



Board of Education of Harford County
Budget Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)

Meeting Minutes of April 12, 2017

Call to Order

Mr. Securro called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

Committee Members Present

Scott Bachman	Joseph Lambdin
Donald Beynon	John Santora
Dick Calvert	Bill Securro
Michelle Francis	Jim Thornton

HCPS Staff Member(s) Present

Joe Schmitz
Angela Morton
Deborah Judd
Phil Snyder

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Beynon and a second by Mr. Lambdin to accept the 1/11/17 meeting minutes. Ms. Francis will submit the approved minutes to Ms. Schmid for posting for public review.

Special Report: Class Size and Enrollment

- Angela Morton, Executive Director Elementary School Performance
 - Supervises 34 Principals and supports student staffing
 - Guidelines from the state to have a reasonable student/teacher ratio
 - She attempts maintain the following class sizes:
 - Kindergarten and 1st Grade – 20 students
 - 2nd Grade – 22 students
 - 3rd through 5th Grades – 26 students
 - Maintaining class size is more challenging in some schools where enrollment is higher
 - Elementary level class size calculations are simple because students primarily remain with their homeroom teachers so they remain stable since all students in each grade level have the same curriculum
 - Projections for class sizes for the following year are made by rolling over current grade level numbers up to the next grade level (Kindergarten uses the same number as the current year) and then staffing adjustments are made
 - Teachers are moved within grade levels (in the same school) or between schools to meet the appropriate ratio
 - In late February or early March each Principal will survey teachers to determine their intent for the following school year and preferences (i.e. retiring, prefer to teach a different grade, at another school in the county or leaving to teach outside of the county)
 - This list can be utilized when staffing changes must be made to hopefully ensure teachers are happy and where they prefer to be
- Joe Schmitz, Executive Director Middle and High School Performance
 - Middle School average class size is 20-30 students

- Wide ranges of class sizes due the fact that students move around when possible for developmental purposes
- The High School average class size is much more difficult to determine
 - Each school has a different master level and class schedule
 - Each year Principals must review classes students have registered for (AP, special needs, arts, etc) it makes it difficult to get a true class size
- Class sizes can range from 5-6 students in an AP Calculus class to 30 or 40 students in some (i.e. gym, art, band, etc.)
- Jim advised there currently is not a formula used by the county for class sizes, but there is a Board of Education policy that states the desire is to have class sizes held to 25 students as often as possible
- Angela stated at the Elementary level it is determined by the total number of students per grade level and then the appropriate class size is determined
- Title 1 Schools are another factor (there are 8 in the county)
 - If their charter states criteria for class sizes, the school must adhere to that requirement, but the intent is to keep the class size the same across the board when possible
- Pre-K is funded by the state and does not come from the Board of Education's Operating Budget – there is a countywide application process and transportation is available for students in the attendance area
- Only a few schools have Full Day Kindergarten (determined by capacity and community need)
- Research always says the smaller the class size the better – but the content/subject does make a difference
 - It is difficult to provide individualized instruction with larger size classes
 - Intervention classes are smaller
 - AP classes or more advanced classes are larger
 - Any class above 30 students gets to be challenging
 - Safety concerns can also restrict class sizes (i.e. cooking, gym, mechanical, etc.)
- Block scheduling and the effectiveness
 - No definitive studies have been done, but teachers have really stepped up to ensure an increased quality of instruction
 - There is a cost increase due to adding another period (from 7 to 8 each day)
- Rotating schedules
 - Each school uses its own discretion to determine if they also will rotate periods on each A/B day
 - Students that have already met graduation requirements may be able to leave school early everyday or every other day to work or take college courses
- Biggest challenge for staffing once the school year has already begun is the fact that staffing is locked in and doesn't fluctuate no matter what happens during the year (large increase or decrease of students) and additions to the staff cannot be made
- Best wish for staffing purposes:
 - Elementary Level – keep the bare minimum to maintain what they have now
 - Middle and High School Level – no staffing or program cuts (i.e. AP classes offered, Biomedical Science and Pre- Engineering programs)
 - The county has gotten used to the idea that students can attend public schools and still get a good amount of AP and Honors classes, eventually that may have to change
 - Maybe HCPS could look at adjunct staffing to help
- Portables are not included in the total school capacity but for the very few schools that still have portables if there are students in them, those students numbers are included in the enrollment numbers
- Construction
 - Has started again in the county
 - Once schools is at 110% of capacity building permits in that area are stopped
 - Is there a point when Harford County is no longer a viable destination for people due to the decrease in the quality of education being offered?
 - Currently they are doing a good job of supporting new teachers but parents are still not happy with increased class sizes
 - The same product cannot continued to be offered if we continue at the same rate/pace

- Retention of teachers is a concern.
 - There are 30 teacher mentors across 33 schools and their staff/students
 - Some colleges are even telling graduates NOT to apply at HCPS because they have not honored their teach contracts
 - Administrators are well underway with creating master schedules for next year but they cannot finalize since the budget has not yet been approved
 - The percent of the budget dedicated to education has been shrinking over time
 - Critical Needs cannot even be included in the budget – those items would help with keeping up with what is needed

Old Business

A. Discussion – Establishment of Sub Committees and Issues

- Mr. Seccurro proposed the following three Sub Committees (and recommended the committees be co-chaired by the individuals listed below):
 1. Fiscal Year Budget Process and Marketing (Paul MacMillian & Scott Bachman) – to review all aspects of the HCPS budget process and marketing of the Annual Fiscal Budget to Harford County stakeholders.
 2. Services and Operations (Don Beynon & Richard Calvert) – to review all aspects of the HCPS Business Services and Operations including but not limited to current services (i.e. maintenance of plant, buses and contractors) as well as other costs associated with this portion of the annual budget.
 3. Enrollment and Class Size (William Seccurro & James Thornton) – to review all aspects of current enrollment and class size related to curriculum and instruction and trends at all levels of instruction.
- Each Sub Committee may have up to five members but cannot exceed a quorum of six members and will not meet until after the next full committee meeting on June 14, 2017.
- Members can volunteer to participate in which Sub Committee(s) they are most interested in to be able to take a specialized look at parts of the budget.
- Each Sub Committee will be expected to provide an update during the quarterly Budget CAC meetings.
- All reporting requests should still be submitted to Mr. Seccurro and he will forward to Ms. Schmid and Ms. Reynolds.

B. Discussion : Preliminary Report to Board of Education

- During the June 14, 2017 meeting Mr. Seccurro will request approval to provide a Budget CAC update to the Board of Education during their July 10, 2017 meeting
- By September the Budget CAC should be in a position to provide feedback for the FY 2019 Budget

C. Confirmation of Next Meeting Date

- June 14, 2017 6 p.m. – upcoming quarterly dates will be discussed

New Business

Discussion of Harford County Council Budget Hearings

- The County Executive has until 4/18/17 to present the budget to the County Council
- Budget Hearings occur on Thursdays – Mr. Seccurro will find the dates of the upcoming hearings and provide to the committee
- HCPS can get additional money from other departments to increase their budget from the County Council, but that has not happened in the past. Typically the budget that the County Executive assigns is what HCPS will receive.
- The next Adequate Public Facilities (APF) Meeting will be on 4/27/17 6 p.m. - County Council Building

Adjourn

With no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.