

UPDATED LWV OF BALTIMORE COUNTY EDUCATION POSITIONS

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QUALITY OF EDUCATION, PART I (1999)

Affirmation of the following to be the purposes of public education:

To prepare students to be responsible citizens and to understand and affirm the democratic values in our society

To prepare students to be economically self-sufficient

To prepare students to be life-long learners, appreciative of the arts, knowledgeable about technology and sensitive to cultural and individual differences

ACTION to support the following to ensure that BCPS students have well qualified teachers:

Strengthening and extension of pre-service training and continued professional development

Recognition and celebration of teachers of high quality

Promotion and marketing of the teaching profession with students and the public

Strengthening support services for new and experienced teachers (e.g. technology training, mentoring, etc.)

Provision of diversity training that engenders respect for academic, socio-economic, and cultural differences among student and staff

Provision of adequate staff to ensure that performance actually meets standards

ACTION to support the following measures in order to motivate accomplished persons to enter and remain in the teaching profession

Salaries competitive with other professions

Salary supplements for those with high performance ratings and those who achieve certification by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards

Exploration of possible incentives to encourage those in other professions to enter the teaching profession

ACTION to support budget priorities of staff, instructional materials and school maintenance including sabbaticals and professional conference attendance

QUALITY OF EDUCATION (TEACHING), PART II (2000)

ACTION to support the following programs that will ensure quality of teaching:

Promotion of parent involvement in every school

Promotion of interaction between parents and teachers

Provision of training by BCPS that gives teachers a variety of strategies to reach and teach students from diverse backgrounds

Provision of instructional aides in all schools

Inclusion of all “stakeholders” in any and all education surveys

Full funding of pre-school education

Full coordination and cooperation between BCPS and DSS in improving the quality of day care programs

Provision of teachers to provide remediation, acceleration and enrichment programs in elementary schools with high percentages of low achieving students

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (2005)

ACTION to support the following early childhood education initiatives:

Provision by BCPS of parent education and assistance with pre-literacy and enrichment activities to families with greatest need

Provision by BCPS of Pre-K education for 4-year-olds from disadvantaged families and those with special needs with the ultimate goal of provision of pre-K for all children

Full funding of pre-K and all-day kindergarten

THE PRINCIPALSHIP

Affirmation of the following principles:

The principal’s role is key to a well-functioning school and sets the tone for its mission to successfully educate all students. The principal is the chief administrator of his/her school. The principal’s main responsibility is that of Instructional Leader

ACTION to support the following:

Provision of discretionary funding allowing the principal to hire a person to supervise tasks which are not directly instructional in nature

Urging BCPS to expand its training program for potential principals to include all requirements necessary to become a full principal and to require part of that training to be in “challenging” schools with an emphasis on human relations.

Encouraging BCPS to create a mechanism for teachers to evaluate the principal

ACTION to support principal evaluation procedures which include appropriate input by teachers and parents

SAFE SCHOOLS/SAFE COMMUNITIES (1996)

ACTION to support

Increased and enhanced before and after-school programs

Increased cooperation between BCPS and other government agencies dealing with the welfare of children

Provision of funding to maintain safe schools and safe communities

CHARTER SCHOOLS (1998)

The League of Women Voters of Baltimore County neither supports nor opposes Charter Schools but does support specific criteria which should be implemented should Charter Schools be permitted in Baltimore County.

DEFINITION: Charter Schools are public schools, non-profit and non-sectarian, which offer alternative approaches to education and are exempted from certain rules and regulations except those related to health, safety, civil rights, special education, criminal background check and financial disclosure in exchange for accountability after a specified length of time. Common characteristics are: small size, (usually fewer than 300 students; relative degree of autonomy over decisions regarding curriculum, staffing, and budget; significant parent involvement; and innovative programs.

CRITERIA:

Parents, teachers, institutions of higher education, community agencies and existing public schools should be free to apply to form charter schools. However, Boards of Trustees of Charter Schools may hire for-profit companies for specific services (e.g. tutoring, accounting, janitorial help).

Federal moneys, foundation, businesses and other agencies can supply start-up funds. For operating expenses, customary funding from local, state and federal sources should flow to charter schools.

State certification for the majority of the teachers is important. Strengthening the certification process for charter school teachers as well as for other public school teachers, along with continuous staff development, is recommended.

Charter School Contracts should be reviewed frequently (e.g. one year, followed by contracts for three to five years).

Students desiring to attend should be admitted using a lottery system.

Students should take the tests customarily given in Maryland. After three years the charter school itself should be held accountable for student success based on its curriculum plan.

Charter schools should be open to non-intrusive visits from citizens who have scheduled appointments. There should be open disclosure of finances including annual audits which are reported to education boards and the public.

The State Board should not limit the number of charter schools.

All governing and advisory boards and councils for charter schools should include lay citizens.

Transportation of students to charter schools should be addressed including transportation for homeless students.

Accountability is crucial for the success of charter schools. Monitoring by local and state boards or by entities appointed by these boards is essential.

