

APPROVED
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Rockville, Maryland
March 28, 1984

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in special session at the Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Wednesday, March 28, 1984, at 8:10 p.m.

ROLL CALL Present: Mrs. Marilyn J. Praisner, President in
the Chair

Dr. James E. Cronin
Mr. Blair G. Ewing
Mr. Peter Robertson
Mrs. Odessa M. Shannon
Dr. Robert E. Shoenberg

Absent: Dr. Marian L. Greenblatt
Mrs. Suzanne K. Peyser

Others Present: Dr. Wilmer S. Cody, Superintendent of
Schools

Dr. Harry Pitt, Deputy Superintendent
Dr. Robert S. Shaffner, Executive
Assistant
Mr. Thomas S. Fess, Parliamentarian

Re: Announcement

Mrs. Praisner stated that Dr. Greenblatt and Mrs. Peyser were unable to attend the meeting.

Re: Meeting with MCCPTA

Mrs. Nancy Dacek, president of MCCPTA, reported that they had started out the year dealing with "A Nation at Risk," and they had termed this the year of excellence. She said that their second delegate assembly dealt with the topic and was one of the best they had ever had. She said that MCCPTA was involved in the "Chemical People" project as well as cable television. They had offered testimony on the report of the Civiletti commission and on the report on reuse of closed schools. They were now in the process of preparing their budget testimony to the Council and had reserved 25 slots for April 5.

Mrs. Barbara Titland, president of MCCPTA Educational Programs, said they were involved with FLES, Creative Enrichment, Hands-on-science, and the cultural arts show case. They had a \$335,000 budget and employed 229 part-time employees as a nonprofit corporation. The Board of Directors met on a monthly basis, and she reported that their program was now recognized outside of Montgomery County and they were helping other counties and states set up similar programs. Mrs. Dacek added that they had started out as a nonprofit corporation to provide programs to students and were now offering programs in 56 schools. They could expand if more space were available; however, they were uncomfortable with the size of this

organization. She wondered whether by providing these programs they were lessening the school system's incentive to do these things. They all wondered what would happen if they were out of business. Mrs. Ann Rose, budget chairperson, stated that they had attended every meeting of the Council education committee, and they were grateful to MCPS staff for their help and guidance. They were now gearing up for the Council budget sessions. They had conducted their annual survey and oversize classes and the seven-period day were the top priorities. She suggested that the school system consider presenting data school by school as OMB had done. Next year they hoped to be able to have input into the budget before the superintendent came out with his recommendations.

Mrs. Seda Gelenian, cultural arts chairperson, explained that they were active in the show cases using the people approved by the superintendent's committee. There was a stringent code that performers had to go through to be registered to perform for children. As chairperson, she acted as a liaison person with the cultural arts chairpersons in the schools. She said that the high schools were not getting funds from the \$30,000 budgeted, and she suggested that they consider making some of these funds available to the high schools as well as the elementaries.

Mrs. Vivian Bland, chairperson of the curriculum committee, reported that they attended meetings of the Council on Instruction, wrote articles about curriculum, and worked with the local schools. They had completed three of the five articles planned for Spotlight. As they looked at the 1983 survey of parents, they found that parents were most interested in curriculum. Therefore, they had communicated with the local PTA presidents about curriculum concerns and had received responses from 15. They intended to be the conduit to other people in the school system. They were concerned about the lack of uniform excellence throughout the elementary schools. For example, in one school the science curriculum might be excellent while in another school there was not the same quality of instruction. They were pleased about the Board's priority for teacher training and hoped that they would look at uniform standards. She asked that information about what teachers saw as significant processes that were working be documented and shared with other schools as part of the five-year plan.

Mr. Matthew Kinnard, chairperson of the human relations committee, said that his committee was involved in Sensitivity Awareness Day, and from all reports this activity was successful. They had met with the Asian Council and had extended an invitation to representatives of that council to attend the area meetings. They had conducted an Area 2 human relations meeting and would produce a report on this meeting which would be published in Spotlight. They were planning meetings for the other areas.

Mrs. Pat Baptiste, legislation chairperson, reported that they had followed the hearings and recommendations of the Civiletti Commission and had testified in Annapolis. They had been following the pension legislation as well as the bill on the school board

elections. They had presented data on the elections bill and had taken a position in favor of the legislation; however, they were disappointed that it would not go into effect until 1988. They had lobbied on driver education funding and had been following bus transportation and safety issues. She felt they had had an active and productive year in Annapolis.

Mrs. Carole Huberman, safety committee, thanked the Board for its response about school patrols for the mid-day kindergarten. In regard to seat belts, she reported there was an overwhelming desire on the part of parents to see seat belts on school buses. She said there was a new generation of parents and children who were safety conscious; however, there was also an amazing amount of literature on both sides of this issue. She said that at the National PTA Conference there was a report that many school districts were in the process of adopting rules for seat belts. Mrs. Janet Bykoski, special needs chairperson, reported that they had cooperated with MCACLD and MCARC on a tour of Kensington Elementary and had had a panel discussion with learning disabled adults. Their biggest activity was at the school level where they had 85 chairmen in 77 schools. They had asked each school chairman to take part in activities and contribute information to the school newsletter.

Mrs. Ellen Cades, volunteers chairman, praised the 4,600 volunteers who contributed \$5 million worth of services. She was especially pleased with the work of the retired senior volunteers and invited the Board to lunch on Fridays at Wayside Elementary where 12 senior volunteers were active. They had 129 senior volunteers in 36 schools, and the average age was 75. She thanked Mrs. Sally Jackson, the MCPS coordinator of volunteers, for the wonderful job she was doing.

Mrs. Nancy Wiecking, Spotlight chairperson, stated that the publication spoke for itself. However, she was surprised about the remarks of the Title IX committee in reference to Spotlight.

Mr. Kinnard said that he had been invited to serve on a team regarding the Board's minority achievement goal and was working with a "Saturday School." He urged the Board to take advantage of the Saturday Schools, and Mrs. Praisner commented that the Board was interested in visiting one of the schools and would be establishing a date in the near future.

Mrs. Mary Ann Bowen, area 1 co-vice president, said it was her objective to make the PTAs aware of the role of the area office, and the area office had held an open house for this purpose. They had found the cluster organization to be effective and thought there was good communication between MCCPTA and the cluster coordinators to the PTAs. It was also a good process to establish community identity. They held monthly meetings at the area office, and they were gearing up for the budget. They had good cooperation with the area office, and Dr. Vance was planning a meeting in June, after the Council acted on the budget, to discuss staffing in Area 1. Mrs.

Cordie Goldstein, area 1 co-vice president, said that the final plans for the Blair magnet were being established, and Dr. Cody had visited the area to discuss needs. The other item of concern was a possible transition to middle schools in their area, and Dr. Tom Poore had done an excellent job in discussing the middle school concept. She explained that it was their desire to see elementary school magnets and grade organizations stabilized at the same time if Takoma Park and Eastern became middle schools. They had the Wheaton/Peary consolidation to be concerned about, and the transition committee was being established for Northwood. She hoped that finally in Area 1 they would begin to look at students and programs instead of buildings. They were enthusiastic about the plan for review teams and minority participation, and she cited the math scores at Takoma Park Junior High School as a perfect example of "going the extra mile."

Mrs. Peggy Slye, area 2 vice-president, stated that Dr. Shekletski had done a magnificent job and had held an excellent meeting in the area in October. They hoped that Dr. Shekletski would be with them for a while. They, too, were ready to get past the point of looking at buildings, and they had concerns about the availability of program to all students. They were concerned about the staffing and student projection processes. They were proud of the pilot project at Woodward for profoundly retarded students, and she was most impressed with the opportunity this program had given to students to learn and to grow. They hoped to be able to look at long-range academic needs in their area. There were some communication difficulties with the Peary closure, and she hoped that they would be able to learn from this process.

Mr. Ron Wohl, area 3 vice president, reported that they were pleased to have their gifted and talented program at Lakewood. He commented that the upper country was undergoing a tremendous growth, and he was pleased to see the report of the Area 3 Task Force. He said that despite the short timeframe for the report, the task force had come up with an astounding amount of information and recommendations. He thanked the Board, MCPS, and Dr. Powell and her staff for the support they had give to the PTA. He explained that one of his objectives was to improve communications in Area 3 because it was only through the proper use of channels of communication that they could let people know their problems and get them solved. He thought they had done that. He said that the Board had received the recommendations of the Gaithersburg-Germantown study group, and he indicated that they were supportive of these recommendations. He explained that their area problems were due in the most part to growth, and he was pleased to see the expansion of the planning office. He thought that educational quality was a product of well thought-through programs meeting the educational needs of the community. They must understand needs before designing program, and equity did not mean sameness. They did not want sameness in Area 3, rather they wanted to meet their needs.

Mrs. Ellen Durigg, Einstein cluster coordinator, stated that they

were becoming a clone of the Blair cluster in that in some cases half of their students could be classified as ESOL; however, they had not received the publicity about their situation. She was concerned that the mini-grants would become political. Dr. Cody replied that it would not work that way because the guidelines would encourage people to apply, but there would no guarantee that all would receive these grants. They were not talking about "big money" for any one school.

In response to a concern raised about the average student, Mrs. Praisner said that the mini-grants and elementary counselors would help all students. She explained that when they provided help for a diverse population, teachers were better prepared to provide services for the regular student. Concerns were raised about class size, and Dr. Pitt explained that this year they had increased the percentage of the total staff and added the seven-period day in more schools. The Board had specifically added a number of teachers for large classes. Dr. Cody added that they had started the school year with a budget and more students than the budget called for. This occurred because of a change in the population trend, but they believed they had a better handle on that trend this year. In regard to class size, they were trying to chip away a bit each year. In regard to the regular student, Mrs. Shannon commented this was more of a concern about a lack of communication between the Board and parents. As she looked at the test scores, she did not see that the regular student was suffering. They had concentrated their efforts where they found the deficiencies and their biggest gain was in this area. She suggested that perhaps the Board should publicly recognize the other things they were doing and note the successes that had been achieved.

Mr. Ewing reported that typically the budget was based on projections of student population which was done in the fall. This year they had received an update on population projects before the Board took final action on the budget, and as a result of the update the Board had added more teaching positions. Dr. Cody explained that if they had not done this, they would have been 20 teachers short at the opening of school in September, 1984.

Mrs. Cynda Wilcox, Whitman cluster coordinator, noted that the projections this year were off by 700 students. This had created havoc in the Whitman area, and the area office had tried to work miracles. She thought it was hard on students to change teachers in midyear. She was concerned about oversized classes and suggested maintaining a pool of teachers to handle this problem. Dr. Pitt replied that they did this, but they had used some of the large class pool for the seven-period day and for the unexpected surge in student population. This year they would hold a pool of teachers in reserve.

In response to concerns about enrollment at Gaithersburg High School, Dr. Pitt said they would be monitoring this situation. They hoped to be able to have better projections and would use a computer

to review their projections. They would add staff at the beginning of the school year if needed.

Mrs. Vicki Bowers, Richard Montgomery cluster coordinator, stated that Richard Montgomery was supposed to be a comprehensive high school. She asked that they discuss staffing. She remarked that educating a person meant more than math and science. Education involved art, music, and recreational activities. She felt that it was "not bad" if students did not take an academic course in the seventh period. Mrs. Kathy Greenfield, Peary cluster coordinator, commented that all of their feeder schools had become involved with Area 2. She remarked that there was total cooperation at the area level among principals, staff, students, and community. She thought that the key to this was communication, and she explained that they were keeping a list of items that would help with the Northwood closure.

Mr. Bill Olmstead, Kennedy cluster coordinator, said his group was concerned about professional standards, teacher compensation, and math and science.

They were glad to see that the Board had addressed the teacher entry level issue; however, it was the perception of many people that they were approaching a crisis situation with math and science teachers. Dr. Pitt replied that they did not have that situation yet in Montgomery County. Their present focus was on staff training, and they had discussed recruitment efforts they would have to make in the next few years. They were also looking at the possibility of using resources available in the high tech industry in the county. Dr. Cody added that in three or four years and then for seven or eight years after they would be in a national competition for science and math teachers.

Mrs. Praisner thanked the members of MCCPTA for sharing their activities and concerns.

Re: Adjournment

The president adjourned the meeting at 10:05 p.m.

President

Secretary

WSC:mlw

