

APPROVED
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Rockville, Maryland
January 28, 2003

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in special session at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Tuesday, January 28, 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
Dr. Jerry Weast, Secretary/Treasurer

Absent: Mr. Kermit V. Burnett
Mr. Mihyar Alnifaidy, Student Board Member

Re: **WORKSESSION ON THE SUPERINTENDENT'S
RECOMMENDED FY 2004 OPERATING BUDGET**

Mrs. O'Neill announced that after the review, the Board would take final action on Thursday, February 6. 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 are free to ask questions and request that staff provide pricing information on specific issues.

Re: **BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE SUPERINTENDENT'S
RECOMMENDED BUDGET**

Dr. Weast explained that each year, prior to the Board of Education's action on the recommended operating budget, the superintendent proposes amendments to the requested budget to reflect information received since completing work on the budget in December. At this time, he proposed amendments that resulted in an increase in the Superintendent's FY 2004 Recommended Operating Budget of \$1,815,378 (from \$1,506,301,494 to \$1,508,116,872), including grants and enterprise funds.

The Board of Education made inquiries about the following chapters:

Re: **CHAPTER 1 – K-12 INSTRUCTION**

Mrs. O'Neill pointed out there will be more combination classes at the elementary level. Dr. Weast replied that the school system had tried to have single classroom units wherever possible; an unbalanced situation can only be dealt with by a combination class. Also, there could be educational reasons for combining two classes.

Mr. Romero asked for the cost for vertical articulation specialists. Mrs. O'Neill replied that 20 vertical articulation specialists cost \$1,162,895. Dr. Spatz added that each specialist averages \$77,886. Ms. Cox asked if the vertical articulation specialist position was 12-month. Mr. Kress replied that they were. Ms. Cox inquired whether if a cluster was interested in reestablishing this position, such as the Rockville Cluster did, were the positions 10 or 12 months. Mr. Kress responded that at that time they were 10-month positions.

Mr. Lange thought that elementary schools without assistant principals must be addressed in the future since he had been hearing of the challenges of a single administrator school. He was concerned that performance goals were not highlighted, especially performance goals of safety and security in schools other than high schools. Under supplies and materials, there is a request for \$8.7 million, which is roughly \$134 per student. Mr. Lange pointed out that that number should be emphasized so that the community recognizes that the budget is meeting minimal needs. Also funded out of this category is any software that a school deems appropriate for its instructional program. Dr. Weast stated that the increase in this category is to meet the curriculum priorities.

Mr. Lange thought there was an opportunity to realign the counselors' work load in order to provide services to students. Mr. Kress stated that he would work with the guidance office on this issue.

Ms. Cox asked about the increase in the elementary school positions. Dr. Spatz replied that those increases related to the staffing ratios, i.e., when enrollment increases to a certain point an elementary school is eligible for an assistant principal.

Ms. Cox noted that the kindergarten staffing guidelines list one teacher for every 21.4 half-day students and one teacher for every 17 full-day students, but the budget states one to 15 full-day students. Mr. Kress stated that there is an average staffing of 15 to 1; however, no new teachers are allocated until all sections exceed 17 to 1.

Ms. Cox remarked that the down-county consortium was currently staffed with 16.6 positions, and Mr. Kress agreed that would be sufficient to develop the academies and prepare the accelerated courses.

Ms. Cox noted that the shared responsibilities for the down-county and Northeast consortiums might require limited increased staffing. Mr. Kress replied that the choice process would begin next spring, and there would be a need to shift staffing or ask for supplemental funds to acquire more staff.

Ms. Cox asked if the money provided to principals for instructional materials could be used for textbooks. Mr. Bowers replied that principals can use those funds for textbooks or instructional materials.

Ms. Cox inquired if the school system had ever done an audit of instructional materials and the alignment of those purchases with the school improvement program. Mr. Bowers responded that there had not been a systemic audit, but community superintendents look at those funds on an individual basis.

Ms. Cox noted in the elementary school narrative that the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs would follow up on the ESOL study with staff development. Dr. Williams replied that both offices would launch a joint effort to fulfill the recommendations of the study.

Ms. Cox noticed that there was \$300,000 for the Business Roundtable for Education under elementary schools, but the responsibility for this function is under the deputy. Dr. Williams replied that the system is funding those positions this year. Mr. Anastasi stated that there are minimal funds to pay for staffing. Mr. Bowers stated that it was in the elementary schools' budget because it supports AmeriCorp, study circles, and other initiatives at the school level.

Mr. Felton supported the functions of the vertical articulation specialists, and he asked staff to collect data for next year's budget so that the Board could understand the consequences of eliminating those positions. Mr. Kress agreed to send the data to the Board.

Mr. Felton noted that the budget was funded for enrollment growth, but there are no reserved positions for overcrowded classes. Dr. Weast agreed that the budget is funded for enrollment growth, but does not anticipate the unevenness of the enrollment. Therefore, combination classes will be formed and some classes will be over enrolled.

Mrs. O'Neill asked about the \$77,000 reduction for the MCPS/Montgomery College partnership, and whether or not this will have a negative impact on that program. Dr. Spatz thought there would not be significant impact since it is a small reduction.

Mrs. O'Neill pointed out that there are three additional positions for Northwood High School to begin the planning process.

Re: **CHAPTER 2 – OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY
SUPERINTENDENT**

There were no Board of Education questions.

Re: **CHAPTER 3 – OFFICE OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS**

Mr. Felton wanted a clarification of Head Start/Fast Start. For next year, he asked that the expenditures be recorded to reflect the most educational benefit to young children. Mrs. O'Neill thought the budget would have been more clear if the federal dollars and enrollment was separated from the local funding for Head Start and EEEP.

Mrs. O'Neill noted that the professional library positions that were reduced last year were increased this year due to the use of the resources.

Mrs. O'Neill asked what the current fee was for outdoor education. Mrs. Muntner replied that it was \$68 dollars. Mrs. O'Neill inquired if the program was self-sufficient. Mr. Bowers stated that a half is paid by fees.

Regarding performance measures, Ms. Cox was interested in the goals and results. Also, what was staff looking for in the assessment and monitoring of the data? Was it the relationship between student achievement and curriculum? What are the plans for FY 2004 for a new curriculum? Is there staffing for a new curriculum? Mr. Fulton replied that the state has now provided standards for art/music/physical education, so that curriculum will be revised and integrated with other areas of study. Staff will continue to plan for mathematics, English language arts, and biology. Then, staff will begin to examine other curricular areas, such as foreign language.

Ms. Cox appreciated the information and new amount needed to fund middle school highly gifted programs and the need for a proactive approach to provide a continuum throughout the county.

Ms. Cox pointed out that the school system does not know how many Head Start/EEEP/Fast Start students can be served before the funding issues are resolved. Dr. Spatz replied that there are many alternatives being reviewed and initiatives assumed the same level of funding.

Ms. Cox wanted information in FY 2004 on the program gaps in career education, and she was pleased that staff planned on providing that data.

Regarding Safe and Drug-Free Schools, Ms. Cox asked about the reduction in non-position salaries. Mr. Fulton replied that in order to preserve the program, 50 percent of the reductions come from building rental, substitutes, and travel and the other 50 percent comes from stipends, hours, and training. Mr. Felton added that the Board should be specifically advised about how the evaluations or assessments related to the objectives of the program will be conducted in 2004 because the federal government does not waive the requirements even though there is flexibility in expending the funds. Mr. Fulton replied that the school system will continue to meet the federal requirements and objectives without the

same number of hours.

Ms. Cox asked about ESOL reduction of 8.6 instructional assistants in the budget which did not agree with personnel staffing. Dr. Spatz explained that the reduction was from the current staffing with new assistants added in highly impacted schools.

Mr. Lange was concerned that the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program is sustained and visual. Mr. Fulton said the duties will be handled by the health coordinator, and there will be a point person for character education within the Department of Curriculum and Instruction.

Mr. Lange stated that there were concerns about the curriculum roll out. Mr. Fulton replied that curriculum production takes time, but staff will review and modify the process of implementation.

Mr. Romero asked about Head Start/Fast Start and the County Council's alternatives. What are the transportation costs? Dr. Weast explained that the added cost of \$2 million in Head Start transportation is to comply with federal requirements (aides and restraints). Dr. Spatz responded that staff is working intensively with the Council to reconfigure slots to reduce transportation costs.

Dr. Haughey asked why Title II is staffed so differently than other programs. Mr. Fulton stated that the bulk of the funding is to implement and provide support for curriculum.

Re: **CHAPTER 4 – OFFICE OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

Dr. Haughey asked for the relationship between staff development's data on Title II and the funding for the curriculum. Dr. Spatz explained that the component in staff development is the former Eisenhower Program to improve teacher quality. In addition, a variety of other components in Title II are budgeted in other chapters to cover such items as class-size reduction and curriculum development.

Mr. Lange did not find human relations training and the performance measures. Ms. Merry explained that there is a staff person to focus on diversity to ensure that it is infused in all training.

Ms. Cox suggested that the office move forward with performance measures that should be included in the next budget. Those indicators would show the correlation with staff development and student achievement.

Mr. Felton asked about the mentoring programs for principals and teachers and the reduction of stipends. Ms. Merry replied that the mentoring program will continue. Each new teacher will have a mentor, but the mentor teacher will not work with the new teacher

in the summer. Mr. Felton asked about the intensive mentoring for first- and second-year teachers in Title I schools provided for in a state grant. Ms. Merry responded that if the grant is not received, that program will not be continued. Mr. Felton thought data was important to assess the help provided new teachers based on recruitment and retention of new teachers.

Re: **CHAPTER 5 – OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER**

Mrs. O'Neill noted that the reduction in maintenance is difficult because of the large number of aging school buildings and delays in modernizations. Mr. Bowers stated that the capital budget will have to increase PLAR if modernizations are delayed.

Mr. Felton asked if the reductions in building services workers recognized the increase in square footage and relocatable classrooms. Mr. Bowers stated that the increased area has been included in the calculations for the budget.

Mr. Lange was concerned that there were appropriate controls in place for purchasing card transactions. Also, he asked about an apprenticeship program, which could be done at minimal cost since the apprentices would be working. Finally, he hoped that the performance measures would be more crisply defined in the future.

Re: **CHAPTER 6 – OFFICE OF GLOBAL ACCESS TECHNOLOGY**

Ms. Cox noted the performance measure on teachers and principals using technology to maintain data on students. How many of the staff use technology? Which schools? Mr. Porter stated that the questionnaire was self-reporting. In the future, there will be other measurements to determine the effectiveness of the office in delivering services.

Mr. Felton inquired about the technology requirements of the *No Child Left Behind* act. Will MCPS be able to respond to the progress reports? Mr. Porter stated that technology is not in place since staff is still working on interpretations of the act.

Re: **CHAPTER 7 – OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

Mr. Felton asked if recruitment incentives were needed. Dr. Arons said there was not a need at this time.

Ms. Cox asked about increasing the number of principals who could scan applications and conduct interviews. Why is the increase in this pilot only 13 principals? Dr. Arons replied that the software will be web-enabled and all principals will be able to access the

information.

Mr. Romero was concerned about the recruitment of bilingual teachers. Dr. Arons noted that 11 percent of the teachers are bilingual.

Dr. Haughey noted that with the *No Child Left Behind* act, middle school teachers must have a major in the subject they teach. Will that affect the workforce? Dr. Arons replied that the many middle school teachers are subject-certified, especially in math. However, it will have an impact on certified elementary teachers.

Dr. Haughey asked if early retirement programs would reduce salary costs. Dr. Arons stated that it cannot be done at this time based on the shortage of teachers and an increasing workforce.

Mr. Lange asked about recruiting minority candidates for administrative positions. Dr. Arons reported the school system has the highest rate ever for minority administrators. It is a continuing goal and the new in-house pool is close to 50 percent minority candidates.

Mr. Lange asked about recruitment and retention of special education teachers. Dr. Arons stated that MCPS opened this year with 20 vacancies, and the supply is not meeting the demand throughout the nation.

**Re: CHAPTER 8 – OFFICE OF STUDENT AND
COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Mr. Lange asked for a trend analysis of special education legal costs.

Mr. Lange inquired about the possibility of using Medicaid to provide mental health services. Could that be a supplement? Ms. Phelps stated that staff is trying to maximize the use of medical assistance, and staff works with other agencies to develop school-based mental health services. However, it is only for children who are eligible for medical assistance.

Ms. Cox asked about residency verification for students. Ms. Phelps replied that the budget includes realigned positions as well as adequate office space. Ms. Cox inquired if residency verification could be handled at the school level. Ms. Phelps stated that there was a pilot in the Montgomery Blair Cluster to determine the effectiveness of this approach.

Ms. Cox inquired about truancy intervention. Ms. Phelps replied that the office is developing dropout prevention and Maryland's Tomorrow programs.

Ms. Cox wanted performance measures related to the quality of services, such as assistive technology.

Regarding alternative programs, Ms. Cox noted a reduction of \$573,000 from non-enterprise summer school for resources funded through federal grants. What does it mean? Ms. Phelps replied that it was funding for the ELO summer program that is now funded by grants and the OCIP which is a realignment.

Mrs. O'Neill remarked about the staffing ratios of speech pathologists, and that MCPS' staffing is above the national average. With the increase in special education students, what will be the impact of the 3.5 FTE reduction in speech pathologists? Ms. Phelps answered that there is less of a need for speech services in K-12, and the reduction will not increase the caseload, which is 60 to 1.

Mr. Felton asked for the per-pupil expenditures for students with disabilities. How much is funded by the federal government? What is the shortfall in the legislated federal share? Ms. Cox thought IDEA stated that the federal government would fund 40 percent of the national average for educating a special education student.

Re: **CHAPTER 9 – BOARD OF EDUCATION AND
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

Mr. Felton referred to boundary studies by a consultant to advise on how major school districts deal with that issue. If the Board wanted to consider such a contract, what area of the budget would pay for a study? Mr. Bowers replied that it would come from his office.

Dr. Haughey inquired about the 25-percent increase in contractual services. Dr. Lacey said that reflects an increase for the annual auditors' report and the realignment of funds for surveys.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 p.m.

PRESIDENT

SECRETARY

JDW:gr