

APPROVED  
4-2007

Rockville, Maryland  
January 24, 2007

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in regular session at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Wednesday, January 24, 2007, at 7:30 p.m.

Present:               Mrs. Nancy Navarro, President  
                              in the Chair  
                              Mr. Steve Abrams  
                              Mr. Christopher Barclay  
                              Ms. Shirley Brandman  
                              Ms. Sharon Cox  
                              Dr. Judy Docca  
                              Ms. Sarah Horvitz  
                              Dr. Jerry Weast, Secretary/Treasurer

Absent:                Mrs. Patricia O'Neill

RESOLUTION NO. 32-07               Re:    **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

On recommendation of the superintendent and on motion of Mr. Abrams seconded by Mr. Barclay, the following resolution was adopted unanimously by members present:

Resolved, That the Board of Education approve its agenda for January 24, 2007.

Re:    **WORKSESSION ON THE SUPERINTENDENT'S  
RECOMMENDED FY 2008 OPERATING BUDGET**

Ms. Navarro announced that after the work sessions, the Board would take final action on Tuesday, February 13, 2007. The review of the budget will be done section by section as outlined in the table of contents for each budget chapter. She urged staff to point out pertinent issues that may be of concern to the Board. Board members were free to ask questions and request that staff provide pricing information on specific issues.

Dr. Weast stated that the Board and staff are making great strides in educating children in Montgomery County. In listening to people at the hearings, this budget should be adopted and funded by the Council to continue all initiatives.

Re:    **K-12 INSTRUCTION AND OFFICE OF SCHOOL  
PERFORMANCE**

For the record, Mr. Abrams noted the \$120-million increase in the budget as it relates to salaries and benefits. How much of that is represented by this chapter? Mr. Bowers replied that it approximately 51 percent is in this chapter, such as classroom personnel.

Ms. Cox noted that the pre-kindergarten enrollment has been about 100 less than expected. Mr. Bowers said that there is transition in and out of the program, but the slots are appropriate.

Ms. Cox asked for the increased student enrollment in art/music since the Strathmore concerts. Ms. Brandman asked if there were oversized classes in elementary art/music/physical education.

Mr. Barclay inquired about the reduction in textbooks and media materials. Mr. Bowers stated that the funds are driven by enrollment and the increase is for inflation.

Ms. Cox asked if the budget reflected changing compensation for the new roles of personnel in the middle school reform. Mr. Bowers replied that the leadership component shows an increase of 40 percent for math and literacy specialists, team leaders, and content specialists.

Ms. Brandman inquired about the success of the middle school grants. Mr. Kress volunteered to check the data. With the focus on literacy, Ms. Brandman asked what was needed at the middle school level.

Ms. Brandman asked about the two student support specialists, and where they will be placed. Mr. Kress stated it was an 11-month position similar to an assistant principal without the same responsibilities and certification. Allocation is based on enrollment.

Ms. Brandman asked how the gifted and talented curriculum was budgeted in the middle school reform. Staff responded that there will be two central office positions for developing curriculum.

Ms. Brandman asked about team leaders in the middle school and where those leaders would come from and if it could be restated that there would be a minimum of two for each school.

Ms. Navarro asked about the realignments of the \$250,000 for contracting with community organizations to develop programs. Staff responded that there were several programs, such as Identity and MetroCap.

Ms. Navarro asked about High School PLUS and whether there is capacity to address this appropriately. Staff agreed that is the right direction; however, the pace of conversion will be based on the closure of the evening high schools. It is important for students to stay in their home communities to receive intervention. Dr. Docca asked how many students were being served in the High School PLUS pilot schools and if the class diversity is the same as night school. Ms. Brandman asked how High School Plus is being evaluated for success, such as examining student performance and dropout rate.

Re: **OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

There were no Board questions.

Re: **OFFICE OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION PROGRAMS**

Mr. Abrams inquired about technology and the intranet within MCPS, especially in sharing curriculum issues. He asked if there were budget limitations or policy implications. Staff replied that this was a management issue than technology limitations. A response will be provided at the next meeting.

Ms. Cox asked if there was a plan to increase staff development, especially if the reason is to provide staff development for those writing curriculum. Staff replied that the professional growth system will provide for conferences and courses.

Ms. Brandman asked if the report on "Girls in Technology" was reflected in the budget. Staff replied that there is the possibility for one position to coordinate the initiative.

Ms. Brandman stated that the Seneca Valley Cluster should be made aware that Junior Great Books is available to all students.

Ms. Cox asked how staff determines if Accelerated and Enriched Instruction is achieving its goals. How is funding related to achievement?

Ms. Navarro was interested in parent outreach for those students who have interrupted educations. Ms. Navarro asked for an update to the Board on the effectiveness of the parent community coordinator.

Ms. Cox noted that there is a brief description of the parent community coordinators' work, it does not capture the huge amount of work accomplished by this office. Regarding interventions and assessments, she asked about the strong level of coordination and collaboration with the Department of Special Education Services and ESOL to identify strategies. Staff replied that those groups are in constant contact in working together to identify and implement interventions.

Ms. Navarro inquired about providing an update on the status of state requirements to offer pre-kindergarten services to all FARMS-eligible children. Where is the school system on its capacity? Staff replied that this budget holds to the same capacity as last year; however, the county is expanding its community-based programs.

Re: **OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND STUDENT SERVICES**

Mr. Abrams asked if there was a disproportionality of African-American and Hispanic students at Sherwood High School. Staff volunteered to supply that data.

Mr. Abrams asked if any of the students who are currently in the learning centers would be eligible for another secondary alternative program. Staff replied that the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team will look at a variety of programs and decide on where the goals and objectives.

Mr. Abrams inquired if there were enough resources to make the change to inclusion in secondary schools. Staff stated that they were confident about moving forward, but developed a more gradual approach to be more sensitive to the community.

Mr. Abrams asked if the more gradual approach would result in more or less exposure to potential litigation. Staff replied that the revised program would be less; however, this will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Dr. Docca stated that she had had concerns about the learning center issue from the beginning. She wanted to make sure that there was support for these students, especially in the middle schools. She thought it would be difficult to fit in three days for professional development. Staff replied that training will be done in concert with the staff development for middle school reform.

Mr. Barclay inquired about the change in the school culture. He has heard from parents about their distrust that the schools will be ready for the special education students. In the current model, students have the ability to choose to return to their home school. What would be the time frame? Staff replied that students have the right to attend their home school, but an IEP team meeting would have to be held.

Ms. Cox asked if it was possible for a school to prepare teachers through training and spring IEP meetings, and to develop a program that will meet the needs of the students. Staff thought hours-based staffing provided experience to take the next step in inclusion.

Mr. Barclay thought it is helpful to know there is training and communication with parents. Hopefully, MCPS will be able to overcome the skepticism of the parents to deliver on its promise. Clearly, the inclusion model is the way to go, but there must be communication with the parents.

Ms. Navarro thought there needs to be communication regarding disproportionality and concerns with the learning centers.

Ms. Brandman had several questions about the learning centers –

- What is in place and budgeted for the program to be a success?
- Is there summer training for paraeducators?
- What are the budget implications?
- What would it cost for the commitment?
- Hours-based staffing has flexibility; will all schools have flexibility to program for the students?
- Does MCPS have the staff and resources?
- What is the effect on class size?
- What would next year look like with learning center students having access to general education?
- Will the learning center students have the ability to access general education?
- What is the expectation that the local school will support the learning center students?
- Is everything in place?

Mr. Barclay asked what other accommodations will be available in addition to those for reading. Staff responded that there will be work in small groups using the co-teaching model.

Ms. Cox agreed with her colleagues on the vision that is shared across the school system. All agreed that schools want to “own” all the children. In an ideal world, all the children are general education students, but some receive special education services. How can parents see that their concerns have been identified and monitored? Staff replied that monitoring is critical, and this is the role for community superintendents working with principals. Staff is committed to assuring the success of these children.

Ms. Cox asked what the staff training and fiscal numbers would be for local schools with the phase out of the learning centers.

Mr. Barclay asked if suspension rates have improved. Staff stated that the rate has drastically dropped because the behaviors of special education students are better when they are in a heterogeneous mix.

Ms. Brandman asked about speech/language pathologists and what the impact is on their services. Is the Collaborative Action Process (CAP) keeping pace?

RESOLUTION NO. 33-07

Re: **ADJOURNMENT**

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

Resolved, That the Board of Education adjourn its meeting of January 24, 2007, at 10:55 p.m.

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PRESIDENT

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SECRETARY

JDW:gr