

# School Budget Review Committee

George Howard Building  
3430 Court House Drive  
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043-4392

Approved

Minutes

January 31, 2017

The following members were in attendance: Reg Avery, Olga Butler, Ron Caplan, Ann De Lacy, Ellen Flynn Giles, Joshua Kaufman, Paul Lemle, Ryan Sturm, Jason Werther, and Bill Woodcock. In addition, County Auditor Steve Peters and Council Analyst Jeff Meyers attended. The following representatives of the School System attended: David Clark.

The video/audio archive of the meeting is available at this web address:  
<http://cc.howardcountymd.gov/Online-Tools/Watch-Us>

Chairperson Joshua Kaufman began the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

The Chairperson pointed out a typo on the date of the Draft Minutes from January 11. The date was corrected. Mr. Woodcock moved approval of the corrected Minutes. Mr. Werther seconded. The minutes were approved by voice vote.

The Committee discussed and reviewed the various proposed preliminary or interim recommendations that it will be making to the County Council. The following recommendations were approved unanimously except where otherwise note:

Recommendation #1: To improve transparency, opportunities for meaningful public engagement, and to reduce the levels of miscommunication and distrust that were evident between key stakeholders during the FY 2017 budget process, the Committee recommends that the County Executive, County Council, and HCPSS Leadership should hold a “school system budget summit” prior to the end of the BOE budget work sessions, which conclude on February 16, 2017.

Recommendation #2: The Committee feels that individual educators and other HCPSS staff should be given the opportunity to propose and champion innovative programs. The Committee recommends that the County Council propose to HCPSS that, in addition to current measures to support innovation, the School System should also designate a dedicated amount of its operating budget each year for such programs.

Recommendation #3: The Committee recommends that the County Council work with the School System to identify funding to hire a consultant to study the allocation of certificated staff and central office staff to ensure alignment with the System's mission, vision, and strategic plan.

Recommendation #4: The Committee recommends that the County Council work with the School System to identify funding to hire a consultant to study the allocation of supervisory and non-supervisory non-certificated staff to ensure alignment with the System's mission, vision, and strategic plan.

Recommendation #5: The Committee recommends that the County Council work with the School System to identify funding to pay for a study of school utilization, with a particular focus on under-utilized schools, to make recommendations that could have a positive educational and fiscal impact. Note: Mr. Avery did not favor this recommendation.

Recommendation #6: The Committee recommends that the County Council propose to the County Executive that the Executive create a position of educational liaison.

Several other recommendations were tabled to be discussed when the Committee formulates its final report:

Tabled Recommendation: To increase financial accountability for HCPSS expenditures, HCPSS should be able to raise its own revenue via local taxing authority. Any State education funding appropriations would be made directly to HCPSS, removing the County Executive and County Council from these decisions.

Tabled Recommendation: We recommend that the HCPSS Manager or Executive who is the responsible official for budget formulation in a specific program area should have the authority to aggregate requests from individual schools under each program area. In turn, each program representative would be responsible for providing a budget request for their area which is inclusive of all needs necessary to staff and service the program.

Tabled Recommendation: We recommend that HCPSS review its budgeting process to ensure that it truly is employing principles of zero-based budgeting, and that those principles are being employed appropriately.

Tabled Recommendation: The Committee recommends that the county internally review the cost of legal fees related to special education that are spent on outside counsel and determine a process for a more collaborative approach that includes working with parents on a public option.

The Committee also considered whom it might like to invite to address the Committee at future meetings. For the next meeting, the Committee wishes to hear from the new Board of Education Operating Budget Review Committee and the Howard County Educators Association. In future meetings, the Committee would like to hear from someone who can compare the HCPSS experience with special education disputes and placements with the experience of other, similar jurisdictions. Mr. Caplan will investigate. The Committee would also like to hear from someone from a jurisdiction that uses “pay for play”. Under that system, students involved in extra-curricular activities would be required to pay to participate. Mr. Werther will investigate.

The Committee adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

February :

~~Wed, Feb 8 11:30a-1:30p~~ rescheduled to Mon, Feb 13 6:30-8:30p

Thur, Feb 23 6:30-8:30p

March:

Wed, Mar 8 11:30a-1:30p

Thur, Mar 23 6:30-8:30p

April:

Wed, Apr 5 11:30a-1:30p

Thur, Apr 27 6:30-8:30p

May:

Wed, May 10 11:30a-1:30p

Thur, May 25 6:30-8:30p