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PLACE: TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND
DATE: APRIL 24, 1991
TEXT:

been doing. MCEA was working with the Community Coalition for the Schools and the SOS organization, and he was cautiously optimistic about budget actions other than salary cuts. He did not think they were out of the woods on class size and the school year, and he was concerned that the budget office had put out a sheet showing that HMO's were in the cut column because the fiscal committee had not made a final decision.

Mr. Simon indicated that he had been saying to Council members that in a year when they were taking \$34 million away from employees they should not take more away, and he believed that Council members would be sensitive to that. He thought that teachers would understand the situation about cost of living increases, but that they would not understand or be tolerant of moves by the Council or the Board to go beyond compensation which included HMO's.

Mrs. Fanconi suggested that MCEA make anecdotal material available to Council members. For example, she had visited a school where this year there were 24 students in a fourth grade class. Next year there would be 35 in that class because of the 1,000 students they had absorbed this year. The County Council needed to know that MCPS would have fewer dollars and more students. She was also concerned about the cut in professional part-time funds. It appeared that this would affect new teacher induction which was critically important. The other concern was EYE days when they were struggling now with the Maryland School Performance Plan and curriculum change. It also took dollars out of the pockets of teachers.

Mr. Richard Jaworski pointed out that in Area 4 they were seeing more diversity in the student population which resulted in curriculum changes to meet these needs. If they did not have flexibility and time to do curriculum change it would kill any possibility of their building for the future. Ms. Jane Stern said that time for teacher mentoring was critical, particularly if they went ahead with the resident teacher certification program.

Mrs. Fanconi urged MCEA to educate County Council members. Ms. Gutierrez suggested they get individual teachers to write and explain the impacts of specific cuts. While the Board had been inundated by letters, they had received only a few from teachers.

A resource teacher from Wood Middle School expressed concern about released time for resource teachers because they needed the time to help new teachers and teachers in difficulty. In addition, resource teachers had time in the summer to implement the program for the coming year, evaluate the past year, and to prepare for Project Basic. This year they would need time to work on the MSPP. On the middle school level, they were still in the transition phase from junior high school to middle schools, and resource teachers served as the liaison between the staff and administrators as well as doing curriculum work.

Mr. Ewing agreed that letters were valuable if they could get to the Council prior to budget action. He reported that Board members had been approached by Council members in regard to what the Board wanted beyond what the education committee had recommended. This was a hard question to answer. As a Board they had one position, and they could only speak to the Council members as individuals. The Board was concerned about budget cuts hitting teachers over and over again and about all-day kindergarten, lunch room aides, etc. It was important for MCEA members to speak with Council members and to push as hard as they could. He believed that MCEA and the community were having an impact on Council members.

Dr. Cheung agreed and pointed out that all of them had tried to lobby the Council. However, the Board had to stick with \$762 as its official position and keep emphasizing that issues directly affecting classroom instruction had the highest priority. He suggested that MCEA look at all the items proposed for elimination because some of these cuts would involve re-negotiation and directly impact employees. MCEA had to lobby for equitable cuts and the need to be consistent in making budget reductions. Council members were getting different signals and they had to know who spoke for the teachers. The Board position had to be that they did not want to give up anything in cuts.

Mr. Simon noted that there was a sentence the Board could use. It was "in a year when employees are being asked to sacrifice \$34 million in compensation, there should be no other compensation sacrifice." Cuts in the length of the school year, HMO's, and EYE would jeopardize morale.

Another MCEA member pointed out that teachers would have to do the same job with less resources. Teachers had to feel trusted and compensated for their efforts. The bottom line was there would be no raise for teachers and 42 percent of their membership would receive no additional compensation. Mrs. Fanconi said they had pointed out this to Council members, and of six or seven items on a possible cut list they had only taken two forward. She felt they had a strong position because of increases in enrollment and new needs.

Mrs. Hobbs pointed out that they knew what they were facing this year, but they did not know what they were facing the following year. Mr. Ewing added that this year was important because it set the base for next year. Mr. Jaworski observed that if they looked at Prince George's county public schools they would see the results of a TRIM amendment and what had happened to property values in that county.

Mr. Simon thought they were preaching to the choir. The big issue was what happened after the Council acted. People were

scared to death about the implications of not getting a cost of living increase, but they were also worried that the system was not going to honor the rest of the agreement. He asked if the Board would take this as an opportunity to carve up the rest of the contract. They had talked to Mr. Potter about preserving what they had negotiated on the salary schedule for the following year. Mr. Simon could not guarantee what would happen in MCPS if an effort weren't made to fund the following year.

Mr. Seth Goldberg commented that what he was hearing from teachers was that their contract would be broken for the second time, and they wanted to know what was coming next. They also wanted to know what were their protections. Mrs. Fanconi suggested that MCEA should remind its membership that the Board tried to honor the contract. Mr. Simon remarked that during the last two weeks in May the Board would have an opportunity to make an effort to do right by a lot of people. Mr. Ewing replied that the Board was well aware of the situation. It was important that they handle this issue with the greatest care to keep the MCPS family together. If they found themselves falling on one another, everyone would lose.

Dr. Cheung felt that people were the assets of MCPS, and teachers were the main assets of the school system. They had pointed this out to the Council, but unfortunately the Board could not generate revenue. It was up to the Council to provide the necessary revenue to support having the best teachers possible. If the Council didn't do this, they should explain to citizens why they were not supporting having the best.

Ms. Stern pointed out that the voters did refuse to vote for a cap on the tax rate. They provided for an override measure for a rainy day, and now it was pouring. They needed to remind Council members of that. It seemed to Dr. Cheung that the people on the other side of this issue were more vocal and more united. The Council appeared to be more concerned about their reactions than those of the majority of silent voters.

Mr. Ewing suggested that they should get a message out to everyone in the school system after the Council had voted. The message should indicate what funds were available and what the options were so that the people would understand the position the Board found itself in. They should explain the categories and the contract issues. This year for the first time they would be having a public hearing after Council action and prior to Board action. They had to consider what would happen if it came to July 1, and they did not have contracts with employees. People should not feel they had been left in the dark about all of these important issues.

In regard to negotiations, Mr. Simon pointed out that last year they were frustrated when they tried to put some non-salary

issues on the table. The Board had spurned those efforts. This year they would be losing a lot, and there should be options to relook at this situation.

Mr. Simon said they wanted to take a few minutes on site-based participatory management. They had been pleased when Mr. Ewing and Ms. Gutierrez had objected to the proposed policy because they felt the same way. He thought that how they worked together on this issue was critical to the process. In other school systems, there had been agreements between the school systems and employee organizations before going into site-based participatory management. He thought they needed more specifics about that joint effort. He had provided the Board with a paper on this issue.

Dr. Cheung reported that he had attended a conference on site-based management, and in successful programs there was close collaboration between the system, board, and employee organizations. Another element was that there had to be a commitment of resources to do the job. Parents also had to be brought into the process. He agreed to provide copies of this information to the Board.

Mr. Simon urged the Board to think about a process involving MCEA. For them, the whole effort was conditional. While they had been supportive of the effort from the beginning, they believed there needed to be negotiation of ground rules, resources, and the role of MCEA. They had to examine what the structures ought to look like at the school level. If the Board was willing to do this with MCEA, they had to make that statement up front.

Mr. Ewing indicated that the Board wanted a policy, but it had not reached agreement on the specifics. The Board had never taken a position on this issue. Rather it had told the superintendent to go ahead, and it had met periodically with the committee. The Board itself had never adopted an official position, but he thought that they were on the verge of doing just that, a policy and an agreement with the participating parties such as MCEA. They also needed to have it clear with parents as well. Until they did that, they could not expect teachers and other participants to feel that the investment of their time was worth it. While they had put money in the budget, they had not committed to the concept in detail.

Mrs. Fanconi remarked that she was not willing to go the route of site-based management unless the Board had the resources to back it up. She was not clear they could do this with the budget cuts they were sustaining. A member of MCEA pointed out that the cuts were in the area of management. Unless they did some reorganization, the few managers they had left would get burned out. He believed that site-based management was a better way to

do this.

Ms. Gutierrez understood the concern about resources, but it might be an issue of the cart before the horse. They had to define what site-based management was, and they needed that close collaboration with MCEA. She saw this as a way of restructuring the system, and in the long-run it would be a way of being able to deal with the resource shortage. However, this could only be done if they knew what they were talking about. If they were serious about site-based management, she didn't think they should wait until they had the resources.

Mr. Ewing pointed out that in anything they did there would be a need for training. The training resources were still there, but the County Council was looking at those funds. He believed they had to restructure what they were doing in training and focus on a few priorities. If site-based management was a priority for the Board, they ought to find the money and support it. Dr. Cheung thought that they needed a systems approach to the issue because right now it was a pilot and was random. Mr. Simon observed that in his memo he suggested that if they didn't do this right, they should not do it at all.

In regard to the MSPP, Mr. Simon said this was a big unknown. Teachers on the elementary and mid-levels were experiencing some anxieties over this issue. In response to a question about publishing results, Mrs. Fanconi replied that the Board had testified that they did not want the results of the first year to become public. Mr. Ewing added that the Board had taken no official position on MSPP although they had discussed the issue, raised questions, and expressed some serious misgivings.

An MCEA member pointed out that at the third grade level, the students were facing nine hours of testing at a minimum. These children couldn't sit still for more than a few minutes, and yet they would be asked to write out answers for this length of time. The people marking the test had not yet been trained and would not have any interaction with students. The fact that these scores would become public had caused much anxiety in the schools. Teachers wanted the Board to be advocates for them and students and to tell the state Board of Education that this was not the way to implement an assessment program for young children. Another MCEA member pointed out that special education students were not exempted which defeated the purpose of special education. Her students were frustrated and demoralized.

Ms. Gutierrez urged MCEA to work with staff on this issue. Mr. Simon noted that nine MCEA teachers had been part of the process, and Dr. Towers did keep MCEA informed of activities at the state level.

Mr. Simon thanked the members of the Board for participating in

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this discussion, and Mr. Ewing expressed the Board's appreciation to MCEA members.

Re: ADJOURNMENT

The president adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

PRESIDENT

SECRETARY

PLV:mlw