

**CENTRAL AREA EDUCATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Baltimore County Public Schools  
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**To: Baltimore County Board Of Education****Date: October 11, 2007****From: Central Area Educational Advisory Council****RE: Pre-Budget Hearing Report**

The pre-budget hearing for the Central area was held on October 11, 2007 at Sparks Elementary School. We have prepared this report for your review and consideration. We have organized the report into the following three sections and attached an appendix that contains the written testimony of any speakers who provided such testimony:

- I. Introduction -States the purpose and highlights major issues of concern
- II. Information and Summarized Testimony -Statistical information about the hearings and excerpts from the testimony of individual speakers by school category or issue where appropriate.

**I. INTRODUCTION**

**A. Purpose**—The Central Area community voiced their concerns about what they believe the priorities should be for the next operating budget for their school system. The pre-budget hearing serves as the primary opportunity for citizens to express their opinions directly about the budget. We urge the Board to give careful consideration to the testimony and recommendations in this report. Giving serious consideration to citizen input maintains the Board's connection to the community it serves and contributes to a high quality educational system for our children.

**B. Issues**-- We have listed the issues presented in no particular order, provided a rationale along with the Council's recommended action for that issue. We believe these items require the Board's immediate attention and should be considered items for funding in the next operating budget.

1. **Personnel Resources** – This was a common thread that ran through the comments. Smaller schools feel penalized for their size because it limits their funding and staffing. No extra sources of special revenue are available for most of these schools. Baseline staffing requirements for all schools should be reviewed. These positions are based on student population and smaller schools are disadvantaged. Kindergarten classes are still felt to be too large and because our smaller schools do not qualify for extra dollars to hire Instructional Assistants (IAs) like other schools, these students are penalized. This same argument of the inability to merge dollars to boost hiring affect the ability of the smaller elementary schools to secure at least a halftime technology position. Some elementary schools have a science-math resource teacher to assist with student achievement. All elementary schools should have this resource. Continuation of music & arts program, magnet programs, science/math resource teachers, IT personnel, gifted & talented resource teachers in elementary schools, and other programs are dependent upon providing both the staffing and funding. These resources are needed to continue to offer a quality education in Baltimore County and to meet the needs of all the children. This issue continues to be a concern of our community. The dollars spent in these areas may well be offset by minimizing the need for remediation.

2. **Special Areas of Music & Art** – Concern was expressed that the school day has seen a reduction in the amount of time elementary students have in music and arts, reducing the time children have to discover and experiment.
3. **Compensation/Benefits for Teachers/Staff** - In order to attract and retain quality staff, not only do we need to be competitive with our salaries, but we also need to have a competitive benefits package. We are in fierce competition for hiring and keeping the brightest and best for our children not only within Maryland but outside of MD as well. It is essential that both salaries and benefits keep pace if Baltimore County Public Schools are to remain a quality system.
4. **Career and Technology Education** – The number of students participating in the Career and Technology programs has grown. Funding has remained static. Funds need to be preserved at current level at the very minimum to maintain program.
5. **Technology Needs** – Many comments from our speakers were about various technology needs. These included Sound Enhancement System, upgrading the IT position in elementary schools, and providing an IT position in all schools. The need for a full time technology integration person will become even more critical with the implementation of the new 4<sup>th</sup> grade keyboarding course. The Sound Enhancement System amplifies a teacher’s voice and evenly distributes it around the room. Studies have shown that even children with normal hearing can miss up to one third of what a teacher is saying in a regular classroom. Studies have shown that these systems increase test scores of all students by 10-15% and results in a decline in Special Education costs.
6. **Funding for School Supplies**– The parents and community request that BCPS needs to ensure that the individual schools have adequate funds to provide the needed supplies to run the school. Our children needs are not driven by politics and funding, to the contrary, their needs are what should drive politics and funding.
7. **Capital Concerns** – The issue of air conditioning and the hardship the lack of it causes in schools was brought up via email. Other issues address were the cancellation of a roller skating program due to asbestos in the floor. Need for additional on site parking at a local high school.

We commend the Board for their continuing support of the Advisory Councils and for their commitment to an open, inclusive budgetary process. As always, we thank you for your time and effort on behalf of all the students in the Baltimore County Public Schools.

cc: Dr. Joe Hairston, Superintendent  
Dr. Sonia Diaz, Chief Academic Officer  
Dr. Robert Haines, Deputy Superintendent of Business Services  
Rita Fromm, Chief of Staff  
Lyle Patzkowsky, Area Assistant Superintendent  
Barbara Burnopp, Executive Director of Fiscal Services  
Michael Sines, Executive Director of Physical Facilities  
Boyd Crouse, Coordinator of Area Educational Advisory Councils  
Jim Smith, Baltimore County Executive  
T. Bryan McIntire, Third District County Councilman  
Vincent J. Gardina, Fifth District County Councilman  
Joe Bartenfelder, Sixth District County Councilman  
Kevin Kamenetz, Second District County Councilman  
Kenneth Oliver, Fourth District County Councilman  
Samuel Moxley, First District County Councilman  
John Olszewski, Sr., Seventh District County Councilman

## II. INFORMATION AND SUMMARIZED TESTIMONY

### A. Statistical Information

Central Area Educational Advisory Members Attending:	4
Total Number Attending:	27
Number of Speakers:	7
Number Submitting Written Testimony Only:	4
Number of Schools Represented:	7
Number of Special Groups Represented:	2

### B. Middle Schools & High School

#### 1. Ridgely Middle School

- ❖ Air Conditioning needed in school. (See attached testimony)

#### 2. Hereford High School

- ❖ Needs additional on-site parking

### C. Elementary Schools

#### 1. Jacksonville Elementary School

- ❖ Increase funding to Instructional Technology positions so that every elementary school can increase to full time
- ❖ Resource personnel for special education should be based on number of hours in the IEPS not the number of students with IEPs
- ❖ Kindergarten classes need instructional assistants

#### 2. Padonia International

- ❖ Art & Music instruction time decreasing and increase emphasis on homework impeding children's ability to creatively experiment & discover on their own
- ❖ Increase funding for school supplies

#### 3. Pleasant Plains Elementary School

- ❖ Kindergarten classes need instructional assistants
- ❖ View technology as a tool to enhance learning and aide student & teachers
- ❖ Provide needed technology support to teachers

#### 4. Riderwood Elementary School

- ❖ Increase funding for school supplies

#### 5. Seventh District Elementary School

- ❖ Concern over cancellation of roller-skating program and asbestos in floor

### D. Community

- ❖ Continue to support Career & Technology programs
- ❖ Support Sound Enhancement System request
- ❖ Recruitment & retention of highly qualified teachers and staff
- ❖ Full time support technology person needed in all schools