

NUMBER: 25-1991  
STATUS: APPROVED  
PLACE: ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND  
DATE: MARCH 26, 1991  
TEXT:



Ms. Gutierrez, chair of the Board's subcommittee on minority student achievement, reported that they had tried to look at all the issues in the Gordon report and group them so that sessions had some cohesion. The focus for this evening was to look at system performance measures including monitoring and accountability. They wanted to look at how they were doing now and what were they measuring now. They also wanted to look at what they were doing with school management information because a recommendation by Dr. Gordon was the need to have a data-driven approach to monitoring of student achievement. They had SIMS which was the beginning of this approach. They were also looking at performance indicators for students, teachers, schools, and the system. A lot of focus for students was dependent on testing, and they would have a presentation on the testing program.

Ms. Gutierrez said that later in the discussion they would focus on where they needed to go and the trends they needed to know about. They should look at new measures and how they could improve on the accountability for the overall system, teachers, schools, and students. She commented that it was a very ambitious review of this segment of the subject matter.

Dr. Vance stated that his enthusiasm particularly under the leadership of Ms. Gutierrez had been growing. He felt that this evening was another step forward in this process. During their last session they had discussed the minority achievement plans from 1983 to 1991. They had discussed their accountability goals and why these were selected. They had talked about the system-wide management plan. Finally they had looked at the programs and staff development activities they had been using to promote the achievement and participation of all students, with special attention to how these initiatives might benefit low achieving Asian, black, and Hispanic youngsters.

Dr. Vance reported that this evening's meeting was about next steps. They would talk about where they should go from here in refining and revising their accountability system. After talking with Ms. Gutierrez, he had asked staff to provide the Board with information about where they were now and where they wanted to be in the future. In describing the near term, it was important to understand the systems for monitoring. They had asked Dr. Richard Towers, their liaison to the State Department of Education, to briefly discuss the Maryland School Performance Program. While Dr. Vance was not wildly enthusiastic about MSPP, he was enthusiastic about its potential. Mrs. Kathryn Gemberling would talk about the School-based Instructional Monitoring System (SIMS). Dr. Joy Frechtling and Mrs. Gemberling would discuss their local criterion-referenced tests. They had asked Mrs. Nancy Perkins to talk about the current teacher evaluation system.

Dr. Vance said they had asked staff to pull together some materials about assessments and evaluations to help them better discuss where they ought to be going. They had looked at what was happening nationally. The last several years had seen a dramatic increase at the federal level in efforts aimed at defining national goals for education and developing more intense accountability systems. They had to look at those. In the future these goals and systems were likely to affect how they thought about and measured the success of children. Staff would be available to discuss these with the Board. He invited the Board to take advantage of that opportunity following this evening's discussion.

Dr. Towers remarked that MSPP was now a "given" in Maryland. The program had several components, and none of these was strange to Montgomery County. The program involved collecting student performance information which the state called data base areas and which might be added to locally by any school system. The emphasis this year was on the testing aspect because the instrument that would be used in May was a little different from that which they were used to. The state had developed a performance-based assessment. They were asking youngsters to take a situation and apply what they had learned to a problem. They were to demonstrate problem-solving skills, higher order skills, and critical thinking skills. These were the skills that people would need in the 21st century. This was not a minimum competency program. This looked at skills that were rigorous and important and that would be assessed in a little different way. The state was setting standards for what was satisfactory and what was excellent. This information would be publicized for each and every school and it would be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender. That information would be put into the hands of the public and into the hands of the teachers and the principals.

Dr. Towers reported that another component of the program was school improvement. Schools had to develop a plan that would allow youngsters to achieve those standards. The plan would have to have a parent/community component. The staff and the principal would have to develop this plan and incorporate a process that the state was calling "school-based instructional decision making." The last component would be an accreditation or review process that would look at outcomes school by school.

Dr. Towers said that in the first report Montgomery County was only one of three or four school systems that did add local data base areas. They could also take the data and report it any way they saw fit. They could go beyond what the state said as long as they met the basic state requirements. He indicated that the assessment piece had received a lot of attention. The state had done this rapidly and had come up with outcomes. They had contracted with the California Test Bureau, and they had involved

Maryland teachers, all in the space of one year. They piloted the program in California and would administer it in Grades 3, 5, and 8 in reading, writing, language usage, and math. Montgomery County would receive information that would focus on the school and give them a profile on how well the school was helping youngsters to achieve those learning outcomes in these grades. It would not necessarily be data that would be meaningful for individual students. The testing would take nine hours, and next year they would have six hours of science and social studies. While it would be useful in looking at schools, they would need other instruments as well to show how youngsters were doing.

Mrs. Hobbs inquired about the numbers of MCPS staff who had been involved in the design and planning of the state system. Dr. Towers replied that each school system was asked to send about nine individuals. Mrs. Gemberling's staff had helped in developing the learning outcomes which were fairly consistent with the MCPS curriculum. MCPS teachers were involved in the initial task development, and a number of them were called back to be involved in the refinement process. The California Test Bureau had been told that they had to use teacher level people in the state of Maryland in developing the instrument.

Mr. Ewing indicated that he would be pleased to receive Dr. Gordon's views once he had examined the Maryland School Performance program. It would be useful for the Board to know the extent to which Dr. Gordon thought this approach was consistent with the recommendations in his report.

Ms. Gutierrez asked about the timeline to get to the accreditation stage. Dr. Towers replied that they were in the second year of the phase-in. This year they were phasing in the performance assessment data as well as the school improvement part of it. The last portion would probably occur next year. What was accreditation was now going to be a review process. If a school met standards, it would probably be rewarded. If a school needed help, it would be given that help and assistance. If a school continued not to make progress, there would be sanctions. He thought it would take another year for this phase.

Dr. Vance asked Dr. Towers to expand on the extent of MCPS involvement. He thought that the results had been positive for Montgomery County because they had decided early on not to resist this initiative but to cooperate. Dr. Towers commented that this process had been very quick and had been anxiety producing. As he attended state meetings and looked at the other jurisdictions, he was proud at how well Montgomery County teachers, principals, and supervisors had picked up the ball and had run with it. They had organized themselves in committees to looking at staff development, testing, assessment, and community/parent involvement. Representatives of MCEA, principals associations, and the community were working on this. They had looked

at their management plans to see how this could fold into the school improvement plans so that the principals would not have to write four or five different plans and could use one overall process. He believed that the involvement of people had been useful and had caused them to be further along in the process. People were positive about the process, but there were concerns that this had been done too quickly by the state.

Dr. Towers remarked that a lot of the state program was similar to the effective schools program. Principals and teachers recognized that MSPP had the potential to really improve education for youngsters and to enrich the lives of students. While it was not necessarily the best timing, principals had taken the training, worked with their staffs, and had given PTA presentations.

Assuming this developed along the lines the state intended, Mr. Ewing asked about specific support this would give them in achieving their goals. He asked whether it would be a lot of help, a little bit of help, not very much help, or no help at all. Dr. Towers replied that it was not a question of what it was going to be. It was a question of what it could be and what they could make of it. First of all it was a given. They had to deal with it. They could look at it in terms of an accountability strategy and use those things that were peculiar to Montgomery County like their local CRT's. They could use this structure to drive the kinds of things they were interested in seeing happen. Rather than having two or three structures going on, it made sense to use MSPP, adjust it, and make it more effective. It seemed to Mr. Ewing that it would not be a hindrance, and they could use it to help them to achieve what they wanted to achieve.

Dr. Vance commented that this expanded the school data base and began to disaggregate by student, information that was critical for what they wanted to do. Given their initiative with SIMS, he thought it began at the local school level to spell out for an individual child whatever it was they wanted to monitor. The range could include the Maryland Functional Tests, to percent graduating, to SAT scores, etc. It could also provide them with discrete information on LC's by class, by teacher. They could have information on the dropout rate and the promotion rate. He saw it as a major support for what they were setting out to accomplish. He indicated that the standards on the MSPP could well become not the ceiling for Montgomery County but the floor for them.

Mrs. Fanconi asked Dr. Gordon for his views on what had been discussed so far. She also recalled that Dr. Gordon had talked about getting some data on the country of origin, the language spoken at home, etc. She asked about how they would use that data if they gathered it.

Dr. Gordon felt that this development was moving in the right direction. However, he did not have enough information on the nature of the assessment probes themselves to make a judgment about the extent to which the knowledge, skills, and competencies were getting at what he was talking about. On the second question, he said the information was most useful in enabling them to begin to target on where their problems were. In his report, he had made a great deal of the issue of diversity, but he also called attention to the fact that they were not able to be sufficiently sensitive to it because they had homogenized larger categories of youngsters. If they were to look at the Asian-American population, it would appear that their problems with that population were isolated in a few sub-populations. If they looked at the total population, they would be misled. The same could be said with respect to their Hispanic population. This got them to income level which might be a more important indicator than race and ethnicity. The problem might be the nature of the resources and parental supports for learning in the home. He did not know how a state would solve that problem.

Dr. Gordon remarked that ideally if one were to try to figure more precisely where the problems were, having socioeconomic status would be an important piece of information. He did think that the MSPP moved in the right direction, but it was probably not yet sufficiently refined to match what he had hoped for. It might be that they would have to settle for much less and use surrogate indicators. He did have some reservation about the school as a focus and a unit of analysis. While it was important to identify which schools had problems, he believed that the capacity of SIMS to begin to look at classrooms and specific teachers and specific children was much more useful.

Dr. Cheung commented that socioeconomic data was very important in terms of determining the needs. Hearing what Dr. Vance described, he agreed it was very important to have a data base and information system on the individual child, the teacher, and the school. There were certain things that one could look at to get socioeconomic factors. These included subsidized lunch, the number of people in the household, rental versus ownership, single house versus multiple units, etc. He wondered about the cost if the state mandated this type of information. He asked if the state had looked into the costs of providing this information. He reported that his agency was going through much the same process about hospitals and patients. They had collected information on patients, costs, effectiveness of treatment, etc., and they were now in the process of automating this data. Therefore, before they collected the data, they needed to define their objectives. He asked whether the state had looked at the plan and implementation of a data-based system.

Dr. Towers replied that the first year had been spent in getting

operational definitions consistent throughout the state. The MCPS management information people had had to make some slight adjustments in some areas, but for the most part MCPS had already collected the data the state was requesting. They would be able to transmit it on schedule without any problem.

Mrs. Gemberling stated that the concept behind MSPP was an external accounting of schools and school systems. SIMS was internal monitoring on the part of the school. The whole concept of the SIMS project had occurred in one school with a staff that chose to establish a student data base in that school. The primary focus was to get a handle on what was happening for individual students, but particularly in terms of monitoring student progress around the goals of Priority 2. One of the subcommittees of the Board's minority student education committee had visited that particular school because gains had been made there. One of the members titled it the "humanistic data base."

She thought it was a good title because they were not dealing with numbers but individual student information. The committee recommended that this project be put in all schools.

Mrs. Gemberling explained that they had demonstrated the SIMS program for the County Council. This year they had 23 schools on the pilot project, eleven secondary, eleven elementary, and one special education school. At the April all-day Board meeting they planned to have a hands-on demonstration showing different data bases that had been generated in individual schools.

Mrs. Gemberling said that if all they did was gather final data, it would be similar to giving a student a report card but never giving him any tests, grades, or progress reports in between. They asked schools to improve, but they did not provide schools with a way to gather data and keep an on-going monitoring system.

SIMS was internal monitoring. If a school was asked how it was doing, there was a certain defensive posture. However, if a school were empowered to look at what was really going on, it could change patterns and do early intervention. When the external reports came, the school would be ready for them. SIMS supplied the school with a basis on which to make instructional decisions.

Mrs. Gemberling reported that they had identified the schools for the coming year. The County Council did approve continued funding of this based on the progress that had been shown. She said they had received terrific feedback from the principals and the staffs using the project. Dr. Gordon had an opportunity to see it in action.

Mrs. Fanconi understood that the original school was Mrs. Gemberling's school when she was a principal. Mrs. Gemberling said it was. The school was Kennedy High School, and the staff worked very hard in developing the program and made great use of

the information.

Mrs. Hobbs said that Dr. Gordon was suggesting a base which included the characteristics of the staff in each individual school. They were talking about the number of years a teacher had been in the system, the number of years of experience, the degrees of the teachers, class size, utilization of space, and the attitudes and behaviors of teachers. She asked if Mrs. Gemberling saw resistance or a good possibility that they could implement this in each school with SIMS.

Mrs. Gemberling replied that at Kennedy they had not extended this to personnel. In terms of students, anything collected centrally on the mainframe was downloaded to schools. Schools collected additional information which was not given back to the mainframe. The personnel records of teachers contained some of this information, and it might be possible to download that information to schools. Some of the other information mentioned by Mrs. Hobbs would have to be collected at the individual school because it would vary. Some of the items suggested by Mrs. Hobbs were judgmental, and she was not sure how they would go about collecting some of that. Mrs. Gemberling said that how they worked with the information they collected was a very important factor. They did not want to put individual students or teachers in any kind of a defensive posture. Many times when they looked at data, they did so with no names whatsoever. Instead they looked at patterns. For example, did they see patterns for black males or around mathematics? Teachers at Kennedy understood that this information was confidential. Their goal was to help every student achieve the outcomes, and collecting information and looking for patterns would vary as much as the individual school communities varied.

Dr. Cheung asked if they were looking at individual schools or patterns across schools. For example, they might want to look at black males in one school versus black males in another school. They could also look at socioeconomic factors. One individual school might not network with the other schools. He agreed they had to be aware of the confidentiality and security. He asked whether they were looking at trends for individual schools, similar schools, or dissimilar schools.

Mrs. Gemberling replied that they had looked at both. For example, they had shared information about schools with the double period algebra. The same thing was true as they looked at new eligibility guidelines. An individual school saw a pattern and alerted the other schools on the SIMS project. They collected information and saw some patterns that had systemwide implications. She cautioned that she saw 23 schools using this system very seriously and making good use of the data.

Dr. Cheung said they could assumed they had information on about

11,000 secondary students. He said they could upload into the mainframe without the names of the students and look for trends.

They could use the central computer and maintain the confidentiality by eliminating identifiers for individuals. Mrs. Gemberling replied that they did do some of that. What they guaranteed schools using the SIMS project was that what they chose to collect internally was theirs to examine themselves. However, they did collect a lot of systemwide data electronically.

Ms. Gutierrez commented that there was no doubt they had electronic data collection, but what was being done at the individual schools was valuable because they were going to the individual student. They had had systemwide data collection for a long time, but that was not good enough. They needed to get down to the individual. One of her concerns was when they had that systemwide data, it lost its significance. She was impressed that they were moving in the direction of the goals of the SIMS project. The state system had a different goal, and that was fine because they needed to look at both sides of this.

Dr. Pitt said that the key was not so much the gathering of the data but finding out what worked with these students and how they transferred that knowledge to other situations. They had found out this was not a simple issue. He asked whether there were some things found at Kennedy that were transferable and worked and could be used on a broader basis for certain identifiable youngsters.

Mrs. Gemberling replied that there were and some of these were in place or were moving into place. One of them was a model similar to what they were doing with the algebra. They had had a project on the math initiative that did produce for them. They also had a mentor program that was particularly effective. She explained that no one program "did it" for a group of students, but having the ability to monitor the individual students showed them when something wasn't working. When they knew something didn't work for a student, they could switch gears and try something else. The system allowed them to see the progress for that individual student.

Ms. Gutierrez commented that one of the characteristics of minority achievement in Montgomery County was that there was quite a bit of community involvement. She asked how SIMS would be useful in nurturing that relationship with the community. She asked how far they could go with the accountability that was now possible at a school, classroom, and individual level. Mrs. Gemberling replied that Kennedy had not used it as a picture of the school to the community. However, when the community came in for the external review, they were able to share additional information with them. They also used SIMS to help them get to individual parents as opposed to reporting to groups of parents.

For example, they monitored interim reports on individual students. They followed up and were able to see patterns. They found the interim system was not as effective with black and Hispanic students as it had been for white and Asian. Therefore, they changed how they did their interims. The PTA formed a volunteer group to telephone in different languages as a follow-up to the written communication.

Mr. Ewing stated that one of the concerns he had about their minority achievement program over the years was that the Board had received a range of reports at multiple times during the year. Some of these did not relate to the others in terms of the analysis that accompanied the report in a way that made for a coherent picture of what was going on. One of the things they were going to have to do was put together a comprehensive approach to this. They had multiple kinds of accountability: the accountability of a school to its parents, the accountability of a teacher, the accountability of a student, and the accountability of the principal to make sure that everything in the school was running as well as possible. The Board and the superintendent had the responsibility to be aware of overall patterns and trends and to use that information to make informed decisions on policy matters.

Mr. Ewing said that Board members always felt as if they were working with about 50 percent of the information they would like to have in order to make a good decision. He thought that as they built these systems they needed to specify what they were going to be used for and who would use them to do what. MSPP was primarily intended to be a state accountability measurement system, but for Montgomery County it could be an accountability system for school-level accountability. However, MSPP was not aimed to apply to individual students, teachers, or classrooms. SIMS on the other hand did do that, and the data from SIMS should be of use to the Board. Then they had the additional information that Dr. Gordon was suggesting they ought to have which was really focused on socioeconomic data. The Board had to clear about why it wanted to collect that and how it was going to be used because that began to enter the realm of privacy. He believed that they had to explore the legal questions about collecting that data. They were going to have to say these were the kinds of information they needed at various levels within the system for various purposes. Then they had to have an orderly way of organizing and presenting that information so that the Board and the public could understand it.

Dr. Pitt remarked that he somewhat disagreed with Dr. Frechtling and Dr. Towers because he believed that the state criterion-referenced test had the potential for providing information on individual youngsters. It might not give them every precise particle of data, but it would provide fairly good data over a period of time. Certainly there was more data than had been

provided with the CAT test. SIMS gave them additional data that would not be available as part of a criterion-referenced test, and he thought they could go together.

Dr. Cheung expressed his agreement with Dr. Pitt's remarks. He was sure that the state would be asking for additional information. Dr. Pitt explained that the biggest problem with the state was that they were moving very rapidly, and there would be mistakes. He believed that the state should have used a sampling technique and gone slower. He did think that eventually they would have a state test showing how well students did in terms of what they were being taught.

On the issue of the usefulness of the MSPP for making judgments about individual students, Dr. Gordon thought it had to do with the way in which the program was managed. If they followed the sampling procedure used with the National Assessment of Educational Progress where no student took the full examination, they would have troubles. If every student took the full examination and was appropriately identified, they could speak to individual students. Dr. Towers believed it would be the NAEP model. Dr. Pitt thought there might be some change as they expanded on the examination. Dr. Gordon said that if the exam were perceived as an instructional device rather than an assessment device, they probably could move in that direction. With NAEP the worry was that they did not want to take too much time from instruction for assessment. The purposes of NAEP could be achieved through sampling, and the sampling intruded less on teaching time.

Dr. Gordon stated that he had wanted to comment on an issue raised by Mrs. Gemberling and might not have stressed enough. This was the circumstances under which the data were used. If teachers viewed the collection of data on the learning experiences of youngsters as a part of the teacher evaluation, they would have difficulty making this program work. If they viewed it as an instrument for careful examination of what they were doing and improving what they were doing, it would be much more positive. This did confront the Board with a policy question. Could they approve the collection of data that could not be made public and would they approve the collection of data that were not used in the process of staff evaluation? If he were making those decisions, both would be affirmative. They should use this at least for a long enough period to determine whether it was an effective tool for school improvement. If they were getting people to improve schooling without the pressures of external accountability, then they did not need to impose them. The Board could never completely abdicate its authority to use data to make judgments about units of the system and even people. His first effort would be to use those data to enable people to better monitor themselves and to improve what it was they were doing.

Dr. Gordon said that in his report he had tried to stress the importance of professional responsibility in juxtaposition to accountability. He recalled a project he had done with the New York City Schools and had been told by principals that they handled the data on a day-to-day basis and could meet the standards that were set. The principals suggested that they needed standards that they bought into because then the responsibility for meeting those standards was a shared responsibility as opposed to having an external group doing this.

If there were a contest between the Board and the people in the trenches, the Board was likely to lose. He had recommended that the Board make clear to the staff what it was that it expected. Having made that clear, it seemed to him that the only way they could hope to achieve was to get people to buy into it. If the majority of people in a school came to an agreement, then they would have the pressure of the group on the Board's side. However, the way the staff perceived the use of the data was very important. The Board would have to look at the issue of data that could be protected for professional use or the private use with individual students.

Dr. Pitt felt that in order to make judgments about achievement the Board would have to decide on the specific data they would allow. People now made judgments about youngsters whether they used computers or not, but they did not have to publish all that information or talk about students individually. Parents ought to have that information on their own children. However, the Board needed to have a system that allowed the Board to make judgments about individual progress of a school toward the goals set by the Board.

Dr. Gordon believed they had a much more manageable problem when it came to student data than staff data. He did not think they could ever be in a position of not being able to make a judgment about an individual staff person. However, staff people had to perceive that as not the primary purpose for which these data were being collected. Otherwise, it would become harder to get the data. If he were a principal, he would like to be able to have data on the instructional procedures used by a teacher. He would like to have detailed information on the learning experiences to which a group of youngsters had been exposed. If he found the outcomes for these students were not as good as expected, he would like to know whether there was something wrong with the students or something wrong with the teaching. The problem was collecting it in a way that did not put the teacher so much on the defensive that he would hide his errors. They wanted the teachers to share his errors so that they could be corrected.

Dr. Riley Chung stated that having received a presentation on SIMS he was impressed. It was a good idea to get down to the

individual levels; however, a data base was a dead body and had to be used in the right way. He did worry about the Maryland system. The Asian and Hispanic communities were not monolithic.

When students were native born and had English as their first language, they would not have much of a problem. He agreed that they had to start early with critical thinking training because it built students' ability to analyze much more complicated issues. The issue for him was the group of minority students that did not have the language capabilities, and he did not know how they could be expected to do critical thinking. He did not know how to face this problem because of the budget situation. However, he hoped that the Board could provide additional efforts to help that group of students.

Mrs. Fanconi was concerned because MSPP was coming on line so fast that teachers did not have anything that they could work with. They would be testing in a month, and they would come out with test scores that didn't look very good. Dr. Gordon had stated that to get people to improve they needed to feel it was not being used as a club. However, the way they were going about this first step was very distressing. She thought they needed to do a lot of talking about what it took to make changes and to give people credit for trying new things. They had to emphasize the effort and not the results right away. SIMS energized staff because they had more information. She had a real concern about the children that Dr. Chung was talking about because they were not exempted from the state test.

Dr. Towers reported that the MSPP was extremely language intensive. The math part was language intensive. All of it required youngsters to explain in writing why they did something. There was no question that there would be many youngsters who would have a very difficult time with this kind of assessment. This was not the same as saying they were not capable of dealing with it. It would take the realization that over time, with practice, with adjustment in teaching methodology, with the appropriate resources for these youngsters, they would see results. He believed that all children could reach those standards. However, it would not happen in the first year no matter how high their expectations were. In the other nine states doing this, the scores had gone down in the first year or two. They could not disillusion people, and they had to be sensitive to morale of the children. Teachers were practicing with students, but this would take time. The third graders taking the test now will do a lot better when they took it in the fifth grade.

Dr. Pitt reported that many Maryland superintendents had testified to this and were accused of trying to hide data. He did not testify against it. The problem was that even if they did this on a slower base because the test was so significantly different, they were going to see very different kinds of data.

He was afraid that people wanting to be critical of education would use this information in the wrong way. He did not think that was a reason for arguing against performance testing. He believed that the idea of trying to measure how well a youngster learned what they were trying to teach him was what they were all about. He did not think they could argue against the concept.

Dr. Chung said that in conversations most parents were for the testing. They saw the need because many of them saw their children needing good analytical skills. He hoped that the school system and the parents would be informed to have much more patience. Parents needed to know how they could help their children. They should not hide the data to begin with because they needed to know where they were. Dr. Pitt commented that Dr. Chung was very much on target. He said they had to worry about making unfair judgments about groups of students. He was going to try to work this through and communicate with parents. Another problem was that he was not sure that the state was as concerned about this as Montgomery County was. In many places in the state, the language-minority populations were relatively small, and it was not seen as a major issue across the state.

Dr. James Moone said that the committee had gone to Kennedy on a fact-finding mission. They came back very impressed, and they were elated that SIMS was coming into the school system. He wished it could be made applicable to some specific target areas such as the black male and Hispanic youths. He thought it had multiple possibilities and utility. The committee had been going into the schools to ascertain what was going on. He hoped that task forces of teachers would be set up to disseminate Dr. Gordon's report rather than have the report stay at the executive session level.

Dr. Moone stated that he was frightened about the MSPP and the long-range implications for black and minority students as well as majority students of low economic levels. He had just returned from Ghana where students were tested to establish their place in society and to admit students to higher education. What frightened him was that at this point in time they had not emphasized the written word in test taking. Students were accustomed to multiple choice or true and false tests. A lot of black and minority students were falling by the wayside and getting locked out of gifted and talented programs. Unless they were able to improve teacher attitudes, they would have a serious problem. It seemed to him that Dr. Towers was very sold on the MSPP. He questioned whether minority teachers had participated in the design of the tests. He recalled an experiment in St. Louis where one exceptional teacher was told her class was low achieving when in reality they were high achieving and another marginal teacher was told that her class was of high intelligence when in fact they were low achieving. The class that was labelled high achieving did very well because of teacher

expectations. The class that was labelled low achieving did not do very well at all even though they had IQ's from 110 to 140 because the teacher had the attitude that these students could not learn.

Dr. Moone believed that unless they had in-service training they would have a resegregation of students based on these tests. He pointed out that they were losing teachers because they did not pass the National Teacher Examination. They must find alternatives for students so that they would not be entrapped by these tests. They also had to find ways to unlock those late bloomers so that they could achieve.

Dr. Towers explained that he did not work for the state. He worked for MCPS, and if he appeared enthusiastic for the program it was because he was realistic to know that they had to make the best of this program. He did believe it had some potential to be beneficial. If he were designing and implementing it, he would do it differently. With regard to the representation of the nine teachers, about one-third of them were Asian, Hispanic, and African-American.

Mr. Ewing remarked that information systems took time to implement and to make use of in a fair and reasonable way. There had been discussion about collecting data but not using it in harmful ways, and he agreed with that. At the same time, the Board faced their responsibility for an effective plan of action that could be implemented in the next school year and had built into it accountability mechanisms that they would use to make judgments about how effective the program was. The community was impatient because for eight years MCPS had been advocating patience. Therefore, they had a real dilemma. They had to make sure they had a reasonable response not only to the concerns of staff but to the concerns of parents and the larger community for making sure they had good accountability mechanisms.

Dr. Frechtling stated that in order to supplement the kinds of information they hoped to get from the state they had decided to keep moving with a set of test instruments that MCPS began to develop seven or eight years ago. These were criterion-referenced tests in reading and mathematics that were matched to the MCPS curriculum. They wanted to have a backstop if the performance assessments did not give them the kind of information they hoped would be provided on individual students. They also would like to be able to have a set of test instruments that they could use in grades other than the grades in which the MSPP would be given. This would provide diagnostic information and would prepare students for the MSPP.

Dr. Frechtling reported that the Council of Chief State School Officers was doing a nationwide survey to look at state testing programs. They had been categorizing these as performance

assessment, portfolios, and enhanced multiple choice. The enhanced multiple choice meant questions with a multiple choice format, but these required students to do some analytical thinking in order to figure out the right answer. She said that the CRT's being developed in Montgomery County were enhanced multiple choice. Most of the new assessment programs in the nation were using a mixture of test items. This year MCPS was taking the set of tests that they already had and build the tests, especially in reading, so that they could make better interpretations from grade to grade. Next year as they continued to expand these tests, they would build in some performance assessment items to give students more experience.

Dr. Frechtling hoped that they would be able to build some stronger pictures that teachers and students could have, and in the future they hoped that parents could have this information on individual student performance. She said they wanted to allow practice so that teachers could diagnose weaknesses in preparation for the state test. This was a joint effort between DEA and OIPD and eventually would produce reports that would communicate on the CRT basis how well students were doing in terms of skills MCPS expected students to acquire at different grade levels. She thought that this was complementary to SIMS and could be a piece of data going into the SIMS data base.

Ms. Gutierrez inquired about a timeframe for implementation. Dr. Frechtling replied that this spring they would test students in grades 4, 6, and 7 in reading and mathematics. The purpose of the math test was to fine tune some things in the CRT's, but they had more work to do on the reading test. If all went well this spring, they would have two very good systems in grades 4, 6, and 7. If things did not go so well, they would have to do more work in reading. Next year they would capitalize on what they had learned this year from the MSPP. Jurisdictions were getting together to build some additional performance assessments. Then they would extend downward to the second grade and work at that level. She saw this as a three to five-year program depending on the grades they wanted to cover and how satisfied they were with the MSPP.

Mrs. DiFonzo asked for an example of an enhanced multiple choice question. Dr. Frechtling replied that normally in a multiple choice situation there would be one right answer and three wrong.

In an enhanced test, there would be choices of degrees of correctness. Mrs. DiFonzo pointed out that MCPS was fortunate in that it had a number of professionals and DEA it could turn to. She wondered what the other LEA's were doing. Dr. Frechtling indicated that there were LEA's that had invested quite heavily in bringing in some outside contractors to develop more performance assessments. Mrs. Gemberling added that some LEA's did not have any criterion-referenced testing in place at all. Some of these brought in consultants to look at the performance

assessment route. One of the other systems had a CRT in place that was given three times a year. She reported that the associate superintendents for instruction and the accountability coordinators got together, and this summer they would have a consortium to share information on additional performance assessments. Dr. Pitt knew of only two systems using CRT's.

Mrs. Fanconi thought they were far ahead of the other LEA's. The problem was that the community in Montgomery County would not judge them by the performance of other LEA's. She was concerned that it was too much, too fast, and too soon, without the community's being prepared for the fact that it would look real different.

Mr. Ewing asked Mrs. Perkins to describe the current teacher evaluation system.

Mrs. Perkins explained that the teacher evaluation system was designed to address both organizational accountability and individual teacher growth. The primary goal was to help teachers improve their effectiveness. She had provided Board members with an implementation manual dealing with the mechanics of the system. They had a professional improvement objective, a supervisory process dealing with classroom observation and data collection, and the final evaluation which resulted in the completion of the evaluation instrument that became a part of the teacher's permanent record in the Department of Personnel Services.

In terms of the professional improvement objective, Mrs. Perkins said that each year every teacher in concert with their building administrator developed a professional improvement objective. The expectation was that this would be a short-range objective that could be attained during that year. The teacher was provided with some structure and support in order to fulfill an identified growth area. An administrator would identify this objective if in the previous evaluation the teacher had received a "needs improvement" or a "not effective." At the end of the year there was a final conference with the administrator and the teacher to discuss the level of attainment of the objective.

Mrs. Perkins said the second component was the supervisory process. In Montgomery County most administrators used a model in keeping with clinical supervision. They observed teachers and collected data. They shared this information with the teachers in a feedback conference along with plans for growth.

Mrs. Perkins commented that in the beginning of the year personnel sent out to each building administrator a printout of every professional in their school. The list indicated whether the teacher was tenured, whether it was a year of no evaluation or evaluation, or a probationary teacher or a teacher on a second

class certificate. This indicated the minimum number of evaluations that the administrator would have to hold. The post-observation conference was one of the most critical pieces of this process. It was an opportunity to look at the performances of teachers and to understand the instructional behaviors that facilitated or inhibited student learning. This also provided an opportunity for the administrator to develop rapport with the teacher. With a beginning teacher, the conference was directive. With the more experienced teacher, the conference was more collaborative. She explained that the evaluation process should result in teacher growth.

As a former building administrator, Mrs. Perkins said that the conference was one of the best parts of an effective supervisory process. It identified areas for improvement and also rewarded the master teacher and reinforced their behaviors. The supervisory process was separate from the evaluative process. If during the mid-year, it appeared that the teacher was in any way less than acceptable, the teacher was placed on a midyear report. This generated a personnel structure process in which the teacher was given additional resources in order to help them become effective. It also required an additional number of observations.

After all the observations were completed, the principal in April or May completed the formal evaluation instruments for the teachers who were up for evaluation. This instrument had ten performance criteria and included a lot of illustrative indicators. There should be a key in between the data collected at the observation and the data collected for the evaluation. If a teacher was having success in establishing learning objectives, this would be keyed into the data on the observation and included in the written part of the evaluation. The ten performance criteria appeared first when the candidate was an applicant. People giving a reference for that teacher were asked to complete the list of ten items in terms of predicting success for that teacher in Montgomery County. These ten indicators followed teachers throughout their careers. Seven of the ten criteria were observable in the classroom. Five of the specific performance criteria could be used to determine whether or not there was a high level of achievement in that regard.

Ms. Gutierrez asked whether these were being used, and Mrs. Perkins replied that they should be used. They were part of the current process. The report stated that priority should be given to instructional behaviors and teacher expectations of minority students. Mrs. Perkins explained that their current instrument enabled them to identify whether or not this was occurring.

Dr. Vance asked whether they had any indication of the criteria they used in selecting, processing, and inducting new teachers and the correlation between that and their chance of success in

the first and second year. Mrs. Perkins replied that in terms of their selecting teachers there was a very high correlation. In regard to the new teacher induction program, Dr. Frechtling added that they had done some follow up on that to see the extent to which teachers were planning to continue in Montgomery County. The teachers coming out of those programs felt successful and wanted to continue.

Dr. Gordon stated that in his visits to classrooms he observed a relatively high degree of unevenness in the quality of teaching which would suggest that even though they had a good procedure for evaluating teachers, there were some things that were not quite working. Mrs. Perkins thought their system was excellent, but the difference occurred in the implementation. One of the roles of staff development had been to provide interns and beginning principals a very intensive supervisory training model.

She believed that this did require on-going in-service training.

Dr. Gordon asked about refresher courses for supervisors. Dr. Pitt reported that new principals were well trained in that area.

The retraining of people who had been around for a while was another question. Given their resources, this was an area where they were not as coordinated. The key to maintaining the evaluation program was continued retraining; however, they did not have a required retraining program.

Mrs. Fanconi commented that the Board had talked about Personnel Services and things that they would like to do differently. One area she hoped they would look at was the isolation of teachers.

As they went into collaborative learning with children, she hoped they would do that with teachers. Teachers had to learn from each other and work in teams.

Dr. Pitt remarked that the Personnel Department was the keeper of the records. He would hope that any of the area superintendents could do as good a job as Mrs. Perkins had done on the evaluation process. Part of the responsibility of the area superintendents was the evaluation of principals. They had to have enough people out there to evaluate principals to make sure that if their evaluation skill was limited that it could be improved.

Mr. Ewing agreed that the evaluation system was a reasonably good system as described. Mrs. Perkins had put her finger on a major problem which was the implementation was uneven. He thought that this needed major attention. A few years ago the Rand Corporation had published a study of first rate teacher evaluation systems around the country, and Montgomery County had been bypassed for inclusion in the list. In addition, the Commission on Excellence in Teaching had a set of recommendations on teacher evaluation which the Board had been unable to act on.

The problem was that they needed to consult with MCEA and MCAASP. He believed that they needed to make a fresh start on this because although they had a good system they could do

better.

Dr. Pitt stated that one of his goals was to get that moving, and he had not succeeded. If they unilaterally instituted a new system, it would create problems. The ideal way was a collaborative effort, and it had been unsuccessful for a variety of reasons.

It seemed to Ms. Gutierrez that there was one piece missing from the system. She asked whether they could tie the evaluation system to the outcomes of education. She did not see that necessarily being the end result of the evaluation of the teacher, and she had inferred from Dr. Gordon's report that that link had to be there. She asked if Dr. Gordon had had an opportunity to look at the actual system of evaluation. Dr. Gordon replied that he had not. He thought that it was important in evaluating staff to look at outcomes in terms of students learning, but he would not want to make that his primary criteria. There were many things that influenced learning. It was possible that there were problems in learning that were independent of the goodness of teaching, and one would not want to get caught in a criterion for effective teaching that was solely focused on outcomes in terms of learning.

Dr. Moone recalled that in the committee's report of July 24, 1989, they had a section on affirmative action to address the recruitment, retention, and the success of black and minority teachers in MCPS. Exit interviews were made with previous teachers in the system as to why they left. They had interviewed teachers who were in a probationary status as well as some principals who did the evaluating. They found a wide discrepancy in the evaluation process. Overall the evaluation system was average, but it did need a tremendous amount of assessment as to the subjectivity of it. They found variations from school to school. He asked about the percentage of fallout for new teachers for the last two years and what was the percentage of minority teachers. Staff Development was key to the educational process and the readiness of teachers. He asked whether they hired them and trained them or hired them and put them in the classroom to do what they were expected to do. Teachers coming out of college and student teaching were expected to have certain skills. However, a principal might observe a teacher and not like what he or she saw. The supervisor came out and did the same thing.

Dr. Moone believed that not enough was being done for the new teachers. The midyear report was a frightening thing for a teacher. He asked whether he could be provided with any statistics regarding the evaluative process. He asked whether some teachers might be successful in another school under another principal. Dr. Frechtling reported that last year they had done some exit interviews with all teachers at the request of the

Human Relations Department. They had analyzed the data by the length of time the teacher had been with the school system and by racial and ethnic group. Two kinds of things fell out of these data. When they had teachers who had been with the system only two or three years, the vast majority of teachers left because their family was moving. The vast majority of teachers who had been in the system for a long time left because they were retiring. For the group in the middle it was a combination of things.

Dr. Frechtling said she had read the forms from anyone who identified themselves as a member of a minority group. Out of the 150 people who left, the percentage of minorities leaving was extremely low. It was difficult to discern a pattern from four to six staff members. These did not differ from those of the rest of the sample. She had also read the narratives provided by the teachers, and there was no pattern coming across in terms of a dissatisfaction with the school system. They had done two cycles of about 150 each. They could not affirm the kind of dissatisfaction that Dr. Moone had talked about.

Mrs. Fanconi stated that some of Dr. Moone's questions were excellent, and she asked Dr. Pitt to provide Dr. Moone with an opportunity to have those questions answered.

Mr. Ewing thanked staff for their excellent presentations. It was a good discussion and very helpful to the Board.

Re: ADJOURNMENT

The president adjourned the meeting at 10:50 p.m.

-----  
PRESIDENT

-----  
SECRETARY

HP:mlw