

MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
Rockville, Maryland

July 17, 2012

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Christopher S. Barclay, Vice President

Subject: Previous New Business Item: Reducing MCPS' Carbon Footprint

On June 14, 2012, I introduced the following New Business Item:

For several years now, the superintendent and members of the Board have heard the advocacy of some community members and students regarding the elimination of polystyrene cafeteria trays and plastic utensils at Piney Branch Elementary School. Correspondence and dialogue on the subject have exposed disagreements as to the magnitude of the problem, viable solutions, and related costs to provide a resolution. The school system is not persuaded that the community members' proposal to install a dishwashing machine at Piney Branch Elementary School provides sufficient environmental benefits to justify the costs and staff efforts associated with implementing the proposal. The administration has in the recent past expressed a commitment to reducing the system's overall carbon footprint. I do agree with the thinking that eliminating polystyrene is a much larger issue than disposable trays at one elementary school and that any discussion about eliminating the use of polystyrene items from the food service industry should not be limited solely to school cafeterias.

I believe that we need to confront and address the larger issue of reducing the system's carbon footprint. We should begin investing in more concrete initiatives designed to address this important issue. The long-term impact on the environment of such initiatives would far outweigh the cost of implementation. I would welcome and support an initiative with easily measurable outcomes that could be evaluated. I am therefore presenting this resolution to the Board for consideration.

Resolved, That the superintendent of schools shall develop and recommend to the Board of Education a plan to reduce the system's carbon footprint; and be it further

Resolved, That each year, starting in the 2012-2013 school year, the administration shall report on the progress of this project to the Board of Education.

CSB:kmy