

APPROVED  
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Rockville, Maryland  
November 1, 1988

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in special session at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Tuesday, November 1, 1988, at 8:10 p.m.

ROLL CALL        Present:    Dr. James E. Cronin, Vice President  
   in the Chair  
   Mr. Bruce A. Goldensohn  
   Mr. Chan Park  
   Mrs. Marilyn J. Praisner  
   Mrs. Vicki Rafel  
   Dr. Robert E. Shoenberg

Absent:    Mrs. Sharon DiFonzo  
   Mr. Blair G. Ewing

Others Present:    Dr. Harry Pitt, Superintendent of Schools  
   Dr. Paul L. Vance, Deputy Superintendent

Re:    ANNOUNCEMENT

Dr. Cronin announced that Mrs. DiFonzo and Mr. Ewing had sent their regrets. They were attending a candidates forum. He introduced Mr. Robert Grossman, the newly appointed director of the Department of Information.

Re:    ANNUAL MEETING WITH THE MONTGOMERY  
   COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE  
   AND SUPERVISORY PERSONNEL

Mr. Matt Tronzano introduced Ms. Joy Odom, Ms. Terrill Meyer, Mrs. Audrey Leslie, Dr. Jerry Lynch, and Dr. Donna Stephens. Mr. Tronzano said their first question had to do with an update on the Commission on Excellence committees.

Dr. Pitt replied that the school flexibility committee received the most publicity. Seth Goldberg was the chair of that committee, and at present they were doing orientations in the community on how schools might apply for the program. He hoped that by the second semester some schools might come in with plans that could be developed over the summer. He explained that schools would be required to pilot the new program using the same funds as they had now, and if they proposed to change any Board policy, they would have to come to the Board of Education. If their proposal changed negotiated agreements, the Board and the associations would have to come to agreement. He was very serious about the work of the committee, and he hoped that an opportunity would come for teachers to make decisions about educational programs for children.

Dr. Pitt reported that the induction committee had received recommendations for pilot schools from the area superintendents, and the committee would be making the final decisions. The pilot schools

would develop their own plan for selecting the colleague teacher, but any process selected had to involve the principal and the teachers. MCPS would provide substitute coverage for half a day once every two weeks plus stipend money. The colleague teacher would spend a number of hours after school working with new teachers. He expected this would start next semester.

Dr. Pitt said the third group was staff training which was more complex. They would have pilot schools where each teacher would develop a plan for staff development which encompassed the needs of the teacher and the needs of the school. The teacher would make a commitment to do this, and MCPS would follow through with staff training support. He was particularly interested in the committee looking at staff development with the goal of making recommendations for changes to the superintendent. The third recommendation in this area had to do with establishing training centers in each administrative area, and he thought this would take a few years.

Dr. Pitt explained that the last committee had to do with evaluation which was a complex issue. His personal goals were that there be peer involvement in evaluation and that this would be piloted. He noted that this would have to be approved by the Board and MCEA, but after 60 days of consultation, the Board could proceed.

Dr. Cronin commented that the Board had given general support to the recommendations of the Commission and had committed funds for the pilots. The plan was for schools to take the initiative, and if some of the pilots worked, they would have some models that were acceptable because they were system-generated. He would like to see the Board continue to stand back from this process.

Mrs. Praisner agreed about the Board's involvement. However, there were a couple of things the Board would have to do. They were going to have to hold to some effective evaluations of the pilots. They also had to be clear in communicating to the public, staff, and County Council, that this was not something that changed overnight. She said they had to crawl before they could run. They might not see exciting pilots initially. She pointed out that one of the Board's priorities dealt with long-range planning and another with staff development. They might see more focus on these issues. Personally, when they talked about staff development, she felt they were not talking about just teacher staff development, but opportunities for everyone at the school.

Dr. Pitt reported that he and Dr. Vance had met with groups working nationally in this area. Those people believed that MCPS was moving faster than they thought possible. In other school systems, these efforts had been union-directed. He said he was now taking a backseat, and that was a difficult process, but the most exciting thing was that these committees seemed to work out. Mrs. Praisner added that in other jurisdictions when they went too fast, they had had to pull back. Montgomery County had a lot of things going on, and they had to keep citizens and staff informed.

Dr. Lynch stated that he was pleased with the process and the perspective that the Board was taking. He was pleased to see that people were being given the time to do a good job because too often MCPS did things too quickly.

Dr. Shoenberg agreed that it was well people were taking time. However, when something worked and looked attractive, everyone would want to do it. This was understandable, but not possible. This also offered the possibility of their getting to a situation where student transferability from school to school would become a problem.

Dr. Cronin remarked that if this multiple effort succeeded, they would have far better ways to express to the community what they were doing in the classroom. Dr. Pitt commented that in the past MCPS did not know what a pilot was. If this worked, it did not mean that every school would get the program. These pilots had to be evaluated. In the past, they had come up with an idea and tried it with the goal of getting it in all schools. This was not a pilot. A pilot was an experiment. Dr. Shoenberg noted that there were certain kinds of basic qualities of the educational program they had to maintain. It would be difficult to do this when they were growing as they were. In six years, they would have over 180 schools in operation, and it was going to be hard to maintain a reasonably uniform quality of education, but this was a challenge they would face.

Ms. Meyer reported that later this month the Board would be considering the revised fund-raising policy. MCCPTA had raised questions about equity in fund-raising, and she was concerned about assuring equity and adequacy of funding for those working in communities with modest means. Secondary schools had to look at copiers costing \$15,000, word processors at \$3,000 to \$5,000, \$30,000 to \$35,000 for football field lighting, Middle States evaluations, and school publications. Some schools were able to raise funds with ease, while others could not.

Dr. Pitt explained that they tried to provide equity, and they allocated funds for athletics based on need. They also tried to provide those things essential for a school to operate. However, there were communities that provided additional funding without blinking an eye.

Mrs. Rafel stated that she had received a call from a PTA president whose community was going to raise about \$15,000 but was not sure what they were going to do with it. She had told him that he had to decide whether fund raising was the best use of PTA people. She suggested that if a PTA provided volunteers, newsletters, and information on countywide issues and still have energy left over, they might consider fund raising. She explained that the PTA could not give those funds to a charity, and she said that perhaps next year that PTA could consider a picnic or another activity to break the fund-raising cycle. She also said she might suggest that there were a lot of PTAs that needed funds for their basic operations. It was her experience that the success of PTAs in fund-raising was not

necessarily tied to socio-economic patterns. There were blue collar communities that raised funds, and upper class communities with little emphasis on fund raising. She thought they should have some sort of open forum where the community could talk about fund raising and issues associated with it.

Ms. Odom stated that it was her understanding that PTAs had ideas about what the school system should provide. Therefore, they liked to give the school something beyond that basic equipment. Mrs. Rafel added that the national PTA had a handbook where they spelled out that PTAs should not be engaged in fund raising to provide basic educational materials.

Ms. Meyer pointed out that her school received \$700 a year for equipment which would never allow them buy a copier. Dr. Pitt said MCPS had provided copiers for elementary schools. Poolesville was unique, and perhaps staff needed to look at this situation. Ms. Meyer added that they had a 550 population, grades 7 to 12. Dr. Pitt agreed that they were a unique case, and that staff should look at this school. He noted that 90 percent of the high schools had the ability to buy copiers out of their funds, but Poolesville had fewer students than almost any two- or three-grade school.

Mrs. Praisner pointed out that secondary schools did not have just one copier; they had several copiers. She suggested looking at when schools got copiers, how many they had, and where they were buying these copiers. Dr. Pitt agreed to look into this. He explained that schools were required to buy copiers through the purchasing department. He was concerned about elementary schools where the PTAs were getting into this and providing copiers.

Mrs. Rafel reported that another issue was playground equipment. The system purchased six sets every year. If schools were not on the list, the odds were that the PTA would buy the equipment. She had done some work with vendors at the national PTA, and there was a tremendous price range on this equipment, and she wondered about protecting PTAs that might buy inferior equipment. Mrs. Leslie hoped that did not limit discussion of the fund-raising policy to the PTA because schools and teachers also raised funds.

Dr. Lynch asked about creative thoughts about recruiting supporting services personnel. The shortage of personnel was affecting all schools because MCPS was now competing with business. Dr. Pitt thought they had done some excellent things in this regard; however, clerical personnel continued to be a problem. One suggestion was to upgrade the skills of MCPS employees. Mrs. Praisner reported that the federal government had done some of this, but it was difficult to retain these people. This might be a topic for a discussion with the business community. There might be some cooperative efforts to recruit. Dr. Pitt suggested recruiting some MCPS business education students, and Dr. Cronin asked if they had thought about providing tuition assistance at Montgomery College with a promise that the individual would work for MCPS for five years.

Ms. Odom noted that they had found a qualified student to hire, but the student was required to take a typing test. The student was familiar with computers and word processing but had never used a typewriter. Dr. Pitt agreed that the Personnel Office should look into this. Dr. Lynch agreed that they should look at students as possible employees, and he suggested they also consider job sharing.

Mr. Goldensohn asked if they made a pitch to MCPS students in their senior year because not every high school graduate went off to college. Dr. Pitt agreed that they should look into this. Mr. Goldensohn suggested working with the guidance counselors, and Ms. Odom suggested placing ads in school newspapers to recruit students. Mrs. Praisner reported that the Board had discussed the DEA report on the status of education for gifted and talented students. She asked if MCAASP had any comments to offer. Mrs. Leslie replied that there was no question that this program was fairly uneven. There was no question about the program in the high schools, although there was some variation in the J/I/M schools. She thought that Priority 2 would help them improve the identification process. One difference was that in the centers they had a lot of teacher-made materials, and they could not expect the teachers in the regular school to make all these materials. Mrs. Leslie commented that differentiation for every child was not easy, and in Area 2 they had several projects to improve differentiated instruction. All of this needed time. Dr. Pitt remarked that he was concerned because the data seemed to show MCPS was not ahead of where it was two years ago. The area and the central offices had to work with principals to make sure they were making this commitment to gifted and talented education. They needed to make it clear that this was Board policy and schools did not have an option.

Mr. Tronzano stated that most principals welcomed people into their school so that they could explain the school program. The focus on gifted and talented instruction had not been forgotten; however, if they needed to do some things differently the principals would do it. He thought there was a lot going on in gifted and talented instruction, but people did not understand what was happening in the classroom. Mr. Goldensohn agreed that it was hard to quantify when there were only a few gifted and talented students in a class. If a class was predominantly gifted and talented, you could see something different going on. Mr. Tronzano said the hardest thing was to explain a gifted and talented program to a community. He frequently suggested to parents that they come in and talk to him about their child's program. Dr. Shoenberg thought that parents got a sense of what was happening by what the child brought home. If the homework was busy work, parents thought nothing was happening. He remarked that some people would not be satisfied with anything less than a genuine pull-out program.

Dr. Lynch reported that there was some confusion about programs for the gifted and talented in the middle level. In junior high schools they had honors programs, and in middle schools they had both elementary and secondary teachers and a program that didn't fit the high school honors model. Dr. Cronin inquired about progress on the

Villani committee which was looking at these issues.

Re: ADJOURNMENT

The vice president adjourned the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

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VICE PRESIDENT

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SECRETARY

HP:mlw