00 and one for \$225,000.00. This summer, the leadership of the SECA proposed that focus groups during the first year of operation of a new organization would be a waste of resources. They proposed an alternate use for at least some of the funds (\$250,000.00) that had been earmarked in the special education budget for the focus groups. Recently, OSE staff met with the advisory group to finalize the proposal. It calls for:

- Five work groups to pursue five of the ten key initiatives for the OSE. Parents will be co-chairmen of each work group and will have members in each group. The five initiatives are the IEP process, improved parent involvement, special education related data, special education curriculum, and inclusion programs.
- Each work group will research its area and will offer parent involvement and information sessions. To facilitate maximum parent involvement, expenses will be incurred to provide for experts/consultants in the field, to provide for day care for parents, to provide materials, to provide refreshments, to provide for transportation for families, to provide stipends for teachers included on the work groups, and to provide for full communication of all endeavors. Funds previously set aside for the focus groups would be used to cover these expenses.