

APPROVED  
36-2003

Rockville, Maryland  
November 5, 2003

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in special session at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on November 5, 2003, at 7:35 p.m.

ROLL CALL Present:                   Mrs. Patricia B. O'Neill, President  
  in the Chair  
  Ms. Sharon Cox  
  Mr. Reginald M. Felton  
  Dr. Charles Haughey  
  Mr. Walter Lange  
  Mr. Gabe Romero  
  Mr. Sagar Sanghvi, Student Board Member  
  Dr. Jerry Weast, Secretary/Treasurer

Absent:           Mr. Kermit V. Burnett

# or ( ) indicates student vote does not count. Four votes needed for adoption.

RESOLUTION NO 546-03           Re:   **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

On recommendation of the Superintendent and on motion of Mr. Felton seconded by Ms. Cox, the following resolution was adopted unanimously by members present:

Resolved, That the Board of Education approve its agenda for November 5, 2003.

Re:   **ANNOUNCEMENT**

Mrs. O'Neill announced that Supplement D would be discussed on November 11, 2003.

Re:   **SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATION FOR  
ALL-DAY KINDERGARTEN**

The expansion of full-day kindergarten would open 17 new programs each year for the next three years beginning next fall, with the final 14 programs opening in the fall of 2007, in compliance with Maryland's Bridge to Excellence in Public Education Act. In all, 65 new full-day programs would be started at schools throughout the county (including two new planned elementary schools), in addition to three schools set to reopen in the next three years to relieve overcrowding in schools that already offer full-day kindergarten.

Re:   **DISCUSSION**

Mrs. O'Neill noted that the Board was committed to all-day kindergarten before the Thornton

Commission's recommendations. The Board has asked the superintendent to form a work group to plan the roll out of all-day kindergarten.

Ms. Cox added that the superintendent was interested in input from the community, and the Board created a work group. The feedback from the community prioritized the concerns, and the recommendations of the work group addressed those concerns with equitable recommendations.

Mr. Lange stated that he was committed to all-day kindergarten. He wanted a break out of the capital impact, especially with relocatable classrooms. What is the total number of classrooms that will be needed for full implementation of all-day kindergarten? Mr. Lavorgna replied that there will be a feasibility study to look at each elementary school to determine the rooms appropriate for kindergarten classes.

Mrs. O'Neill thought the information would be useful in legislative matters, and she asked for the total number of kindergarten classrooms needed in the capital budget to fully implement all-day kindergarten.

Dr. Haughey wanted to know the plan for complementary/supplementary kindergarten services when all-day kindergarten is implemented. Dr. Weast replied that both before-and after-school day care would still be available.

Mr. Felton suggested an all-day kindergarten FAQ be written and distributed to the community since this is a Board commitment and priority. Ms. Cox thought that the FAQ should include the kindergarten curriculum and program.

Mrs. O'Neill asked that the school system make the community aware of the changing dates for entrance into kindergarten.

Re: **OVERVIEW OF THE SUPERINTENDENT'S  
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

Dr. Weast presented the six-year plan to improve the quality and availability of public school facilities and classrooms in Montgomery County by building or reopening 10 new schools, constructing additions to 21 more schools, and accelerating the modernization of another 18 schools.

Featuring dozens of projects affecting tens of thousands of students throughout the county, the plan would respond to a growing enrollment, cut the backlog of long-delayed projects, and significantly reduce the number of relocatable classrooms from 689 this year to 309 at the plan's completion. Restrooms would be refurbished in 50 schools, and gymnasiums

constructed at 33 elementary schools. Many other smaller systemic and core facility upgrades would be made, expanding the impact of the improvements throughout the county.

The Richard Montgomery High School project would be moved up one year, all other high school projects moved up two years, and all elementary projects moved up one year, beginning with College Gardens Elementary School. In addition, six other schools would receive core improvements to areas such as cafeterias, media centers, and health rooms. Many more systemic projects would replace roofs, upgrade heating and air-conditioning systems, improve indoor air quality, and address safety and security needs.

The proposals, if approved by the Board of Education and the County Council, would increase the FY 2005 Capital Budget by \$71.1 million to \$204.4 million. The six-year Capital Improvements Program (CIP) would increase by \$319.1 million to \$956.2 million.

The gymnasium project is an example of the kind of change necessary so that all elementary schools finally have an appropriate indoor facility for physical education, recreation, and other programs for the community.

The recommendations are in addition to the earlier proposal to expand full-day kindergarten to all elementary schools by 2007, in compliance with the Maryland Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act. Other recommendations include a review of modernization versus renovation costs, a six-year plan for Career Technology Education, an articulation plan for East Silver Spring, Takoma Park, and Piney Branch elementary schools, and an improvement of the Mark Twain program.

Dr. Weast said the magnitude and scope of these recommendations are within reach of Montgomery County. The funding recommendations are built on a combination of revenue sources that include an increased Spending Affordability Guideline (SAG) for county bonds, an impact tax on new residential units, dedication of the increase in the recordation tax, and the securing of a reasonable amount of state aid. On September 30, 2003, the County Council set the capital budget SAG at \$190 million per year for FY 2005 and FY 2006 and \$1.14 billion for the six-year total. The new six-year total increases the amount of bond funding available for all county agencies for the FY 2005–2010 CIP by \$245 million over the previous six-year period.

At the same time, the Council has amended legislation to dedicate the increase in the Recordation Tax adopted in 2002 to the MCPS capital budget and the Montgomery College technology needs. The Council is considering legislation to establish a School Impact Tax on new residential housing to be dedicated to funding school capacity projects. The total state aid request for FY 2005 is \$59.9 million. There are two components to this request. First, \$17.9 million is the minimum level the state is obligated to support under current provisions. Second, there are projects amounting to \$42 million that have not yet been approved for

planning by the state.

The recommendations for new and existing projects include the following:

1. Opening five new schools (one high school, one middle school, and three elementary schools).
2. Reopening five schools (one high school, one middle school, and three elementary schools).
3. Building additions to 21 elementary, middle, and high schools.
4. Accelerating modernizations by one year for Richard Montgomery High School, two years for all future high schools projects, and one year for elementary schools, beginning with College Gardens Elementary School.
5. Planning and constructing 33 elementary school gymnasiums for all existing, new, and reopened elementary schools currently without such facilities.
6. Refurbishing restrooms in 50 schools.
7. Providing core improvements at three high schools, two middle schools, and one elementary school.
8. Implementing systemic projects, such as Planned Life-cycle Asset Replacement (PLAR); roof replacement; heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC); indoor air quality; improved safe access; and security improvements.

**Re: DISCUSSION**

Ms. Cox asked staff to speak about the SAG and the AAA bond rating. What is the formula? Why it is important? Will the CIP proposal affect that rating? Mr. Joseph Lavorgna, director of the Department of Planning and Capital Programming, replied that the County Council has several criteria for the SAG, including the ability to pay for the overall debt and the ratio of the debt to the operating budget.

Mrs. O'Neill pointed out that some PTAs are concerned that their schools' projects are not scheduled until 2007-08. Mr. Romero said that the school system is constrained by its holding facilities for modernizations. Mrs. O'Neill added that it is the PTAs that want additions because the classrooms are full now. Dr. Weast responded that most of the projects are in the first two years, but there is a domino effect with the holding facilities. If the CIP is not funded or the projects spread over more years, it is important to understand the ramifications for facilities management in the coming years since capacity issues are a priority.

Mr. Romero pointed out that the construction industry takes time to catch up on increased prices so it would be fiscally responsible to do the projects in the first years of the CIP. Mr. Richard Hawes, director of the Department of Facilities Management, stated that was correct. Dr. Weast stated that the projects have to be completed in two fiscal years because those projects are necessary and past due.

Ms. Cox noted that a relocatable classroom is temporary. The enrollment projections indicate that MCPS cannot eliminate relocatables without building facilities.

Mr. Lange said an article in *The Washington Post* reported a projected 31-percent increase in the population by 2025.

Dr. Weast said staff had sent to the Board the comments received from clusters and how those comments fit into the CIP. Mr. Felton requested that the cluster comments on the CIP needs, sent during the summer, be resent to the Board.

Ms. Cox asked staff to speak about the Clarksburg/Rocky Hill conversion. Mr. Lavorgna replied that the middle school was built on the high school site with the intention of converting the school to a high school because there was no middle school site at the time. Since then, a middle school site has been secured. Therefore, the long-term plan is being executed. Ms. Cox added that if that had not been the plan, the school system would be building an addition plus a high school.

Ms. Cox asked about the parent drop-off area at South Lake Elementary School. Are there plans to correct that situation? Mr. Lavorgna replied that the drop-off area will be done when the addition is being built.

Mr. Lange was interested in a cost comparison of modernization and renovation. He noticed that the supplement addresses that issue and was completed by a consultant. During the worksessions, he would like more information on that issue.

Mr. Lange was interested in information regarding the Thomas Edison High School of Technology and the downturn in enrollment. He was especially interested in adequate facilities for the provision of career education.

Mr. Romero noted that with additions to schools there are "add/alternate" projects. How does the school system make decisions? Dr. Weast stated it is related to funding and the cost of the project.

Mr. Romero thought that was a strong point in support of full funding. Regarding gyms, some of them are tied to additions and modernizations. How many are not tied to other construction projects? Mr. Lavorgna replied that 14 were not.

Mr. Felton thought the Board had to focus on the rationale for full funding. The community should focus on why the projects are phased over the six years, and what the impact is on education programs.

Dr. Haughey asked for a comparison of life-time uses for relocatables versus the operational

costs of regular classrooms.

RESOLUTION NO. 547-03 Re: **ADJOURNMENT**

On recommendation of the Superintendent and on motion of Mr. Felton seconded by Dr. Haughey, the following resolution was adopted unanimously by members present:

Resolved, That the Board of Education adjourns meeting of November 5, 2003, at 9:15 p.m.

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PRESIDENT

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SECRETARY

JDW:gr