

REPORT OF THE WORK SESSION ON THE PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2005
OPERATING BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

Thursday, February 5, 2004
Greenwood

The Board of Education of Baltimore County, Maryland, met in open session at 7:03 p.m. at Greenwood. President James R. Sasiadek and the following Board members were present: Mrs. Phyllis E. Ettinger, Mr. John Hayden, Ms. Jean M. H. Jung, Mr. Michael P. Kennedy, Ms. Janese Murray, and Ms. Joy Shillman. In addition, Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent of Schools; staff members; as well as the media.

Mr. Sasiadek reviewed the purpose of tonight's meeting. Staff was thanked for its work in preparing the information presented at tonight's meeting.

Dr. Hairston remarked that tonight's work session was a follow-up to the presentation made to the Board on January 13th and the public hearing held on January 28th. Dr. Hairston noted that the FY2005 budget focuses on BCPS *Blueprint for Progress, No Child Left Behind*, and *Bridge To Excellence*. Dr. Hairston stated the goal was to present to the Board a budget that was fiscally responsible, while at the same time responsible to our employees. Baltimore County Public Schools is committed to quality instruction being delivered in the classroom, quality of the instruction, and the quality of service being delivered by all employees.

Ms. Barbara Burnopp, Executive Director of Fiscal Services, provided a brief overview of the plans to fund the FY2005 proposed operating budget. An hourglass graphic was distributed to Board Members to assist them in understanding the proposed budget. Ms. Burnopp noted that one of the goals was to look at existing resources as well as new resources available from the State and Baltimore County. Priorities for the proposed operating budget were:

- Fund compensation package
- Meet goals of *No Child Left Behind*
- Create transitional center
- Ensure adequate funding of special education
- Fund ongoing buildings
- Built-Ins

Ms. Burnopp reviewed the Maintenance of Effort graph. Maintenance of Effort is the requirement put on Baltimore County by the State of Maryland. In the event that Baltimore County cannot meet the Maintenance of Effort level, the State does not have to provide the additional Thornton State dollars. She noted that historically the County funding levels have been above Maintenance of Effort.

Ms. Burnopp reviewed the comparison of all general fund revenues for FY2004 Budget to FY2005 proposed budget. She noted that there is a shift in the budget with County resources declining as a proportion of our total request. Ms. Burnopp also noted that the State portion appears to be increasing from 35% in FY2004 to possibly 37% in FY2005.

Dr. Hairston opened the floor for Board Members to ask questions or express concerns regarding the proposed operating budget.

Mrs. Ettinger thanked Dr. Hairston and staff for the way in which materials have been put together for this work session.

With regards to Performance Goal 1, Secondary Programs (Consistent grade 6 reading materials in all middle schools), Mrs. Ettinger asked where the expenditure was located in the FY2005 Proposed Budget booklet. Ms. Burnopp indicated the expenditure is a redirect within existing resources. Mrs. Ettinger inquired why this expenditure is listed under Elementary Programs instead of Secondary Programs. Ms. Burnopp responded the funds are housed within one specific budget; however, the funds can be spent for a different resource each year. Mrs. Ettinger asked whether the funds for secondary reading would come out of this account. Ms. Burnopp responded these resources are a year-by-year decision for this account. Mrs. Ettinger asked if all the funding was going towards the purchase of a reading series. Dr. Gwendolyn Grant, Executive Director of Secondary Programs, responded this is a one-time purchase and specific level of funding needed for the sixth grade reading series was still being determined. Mrs. Ettinger inquired whether the reading series would meet the needs of all sixth grade students. Dr. Grant indicated a review of the material is almost complete to ensure voluntary alignment with the State curriculum and to meet the multiple needs of our students. Mrs. Ettinger expressed concern that BCPS does not attempt a “one size fits all approach” with sixth grade students.

Ms. Jung requested clarification on the reading material, professional development, and timing. Dr. Grant indicated staff is finished the review and evaluation of the reading series. The texts have been narrowed down to four. Dr. Grant stated BCPS is looking for texts aligned with the voluntary State curriculum that would serve the multiple needs of our students: above, below, and on grade level. She also indicated there are programs taken place where intervention materials are being piloted in some schools for students below grade level. BCPS will be reviewing and researching this information, when available, and selecting those alternative programs in reading. With regards to professional development, Dr. Grant indicated there would be four-day professional development training for reading teachers and specialist. Ms. Jung inquired who would be providing the training. Dr. Grant stated the publisher and Ms. Carla Zamerelli-Clifford, Reading Supervisor, would provide training. Dr. Grant noted training for reading teachers and specialists has begun and will carry over to next year.

With regards to redirected funds that were centrally housed, Mr. Kennedy asked if this fund could be used for emergencies. Ms. Burnopp indicated that funds housed under the elementary education budget are used primarily for textbooks and supplies.

With regards to the redirecting of Academic, Enrichment and Acceleration funds, Mrs. Ettinger expressed concerns shared with her by the community about the redirection and asked about the plans to address these concerns as we move forward in the enrichment and acceleration programs. Ms. Phyllis Bailey, Executive Director of Special Programs, assured Board Members and the public that services for the Gifted and Talented (G/T) Program will be maintained. Ms. Bailey noted the budget addresses and supports G/T staff development, curriculum development, instructional materials, and central office. Ms. Bailey indicated the redirect of \$2.5 million was allocated to support and stimulate schools in the first year of the implementation of Board Policy

6135. Ms. Bailey stated the program has been very well supported by this administration. Mr. William Lawrence, Executive Director of Schools, Northeast Area, indicated students would continue to receive services. Mr. Lawrence stated the initiative would not go away with the redirect of funds.

Mrs. Ettinger recommended this issue be revisited sometime in the future when more funding was available.

Mr. Kennedy shared his concerns about reducing gifted and talented staff. We cannot reduce the amount of money in a program and believe it will be just as good as it has been.

Dr. Hairston stated that the proposed budget incorporates everything BCPS has in place for students today and, at the same time, provides appropriate support for BCPS teachers and other employees.

With regards to Special Education, Ms. Shillman asked if non-public placement was included in **Other Charges**. Ms. Burnopp responded affirmatively. Ms. Shillman stated this category is confusing. Ms. Burnopp indicated the money seen under **Non-public Placement** in the work session materials are new funding. The existing dollars for **Non-public Placement** are in the FY2005 shown in the budget book. Ms. Shillman inquired as to whether parents pay any portion of the **Non-public Placement**. Ms. Burnopp responded that they did not.

Mr. Kennedy inquired about ways to reduce the Non-Public Placement figure. Mr. Ronald Boone, Executive Director of Federal and State Programs, responded we could reduce Non-public Placement funding if tuition rates remains stable. This year, however, the State of Maryland has informed BCPS that there will be a tuition increase estimated to be a 5% increase.

Ms. Jung inquired whether we should continue to verify that placements are correct or see if other services are available within the school system. Mr. Boone agreed this effort should continue.

Regarding private placement, Ms. Jung asked why State funds have decreased in FY2005. Mr. Boone shared two reasons for the decrease:

- The State has refigured the 300 percent number (formula)
- The State lowered the amount of money it paid within the formula.

Mr. Sasiadek asked whether the State contribution for transportation was decreasing. Ms. Burnopp replied the Governor's proposed budget does include a reduction in transportation funding provided by Thornton funds.

Regarding expanding half-day Kindergarten to full-day, Mr. Hayden inquired about the mechanism used to select these 10 elementary schools. Ms. Kathleen McMahan, Executive Director of Elementary Programs, replied BCPS has identified schools in order of their participation in the Free and Reduced Meal Program. Therefore, the next 10 schools would be the 10 schools listed in the proposed budget.

Mr. Hayden questioned why 7 ESOL tutors are being replaced with 3.5 ESOL FTE teachers. Mr. Hayden expressed his concern that adequate resources are not being devoted to this area. Dr. Grant indicated that this is the first year of a three-year plan to provide certified ESOL teachers for all English Language Learners. She also stated students receive assistance from ESOL tutors as well as from ESOL teachers.

Ms. Shillman noted that the schools listed for certified ESOL teachers are elementary schools, however, funding is listed under secondary programs. Dr. Grant replied that the ESOL program provides services to pre-K through 12 grades. Dr. Grant noted that the 3.5 ESOL FTE teachers are the additional staff for the six elementary schools listed in the proposed budget.

Ms. Jung inquired about the qualifications of a tutor and a teacher. Dr. Grant replied ESOL are certified as Teachers of English and Secondary Languages (TESOL) and have their Masters for teaching English/Language Learners. ESOL tutors may or may not have the TESOL certification.

Mr. Hayden inquired about the **Other Redirects** category; for what purpose and where are these funds redirected. Ms. Burnopp stated there is a list of routine items that were redirected. Mr. Hayden requested a copy of the items included in the **Other Redirects** category.

Mr. Hayden asked about the small dollar amount requested for replacement of trucks. Ms. Burnopp stated this is a funding for annual lease payment.

Mr. Kennedy inquired about the elimination of the Northwest and Southwest teams. Ms. Burnopp indicated that these functions would now be performed through the transition center rather than through the northwest/southwest teams. In response to Mr. Kennedy's question, Ms. Jean Satterfield, Executive Director of Student Support Services, replied the expectation is for the transition center to assist children and provide a smooth transition to a comprehensive or alternative school.

Ms. Jung was pleased to see the transition center item in the proposed operating budget. In regards to physical location and requirements of the center, Ms. Satterfield stated the Strategic Planning Office would look for leased space that could be built to BCPS' specifications. Ms. Rita Fromm, Executive Director of Planning and Operations, indicated the school system is looking on the western side of the county for a building, which would need to be approximately 17,000 square feet. Regarding Ms. Jung's question, Ms. Satterfield indicated that the northwest and southwest teams would be housed in the transition center but would also continue to serve elementary students located outside of the transitional center.

Ms. Shillman asked if it would be necessary to extend the student's stay at the transition center longer than 3 weeks. Ms. Satterfield indicated staff would work closely with parents/guardians to get all the information and assessments completed for the student to transition to a comprehensive or alternative school as soon as possible.

Mrs. Ettinger inquired about staffing and instruction for the transition center. Ms. Satterfield stated the transition center would have a small staff similar to an alternative school with a principal, counselor, nurse, pupil personnel worker, and special education teachers to ensure students are familiar with the curriculum and expectations of the school system.

Mr. Kennedy inquired about the Supervisory position for the Drop-Out Prevention Program. Ms. Satterfield indicated this position has been grant funded in the past, however, would now be funded from the general fund.

Mr. Kennedy inquired about the success of the Drop-Out Prevention Program. Ms. Satterfield replied she would provide the information.

Mr. Kennedy inquired about copy machines within the schools. Mr. Burnopp indicated a survey would be provided to the Board regarding information on copy machines.

Mr. Kennedy suggested placing additional funds in next year's budget to help offset the cost of courses and exams for paraprofessionals as necessary.

Mrs. Ettinger was delighted to see the restructuring of compensation scales for BCPS employees in the budget.

Ms. Shillman inquired about the increases in enrollment and the additional teaching positions. Ms. Burnopp replied 75.6 FTE's were added in FY2004. In order to maintain current-staffing ratios based on actual enrollment increases, 20.4 additional teaching positions would be needed in FY2005.

Mr. Sasiadek inquired about the enrollment formula for special education as well as general education. Mr. Sasiadek noted enrollment projections are extremely important with teacher to student ratio.

Ms. Shillman questioned the Title II Grant, Science/Mathematics Resource Teachers new program. Dr. Hayes B. Lantz, Director of Science, PreK-12, replied these are new resource positions for elementary schools to provide science leadership and professional development.

Ms. Shillman inquired whether the grade 6 reading materials emphasis is on phonics. Dr. Grant stated phonics would be a small part of the grade 6 reading focus, while emphasis would be on fluency, reading comprehension, and informational text as the focus as needed to meet the Voluntary State Curriculum for 6th grade reading.

Ms. Shillman questioned the amount of money proposed for health benefits. Ms. Burnopp indicated this is the increased cost to the program.

Ms. Jung questioned the four elementary schools that would receive the double relocatables based on projections. Ms. Kathleen McMahon, Executive Director of Elementary Programs, replied that in order to plan for the expansion of full-day kindergarten programs, offices worked together to visit and examine schools to determine physical facility size, space, and resource personnel for kindergarten classrooms.

Ms. Jung inquired as to whether an additional 1.5 Pupil Personnel Worker FTE would be sufficient. Ms. Satterfield replied this is a reasonable request that would help support families.

With regards to Physical Facilities, Ms. Jung inquired about staffing needed due to the increased number of facilities with DDC (Direct Digital Controls). Mr. Cornell Brown, Jr., Physical Facilities-Maintenance Administrator, outlined the additional monitoring needed to support these additional controls.

Ms. Jung inquired about the contracted services to do required physical education inspections and repairs. Mr. Brown replied that some of the funds are being redirected from physical education to physical facilities to properly serve the curriculum/instruction side. The additional funds are for inspections, physical education equipment, and necessary repairs such as basketball courts, climbing apparatus, ropes and mats.

Ms. Jung expressed her concern that Baltimore County Public Schools has been fined for false alarms. Mr. J. Robert Haines, Deputy Superintendent of Business Services, replied that to date BCPS has been granted waivers for the excessive fire alarm calls. Funding hopes to reduce the number of false alarms.

Regarding the CCBC and BCPS Partnership, Ms. Jung requested additional information regarding concurrent enrollment and the impact it has on four-year college graduation rates.

Mr. Hayden commented that the CCBC and BCPS Partnership was an excellent program that allows students to obtain college education credits while getting their high school diploma. Dr. Hairston reinforced what Mr. Hayden stated regarding the partnership. Dr. Hairston announced that on Monday, February 9th, at The Education Channel 73, he will be hosting a Superintendent's Round Table with five college presidents from around the county.

Ms. Jung was pleased to see the Closed-Caption Pilot in the proposed budget. Ms. Jung inquired as to how many people watch Channel 73. Mr. Jeff Lifton, Educational Channel Manager, stated BCPS would have to develop a marketing survey to determine how many people in the community view Channel 73. Mr. Sasiadek and Mr. Hayden echoed Ms. Jung's comments in support of the closed caption pilot.

The work session was concluded at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe A. Hairston
Secretary-Treasurer