

Minutes
SW Education Advisory Meeting
Pre-Budget – October 20, 2004
Lansdowne High School

Council Attendees:

Brian Bailey	Dr. Richard Milbourne
Sarah Chavis	Lisa Orens (chair)
Elizabeth Lee	Ashley Palaigos
Sharon Loving	Debbie Phelps
Sam Macer	

Public Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm by Dr. Richard Milbourne.

Attendance: Approx 40
Speakers: 20
Reports: 4

Thanks extended to all in attendance. With idea in mind that the meeting should be thought of as a needs assessment, expressed pleasure at seeing so many in attendance. Introductions made to Michael Kennedy, County Board of Education (BOE); Nicholas Camp, BOE Student Rep; Roger Jensen, BOE; Charles Herndon, Office of Communications Director; Michelle Pumo, Health Services Coordinator; Don P, Executive Director Human Resources; Bill Wingerd; Lin Cassell, Title 1; Ghassan Shah, Office of Strategic Planning; Charlene, Career and Technology; Steve Warner, Professional Development; Diane McGowan, Coordinator of Placement; Barbara Burns, Physical Services; Dr. Gwen Grant, Secondary Education; Deb Phelps, Southwest Area Office; Jan Thomas, PTA Council; Mary Pat Kale, PTA Council; show of hands for Principals from 7 SW area schools.

Purpose of Meeting Stated at 7:10 by Lisa Orens.

Thanks extended to Principal DeHart for hosting the meeting in the school's library. Thanks extended to all in attendance, as this important meeting is a time the EAC gets to hear community concerns and direct them back to the BOE thru minutes that record all presentations. Distinction between operation and capital budget cycles made with request to state if presentation is capital budget related, as that is separate cycle. Capital budget requests will be communicated to the BOE. Stated speaker time limit of 3 minutes; speakers to be called in order of sign in, followed by EAC members, then adjournment of pre-budget meeting followed by business meeting. SWEAC members introduced.

Speaker: Denise Cutair – Teacher, Powhatan Elementary

Request made to consider and recognize need to budget to staff for smaller class sizes. Currently in fourth year teaching, 2003-04 class size was ten (10). This year, student-teacher ratios are as follows: kindergarten and first grade is 27:1 (17:1 last year), third grade is 30:1 vs. 22:1 last year. No Child Left Behind entitles students to small class size.

Speaker: Angela Kelly – PTSA Catonsville Middle

Several teachers in 0.8 FTE positions have left the county because of a need for a full time salary. Request made to increase budget to allow positions to be increased to 1.0 FTE. Additional "come

back” classes have been created with up to 40 students per class demanding more of teachers’ time. Principal and assistant principal salaries not increased much last year therefore expressed concern that some will move to Howard and Anne Arundel counties for more competitive salary. Lastly, funding is needed for text books as math books in particular are in bad shape.

Speaker: Nasasha Parker – Parent, Woodmoor Elementary

Request made to increase salary budget. Kindergarten and Pre-K have classroom aid, bur after kindergarten, class size increases and there is no longer an aid. Additional request made to fund replacement windows, as current windows do not open. With no air conditioning, children with respiratory problems often do not attend in the heat and replacement window that open would assist attendance. Third request made for a canopy to provide cover from inclement weather.

Speaker: Tracey Cyr and Bailey Weinkam – Parent and Child, Westchester Elementary*

Request made for funding for Intermediate Adaptive class. Currently, Westchester has self-contained primary adaptive class for first thru third grades. Students are diploma bound and in need of structure provided by adaptive classes. Westchester is home school for current class of seven (7) students but all would have to transfer to Catonsville Elementary School for Primary Adaptive class. If required to transfer, move to new school, new bus, strange cafeteria, new teachers and new relationships would put these children at a disadvantage compared to children in other adaptive programs in the SW. Eight (8) of nine (9) schools in SW that have adaptive programs have both primary and intermediate, with Westchester as the only exception.

Speaker: Mark Weinkam – Parent, Westchester Elementary*

Request made for funding for Intermediate Adaptive class. Speaking as representative for several parents and students from the Primary Adaptive class at Westchester, submitted petition for addition of Intermediate Adaptive class to service fourth and fifth grades. Children in these programs need small class size. Daughter, Bailey, attended Villa Cresta for two (2) years of Pre-K spending several hours on a bus because it was the only county program to meet her needs. Attended kindergarten at Hillcrest Elementary and is now “blooming” at Westchester. Another move would be unfair, considering there will be a need to move again in two (2) years after completing elementary school. Additional funding to add a Primary Adaptive class at Westchester would provide a fair chance for Westchester students, an equal chance as compared to other Primary Adaptive students in the SW.

Speaker: Fred Ludwig – Career and Technology Advisory Council*

Request to increase budget of \$837,000 that has been the same for four (4) years. Career and Technology programs service over four thousand students who are ready to enter the workforce at graduation. Eighty-three percent of operating budget is for staff development and equipment. New and ongoing requests include \$44,000 for the EMS program at Woodlawn HS, \$40,000 for books, supplies for the Finance program at Randallstown, and \$20,000 over the next two (2) summers for a Dell Computer program

Speaker: Alex Clough – GT Resource Teacher, Johnnycake Elementary

Request made to increase funding for Catalyst Program, which currently provides 0.5 FTE. Since implementing the program, test scores have risen and there is more reliable targeting of GT students at a younger age so they can be more fully identified across kindergarten thru second grade. This has raised the expectation for all students. School is also working to raise awareness of parents.

Primary Talent Development for kindergarten thru second grade used to find more GT students who might otherwise be missed.

Speaker: Vicki Yurek-Gordon, Dogwood Elementary

Request made to increase funding for staffing. Over 600 students are serviced. Currently there are two (2) inclusion teachers, increased from one (1) last year, but even more is needed. Speech/language position is now at 0.8 FTE, not 1.0 (Title 1 status resulted in loss of 0.2 FTE to this position). Desire is to assess student need at younger age, but this impacts staff and is therefore offset by desire to maintain quality service.

Speaker: Carla Tucker, Dogwood Elementary

Request is believed to be for capital funding cycle. After five (5) years of operation, six (6) relocatables have become a permanent fixture. Students slip on rocky path leading from building and request therefore is for a canopy covering to protect students when walking to trailers. Additionally, students are carrying the teacher's key to let themselves into the building to use restrooms; this presents a safety issue for all schools with relocatables.

Speaker: Natalie Racks – Parent, Powhatan Elementary

Request made for funding increase to provide more teachers resulting in smaller class sizes. Third grade has two (2) teachers with 29 or 30 students each; all grades understaffed.

Speaker: Kerrie J Lagon – Acting PTA President and Secretary, Edmondson Heights Elementary

Gratitude extended for facilities improvements, but request made for funding to increase staff to take full advantage of improvements. With over seven hundred students, 90-100 reside in multi-family dwellings. A full time social worker would be able to address emotional needs and behavior concerns of students. Additionally, a Focus Room staff member is needed to keep students out of the office and in a classroom. Lastly, request made for funding for second assistant principal to assist with administrative paperwork.

Speaker: Yvonne Nelson, Edmondson Heights Elementary

Gratitude again extended for facilities improvements, but request made for funding to increase staff. About 15% of student population lives in multi-family dwellings, many of who are foster children in need of a social worker. Additional funding to provide focus room staff member and second assistant principal requested.

Speaker: Veda Jefferson – Lansdowne High

Expressed concern over faculty salaries. Does not want to see quality teachers and staff leave due to salary concerns.

Speaker: Jody Wallace – Chair, ABC (Advocates for Baltimore County) Music

Request made for continued support of quality music programs. Research sites positive links between music and learning. Request made that display of support would be shown by increasing budgetary funding to ensure instruments could be adequately repaired every year. Repair funding us typically spent by November of each year.

Speaker: Daric Jackson – Woodlawn High

Request made to decrease class size, especially in math, English, and government (social studies) by hiring more staff and to find better ways to recruit and train teachers. Additional request for

funding a “Campus Supervisor”, someone to be responsible for continuously monitoring the campus daily both inside and out. Many students linger after school hours, so additional request made for funding to increase and improve after school activities and to allow transportation for after school activities. Final request made for funding for speaker in the hallways to allow students to hear bells and therefore improve tardiness.

Speaker: Ori Shabazz – PTSA President, Woodlawn High

Acknowledgement made of professionalism and service provided by health professionals, particularly nurses at Edmondson Heights Elementary and Southwest Academy. Request to cap class size, provide assistance in cafeteria, and supply test books. Regarding books, several are not returned at year-end therefore each year begins with short supply. It is difficult to encourage students to achieve if they do not have a textbook.

Speaker: Elizabeth Lee – Southwest Advisory and Parent, Catonsville Elementary

Expressed concern for air quality, particularly when 400+ students are in gymnasium with the doors closed and no air conditioning.

Speaker: Brian Bailey – Southwest Advisory Council

As a former student member of the EAC, gratitude expressed for number of persons displaying commitment to education as exemplified by attending.

Speaker: Sharon Loving – Southwest Advisory and Parent, Woodbridge Elementary*

Short-term request for adequate locks to be placed on storage rooms used for required lock down safety drills; long term request for consideration to revisit open space concern as Woodbridge is only school of purely open space design as reported by Strategic Planning.

Speaker: Michael Kennedy – County Board of Education

Addressed audience to remind attendees that BOE is not fiscally independent but rather relies on County Executive’s Office. Request made to rally in support of Thornton Funding not only to the County Executive’s Office, but the Governor’s Office as well.

Public meeting closed by Lisa Orens at 8:03pm and all speakers, attendees and BOE members thanked. Thanks also extended to Mr. Thomas DeHart for hosting. Reminder made that all information shared at the hearing goes to the Board of Education. Good things happen every day in BCPS and parent involvement is important. Our schools are educating future adults of our communities. Informed attendees that Councilman Moxley and County Executive Smith are meeting simultaneous to this meeting to discuss education. Reminded all that it is important to work together. Encouraged everyone to find something good in the school system and promote it.

Public meeting adjourned at 8:08pm.

*Indicates report provided by presenter.

Business meeting called to order at 8:37 pm by Lisa Orens

Members in attendance: Brian Bailey, Sarah Chavis, Elizabeth Lee, Sharon Loving, Sam Macer, Dr. Richard Milbourne, Lisa Orens (chair); others in attendance: Jody Wallace

1. Member discussion:
 - ⌚ Introduction made to Sarah Chavis, student member from Lansdowne High.
 - ⌚ Introduction made to Ashley Palaigos, student member from Catonsville High.
 - ⌚ Introduction made to Elizabeth Lee, newest member.
2. Dr. Milbourne indicated that Judy sent a request to all area principals to request support through attendance.
3. Lisa used Tracey Cyr as an example of how one member can make a difference. She explained that Tracey is a former member who brought to light many issues based on the needs of her own children.
4. Dr. Milbourne reported that there is an effort underway to get all special education children returned to their home school. As an example, over forty students previously at Owings Mills have been returned to Woodlawn.
5. Johnnycake was mentioned as example of change possible from converting to full day kindergarten. Sharon questioned plans to convert Woodbridge in 2005, explaining that she learned at a PTA meeting that Facilities will not sign off on Woodbridge as being ready in its current state, partly due to open space as a concern since there is no place to put an additional class that meets kindergarten qualifications. Referral was made to Kathy McMahon who is handling the full day kindergarten transition by 2007, in part to determine the possibility of a delay at Woodbridge from the suggested 2005 date.
6. Dr. Milbourne indicated that “State of the Area” address could be given at a meeting soon based on a meeting of the previous evening. Discussion ensued regarding the following:
 - ⌚ All 20 elementary schools in SW met adequate yearly progress (AYP) and Johnnycake exceeded in all areas.
 - ⌚ AYP met by 2 of 4 middle schools
 - ⌚ AYP met by 3 of 4 high schools
7. Lisa questioned possibility of foster care issues contributing to failure to meet AYP. Dr. Milbourne indicated he did not believe this to be a factor.
8. Lisa reported that a parent express concern over replacement windows, particularly at Southwest Academy and Johnnycake Elementary. Dr. Milbourne indicated over \$30,000 has been spent for windows at Johnnycake Elementary. Because the windows are being vandalized repeatedly, there is an effort underway to involve the community in solving this concern as BCPS cannot afford to continue to spend this kind of money on window repair.
9. Sharon questioned the status on the Windsor Mill Middle School project and Dr. Milbourne reported that a ground breaking ceremony occurred several months ago. The school should be operational in 2006. Sam reported that he heard reference on a radio discussion that this might be a NW school. Dr. Milbourne indicated that while students from Old Court would likely be

included, a redistricting would occur effecting Woodlawn Middle and Southwest Academy, making this a SW school. The elementary schools likely impacted by a redistricting would include Winfield, Chadwick and Dogwood. Sam questioned how soon the boundaries would be decided with a response that committees would be set by this time next year.

10. Lisa questioned what is occurring with the Transition Center and it was reported that it is delayed pending inclusion of special education students.
11. Elizabeth questioned possibility of foster care students being allowed to finish out a school year after being placed with a foster family by BC providing transportation. She believes this to be modeled in Montgomery County with the benefit to the student that change is limited. Discussion ensued with some agreement that, if considered, this would be a case-by-case decision.

Business meeting adjourned approximately 9:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Loving
Secretary, SW Education Advisory Council