

**Central Area Educational Advisory Council
2013 Capital Pre-Budget Hearing
April 14, 2011**

Meeting started at 7:05PM at Ridge Ruxton School.

George Sarris in attendance from BCPS.

8 speakers signed up for testimony. Six parents from Stoneleigh Elementary regarding overcrowding, one parent for climate control and one parent from Pot Spring Elementary also regarding overcrowding.

1- Stoneleigh parents asked that renovation/addition be moved up the BCPS priority list. They have asked for a pledge by the School Board to approve construction funds in the 2013 Capital budget. The addition was part of a three part series to relieve the overcrowding in the Towson area and to date, Towson Elementary has been built and Hampton is slated for construction to begin this summer. The Stoneleigh piece must be started now.

Stoneleigh is the 4th oldest school in the county, 81 years old. The classroom and common areas were of a much smaller footprint back then. Interestingly, Stoneleigh parents have repeatedly asked for the square footage of the school and rooms and to date have NOT been able to secure that information from BCPS. It should not be that difficult.

Parents ask strategic planning to look at capacity projections again. 9 out of 12 homes in Anneslie are made up of residents 80 years and older. There is a transition of younger families coming soon.

One of the negative by-products of the overcrowding has to do with parent involvement. The Blueprint for Progress Goal #6 states:

“6.4 Increase parent/guardian attendance at school-based events and activities such as back-to-school nights and school improvement teams. (BCPS standard) “

Unfortunately, the schoolhouse is too small for students and parents to attend after school events. The school will have to make cuts in order to prevent a dangerous situation from occurring.

2- Dr. Laurie Taylor-Mitchell spoke about the continued pressing need for climate control in all of the BCPS schools. If three schools per year were air conditioned, it would still take 25 years to complete the job.

She also spoke about systemic problems within BCPS and why do the parents continuously have to fight for solutions? This sparked a lively discussion amongst attendees and how to petition for monies. The discussion did venture into the realm of politics and the County Council/Executive, but was allowed because of the interest of those in attendance. More thoughts and ideas resulted.

3- Finally, Melissa Whatley, PTA President at Pot Spring Elementary, spoke about the overcrowding at the school. Apparently, they are beginning in their quest to reduce overcrowding. When speaking to the office of strategic planning, they were given the answer that “their school is peaking at its capacity”.

Original capacity numbers indicated that Pot Spring would not reach 600 students until 2018. Well, the upcoming years have been modified because they have over 600 students now. Next years capacity goes up to 633 students in a school for 477 students. This will bring them to 132% capacity. 2018 indicates 649 students.

Announcements were made as to the public hearing on the county budget on April 26, 2011 as well as the BOE public hearing on 2013 capital requests on May 25th.

The meeting ended at 8:40 PM