

Annapolis, they had presented a fact sheet about MCPS which spoke to the composition of the student body and the honors that the school system had achieved. They had defined MCCPTA for the delegates because they felt strongly that people in the greater community had to know what MCCPTA was doing in terms of lobbying for education. They wanted people to know that while individual members of MCCPTA had varying priorities, their membership was out there pushing for the school system.

Mrs. Friedman said they were now doing outreach with the community, and they had met with the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, and as a result of this outreach the Chamber now had an education subcommittee. The chamber's subcommittee was looking into taking positions on the budget, but more importantly, they wanted to get involved at looking at the school system on a long-term basis. They were currently preparing a survey which would be disseminated to their entire membership which asked for views about MCPS.

Mrs. Friedman indicated that their second resolution had to do with overriding Question F which they supported. The third resolution had to do with the MCPS employee agreements. During debate about this resolution there was a lot of pain involved because many parents were suffering job losses themselves but felt very strongly that they wanted to support teachers and staff. Regretfully, they could not support fully funding the negotiated contracts, and Mrs. Friedman pointed out that this did not necessarily mean they were talking exclusively about salary.

The priority for parents was the MCPS instructional program. If the salaries were fully funded, a tremendous amount of people would lose their jobs with MCPS. The next resolution dealt with user fees and the fact that PTA was being called on to do much more for the schools. They had concerns about what would happen to the schools that could not afford to supplement the budget, and they would like to be involved with the Board in looking at this problem.

The last resolution had to do with the budget process. Mrs. Friedman explained that they were concerned about the future of MCPS, and they wanted to see MCPS survive and survive well. They were concerned about the budget process being looked at in a vacuum without considering the instructional program. For example, they would like to see the Success for Every Student plan being used as a guideline for making budget decisions. They supported educational decisions going hand in hand with the budget process.

Mrs. Diane Kartalia, MCCPTA budget chairman, explained that they wanted the budget process to mesh with school system goals. They had received a very moving presentation from Dr. Vance on SES, and MCCPTA wanted success for every student. As parents, they knew that children came in all shapes, sizes, and abilities, and they wanted the school system to deal with this. This did not mean an equal dollar for every student, and they wanted the

budget to reflect that goal of success for every student.

Ms. Kartalia remarked that they had a budget process that worked well in a boom period, but they now had spending affordability guidelines. This year they were facing a gap of \$49.5 million, and it was now the middle of March, and parents still did not know what was going to be cut. Would there be all-day kindergarten or a magnet program next year? They just didn't know. MCCPTA wanted a budget process that worked in a recession, and they wanted the process for FY 1994 to start now. They wanted a different way of looking at the budget to support the educational program and to develop alternatives for delivery of services. They were pleased that Dr. Vance had presented the non-recommended options early this year, and they thought the staff comments were very helpful. However, they did not see why the Board could not have a spending affordability alternative budget in January. They wanted plans for different funding levels, and they hoped that MCCPTA could participate in the development of a new process that dealt with limited resources. They didn't want to appear before the Board next March and be saying the same things. They had a great admiration for MCPS staff, and they felt if they could work together they could avoid the situation they were in this year with the \$49.5 million gap.

This resolution was adopted unanimously by the budget committee, unanimously by the executive committee, and overwhelmingly in the delegate meeting.

Mrs. Charlotte Joseph, second vice president, described their delegate assembly programs for 1991-92. They had covered budget, legislation, and testing, and they planned to have discussions on staff evaluation and curriculum in the near future. In September, they would have a forum for Board of Education candidates.

Mrs. Nancy Jacobstein, facilities co-chair, reported that this year 16 schools banded together and agreed to testify as one for PDF for modernization. They agreed that modernization was the way to go and that schools were willing to have their projects deferred to get a full modernization for an equitable education in Montgomery County. She praised the work of Ann Briggs, Deanna Newman, and Robin King in providing her committee with good and honest information. They did have one concern about the area restructuring plan because of the lack of staff there to interact with the clusters, and they felt that at some point this should be discussed.

Mrs. DiFonzo asked what they would be willing to put aside to make sure that SES was funded. Mrs. Friedman explained that as the Board looked at different policies it was important to see how they fit with the financial picture. For example, they had SES and the early childhood policy to consider, but they did not have unlimited resources. It seemed to Mrs. DiFonzo that they

were talking more about discussion time as opposed to specific budget items. Mrs. Friedman agreed that it was more philosophical, but the bottom line was that next year they shouldn't be working from lists but rather they should be coming from the same place as to their priorities for education.

Mrs. Kartalia explained that there was a timing issue involved. The discussion about the interim restructuring should have occurred in the fall. For next fall and in the future, they should discuss the programs they wanted to support so that they would have held these discussions before they came to the budget.

They had to build in adequate time for Board and staff discussions. Mrs. Friedman said they had suggested a number of task forces be sent up to look at a variety of issues and to make the school system more effective. One of them was procurement, and the county was already looking into this. The Board should be looking at efficiency measures now and do it with a larger goal in mind. If MCPS came out looking efficient to the parents and the greater community, this would improve the perception of MCPS in the eyes of the community.

Mrs. Kartalia commented that part of the budget process had to be the employee contracts. They wanted the Board to make the best promises to their employees and honor those promises; however, the Board had to look at the total picture. The budget was labor intensive, and they were a growing school system, but this had to be part of the budget process. Mrs. Joseph remarked that spending affordability was now a way of life. They had to look at how much money they had and how they could use those funds to implement a program such as SES. They did not need to have a perpetual litany of what was going to be lost in the budget process.

Mrs. DiFonzo asked about the number of people attending the delegate assembly. Mrs. Joseph replied that usually it was 200, but there were only about 150 people voting at the resolutions meeting. Mrs. DiFonzo asked what they were looking for as far as information on the role of the area office. Mrs. Jacobstein explained that they looked to the area superintendents when they went through the facilities process, and she wondered with whom the cluster coordinators would interact to get needed information. They also wanted to know about the area office functions so that MCCPTA could respond organizationally.

Mrs. DiFonzo explained that she had come through the PTA ranks, and the area office was the first line of defense and communication between the schools and the central office. The superintendent and the Board would have to come up with a model of who handled what so that parents would know where to go to get their questions answered. This year, with the positions they had lost, the area offices were being stretched to deliver services.

Mrs. Joseph felt that people needed reassurances. They knew it

was not going to be the same as always, but they did not know what it was going to be. They had to not look at the loss but the challenge of doing things better.

Mrs. Fanconi thanked MCCPTA for the work they had done in educating people. She was particularly pleased about their community outreach effort, the briefings in Annapolis, and the work on modernization versus renovation issues. She, too, was not clear what the cluster/area office process would be although she knew they would not have the support in the area offices they had before. Anytime they had a task force involving staff, they might not have the staff to assist the way they used to.

Mrs. Fanconi thought that the Board had shown its priorities in its budget actions. For example, there were a lot of things they could have put on the non-recommended list dealing with early childhood education, but they did not put them on the list. Mrs. Kartalia pointed out that the non-recommended list submitted by the Board last year bore no resemblance to the Board's actual final budget. Out of 34 items on the non-recommended list, only 11 became cuts. Mrs. Fanconi pointed out that last year they did not go down to the level the list addressed.

In regard to alternative budgets, Mrs. Brenneman pointed out that the county executive had one figure, the Council another, the superintendent had his recommended budget, and the Board had its budget amount. She asked whether they were suggesting another budget be prepared for the Council or county executive level. Mrs. Kartalia explained that what they were saying was there should be a plan for a lower funding level which was more than a list of items. Mrs. Brenneman pointed out that they were obligated to fund employee contracts, and she asked whether they were suggesting the \$49.5 million difference between the Board's budget and the executive's budget come from program. Mrs. Kartalia replied that they were suggesting the Board develop a couple of scenarios to fit the budget situations.

Mr. John Jamieson, Poolesville cluster coordinator, stated that they had to work out an affordable budget and then look to employee negotiations. This was difficult to do with a multi-year contract, but the Board would be negotiating this year. Mrs. Fanconi pointed out that when the contract was negotiated three years ago, things looked very different. She pointed out that by state law the Board had to advocate for what was needed for education. She said they had to think about the total of services to children and wondered whether these services should be balanced the same as all of the other things in the budget. She was concerned about where society was going regarding services to children and pointed out that most of the cuts in the Health Department budget had a direct impact on children in MCPS. She remarked that even in a recession there were choices to be made in these services, and those choices should not be made on "the

backs of children." They should fight for all services to children, not just those for education. Mrs. Joseph replied that when MCCPTA testified before the Council they would be advocating for children, as they always had. She indicated that with the budget process they were suggesting the Board do it differently in bad times and good times. They had to acknowledge the existence of spending affordability. She pointed out that most people had a family budget and knew that they had to live within that budget.

Mr. Ed Silverstein, Area 1 co-vice president, stated that the superintendent could present the Board with three budgets, one that was necessary to carry out his responsibilities, the second to match the County Council's spending goals, and the third as to what he could do with what the county executive was proposing. This would show the total budget picture.

Dr. Cheung did not disagree that they needed to look at different ways of doing things and doing them better. As a Board member, he was mandated by the state to make sure they had the best educational system for the county, but they had to depend on other areas of the government for the funds to do this. His first responsibility was to make sure they had what they needed, and for several years now the percentage of the school budget as a percent of the total county budget had been decreasing, yet they had increasing enrollment and a changing student body. They had improved their efficiency as much as they could. They had little experience with spending affordability, and what they lacked was the analysis of the implication to the quality of the instructional program, not just the dollars. It was easy to cut numbers, but it was more difficult to know the impact. He pointed out that the superintendent and staff almost burned out through this process. Now they might have the time to look at the future in terms of restructuring the budget process and try to have more analysis. He believed they had to budget for what they believed was needed, and if officials raising the revenue declined to fund the budget, they had to state that they were going to accept less than the best educational system.

It seemed to Mr. Pishevar that in his year on the Board he had seen a lot of things on the verge of being destroyed. The community was dividing into groups and becoming divisive in promoting their own interests. He saw MCCPTA as a healing force and one to unite the community. If they all were not united in keeping the child in mind, they would lose something that would be hard to reclaim. The budget process was very confusing, and in his discussions with the Council and business people, he had been shocked by the amount of misinformation out there. He believed they should unite with MCCPTA and make a stronger effort to get the correct information out. Mrs. Hobbs thanked Mr. Pishevar for doing a nice job of expressing what they were all feeling. She appreciated the efforts that MCCPTA had made in

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informing local PTAs about the issues. She had shared one of their newsletters with Mr. Potter, and he was impressed by how much PTA had done in being a strong advocate for MCPS.

Mrs. Barbara Wells, Watkins Mill Cluster coordinator, commented that Dr. Vance had brought the Board a comprehensive budget package, but the Board had tinkered with it and added \$3 million.

When they started getting into affordability, they were no longer looking at a comprehensive balanced school system. They trusted Dr. Vance and the staff to at least present a balanced package, and they wanted to know what the school system would look like before it was dismantled piece by piece. They were asking to be shown what the school system would look like at \$738 million if the Board was bound by its employee contracts. A lot of people didn't believe that this might happen, and that \$738 million meant there would be 40 children in a classroom without an aide. People would be down in Annapolis testifying if they had this information. They no longer knew what they would have in the school system except a list of non-recommended cuts.

Mrs. Eileen Shea, Gaithersburg Cluster coordinator, explained that they were not criticizing the Board for the three-year contracts, but they should not do it again. They were the PTA, and the "T" stood for teacher, but they now found themselves pitted against teachers. They wanted teachers to teach and not work to the rule. The Board had to get a reasonable contract and not dismantle the school system piece by piece. No one touched all-day kindergarten, and yet the Board included an increase in class size. In her cluster the average in kindergarten was 5.5 above the county average of 21.4, and she wanted to know what would happen if they put another .7 in there. They had classes with wheel chairs and standing boards. She thought they had to look at the big picture regarding class size and all-day kindergarten.

Mrs. Hobbs thanked MCCPTA for their presentation and discussion.

Re: ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Hobbs adjourned the meeting at 9:35 p.m.

PRESIDENT

SECRETARY

PLV:mlw