

**Minutes
SW Education Advisory Meeting
Capital Pre-Budget Hearing
May 16, 2007
Catonsville Elementary School**

Council Attendees:

Beverly Lindsey Lisa Orens (chair)

Board of Education Attendees:

Joe Pallozzi
Barbara Burnopp, CFO, Baltimore County Public Schools

Hearing called to order at 7:10 pm by Lisa Orens

Attendance: Approx 25, including members and leaders of Boy Scout troop 305.

Speakers: 2

Introductions made to Joe Pallozzi, County Board of Education; Linda Miller, Principal

Purpose of Meeting Stated at 7:19 by Lisa Orens.

Thanks extended to Principal Miller for hosting the meeting. Stated speaker time limit of 3 minutes; speakers to be called in order of sign in.

Speaker: Diane Eff, Catonsville Middle School

Thanked the Board of Education for renovations. The overhaul was much needed and much appreciated. Work is progressing well and is expected to be completed by the end of the school year. Phase II, construction of the new wing, will begin soon. Mrs. Eff asks that the Board of Education invest in upgrading technology. The school is using Safari Montage. The school has 12 LCD projectors for the teachers' use. In order for students to gain the most benefit from this technology, LCD projectors need to be installed in every classroom. They need to be mounted because the lamps get very hot and are very delicate.

Speaker: Larrina Giller, Assistant Principal, Maiden Choice School

Thanked the Board of Education for providing funds for the changes made in the past year, including the new roof and windows. More funds are needed to enable the school to serve its students as effectively as possible. Because of the needs of their students, Maiden Choice School needs to exceed ADA compliance. Every room needs to have a handicapped-accessible sink and faucet. Doors need to be widened to allow room for wheelchairs to pass through easily. Accessible hardware is needed for doors. Parking lots need improvements and additional spaces. Currently lockers are being stored on the parking lot and need to be removed. The ramps to the playground need to be widened. Maiden Choice School students range in age from 3 to 21. The huge range of needs and disabilities of these students makes these modifications a necessity both in terms of academic success and safety and health.

Speaker: Joe Pallozzi – County Board of Education

Explained the pre-budget hearing process. Notes go to the Board of Education. The superintendent presents the proposed budget to the Board of Education. The Board makes changes, then after approving, it goes to the County Executive. He can add or cuts funding, and then sends it to the County Council. The Council can cut funding, and then votes to approve the budget.

Speaker: Barbara Burnopp, Chief Financial Officer, Baltimore County Public Schools

Defined the two budget processes. The Operating budget process is 1 year long. Operating funds pay for salaries, paper, books and so. The Capital Budget pays for new buildings, renovations, repairs, etc. The superintendent presents the Capital Budget to the Board of Education. Then it goes to the Planning Board. From there the County Executive approves it, and then finally the County Council approves it. We try to make our local dollars go as far as possible, by securing as much funding as possible from the State. The County has to *match* the State funds. An example of operating versus capital funding: The cost of repairing a toilet falls under the *operating* budget, replacing a toilet is a *capital* budget item.

Questions:

How much money is budgeted to the school nurses for medical supplies? Ms. Burnopp replied that the amount of supplies is calculated as part of the per student amount for each specific school. She cited Catonsville Middle School as an example. One can find Catonsville Middle School in the budget book and find the amount of non-salary dollars allotted to that school.

What if a school has money left over at the end of the year? Ms. Burnopp explained that in June if the school has not used all of their allotted funds, she can use it for system purchases or re-appropriate the funds for the next year.

The members of Boy Scout troop 305 attended our prebudget hearing to learn about community involvement in government for a merit badge. The Southwest Area Advisory Council is honored that they chose to attend our hearing and allow us to help them earn their badge. We hope they found the experience helpful. The Council would also like to thank Ms. Burnopp for explaining the budget process to the scouts and our audience as a whole.

Hearing Adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

**Lack of Recess – A Summary of Concerns and Points in Support of Creating a
BCPS Recess Policy**

Kelly Strzelecki, Parent, Catonsville Elementary School

April 18, 2007

As a parent of two elementary school children, I am concerned about the lack of regular outside recess at my children's school, and strongly feel that the Baltimore County Public School system should institute a county-wide recess policy similar to what Howard County Public Schools have recently enacted.¹ I have raised the issue regarding lack of regular recess several times with teachers and the principal of my children's school over the past few years, without success. This year seemed to be particularly disconcerting; my 4th grade daughter stated that she had not been outside for recess for an entire month, for reasons that did not involve weather or behavior issues.

My concerns are shared by other parents at my school and at other elementary schools in Catonsville. The pressures on administrators and teachers to improve test scores have apparently come at the expense of recess. In addition, the elimination of recess seems to be the preferred form of punishment for several issues including forgetting homework, failing to return signature slips from parents, and classroom behavior. At the beginning of the school year both of my children's teachers listed the loss of recess as a top punishment for behavior issues.

I believe that reducing recess as punishment is misguided as the children with poor behavior are usually the ones in need of physical activity. Also, there are volumes of studies showing that physical activity during recess actually improves children's cognitive abilities, reduces behavior problems, helps with weight management, and improves social skills.

Please consider the following points from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) in support of recess and for creating a Baltimore County Public School recess policy:

- NASPE recommends that all children in elementary schools engage in at least one daily period of recess for at least 20 minutes per period.
- Recess should not be viewed as a reward but as a necessary educational support component for all children. Therefore, students should not be denied recess so they can complete class work or as a means of punishment.
- Recess should not replace physical education classes. Physical education provides sequential instruction to enhance the development of motor skills, movement concepts, and physical fitness. Recess provides unstructured play opportunities that allow children to engage in physical activity.

¹ Howard County Public School System, Policy 9521, Wellness Through Nutrition and Physical Activity, requires daily supervised recess for all elementary school children, and encourages to limit the use of recess time as punishment.

- Outdoor spaces should be used whenever the weather allows.

As a final point, multiple studies show that quality physical education and daily recess are components of the elementary school educational experience that enable students to develop physical competence, health-related fitness, personal and social responsibility, and enjoyment of physical activity so that they will be physically active for a lifetime.

Thank you for your consideration.

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