

APPROVED  
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Rockville, Maryland  
January 10, 1990

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in special session at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Wednesday, January 10, 1990, at 8:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL Present: Mr. Bruce A. Goldensohn, Vice President  
in the Chair  
Dr. James E. Cronin  
Mrs. Sharon DiFonzo  
Mr. Blair G. Ewing  
Mrs. Catherine E. Hobbs  
Mrs. Marilyn J. Praisner  
Ms. Alison Serino

Absent: Dr. Robert E. Shoenberg

Others Present: Dr. Harry Pitt, Superintendent of Schools  
Dr. Paul L. Vance, Deputy Superintendent  
Mr. Thomas S. Fess, Parliamentarian

Re: ANNUAL MEETING WITH MCAASP

Mr. Goldensohn welcomed Dr. Jerry Lynch, president of MCAASP, and members of his executive board to the annual meeting.

Dr. Lynch stated that they continued to be concerned about providing support at the local school level and getting the operating budget funded by the Council. He pointed out that the composition of schools was changing, and they were seeing more ESOL students and more students needing academic and other supports. Board members suggested MCAASP principals invite Council members to visit their schools so that principals could explain programs where they thought there were crucial needs.

Dr. Pitt thought they needed to encourage business people and people other than parents to express their support for schools to the Council. Mr. Ewing suggested that they make a solid case of what it took to administer a school system as complex as MCPS. Mrs. DiFonzo said they had to educate the Council about the central and area offices and about needed supports in the local schools. Dr. Lynch indicated that MCAASP would be willing to provide speakers to local clubs and civic associations. Mrs. Praisner said that any presentations should include demographic overviews of the school system to show the changing population and needs. Dr. Pitt stated that the key was for MCAASP members to be knowledgeable about the budget and needs in the schools.

Dr. Frank Masci reported that another concern was the increasing difficulty of attracting qualified people to administrative positions. This would be critical as the school system grew and people retired. Mrs. Praisner commented that she had raised this issue and believed they needed a concerted plan and some targets to insure that they had a cadre of qualified people. Dr. Pitt reported that while people were taking leadership training classes, only about half of them were interested in becoming administrators.

Mr. Ewing asked why they were having difficulty in recruiting people. Dr. Masci replied that one reason was the salary overlap with the resource teachers and assistant principals. The other was the aggravation factor of being on duty 24 hours a day. Dr. Donna Stephens added that it was not just running a school. It was dealing with all the other factors including the very political nature of

Montgomery County. Dr. Masci said that another inhibiting factor was the avenue to the principalship through the assistant principalship which was not very rewarding professionally.

Dr. Linda Weber said that at the elementary school level the principal was alone with the building with all the stressors and no one else to turn to. However, Montgomery County had an outstanding training program for new principals and it did help people feel more comfortable in difficult situations. Dr. Cronin asked about help from the counselors and curriculum specialists. Dr. Weber replied that while there was some support there, the principal had the responsibility for evaluation which at times was a difficult job. Mr. Gerald Johnson added that the assistance really depended on the goals of the people in those positions. If they were headed for administration, they were more likely to assist principals in those duties.

Dr. Weber said that one thing that helped was to deal with the community frankly about their expectations. Dr. Lynch pointed out that the proposed addition of lunch hour aides for the mid level schools would free up the principal and teachers to deal with instructional issues and feel more professionally about their work.

Dr. Masci felt that principals needed flexibility in assigning staff to cope with changing populations. Dr. Rich Wilson suggested allowing people in OIPD a year's trial in administration without the loss of their original position to see if they could have success as school administrators.

Dr. Cronin inquired about frustrations imposed by the complexity of the school system. Dr. Weber replied that an amount of frustration had been eliminated through paperwork reduction, and Mrs. Gemberling was talking about getting more things done through the mainframe computer. However, people still avoided the principalship because of the pay, longer hours, and unsolvable problems. Dr. Stephens commented that about five years ago she had done a study of the concerns of principals. Their number one concern was the lack of recognition for what they did, and another was that they be seen as humans and not the all-knowing person standing alone. Dr. Masci thought that they needed to look at technology as an aid for administration, and Dr. Pitt indicated that Mrs. Gemberling was promoting such a system. However, the county executive had recommended cutting this out of the capital budget and putting it in the operating budget.

Mr. Ewing agreed that modernizing the management function was very important. In his work everything was automated and networked to improve communication. He noted that middle management was crisis management. Good managers knew this and struggled to gain control of their environment to have time to plan. Sometime they had to turn people off, but they couldn't do that if they were the only administrator in the building. Some people did not like dealing with crisis, but others did see the enterprise and crisis as something they could overcome. The frustration came when they did not have the tools to do this. He wondered about developing methods of identifying the right kinds of people to deal with this and providing better ways of equipping people to cope with crisis and management. They needed people who wanted the challenge, but they had to identify these people and encourage those people with these skills.

Dr. Pitt pointed out that MCPS was about to receive a national award for its training program. The issue raised by Mr. Ewing was interesting because it was very hard to measure how people would react in a situation. A lot of this was intuitive judgment, and for

that reason they put elementary school trainees in the role of principal for two months. Mr. Johnson said that it was important to let these people know what they were getting into to help them adjust to the liveness of the principalship.

Mrs. Praisner thought they might learn from industry leadership programs. Dr. Weber was aware of another system's assessment center where they looked for areas of weaknesses and worked on improvement there for a year or two.

In response to Mrs. DiFonzo's question about the most rewarding and frustrating things about jobs in MCPS, MCAASP members listed the challenge and the opportunity to help children as the rewards. The frustrations included failures to help and accomplish more and the loneliness of the position.

Mr. Goldensohn thanked the members of MCAASP for their comments and views.

Re: ADJOURNMENT

The vice president adjourned the meeting at 10:20 p.m.

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VICE PRESIDENT

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SECRETARY

HP:mlw