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BOARD OF EDUCATION
BALTIMORE COUNTY

FY-2023 OPERATING BUDGET
PUBLIC HEARING
BROADCAST VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

JANUARY 18, 2022

Transcribed by:
Paul A. Gasparotti

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1 **BOARD MEMBERS:**

2

3 Julie C. Henn, Board Chair

4 Cheryl E. Pasteur, Vice Chair

5 Kathleen Causey

6 Moalie S. Jose

7 Erin R. Hager

8 Russell T. Kuehn

9 Lisa A. Mack

10 Rodney R. McMillion

11 John H. Offerman, Jr.

12 Lily P. Rowe

13 Makeda Scott

14 Christian Thomas, Student Member

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1 Andy Saleem Heggins III

2 Announcements. 199

3 Adjournment. 200

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1 **I N D E X**

2 Call to Order. 5

3 Public Comment 5

4 Christine Phillips. 7

5 Lena Amick. 10

6 Dayana Bergman. 14

7 Bill Adams. 16

8 Cindy Sexton. 19

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15 Amy Adams

16 Jenn Reedholm

17 Carol Vidal

18 Bash Pharoan.

19 Erica Mah

20 Mary Taylor

21 Josiah Lookingbill.

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1 **PROCEEDINGS**

2 **CHAIRWOMAN HENN:** Good evening, this is

3 Chairwoman Julie Henn. I call to order the Board

4 of Education of Baltimore County's Public Hearing

5 on the Superintendent's proposed FY-2023

6 operating budget. This evening's Board of

7 Education meeting is being held virtually and

8 broadcast through Microsoft Teams Live and

9 BCPS TV, Comcast Xfinity Channel 73 and Verizon

10 FiOS Channel 34.

11 The registration forms for the public

12 hearing were available to the public on line and

13 closed at one p.m. today for anyone wishing to

14 speak at this evening's hearing. Speaker's names

15 will be called in the order of registration and

16 the next speaker's name will also be called and

17 asked to be on deck and ready to provide their

18 comments.

19 While we encourage public comment on the

20 proposed FY-2023 operating budget this evening,

21 this is not the proper forum to address specific

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1 student or employee matters or to comment on
 2 matters that do not relate to the operating
 3 budget. I remind everyone that inappropriate
 4 personal remarks or other behavior that disrupts
 5 or interferes with the conduct of this meeting
 6 are out of order.

7 Each speaker will be given three minutes
 8 to speak on the superintendent's proposed FY-2023
 9 operating budget. This public hearing is not the
 10 forum to speak on any other topics. I ask
 11 speakers to observe the three-minute limit and
 12 conclude remarks when time has expired and you
 13 here the tone. The call will be ended if a
 14 speaker addresses specific student or employee
 15 matters or is commenting on matters not related
 16 to the superintendent's proposed FY-2023
 17 operating budget.

18 The first speaker tonight is Christine
 19 Phillips, who will be followed by Lena Amick.
 20 MS. PHILLIPS: May I begin?
 21 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Yes, Ms. Phillips,

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1 good evening.

2 MS. PHILLIPS: Okay. Good evening,
 3 Chair Henn, Vice Chair Pasteur, Superintendent
 4 Williams and Board. My name is Christine
 5 Philips, I am a fourth-year Spanish teacher at
 6 Woodlawn High School and hopefully a career-long
 7 educator. I want to emphasize two ways the
 8 Board's budget can make teaching in BCPS a more
 9 tenable career.

10 Number one, pay para-educators a living
 11 wage. Every para-educator that I know has at
 12 least one other job and/or is in school to
 13 eventually do something else. Para-educators are
 14 integral to the functioning of a school building
 15 and the learning of the students they serve. As
 16 a Spanish teacher, my class is often the only
 17 good grade that English language learners have
 18 because it's taught in their native language. In
 19 mainstream classes of 30-plus students they get
 20 lost if they don't know how to advocate for
 21 themselves or aren't, quote-unquote, good at

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1 school. I have watched how a single ESOL
 2 para-educator has drastically changed the
 3 outcomes for those students.

4 Woodlawn was allocated one ESOL
 5 para-educator position in the middle of the
 6 2018-19 school year, my first year teaching.
 7 Ms. Eve started making a measurable difference
 8 immediately. Some of the English language
 9 learners who had failed first quarter English did
 10 an about face. I asked them what had changed and
 11 all of them said Ms. Eve. Three years later her
 12 impact had only grown, but she was also in
 13 college classes to become a Spanish teacher,
 14 because being a para-educator does not serve the
 15 financial needs of her family in the long term.

16 BCPS students need para-educators like
 17 Ms. Eve to be successful throughout their K-12
 18 schooling. If we want to close the gap for ESOL
 19 students, BCPS must show that they value the work
 20 that para-educators do by paying them a living
 21 wage.

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1 Number two, pay additional adult
 2 assistants what they're worth and offer them
 3 benefits. Adult assistants serve the BCPS
 4 students with the highest level of need and can
 5 make more money at Target or Amazon. They would
 6 also probably have better benefits at either of
 7 those jobs. Just an FLA is not adequate.

8 Woodlawn High School has one of the largest
 9 special education populations in the county and
 10 we cannot retain AAs. In the past two school
 11 years I've had students whose IEP requires that
 12 they have an adult assistant for individualized
 13 support but we didn't have one to give them.
 14 These two students were outside the general
 15 education classroom in classes of 15 students or
 16 less for every core subject, but in a mainstream
 17 setting with classes of 25 to 30 for electives
 18 like Spanish. I try my best to meet their needs
 19 on a daily basis, but I cannot effectively teach
 20 and perform the duties of an adult assistant.
 21 Additional adult assistants need benefits and a

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1 living wage to make the support they provide
 2 students more than just a temporary job. There
 3 will continue to be vacancies and retention
 4 issues if AAs can make more money and get better
 5 benefits working elsewhere.

6 The new Blueprint funding does not
 7 specify competitive wages and benefits for
 8 educational support professionals but this budget
 9 can. Prioritize paying ESPs a living wage in the
 10 budget. Thank you.

11 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Thank you. Next we
 12 have Lena Amick.

13 MS. AMICK: Good evening, Chair Henn,
 14 Vice Chair Pasteur, Superintendent Williams and
 15 the Board. Can you hear me?

16 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Yes, we can.

17 MS. AMICK: Thank you. My name is Lena
 18 Amick, this is my fifth year teaching history to
 19 the incredible students at Owings Mills High
 20 School and like Christine, I hope to be a
 21 career-long educator, and have spoken before this

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1 Board about the challenges that have sometimes
 2 made me feel forced to abandon this career I've
 3 invested so much in.

4 I'm heartened to see a budget proposal
 5 that adds 381.3 much needed new positions,
 6 including para-educators, school counselors and
 7 nurse assistants. Investing in people is
 8 investing in our district's future. It's no
 9 surprise to this Board that the workload of BCPS
 10 educators is crushing and is leading teachers to
 11 consider employment elsewhere. I'm here to speak
 12 as a teacher about how critical it is for our
 13 budget to prioritize two things, reducing teacher
 14 workload and providing professional compensation
 15 to all our employees.

16 First, investing in educators' planning
 17 time. This means investing in enough FTEs and
 18 well paid substitute positions to eliminate
 19 coverage for the system in which teachers and
 20 para-educators are forced to give up our planning
 21 time during the day. As a high school teacher I

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1 have one planning period a day and even before
 2 the staffing shortage caused by the pandemic but
 3 since I began teaching with BCPS, I was pulled
 4 from my planning period multiple times a week to
 5 substitute teach another class. This left me
 6 with 40 minutes in which to call parents,
 7 document interventions, grade and track data,
 8 send students messages and plan responsive
 9 lessons for the next day, 40 minutes. Of course
 10 I don't give up doing those things, I donate my
 11 time to this district at the end of each duty day
 12 for my students.

13 It isn't to celebrate how hard we work
 14 as teachers, but to emphasize that a system that
 15 raises the bar for our students is not a system
 16 that expects its employees to donate hours of
 17 their time each day, especially when so many of
 18 us on have responsibilities outside of work. We
 19 have such a great start for staffing on this
 20 budget, especially for our overburdened special
 21 educators. I think we can and must go further,

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1 with the goal of providing all teachers with a
 2 full uninterrupted planning period each day.
 3 Other school systems do this and I believe we can
 4 too.

5 Second is to invest highly in all our
 6 education professionals, especially our
 7 para-educators. The addition of the FTEs in this
 8 proposed budget is critical and we need to pay
 9 our para-educators a living wage so they can
 10 invest in a career in BCPS. The para-educators I
 11 work with are invaluable to my classroom, they're
 12 able to connect meaningfully with students and
 13 give that special attention and academic support
 14 that closes gaps for our students. But I've
 15 almost never in my four-and-a-half years of
 16 teaching had a para-educator be able to stay in
 17 my room for the entire year because with our
 18 shortages they're often pulled to cover
 19 standardized testing or attend to other classes,
 20 leaving my students without the support they
 21 need. And then often para-educators go to work

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1 second and third jobs in the evening to make ends
 2 meet.
 3 For my students to have the consistency
 4 they need to meet with success in the classroom,
 5 our ESPs must have the financial support they
 6 need and this must be a priority. Thank you.
 7 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Thank you. Next we
 8 have Dayana Bergman and on deck will be Bill
 9 Adams.
 10 MS. BERGMAN: Good evening, board
 11 members. My name is Dayana Bergman and I'm a
 12 taxpayer of the United States of America, of
 13 Maryland and Baltimore County. As you know, the
 14 Baltimore County Public Schools operating budget
 15 consists of federal, state and county taxpayer
 16 dollars. In FY-2023 the operating budget will
 17 have 86 percent dedicated to the salaries of our
 18 teachers and staff.
 19 As you know, the school system now has
 20 56 percent of children of color and 32 percent
 21 children that are white. Our children in BCPS

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1 should have an operating budget that reflects the
 2 ability to hire educators that look like them, so
 3 they can stay motivated, encouraged and supported
 4 in their education as they grow. Our Board of
 5 Education is 73 percent white, making decisions
 6 at the operating spectrum, with their own
 7 operation using over \$100,000 of taxpayer dollars
 8 in their own operating budget. I am recommending
 9 the entire (inaudible, static and feedback) that
 10 are criminal in nature, and I think FY-2019 they
 11 went over seven percent of their allowed
 12 operating expense, and then in FY-2020 they were
 13 68 percent over.
 14 We can't waste amounts of money like
 15 that of taxpayer dollars, and we honestly can't
 16 afford it. Our kids deserve better, our
 17 educators deserve better. We should be handling
 18 our taxpayer funds appropriately and be able to
 19 support our students' education. We should be
 20 setting proper examples for our students in BCPS.
 21 We shouldn't be showing them that we do things

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1 illegally and break the law, that's unacceptable.
 2 So for the FY-2023 budget, I am demanding that we
 3 spend and increase that 86 percent of the budget
 4 to provide salaries and support for our educators
 5 that look just like our BCPS students. Thank
 6 you.
 7 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Okay, the next speaker
 8 is Bill Adams and on deck will be Cindy Sexton.
 9 MR. ADAMS: Hey, good evening. I have
 10 two quick topics but I'll just share one point
 11 first. My first point is I would not do a call
 12 with my customers without my camera on, I just
 13 think that's totally copping out.
 14 All right, on to my two points. First,
 15 a high level on COVID. There have been as of
 16 this morning 2,104 deaths in Baltimore County
 17 that are supposedly with COVID. If you listen to
 18 the CDC, which I know all of you on the Board do
 19 very closely, over 70 percent of those 2,100
 20 deaths had four or more comorbidities and most
 21 were old. I bring this up because there's

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1 850,000 residents in Baltimore County so 2,100
 2 deaths over 850,000 residents is a death rate of
 3 .245 percent and if you flip that around, that
 4 means 99.7 percent of everyone will be just fine
 5 as I was through an experience with COVID, it was
 6 nothing more than a cold. So I beg you keep stop
 7 canceling everything for these children, you're
 8 damaging their mental health and wellbeing. Let
 9 dances move forward, let sports happen, let after
 10 school activities take place. (Inaudible, static
 11 and feedback.)
 12 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Can I ask all
 13 participants to please mute their phones?
 14 MR. ADAMS: I don't know who's talking,
 15 but the second point is enrollment. Baltimore
 16 County paid a million bucks to Public Works and
 17 in that (inaudible, static and background noise.)
 18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm not sure if
 19 he's there or not.
 20 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Can we please mute the
 21 audience?

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1 MR. ADAMS: What is going on? Like
 2 literally, what is going on?
 3 The second point involves enrollment.
 4 You paid a million bucks to Public Works to give
 5 you a consulting report. In that report, Exhibit
 6 ES-1 on page two, it says there are 109,000
 7 students enrolled in Baltimore County Schools as
 8 of 9/30/20. If that fact is incorrect I'd like
 9 someone to correct it; again, this was over a
 10 million bucks paid for that report. I know we
 11 keep using the number 111,000 but that's
 12 significantly different than 109,000.
 13 The next point is the FY-22 budget put
 14 forth a 6,000 student increase. Many callers
 15 like myself called in and said that was
 16 ridiculous when it was proposed, turns out it
 17 was, we added 36 students, we were off by over 99
 18 percent. This year's projected enrollment
 19 increase is 3,000. Again, I don't believe we
 20 know how many students are currently enrolled as
 21 of December 30th, and I don't think we will be

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1 adding the 3,000 students. So I would ask for
 2 efficient use of tax dollars and discontinue any
 3 type of maintenance of effort.
 4 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Mr. Adams, were you
 5 able to complete your remarks? I know that your
 6 time was interrupted.
 7 MR. ADAMS: Yeah. I mean, this is a
 8 show, man, I'm done. Thanks.
 9 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: If you need additional
 10 time, it can be restarted if you need it. I do
 11 apologize for the interruption.
 12 Okay, next we have Cindy Sexton.
 13 MS. SEXTON: Good evening, Chairwoman
 14 Henn, Vice Chair Pasteur, Dr. Williams and
 15 members of the Board. Way back in Dr. Williams'
 16 report on the 100-day entry plan he stated that
 17 our priorities must squarely focus on what is
 18 best for our students in every neighborhood and
 19 school across the county. Those words are still
 20 applicable. You've heard me say that effective
 21 teachers are the most important factor in

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1 contributing to student achievement, and that
 2 statement is also a BCPS core value. You have
 3 also heard me speak numerous times about the need
 4 to recruit and retain educators.
 5 This budget prioritizes people who have
 6 the interactions with our students most, those
 7 people who are charged with building new
 8 relationships, nurturing and yes, of course
 9 instructing our students. This is a bold budget
 10 of putting people first and TABCO supports the
 11 budget.
 12 I want to be sure the system has in
 13 place a plan for attracting, recruiting and
 14 hiring new staff funded in this budget, as well
 15 as for current vacancies. A properly staffed
 16 school will help improve learning outcomes and
 17 help address discipline concerns. This budget
 18 does move us towards that goal.
 19 We continue to be in unprecedented
 20 situations where the goalposts keep moving.
 21 Through it all, our educators are there for our

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1 students, doing all they can to meet their needs,
 2 social, emotional, mental, physical and yes,
 3 academic need skills. Now more than ever we need
 4 to make sure that our focus is on the people who
 5 make a difference in the lives of our students,
 6 our educators of course, but let us also remember
 7 all the support staff who work with our students,
 8 make sure they are also fairly compensated as
 9 well.
 10 I hope the Board supports this budget,
 11 because when those positions are filled it will
 12 make a difference for our students. Thank you.
 13 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Thank you. The next
 14 speaker is Lloyd Allen and on deck will be Sonja
 15 O'Donahue.
 16 MR. ALLEN: Good evening, Chair Henn,
 17 Vice Chair Pasteur, Superintendent Williams and
 18 Board, thank you for your time. I'm Lloyd Allen,
 19 a special educator in mathematics in Baltimore
 20 County. Earlier this year I gave public comments
 21 about the importance of the support of social and

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1 emotional learning through the lens of a report
 2 from the National Association of School
 3 Psychologists, which suggested ratios of one
 4 psychologist and two school counselors per 500
 5 students, as well as one school social worker per
 6 400 students.

7 I also want to say that as a teacher of
 8 mathematics, I make mathematical mistakes a great
 9 deal of the time, I'm ready to be wrong if
 10 there's things that I missed or misunderstood in
 11 the documents. As I read this budget, I noticed
 12 the breakdown of positions related to mental and
 13 physical health on page 14 and the verbiage, an
 14 increase of 69 FTEs and \$4.1 million for
 15 counseling, health, psychological and social work
 16 positions to support a safe and supportive
 17 environment, on page 86. Adding up the positions
 18 on page 14, I do get a total that is one shy of
 19 70. However, the psychological positions is a
 20 fiscal assistant for psychological services.
 21 Fiscal assistants are very important but if I'm

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1 reading this correctly, we still need actual
 2 psychologists. The only additional psychological
 3 service provider FTE that I'm finding is
 4 three-fifths of a psychologist for Northeast
 5 Elementary on page 198.

6 Page 120 of the budget identifies the
 7 increase of 32 school counselor FTEs as part of a
 8 three-year plan. It also identifies a new FTE
 9 for a school counselor at Northeast Elementary.
 10 However, if my math is correct, at the end of
 11 three years this will put us at 84 percent of the
 12 ratio standard of one counselor per 250 students
 13 from the NASP recommendations of 2013. This
 14 shows significant progress but does not quite
 15 close the gap.

16 Please let the NASP recommendations be
 17 our true north. Using a low estimate enrollment
 18 of 15,000, we should be aiming for 460 school
 19 counselors, 230 school psychologists and 287
 20 school social workers. We appear to be
 21 addressing 28 percent of our shortfall in school

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1 counselors, six percent of our shortfall in
 2 school social workers, and a negligible portion
 3 of our shortfall in school psychologists.

4 It is true that the NASP recommendations
 5 do not include social emotional learning teachers
 6 and that when properly implemented their roles
 7 may begin to close the gap for student needs in
 8 these areas.

9 Finally, I'm pleased to see the
 10 increases in FTEs for health staff and most
 11 special education and related service roles.
 12 More staffing in special education should reduce
 13 the size of caseloads, which should have a
 14 positive effect on the quality of service
 15 provided to students. I recognize that we are
 16 making progress even if we can't yet mark these
 17 goals as achieved. In particular, thank you for
 18 identifying positions for elementary IEP chairs.
 19 Now I wonder whether we can raise the bar by
 20 considering IEP chairs for 12-month employment.
 21 Thank you for your time and patience, I

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1 appreciate the effort that goes into preparing to
 2 prepare for our future. Thank you.

3 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Thank you. The next
 4 speaker is Sonja O'Donahue, and on deck will be
 5 Roah Hassan.

6 MS. GOVER: Ms. Henn, it doesn't look
 7 like she signed on.

8 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Thank you, Ms. Gover.
 9 Roah Hassan?

10 MS. HASSAN: Good evening,
 11 Superintendent Williams, Chairwoman Henn and
 12 members of the BCPS Board of Education. My name
 13 is Roah Hassan, I'm a junior at Perry Hall High
 14 School and it is both an honor and a privilege to
 15 have the opportunity to speak to you all again
 16 today.

17 Today you will begin to make essential
 18 decisions on BCPS' operating budget and allocate
 19 funds to supplement the most essential part of
 20 this system, the students. Students deserve not
 21 only the opportunity to succeed but the right to

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1 excel. Fighting for students means fighting for
 2 every single student regardless of their
 3 background. It means giving them an opportunity
 4 to academically flourish, explore their passions
 5 and discover their undeniable power. That is
 6 what the operating budget signifies, it is not
 7 another number to keep in an archive, it is a
 8 real quantity that affects me and impacts the
 9 students here today as well as the students who
 10 are not.

11 Students have shared their concerns with
 12 you, they're currently sharing their voices,
 13 we've told you what we need, the changes we want
 14 to see, and I truly hope you've taken not only
 15 the time to listen but to reflect and apply those
 16 voices into your work and on this Board of
 17 Education. The decisions you make will be a
 18 reflection of your understanding and empathy for
 19 students and for our youth.

20 Students use the privilege that I'm
 21 grateful to have but is not easily accessible to

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1 all of our students. Our system tends to praise
 2 students for being academically successful and
 3 active within the school community, and it is
 4 good even to applaud them. However, we also must
 5 begin to recognize that every student in this
 6 county is worthy of an opportunity to find their
 7 passion and success, and are lifted to do so in
 8 every regard. The reality that both you and I
 9 are aware of is that not every student has access
 10 to resources outside of school hours. Many of
 11 our students are overwhelmed with circumstances
 12 both within and outside of their control, and you
 13 have to find the support they need to grow
 14 outside of who they are as academic learners.

15 What you fail to acknowledge is that
 16 this issue is not just case by case or school by
 17 school, it is systemic. It is a systemic issue
 18 that you have the power and ability to mitigate.
 19 Therefore, I implore you to support Student
 20 Member of the Board Christian Thomas' endeavors
 21 to create an office of student engagement, which

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1 will create opportunities for loans to students
 2 and actively foster their passions and prepare
 3 them for opportunities and experiences they will
 4 encounter. The office of student engagement
 5 would be a necessary stride towards equity for
 6 students who are currently not able to
 7 participate in extracurriculars and will
 8 undoubtedly value student engagement with a lens
 9 of empathy, a much needed concept in every
 10 decision made on the Board. Knowledge without
 11 passion creates an echo chamber of progress. Our
 12 schools and systems must not be an echo chamber.

13 I continue to ask you to make your
 14 decisions on the operating budget with empathy
 15 for students outside of those who you interact
 16 with on a frequent basis. Consider the students
 17 who aren't here but who are just as essential and
 18 valuable as the students who are. I ask you to
 19 take the passion from our voice and create a
 20 school environment that empathizes rather than
 21 echos. Thank you.

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1 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Thank you. The next
 2 speaker is Rochelle Wilkinson and on deck will be
 3 Bill Wilkinson.

4 MS. GOVER: Ms. Henn, I don't believe
 5 either one are signed on.

6 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Thank you, Ms. Gover.
 7 The next speaker is Aziza Mattaka, and on deck
 8 will be Sabrina Thaler.

9 MS. MATTAKA: Good evening, Baltimore
 10 County Board of Education. My name is Aziza
 11 Mattaka and I'm a senior at Eastern Tech, and
 12 today I want to bring to your attention some
 13 problems that must be addressed in our operating
 14 budget.

15 Imagine sitting in class and taking a
 16 test and all of a sudden you start to sense
 17 something, a feeling, it's a familiar one, this
 18 is generally sometimes uncomfortable and it comes
 19 with headaches and lower stomach pain. This type
 20 of feeling tends to visit you regularly, once a
 21 month to be exact for the duration of five to

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1 eight days. Now, although this feeling is not
 2 universal, and we've all been in a basic anatomy
 3 class and know that the feeling I was alluding to
 4 is a menstrual cycle.

5 Going back to the earlier scenario, once
 6 you realize that you've been visited by your
 7 monthly cycle, you have three choices: A, search
 8 your bag for hygiene products that you know you
 9 forgot to carry that day; B, run to the bathroom,
 10 text your friends and hope one of them can become
 11 your Walgreen's; or C, sign out to go to the
 12 nurse, wait 20 minutes behind other students just
 13 to get a large and slightly uncomfortable pad,
 14 then go to the bathroom and then back to your
 15 class where you've now missed one-fourth of the
 16 lesson plan.

17 As students, this type of chaos should
 18 not be running through our minds as we are trying
 19 to pay attention to our learning. All the
 20 choices that are provided are true stories that
 21 I've heard from other students that go to

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1 different schools in Baltimore County, students
 2 that have been disappointed time after time
 3 because they go to the bathroom and see
 4 dispensers that are empty. And in the rare cases
 5 that products are provided, students don't know
 6 where or how to access them. I find it
 7 concerning that a process so common and natural
 8 is barely accounted for, and yet has the ability
 9 to impact their focus on education so much.

10 Maryland House Bill 208 state's that
 11 each county's board of education would be
 12 required to insure that each public school
 13 provides free menstrual hygiene products via
 14 dispensers in restrooms at every school. And
 15 while this bill hasn't been completely passed, I
 16 encourage the Board of Education to take the
 17 initiative to end this easily resolvable
 18 distraction. By making it easier for students to
 19 access menstrual hygiene products, we take away
 20 the uncertainty and the chaos of trying to solve
 21 this problem in schools ourselves.

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1 I'd ask the Board of Education to find a
 2 way to give students access to quality menstrual
 3 hygiene products in an efficient way in the
 4 operating budget. This year our senior class has
 5 had a very innovative way to solve problems, so
 6 here I bring part of my learning to you through
 7 what my allied health teacher calls a how might
 8 we statement. I ask the Board, how might we
 9 insure that students have access to quality
 10 menstrual hygiene products so that we can put a
 11 greater focus on our education? After all, we
 12 can only begin to expand our minds once our
 13 physiological needs are met. Thank you.

14 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Thank you. The next
 15 speaker is Sabrina Thaler and on deck will be
 16 Jane Milstein.

17 MS. THALER: Good evening, Chair Henn,
 18 Vice Chair Pasteur and Superintendent Williams
 19 and the members of the Board. My name is Sabrina
 20 Thaler and I'm a tenth grade student at Eastern
 21 Technical High School. I am here urging you

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1 specifically to make allowances in the FY-2023
 2 operating budget to follow through on the
 3 promises you made in the LGBTQ+ inclusion
 4 resolution that was passed this past August.

5 This means a lot of money to the
 6 development of gender neutral facilities like
 7 bathroom, and funding enhanced social emotional
 8 supports and policies which accommodate the
 9 unique needs of trans, non-binary and gender
 10 fluid students. BCPS has the opportunity at this
 11 moment to become an incubator for empowered,
 12 expressive and inclusive stakeholders, especially
 13 for those students who go home to unsafe
 14 non-inclusive households. By leaving the
 15 development of gender neutral bathrooms out of
 16 the budget, you sustain a toxic binary paradigm
 17 of gender that denies the authenticity of so many
 18 students' identities.

19 I remember watching the Board's debate
 20 over the LGBTQ+ resolution back in August and
 21 feeling alarmed that our own elected officials

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1 considered trans inclusion to be so expendable
 2 and negotiable. Now we lie at a crossroads for
 3 the future of this resolution and it's important
 4 to reiterate the true consequence and urgency of
 5 the initial legislation proposed by Student
 6 Member of the Board Christian Thomas. The
 7 FY-2023 operating budget is an opportunity to
 8 codify the inclusive principles of the resolution
 9 and to do more than merely send a signal to
 10 constituents.

11 In response to some of the concerns
 12 brought up at the August meeting I want to
 13 highlight a 2018 study that found that
 14 trans-inclusive bathrooms don't increase the risk
 15 of, quote, attacks on one gendered people, a
 16 phenomenon that opponents to trans inclusion have
 17 posited. In fact, research proves that the
 18 discomfort is felt adversely. When trans people
 19 are forced to use bathrooms misaligned with their
 20 identities they're susceptible to verbal
 21 harassment and physical assault. It should not

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1 be a privilege to anticipate that when you use a
 2 bathroom, especially at school, you will be
 3 treated with respect.

4 Nationwide, 150,000 people ages 13 to 17
 5 identify as trans, and this number is increasing
 6 rapidly. Based on the work of activists,
 7 leaders, scholars and media, society has grown in
 8 the past decade alone to be vastly more inclusive
 9 of trans and gender nonconforming people,
 10 especially among youth. By acting quickly to
 11 fulfill your promises in the LGBTQ+ inclusion
 12 resolution in this operating budget, you send a
 13 message to BCPS students that you are perceptive
 14 of their needs and care about fostering truly
 15 humane and safe environments, as the definition
 16 of safety itself evolves. Thank you.

17 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Thank you. The next
 18 speaker is Jean Milstein and on deck will be
 19 Michelle Wang.

20 MS. MILSTEIN: Good evening. Thank you,
 21 Chair Henn, Vice Chair Pasteur, Dr. Williams and

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1 members of the Board. My name is Jennie Milstein
 2 and I am a para-educator at a comprehensive high
 3 school and ESOL assister. I am encouraged to see
 4 the increase in funding for both special
 5 education and ESOL services as both are sorely
 6 needed.

7 However, I have to say, I have some
 8 concerns about what I see as a reliance on
 9 contractors and contractual services in this new
 10 budget. I see contractors -- I'm talking --
 11 additional adult assistants, cafeteria workers
 12 and kindergarten assistants all work tirelessly
 13 for BCPS, many of them with some of our most
 14 vulnerable populations, and many of them at an
 15 hourly rate far less than they would earn
 16 elsewhere. I am therefore happy to see that the
 17 proposed budget increases pay for AAs and other
 18 staff above that of minimum wage starting in July
 19 of 2022. Thank you. This begins to close the
 20 gap.

21 However, we are in the middle of a

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1 pandemic. If I as a para-educator get sick, I
 2 can see a doctor without worrying about costs.
 3 These actual employees without benefits are not
 4 afforded this necessity; please move towards
 5 closing that gap as well. We are, after all,
 6 Team BCPS.

7 We also see that BCPS is moving towards
 8 using outside contractors for substitute hiring.
 9 I do have to wonder if this hiring is penny wise
 10 but pound foolish. Wouldn't it make more sense
 11 for us to grow our capacity as a system, for
 12 example by increasing staffing in HR and hiring
 13 internally rather than relying on external
 14 vendors, raising the bar for ourselves and for
 15 instance, our appropriately supported HR
 16 department is in the long term the only way to
 17 close the gap on staffing in order to prepare for
 18 our future. Thank you.

19 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Thank you. The next
 20 speaker is Michelle Wang, and on deck will be Amy
 21 Adams.

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1 MS. WANG: Good evening, board members,
 2 my name is Michelle Wang and I am a junior at
 3 Dulaney High School. I'd like to start off by
 4 saying that the last time I was here in November
 5 I talked about opting for a more inclusive
 6 calendar, and today I'm here to discuss the four
 7 ways that the operating budget can be better
 8 spent.

9 The first is AP exams. It costs \$96 to
 10 take a single exam. This is extremely high. I'm
 11 taking five exams and my sister is taking six;
 12 that's a combined cost of \$1,056 for my family.
 13 Although there are fee waivers, this isn't
 14 enough. I urge the Board to allocate more funds
 15 towards subsidizing the cost of AP exams.
 16 Instead of preventing students from high
 17 achievement due to costly exams we should be
 18 encouraging them to take these higher level
 19 classes by reducing the costs.

20 Secondly, COVID relief supplies. Last
 21 week my school distributed one testing kit and

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1 one KN95 mask per student, that was it. These
 2 masks are not supposed to be reused, yet we only
 3 received one, which was supposed to last us for
 4 weeks. This is not enough for COVID relief. As
 5 BCPS navigates the pandemic, supplies such as
 6 testing kits and masks must be more widely
 7 available to students. If you're asking us, even
 8 demanding us to back in person, at least give us
 9 the proper protection supplies. A simple
 10 surgical mask is not adequate for our protection
 11 and safety. There must be more measures, more
 12 supplies and more revenue dedicated towards COVID
 13 mitigation and prevention.

14 Thirdly, increasing funding for support
 15 staff must be a priority. Currently my high
 16 school, Dulaney only has one school psychologist.
 17 Having a single psychologist is not enough to
 18 address the needs of the 2,000 students in a
 19 single high school. It's clear that students'
 20 mental health has suffered during the pandemic,
 21 and are still suffering from the anxiety and

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1 uncertainty from the pandemic and stress from
 2 schools. School psychologists are critical and
 3 an increased portion of the budget for school
 4 psychologists and support staff is a necessity.
 5 School counselors and social workers should not
 6 be taken for granted and must be available for
 7 all students who need them.

8 Lastly, free and reduced meals for
 9 students. I appreciate how the county has
 10 already done so recently amongst the pandemic.
 11 This should be continued for students throughout
 12 the pandemic and possibly beyond. These meals
 13 are critical for low income and food insecure
 14 students. I urge that more funds to insure that
 15 meals are continuing to be provided at a free and
 16 affordable price, and also be healthy and
 17 nutritious for students.

18 In summary, I look at four things,
 19 reducing the cost of AP exams, COVID mitigation
 20 supplies, psychologists and support staff, and
 21 free and reduced meals. We should prioritize all

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1 of these things in addition to allocating the
 2 budget to reduce the achievement gap between
 3 students, and make sure that every classroom is
 4 well equipped and supplied with resources as well
 5 as funded programs such as AVID and ESOL. This
 6 budget directly affects me, and a priority should
 7 be reducing administrative costs and spending
 8 dollars in the classroom. Thank you.

9 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Thank you. The next
 10 speaker is Amy Adams, and on deck will be Jenn
 11 Reedholm.

12 MS. ADAMS: Good evening, thank you for
 13 the opportunity to speak. As a parent and a
 14 taxpayer, I want to see our school system use
 15 this enormous and complicated budget in the most
 16 efficient way possible. I want staff to be happy
 17 and committed to working, I want buildings and
 18 buses to be properly maintained every year to
 19 maximize safety and function, but most
 20 importantly I want BCPS students to be
 21 successfully educated. We should see

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1 improvements in academic proficiency, and IEP and
 2 compensatory services should be provided to every
 3 child who needs it. I think most people feel the
 4 same.
 5 I am perplexed as to why the proposed
 6 budget is asking for a \$115 million increase over
 7 the maintenance of effort for the following
 8 reasons: One, as was reported, for the previous
 9 several years BCPS has had a \$30 million surplus
 10 in May for the best. Two, our system has shrunk
 11 with less students enrolling over the last two
 12 years. Three, BCPS has received a record amount
 13 of grant funding totally \$362 million over five
 14 years. I understand this money is temporary and
 15 cannot fund anything long term, but it is still
 16 available for use next year. Fourth, the
 17 superintendent's cabinet reorganization will
 18 reportedly save \$1.7 million next year. It seems
 19 like we're off to a slow start of saving the
 20 possible \$39 million over five years as stated in
 21 the Public Works review.

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1 I do believe in funding people over
 2 technology. I want to see all positions filled
 3 with qualified and dedicated people. I've
 4 listened to budget committee meetings and I
 5 really like the directive to survey principals
 6 and gather data on what each specific school
 7 needs. I would like to see the money being used
 8 at the schoolhouse level for more efficient local
 9 operations. I think it's crucial to spend money
 10 wisely.
 11 Recently the curriculum department has
 12 spent millions on multiple new programs and
 13 materials. I think it's important to provide
 14 extensive professional development to teachers so
 15 these materials are most impactful in the
 16 classrooms and benefit the students. Money
 17 should not be spent without followthrough and
 18 positive results. I and many others are looking
 19 for accountability for the money spent on
 20 curriculum and fidelity of implementation, and
 21 for professional development so that the gaps are

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1 closing. That is our motto after all. Thank
 2 you.
 3 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Thank you. The next
 4 speaker is Jenn Reedholm, and on deck will be
 5 Carol Vidal.
 6 MS. REEDHOLM: Hello?
 7 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Ms. Reedholm?
 8 MS. REEDHOLM: Yes, thank you. Hello to
 9 everyone. Thank you for allowing the public to
 10 provide feedback on the proposed operating
 11 budget. I would like for you to consider the
 12 areas of special education and substitute teacher
 13 pay.
 14 Substitute teacher pay must be increased
 15 due to the enormous need in this area. The
 16 current daily pay rate is barely over minimum
 17 wage. Why would anyone choose a job to basically
 18 be abused at those rates instead of working at a
 19 retail store and not have to deal with out of
 20 control classroom behavior? This is so much more
 21 important than retail and should be compensated

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1 as such.
 2 I am a current substitute with my
 3 teaching degree without certification. Perhaps
 4 paying those with a teaching degree at an hourly
 5 rate that is at least double the current degreed
 6 rate, you may get more people like me and others
 7 to take more jobs. Currently I'm very selective
 8 about which jobs I take due to the low pay. I
 9 worked corporate America and I own my own
 10 business, so it's hard for me to fathom working
 11 for barely over minimum wage as a highly educated
 12 woman. I often consider taking a full-time
 13 teaching job but the path to get certified stops
 14 me. Substitutes are viewed as nothing more than
 15 a glorified babysitter so why not fund continuing
 16 education and provide more incentives so they
 17 could be truly an extension of teachers in the
 18 classroom?
 19 On boarding these substitutes is also
 20 problematic when you make them pay nearly \$80 for
 21 the fingerprinting and background check that is

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1 not reimbursed, and also require a two-hour
 2 unpaid training. That doesn't attract new
 3 people. Things that should -- these things
 4 should be budgeted for to attract more quality
 5 employees to the job, and maybe someone who wants
 6 to become a full-time teacher can be placed on a
 7 career path to achieve that.

8 Also, special education has always been
 9 severely underfunded. Programs for 2-E or twice
 10 exceptional students currently don't exist,
 11 especially for summer. 2-E students have high
 12 IQs but have learning differences. They're not
 13 typically eligible for nonpublic placement
 14 because they're so high functioning and don't
 15 learn like typical peers.

16 Also, there is glares of tutoring money
 17 that was supposedly available for students. No
 18 one I know received it and I know a lot of
 19 special needs families who could have benefited
 20 from it.

21 Finally, BCPS must be more competitive

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1 with the service provider salaries because they
 2 end up elsewhere in the private sector making
 3 more. They don't want to stay in an institution
 4 that undervalues them. When I ask for things for
 5 my special needs son in order for him to be
 6 successful, I'm consistently met with statements
 7 like we don't have staff, budget, or are unable
 8 to provide what's truly needed. I heard in a
 9 recent BCPS meeting that money allocated for
 10 compensatory services was being considered to be
 11 reallocated to teacher bonuses. Stealing from
 12 the poor is beyond inexcusable. The legal need
 13 for required compensatory services was severely
 14 underestimated on purpose, and halfway through
 15 the year they have not even been served one
 16 single minute. The delays need to stop and the
 17 money needs to stay there and should be
 18 increased. Special education needs to be the
 19 absolute highest priority over any other need in
 20 our school system right now. Thank you so much
 21 for your time.

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1 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Thank you. The next
 2 speaker is Carol Vidal, and on deck will be Bash
 3 Pharoan.

4 MS. VIDAL: Can you hear me?
 5 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Yes, we can.

6 MS. VIDAL: All right, thanks. Good
 7 evening, and thank you for the opportunity to
 8 speak tonight. I am a parent of students at BCPS
 9 and I was at the board meeting last week and was
 10 inspired by Dr. Williams' budget and its focus on
 11 people. I'm also impressed with the resolution
 12 of board members not to share a social media
 13 space and I support what was said in those
 14 presentations. I'm just here as a parent to
 15 support the trend of this administration and
 16 Board to invest in people first.

17 Ms. Mack's presentation proposed that we
 18 have smaller classes so that children can learn
 19 well, smaller classes allow teachers to teach
 20 better, to know their students well and to build
 21 relationships. The focus on people is not only

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1 on teachers but also on para-educators and
 2 substitutes who support the teachers, and on CNAs
 3 who support nurses. The focus on educational
 4 cycle and research at the school level makes
 5 sense not only to help a growing population
 6 receive special education services but also to
 7 prevent the placement of those children in much
 8 more expensive schools that end up costing the
 9 system more money for less children served. And
 10 with the increase in behavioral problems,
 11 providing enough counselors and mental health
 12 providers such as psychologists and social
 13 workers is key.

14 Some districts like Baltimore City have
 15 contracted services with outside mental health
 16 organizations who serve as clinics located in the
 17 school while billing the families with medical
 18 assistants. With the changing demographics and
 19 higher percentage of students on Medicaid, many
 20 schools could benefit from such service and to
 21 make sure that teachers can focus on teaching and

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1 not on managing behaviors.

2 I also agree principals should be given

3 more autonomy and funding for their own schools.

4 We have learned this during the pandemic. At the

5 end, it is easier to manage a system that is

6 diverse like BCPS by allowing principals who know

7 the realities of their communities better to

8 respond to people on the ground. Schools will

9 have different needs and principals need to be

10 able to respond to those needs quickly.

11 And finally, and the main reason why I

12 wanted to speak today is because we may not be

13 able to fund schools the way we want and we may

14 need to cut corners. I'm hear to ask that if

15 anything gets cut, it should be the multitude of

16 online curriculums offered. Just like virtual

17 did not work, the online reading programs and

18 math programs offered, as well as programs like

19 the online summer program, have not improved the

20 outcomes over the years and have been difficult

21 for children and parents to navigate. Different

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1 teachers need training to be able to use them

2 well, children need time to adapt to them and to

3 get the content they're trying to deliver. In

4 this case, less is more. After all, there are

5 plenty of online resources that are free and that

6 parents already access at their own convenience.

7 Those are much more easier to navigate than

8 Schoology but they are still nothing like having

9 a teacher in the classroom.

10 Our schools should not be focused on

11 providing more of the same or a different version

12 of materials that are already available on line.

13 Indeed, school students in this system spend too

14 much time trying to find their assignment on

15 Schoology and not enough time focusing on

16 content. We will need more programs to teach our

17 children, we need more people to do it. Without

18 a doubt, BCPS needs to fund 21st Century

19 websites, virtual meetings and platforms that

20 will engage more teaching in the classrooms.

21 Thank you.

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1 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Thank you. The next

2 speaker is Bash Pharoan, and on deck will be

3 Erica Mah.

4 DR. PHAROAN: Good evening, Chairwoman

5 Henn, Vice Chair Pasteur and Dr. Williams. The

6 Central Area Advisory Council is eager to see the

7 operating budget to include adequate number of

8 foreign language teachers for Italian, Arabic and

9 Chinese languages. I am concerned that if the

10 operating budget does not specify those positions

11 then it will not really be done.

12 Why do we need to teach a foreign second

13 language? For one, it's better opportunities for

14 business for our students. For two, the federal

15 government and the state government agencies do

16 need fluent speakers in Arabic and Chinese. We

17 the nation needs to communicate and understand

18 other cultures, it's better business. And for

19 three, foreign language as a second language

20 makes the students round and makes them more

21 thoughtful and a better judgment, and it broadens

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1 their minds and their fate.

2 I would like to commend the

3 superintendent, the school system and the Board

4 of Education on the increase in the operating

5 budget. However, let us be careful that when we

6 take more money from the state and the county

7 that means there are less funds for our roads and

8 social programs and alternate stakes and helping

9 the needy. Now the state seems to have surplus

10 of several billion dollars which is really good

11 news and it's good to look for that as a source

12 of revenue. However, I would like to see the

13 school system, the Board of Education building up

14 and strengthening our BCPS Foundation so the

15 foundation may have more funds to support the

16 school system. The foundation is a tax exempt

17 entity and the county residents when they will be

18 donating to the foundation, they are helping

19 their own children, they are making the

20 foundation stronger. It will give more breathing

21 room budget wise for the school system.

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1 Last but not least, I know everybody
 2 wants to increase all kinds of positions,
 3 including myself. I believe county residents pay
 4 more than their fair share of taxes, so we must
 5 be careful. We need to take care of our
 6 educators, we need to take care of other needs in
 7 the school system, but I do not think we need to
 8 set the stage to raise taxes. Again, I thank you
 9 for the opportunity and thank you for this
 10 complex and really thoughtful proposed operating
 11 budget.

12 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Thank you. The next
 13 speaker is Erica Mah, and on deck will be Mary
 14 Taylor.

15 MS. MAH: Am I, did I work my mute
 16 button correctly, can you hear me?

17 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Yes, we can hear you.

18 MS. MAH: Okay, good. Members of the
 19 Board of Education and Superintendent Williams,
 20 my name is Erica Mah and I'm a parent at
 21 Catonsville High and a teacher at Lansdowne

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1 Elementary. First of all, thank you, thank you
 2 for a budget that focuses on people in the
 3 schoolhouse. As an ESOL teacher who just added
 4 another eight students to her school's caseload
 5 since winter break, I thank you for the increase
 6 of ESOL staff by 44 members. We are literally
 7 drowning in our numbers but we love our students
 8 and want to help them all, but there are simply
 9 not enough hours in the day or staff in our
 10 schools, the additional staff is needed and
 11 welcome.

12 But where are these teachers going to
 13 come from, especially as we compete with other
 14 counties nearby with similar needs and demands?
 15 Let me introduce you to ALICE. ALICE is a term
 16 used by the United Way that stands for Asset
 17 Limited Income Constrained Employees. This is a
 18 population of Marylanders who are above the
 19 poverty level who have jobs but struggle to make
 20 ends meet when paying for housing, childcare,
 21 transportation, food, health care and basic cell

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1 phone service. In short, ALICE stands for those
 2 who make just enough to sustain their basic
 3 needs, it is the level of survival.

4 In 2018 the United Way calculated the
 5 amount needed for two adults with two children to
 6 be approximately \$78,000, with childcare it's
 7 92,000. For a single parent with one child in
 8 childcare it's 58,000. Look at our pay scale.
 9 That family of four, assuming one parent is at
 10 home with the young children, cannot survive on a
 11 teacher's salary ever. With a master's, the
 12 family would be at that rate of survival by year
 13 16.

14 True, most families nowadays do have two
 15 working parents and that does mean childcare for
 16 the children, which brings the ALICE number up to
 17 92,000, which means a two-teacher family can just
 18 survive on their starting salaries. And that
 19 single parent cannot survive until they have
 20 worked for nine years in our school system.
 21 Those are teachers.

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1 What about our hourly employees?
 2 Starting ALICE wage for a single adult is 16.58
 3 an hour, for a single parent \$25 an hour, for a
 4 family of four 38 an hour. I'm not sure you
 5 really want me to compare our ESPBC or AFSCME
 6 hourly wages to ALICE wages because frankly, in
 7 some cases those hourly wages don't even show up
 8 on our charts. No matter what grade and how many
 9 years some ESPBC and AFSCME members have been
 10 working for our school system, they will never be
 11 able to survive on a BCPS salary. And remember,
 12 ALICE means surviving; is that really what we
 13 want for those who take care of our children day
 14 in and day out? And frankly, who is going to
 15 come work for BCPS if their salary is only to
 16 survive? No one gets into the education field to
 17 make money, but I think it's safe to say that we
 18 want to do more than survive. We will not
 19 fulfill these positions without salary increases,
 20 especially for our critical ESPBC and AFSCME
 21 members. We will not fill positions with missing

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1 steps, we will not fill them when paychecks are
 2 incorrect, and we will not fill these if
 3 insurance is still not accurate two weeks into
 4 the new year during a pandemic. Please take care
 5 of your employees, all of them. Thank you very
 6 much.

7 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Thank you. The next
 8 speaker is Mary Taylor, and on deck will be
 9 Josiah Lookingbill.

10 MS. TAYLOR: Good evening, can you hear
 11 me?

12 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Yes, we can.

13 MS. TAYLOR: Okay, thank you very much.
 14 Over the past year parents and stakeholders in
 15 BCPS have raised many COVID-related concerns,
 16 including concerns about the state of the
 17 buildings, and while BCPS facilities has
 18 inspected all the systems to make sure they're up
 19 to code, the mechanical code is a minimum
 20 standard, and ASHRAE, the organization that sets
 21 the references for building codes, has issued

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1 additional guidance for improving ventilation and
 2 filtration in schools during the pandemic. BCPS
 3 has completed the recommended inspection and
 4 maintenance and increased the ventilation where
 5 possible. However, they have not followed
 6 through on the additional recommended steps which
 7 are to increase filters to MERV-13 or better for
 8 recirculated air by providing portable HEPA air
 9 cleaners, and many of our schools continue to be
 10 poorly ventilated and are operating without
 11 filtration. SARS-Cov-2 is an airborne virus and
 12 we cannot ventilate the spaces; the air needs to
 13 be filtered to a minimum of MERV-13 standards.
 14 And while some schools have purchased or received
 15 donated air filters for all classrooms, most of
 16 the schools across the county do not have air
 17 purifiers in all classrooms.

18 In addition, this is important for the
 19 budget consideration because adding air filters
 20 to our schools will improve the air quality in
 21 schools in the long term as well, and many parts

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1 of Baltimore County have high numbers of students
 2 with asthma, many students and staff have
 3 seasonal allergies, and some of our schools have
 4 mold, asbestos or other air quality issues. The
 5 Baltimore area has high rates of fine particle
 6 pollution in indoor air, which many studies have
 7 demonstrated impacts the health and learning
 8 outcome of students.

9 This is not just a pandemic issue, this
 10 is an issue of equity and justice for all
 11 students in Baltimore County who deserve to
 12 breathe clean air in schools. While COVID relief
 13 funding can be used for the initial purchase,
 14 replacement filters are also needed on a
 15 six-month to annual basis. This must be part of
 16 the budget planning process. Air purifiers work
 17 to help stop the spread of COVID-19 according to
 18 the EPA, CDC, OSHA, ASHRAE and many scientific
 19 studies. They also help improve learning
 20 conditions for our students. There is no
 21 drawback to providing cleaner air for our

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1 students and staff. For more information or
 2 questions and to get involved, you can follow
 3 Dr. Elizabeth Dowell at Air Filtration for
 4 Baltimore County and Greater Baltimore Area
 5 Schools on Facebook, to sign a petition for
 6 school studies and for more scientific provided
 7 information. Thank you for your time and
 8 consideration this evening. Good evening.

9 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Thank you. The next
 10 speaker is Josiah Lookingbill, and on deck is
 11 Andy Saleem Heggins.

12 MR. LOOKINGBILL: Thank you, did I
 13 unmute properly?

14 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Yes, we can hear you.

15 MR. LOOKINGBILL: Excellent, thank you.
 16 Good evening, Chair Henn, Vice Chair Pasteur,
 17 Superintendent Williams and all members of the
 18 Board. My name is Josiah Lookingbill, I am a
 19 math teacher at Woodlawn High School, and I want
 20 to know how BCPS could better facilitate learning
 21 for our students.

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1 The first item that, the first way that
 2 we could facilitate better learning for our
 3 students is to pay our adult assistants, our
 4 highly skilled adult assistants what they need to
 5 take care of themselves as they take care of our
 6 students. I have seen several students with
 7 legally mandated needs that have been unmet this
 8 school year and notice that this is not unique to
 9 this school year, every year lack of staffing has
 10 impeded student success.

11 Additionally, every year I see my
 12 co-teaching special educators as they manage
 13 caseloads that are untenable. Special educators
 14 need to have the space to effectively teach, and
 15 often are pulled to substitute for other classes
 16 or have multiple meetings. Others need the time
 17 to effectively connect with students.
 18 (Inaudible, static) is needed, so it is no wonder
 19 we see such great turnover in our adult
 20 assistants and special educators. This
 21 ultimately becomes a matter of safety when

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1 students don't receive the support they need or
 2 they lack adult support, it is challenging in the
 3 behaviors and we do not have at the moment enough
 4 staff adults to support the students and others
 5 there. If safety is our true north it is only
 6 possible with significant increases from what has
 7 been the norm. Thank you for your attention to
 8 our students' needs. Please fully fund our adult
 9 assistants and increase support for our special
 10 education staff. Thank you.

11 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Thank you. The last
 12 speaker for the night is Andy Saleem Heggins.

13 MR. HEGGINS: Thank you. I just want to
 14 say hello, good evening to Chair Henn, Vice Chair
 15 Pasteur, Superintendent Williams and the rest of
 16 the BCPS school board members. I'm Andy Saleem
 17 Heggins, I'm a parent at a regional high school
 18 located in Owings Mills.

19 And so over the past decade, Owings
 20 Mills and Randallstown has had a lot of new
 21 construction and that's a good thing, and there's

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1 even more scheduled. The challenge is that it
 2 has led to overcrowding. So on page 14 of the
 3 2023 budget, I was heartened to see more money
 4 being spent towards teachers, cost of living
 5 adjustments and several other increases that are
 6 much needed. The challenge is it always seems
 7 like our children get lost in the numbers, such
 8 that student-teacher ratios aren't really
 9 effectively addressed, and so what I'm hopeful of
 10 is that we are deeply committed to our children
 11 receiving a high quality of education, our
 12 teachers and staff being compensated properly,
 13 and towards that end having an ongoing
 14 conversation with parents, teachers, students and
 15 staff so that this is constantly being monitored
 16 and is not just a fiscal year thing or a
 17 one-meeting thing but so that we're constantly
 18 checking in and even reevaluating, to make sure
 19 that this money is being spent effectively,
 20 because ultimately our children are the ones that
 21 get lost in the fog.

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1 My second point is, I honestly hope I
 2 never get to the point where I say losing 2,000
 3 people isn't a big deal. So there are over
 4 850,000 families who have been impacted by COVID
 5 in terms of losing a loved one, and there are
 6 many statistics that say a majority of the people
 7 who have been infected by COVID will have, will
 8 develop some sort of long-term symptoms.

9 Personally I had an 11-year-old nephew rushed to
 10 the hospital only several days ago, and my father
 11 was just released from the hospital, and so it's
 12 very pressing to me. And so you know, again, I
 13 was heartened to see under safe and supportive
 14 environment that we're going to add 22 health
 15 assistants and we're putting them towards that.

16 My concern is that this conversation only takes
 17 place as it relates to students who have
 18 experienced virtual learning but we're not taking
 19 into account the people that actually lost
 20 members, so at some point in time I think we are
 21 all hopeful that two, three, four, five years

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1 from now we'll be talking about virtual learning
 2 in the past tense, remember when, but there are
 3 people right now who have lost family members and
 4 who have long-term symptoms who are being
 5 impacted, and so I'm hopeful that in the
 6 language, because that's where I'm not seeing it,
 7 in the language we're also taking them into
 8 account.

9 The last thing is I want to say thank
 10 you to Ms. Cheryl, Vice Chair Cheryl Pasteur,
 11 Ms. Makeda Scott, Mr. Duane Bazemore, Ms. Racquel
 12 Jones and Mr. James Martin, the principal at
 13 New Town High School, because in this
 14 conversation about whether we should come back
 15 when the numbers are going up, it seemed like
 16 there was only one group of voices being heard,
 17 and I'm so thankful that these members were
 18 listening and attentive, so much so that in
 19 particular Ms. Scott --

20 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Thank you.
 21 MR. HEGGINS: -- Mr. Bazemore and

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1 Ms. Jones actually reached out with a phone call,
 2 so I just want to thank you for being true
 3 partners, and thank you all.

4 CHAIRWOMAN HENN: Thank you, and that
 5 was our last speaker for the night, and I'd like
 6 to thank everyone for taking the time to
 7 participate in the hearing on the FY-2023
 8 operating budget.

9 The next item on the agenda is
 10 announcements. The Board's next meeting will be
 11 held on Tuesday, January 25th, 2022, at 6:30 p.m.
 12 At this time the board will be going into a
 13 closed administrative function session. Thank you
 14 all for joining us this evening.

15 (Open session adjourned.)

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1 STATE OF MARYLAND.
 2 BALTIMORE COUNTY: SS
 3
 4 I, Paul A. Gasparotti, a Notary Public in and
 5 for the State of Maryland, Baltimore County, do
 6 hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and
 7 accurate transcription of the recording to the
 8 best of my ability.

9 I further certify that I am not of counsel to
 10 any of the parties nor in any way interested in
 11 the outcome of these proceedings.

12 As witness, my hand and notarial seal this
 13 24th day of January, 2022.

14
15 _____
 16 Paul A. Gasparotti
 17
18
19
20
21

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