



Dr. Phinnize Fisher, associate superintendent, stated that the first recommendation was to delegate the transfer of centralized authority, particularly in budgeting, staffing, and curriculum to the local schools. In light of that, staff had reviewed the site-based management policy. This evening they would like the Board to provide staff with some information or guidance in terms of the transfer of authority. They had been reviewing the policy, and they could see local decision making related to the school improvement management plan, but the question was how much authority to transfer to schools related to staffing, which staffing decisions should be central only, which decisions should be shared by the central office and the local school, and which decisions should be delegated totally to the school. The Board might wish to consider this at the action area meeting on October 17 if they wanted to make any changes for the 1995-96 school year.

Mrs. Brenneman remarked that normally the Board received a task force report, sent it to the superintendent for his recommendations, and received the superintendent's recommendations. Now the process had changed, and the superintendent had not provided his recommendation for the first few recommendations and was looking to the Board for guidance. She did not understand why the process changed. She would like to know whether the superintendent and staff agreed with this recommendation or not. Dr. Vance replied that before they could make that decision and be case specific about it, they needed the results of the survey based on the Board's resolution and to hear further discussion from the Board to get even more of a sense of the Board and where members were with that particular issue given there was a policy on site-based management.

Mrs. Brenneman pointed out that on condom distribution, the superintendent was not in favor, the Board agreed with that recommendation, but the Board did not discuss this ahead of time. With today's paper, the Board could react to the last couple of recommendations but not the first ones. She did not understand what had happened here with the process.

Ms. Gutierrez did not think that discussing a long-range planning report was anything that could be dealt with in the same way as the recommendations of advisory committees which had an on-going role. Condom distribution was a very specific decision that could be answered by yes or no. The Board had asked the long-range planning task force to take time to come up with a view of MCPS that was not going to be a vote up or down type of decision. She did not think that any of the recommendations were for staff to tell the Board they agreed or disagreed with the position. She believed the Board had to develop this response, and they would not develop the response in one meeting. Long-range planning was a process that took a long time. In this case the

superintendent had raised issues and provided the Board with a list of items they had to take into consideration. The recommendation from the task force was one of restructuring a whole educational institution. She did not have any expectation that they could get any straight up or down answers from staff.

Mrs. Brenneman asked whether Ms. Gutierrez would take exception to the last four recommendations. Ms. Gutierrez replied that she was not here today to vote yes or no on these recommendations. She thought they were here to see how the Board was going to deal with some very major proposals. Each of these issues had to be understood in a much deeper sense and with much greater care before they could be ready to make final decisions. They had received a memo from the superintendent which talked about building their capacity for strategic planning and appointing individuals with a long-term perspective. She was sorry that not everything could be done in a short period of time, but this particular issue was a complex one.

Dr. Cheung pointed out that the Board had a policy on site-based participatory management, and to him there was no difference between the committee's recommendation and Board policy. The important question was how the policy related in terms of the Board's delegating or transferring some of authority for budgeting, staffing, and curriculum to schools who chose to do this. If they were talking about site-based, they did not want to dictate to the schools what they should do. They were saying that schools would have an opportunity to do all these things, and in their school management plan they could ask for more authority for staffing or resources or flexibility in curriculum. They should not lose sight of the system's goals and objectives. Whatever a school wanted to do in terms of decision making, they had to be able to meet the goals and objectives of MCPS. They did not want to have 180 schools doing 180 different things.

Dr. Cheung stressed that the most important thing was accountability. They needed measures to hold schools accountable. He asked whether they were looking at the individual site-base in terms of budgeting, staffing, or curriculum. Were they looking at cluster based? These were the discussions they needed to have to provide the direction to the superintendent and staff. How much staffing responsibility should an individual school have? He did not think they had enough information yet on staffing.

Mrs. Fanconi pointed out that on October 17 they would have a lengthy discussion on the first recommendation. It seemed to her that the Board needed to determine where they were comfortable along the continuum of all decisions made at the local level and all decisions made at the central level. A couple of Board members had said they needed some proposals to talk about what the impact would be. She asked about the presentation being

planned for October 17, and then she suggested that the Board move to the next recommendation.

Dr. Cheung commented that the state was proposing to look at charter schools. A charter school could be a form of site-based decision making. Last year, he had worked in the Senate and had a lot of information on charter schools because of charter school legislation which was included in the Goals 2000. He would share this information with staff. The charter school had to come to a body to ask for exemptions, and Montgomery County needed to look at this in terms of site-based decision making. Mrs. Fanconi remarked that charter schools were in the report under school reform initiatives, and she suggested they hold this discussion until they came to that topic.

In regard to October 17, Mrs. Gemberling stated that they could bring any kind of staffing models to the Board as long as they had a sense of where the Board was on the continuum. For example, a school could get money and making all the decisions or at the other end, the budget would be controlled centrally. The staff needed a sense of where the Board saw itself on this continuum. They thought they would make sure that everyone was aware of how they staffed and the formulas that were used. When staff looked into this, they realized there were considerations about who made what decisions and how much empowerment the Board wanted to give a school. In some of the initial discussions, they heard individual Board members at different places on that spectrum. They hoped to get the position of the Board from the discussion on October 17.

Dr. Vance reported that a major part of that discussion would have to do with the overall and specific implications of a massive institutional transformation and a shifting of responsibilities and prerogatives from a centrally coordinated school system to one which was more local or regional. There were implications for policy, programs, contract negotiations, and procedures. Mrs. Brenneman thought the experts should be telling the Board what was best for the school system, but it was the other way around. She would recommend they take a middle-of-the-road approach and incrementally tell the Board what would happen if a school received more power or less power.

Dr. Cheung said it would be helpful to know what was discretionary and what was non-discretionary. When he said discretionary, it was to be able to allow the school staff to work on this without having too much adverse impact on the system as a whole. They could also look at it in terms of staffing, and they should know what was discretionary or non-discretionary or mandatory. If the Board understood this, they could be more flexible in allowing schools to make decisions to meet their needs.

In regard to site-based decision making, Ms. Gutierrez said that if they were looking for guidance she believed they needed to move towards greater decentralization of authority. She believed they needed to review their staffing allocation formulas because these drove the cost of the school and the program capabilities. She was hesitant to deal with the first question on the current practices of allocating resources under site-based management because she saw that allocation of resources was another huge issue unto itself. On October 17, the Board could see where they were on that continuum. She thought there were some aspects that were already decided at the local level, but she did not know whether it was very clear to all the Board members just what that was. The most important thing the Board could do was to see how they wanted to move from where they were if they had consensus. If they had agreement to move to another point on the spectrum, they should come up with the mechanisms by which they could be looking at the implications of that movement. She could not see them taking a vote and implementing anything overnight. They needed policies and procedures, and they needed to understand the consequences. In addition, they needed to be ready to implement any changes. If their goal was to have a less centrally managed system, they would have to see where they ended up. This had to be done with enormous care.

Mrs. Gordon commented that she was feeling some of the things that Mrs. Brenneman was feeling. As far as she could tell, there wasn't anything here that could not be done already by a site-based school because their policy left open the kinds of things that a site-based school could do. There was even a provision that a school could request an exception to Board policy. However, some of the issues in the long-range report were standards rather than Board policy. For example, there was no Board policy mandating X-number of reading teachers.

Mrs. Gordon hoped that on October 17 they would learn about the implications if the current site-based schools or every school in the county chose to exercise every single option in the long-range report. She did not want to start in the middle. She wanted to start out giving all the responsibility other than policy issues to the schools and then work back from that point. They had to have some idea of what the implications were, and anything had to be tied to the goals they had set. They had to see how this would impact on Success for Every Student or vice versa. She thought they were getting caught up in trying to decide whether or not they were going to allow schools to implement their policy, and she was concerned about that. It seemed to her that if a site-based school decided they were going to use their staffing allocation differently, they could do that. If they decided they were not going to teach reading or have physical education, they would have to come to the Board for approval. She would like to know what would happen if 180

schools did decide they wanted to exercise what the Board had already said they could do in the policy.

Mrs. Fanconi agreed with Mrs. Gordon. It seemed to her that their policy allowed all kinds of things, but there was a feeling in the community that they would not allow a school to not have a media specialist and trade that position for another elementary school counselor. She would like to hear some of the problems the Board ought to consider in having the discussion and sending the message to the community about what the Board would look at as exceptions. It would be good to hear about what other school systems had encountered. For example, one school in the Whitman cluster had a special program and parents were concerned about what happened when children from all the elementary schools came together in the middle school.

Mrs. Fanconi said it was important to have a presentation from the staff's point of view about what the Board's policy currently allowed and what kinds of staffing allocations they now had. Some of the staffing allocations may have been set by the Board. When they looked at long-range planning, they were not looking a single issue such as condom distribution, but rather a lot of interrelated issues. They were talking about implications on what they could do in long-range planning that would improve academic achievement. The assumption was that schools that were locally controlled tended to be able to address the individual needs of their school population and, therefore, academic achievement improved. She would like to hear some response from staff about whether they agreed or disagreed with that overall premise. She would be interested in knowing what practices would have to be put in place beyond their own policy, what did the policy allow or deter, what practices and safeguards would they have to put in place, what the process would be for staffing decisions, and whose responsibility would that be. She hoped that some of that information would come to the Board.

Dr. Elfreda Massie, associate superintendent, stated that the next area focused on staff development. Staff development was one of the Board's action areas, and the availability of resources was the primary issue. Staff agreed with the task force recommendation because there was a need for an independent training institute. The staff had focused on the need for a facility in which they could conduct training. They did a lot of training of employee groups, and one of the primary issues they had struggled with was the facility issue. In almost all policies adopted by the Board in the past year there was some component of training that needed to occur. They also had a lot of training that needed to occur with technology. They would like the sense of the Board about whether or not the facility issue was one they could address at some point because it would have to be addressed through the budget process. In terms of having the coordination they needed with regard to staff

development, a facility would help for supportive services training and aid them in developing a comprehensive plan.

Ms. Gutierrez said she would like to go to the recommendation regarding staff development. She thought this was a more concrete issue because they did not have a continuum of choices here. It was clear from the staff response that they could come out with a strong recommendation. She fully supported the staff's approach because it was the same approach they could do for site-based management. The proposal for a training institute was doable, and she would fully support it.

Mrs. Gordon supported the idea of an institute for training as well. Her concern was that should funds not be available for a facility this should not stop them in moving forward with the concept. She did not think they should tie the training that needed to be done to a facility. They could plan for that. When she talked about long-range planning she was not just talking about next year or the year after, she was talking about long-range planning. She thought they needed to move forward with the instructional pieces of the training, but this should not be constrained by the lack of a facility. She would like to see more interaction with the colleges and universities in the state and in the county as well as with businesses. She felt that there were opportunities for training outside of the CIP and the operating budget that they had just begun to tap or should begin to tap. If staff were going to come back with recommendations, she would like to see those pieces included. Corporate America did extensive in-depth training and budgeted much more for training. She thought they needed to move forward with the superintendent's recommendations, but they should not allow the capital budget constraints to prevent them from moving forward.

Dr. Vance commented that there was every evidence based on actions and meetings that they were on target with the expanded version of this independent training institute to be much more than a school system initiative, but rather a county-wide initiative. The agency heads had been sharing training ideas, plans, and initiatives. CPME and MEC were vitally interested in this because training was at the heart of change.

Mrs. Gordon reported that the Commission on Higher Education had issued some recommendations. One of the recommendations was in regard to professional development schools. If this recommendation did move forward, MCPS ought to be in the forefront in working in that partnership and setting the pace for teacher training both at the university and post graduate levels.

Mrs. Brenneman agreed with the concept of the institute. She wondered if they had used television to train people and if they could do training with television and not use a facility. Dr. Massie replied that they had used television and video tapes for

a great deal of training, but it was not always appropriate to do training through television. They had used some interactive television where people could call in. Dr. Joseph Villani, associate superintendent, added that this was the third year they had been using interactive television for training. For certain training, they would bring in representatives from local schools to teach them to be facilitators for the televised lessons. They used Channel 60 to do the training with a local facilitator in the schools. They had to have someone familiar with the concepts who would lead the activities and answer questions. As part of those programs, they did call-in sessions. One of the new positions in the budget was for a television training specialist. They were also looking forward to providing training through the wide area network when they got the global access plan.

Mrs. Brenneman said she would have a problem asking for a capital expenditure when so many schools needed modernizations. However, people were talking about a conference center or convention center for Montgomery County. She would support the concept of the institute, but she would not be in favor of a capital program. It seemed to her the task force was focusing on the concept but the staff response was focused on the facility part of it.

Dr. Cheung saw staff development as the most important issue in the public schools because it was the core of continuing improvement for teachers, staff, and administrators. They needed to develop their intellectual resources, and continued improvement was needed for staff to educate children better. They had talked about means of trying to develop and deliver material. He was always very suspicious in terms of the academic approach to training which was the university way. He thought that MCPS teachers and staff beyond what was offered to students in college. Medical professionals did not use the academic approach but rather a residency process. It was nice to watch a television program, but education had to be interactive, hands-on, mentoring, and applied. It sounded as if they delivered training through lectures and assumed the recipient would know how to apply the material. This was far from the truth. The important thing was to be able to apply what was offered which would result in true learning. If they had a good staff development program, it was worth every single dime. But if they just delivered the lecture, this was wasted time. He would like to know what model the training institute would use.

Mrs. Fanconi said that it was disappointing to her that so many steps were needed before anything could be accomplished. It seemed to her that they had done some preliminary work. For example, they had talked about taking space in the Blair building and using it for a training institute. They talked about the importance of having computer labs, mentoring, and observation booths. She did not think they needed a task force, and she

thought they ought to move fast on this. The Board had been very clear that staff development was critical. There were a number of things to be done that had nothing to do with facilities. For example, there needed to be a recommendation on release time in the next budget.

In regard to facilities, Mrs. Fanconi said it was frustrating to offices like Mr. Masood's when they had to do training for coaches and athletic directors because of the lack of large facilities. The county government did not have enough facilities to do meetings and training. They had the University of Maryland facility, but that was not very big. She would encourage them to go to Johns Hopkins and the University of Maryland to talk to them about shared space. She would like to know more about the Gheens Professional Development Academy in Louisville, Kentucky. She wanted to know how they could go about getting the support that Louisville had received. Particularly on global technology, if they were going to move forward rapidly they had to have classrooms available that teachers could get into and learn how to use the equipment. She noted that some school systems had made arrangements with computer companies to get a discount for teachers so they could buy machines to be used at home and learn more rapidly. They had 15,000 employees, and it was not minor to do massive staff development on technology.

Dr. Villani explained that they were not talking about establishing a task force to proceed. They were thinking about an advisory group, but staff was already working on a plan that they were prepared to bring to the Board in the near future if the Board wanted to move in this direction. Mrs. Fanconi believed they had consensus to look at the things that could be done with a facility as well as look at the possibility of a facility. Dr. Vance said it was his interpretation of the long-range task force recommendation was the emphasis on idea of an independent training institution. This conveyed to him an effort to radicalize what it was they did and for whom, and not necessarily a pre-occupation with the status quo. He recommended an advisory group to look at an independent training institute and come back with recommendations.

Mrs. Fanconi said that the third recommendation was that the Board concentrate on planning, policy making, and performance evaluation rather than administrative management.

Dr. Rohr stated that the current Board had made a concerted effort to concentrate on planning. This current Board had spent more time on planning and policy issues than other Boards. They established ten action areas, and these had been discussed 27 times in the last fiscal year. The development of the educational technology policy and the global access plan was a splendid example of strategic planning and policy formulation. The current discussion, the October 17 meeting, and the formation

of a Board subcommittee on long-range planning were other examples of the Board's emphasis in this area.

Dr. Cheung was supportive of the task force recommendation, and he also agreed with Dr. Rohr. Since he had been on the Board, they had gone through a lot of reorganization and now they were talking about the planning process in the schools. It would be good to have a group look at how to re-invent the Board. The Board had been functioning in the same way for years, and all they did was add more meetings. He was not sure they were more efficient or effective because there were limits in terms of time and energy to be able to deal with all the issues. He would like to have some honest assessment of the Board by the staff and community in terms of how they could improve the role, organization, and functions of the Board.

Mrs. Gordon stated that she couldn't agree more with Dr. Cheung. They had done a lot of planning, and she would like to see them focus on doing something with the plans they already had. Site-based was the perfect example of something that started years ago, and they had not moved beyond where they were when they first started. She thought this was an issue the Board needed to address over the next year to look at the direction the Board itself wanted to take. She said they had a great deal of work to do in the area of boardmanship. While she looked forward to suggestions, she felt the Board needed to accept responsibility for this recommendation.

Ms. Gutierrez expressed her agreement with Mrs. Gordon's remarks. They needed to look at how effective they were and, as Dr. Cheung stated, they needed to reinvent themselves. This was not to say that the Board had not been effective. When she came on the Board, she made it clear that strategic planning was going to be a major focus of the Board, and they had delivered. They now had a plan, Success for Every Student, which looked for goals and outcomes. They were now moving into a more sophisticated area to do plans that looked strategically and moved them in a consistent way over a period of time. They had had institutional development and growth. When she had attended a Board candidates meeting, she had been impressed by the documents representing the Board's work over the past four years. She thought their focus on better planning and policy development had paid off, but it was not a job that was complete. She felt that the comments made by the task force did not address the problems of the Board. She did not think they were spending a lot of time in administrative management, but the Board needed to be more effective with boardmanship skills and a review of their needs for information and their effectiveness in decision making. She thought it was up to the Board, its officers, and its staff to focus on this area.

Mrs. Fanconi reported that the superintendent had offered to have staff develop some presentations on the way the Board could look at issues development and concept analysis. She thought this would be a good idea, but she would suggest that the subcommittee look at these issues.

Mrs. Fanconi recalled that when she came on the Board she questioned why the Board had to act on so many items; however, she found that their actions were required by state law. She thought there were a number of things they could look at such as how they used their time and how they could be more efficient. She pointed out that they were a part-time Board, and they had cut 200 people or more out of central office. They could schedule more and more meetings to get more done, but she did not think this should be an option. They needed to make better use of their time, make sure consent items stayed consent items, and focus on policy development, implementation, and accountability. She had looked back through some papers and one of them stated that in 1989 the Board had acted on four policies and in 1992 it was 14 and 1993 it was eight. This Board had acted on long-range facilities planning, education of students with disabilities, early childhood education, quality integrated education, site-based participatory management, middle school education, sexual harassment, class rank, resolutions on math and science, and educational technology.

Mrs. Fanconi said that the fourth recommendation was on budgeting and financial reporting.

Mr. Larry Bowers, chief financial officer, reported that the task force had recommended a change in the program and financial reporting system that would link outcomes to cost in a meaningful and useful way. They also supported the idea that more data, information, and analysis for both budgetary and academic purposes be publicly available in more useful formats. Mr. Bowers said this was also a message they had heard from the PTAs in the past and from CPME and other groups. On August 29, 1994, the staff had discussed the format of a document they were planning to put together, and they had provided the Board with a draft format. The sample was for a high school, and each level would have a slightly different format. They were developing a system that would pull this information together from a variety of different sources. This document would be distributed along with the superintendent's operating budget.

Mr. Bowers indicated that they were also looking at multi-year budget which had been discussed previously. They were looking at initiatives of the Board and tie the capital and the operating budgets together. They would show all the budget implications and putting this in a multi-year format. A good example would be multi-year implications for staff development both capital and operating. As they looked at program mission summaries, they

would display information on a multi-year basis for all the resources, but not item by item.

Mrs. Fanconi suggested that Board members comment on the format. She was concerned about schools with a lot of special education programs or inclusion. For example, people think one school had more staff than another school without realizing the school had special education programs which required individual aides for each child. When the IEP required this, this was not something that was optional or could be used flexibly. Mr. Bowers replied that the different programs would be listed, but that would not get at it completely. The last time the Board discussed this, a number of Board members emphasized the need to describe what the programs were, what the services were, that changed the cost. Staff would try to display that information on the bottom of the page to try to explain why the costs at a certain school might be higher.

Mrs. Fanconi was concerned that this procedure might not get at inclusion which was not a special program. These students might need highly intensive services, but this would not be reflected in a program category. They had to show that the resources did follow the students back to their home schools. On the other hand, these resources were not flexible and could not be turned into an extra media specialist, for example. She wondered if it would be possible to get some input from the public on the format during the budget forums. Mr. Bowers replied that at one of the sessions they would be talking about the new format and six-year budgets. The only question was how much could be incorporated because their deadline was mid-December to finish this document. He remarked that Mrs. Fanconi's comment about inclusion was excellent. It would be a little more difficult to get at this because it was not on a data base. It was not only numbers of students but the services they were receiving, and he was not sure they could incorporate this information this time around.

In regard to school data, Mrs. Gordon asked what would be included as outcomes for an elementary school. Mr. Bowers indicated they would be using CRTs and MSPAP. Mrs. Gordon asked whether they would be using actual salaries for teachers or the county average salary for a teacher. Mr. Bowers replied that it was the latter. Mrs. Gordon inquired about the point at which they would be able to have that information. Mr. Bowers replied that staff had been working on this; however, they needed to have a discussion with the Board to see if they wanted to do this.

Mrs. Gordon asked whether instructional supplies would be an actual figure for that particular school. Mr. Bowers replied that this would be the actual number but salaries and fringe benefits would be an average. They were also looking at ways to get facilities costs, but some of the information would have to

be averaged and some information would be actual. He added that there would be a description to indicate which was which.

Mrs. Gordon commented that this was the key to everything else they had discussed or would discuss this evening. If they were talking about site-based management or training, they had to have this data. It was a difficult change for the school system to make, and there were pitfalls. The more information provided, the more chance there was for scrutiny and discussion. However, the more they tried to protect that information, the more it set up a lack of trust. From her perspective, this was a good start. She hoped this document was not viewed as the end product. If the Board had to take a position on this, they needed to do this in enough time for staff to move forward in the next couple of budget seasons.

Dr. Cheung complimented the staff on the document. He knew it was preliminary and they would improve on it. He agreed with Mrs. Gordon that they needed good information for planning, for management, and for accountability. Even though this was preliminary, he was already thinking about utilization, efficiency, productivity, effectiveness, and quality. It was good to have this kind of data because that was what total quality management was all about. Even though this was preliminary, he knew they could build on it.

Ms. Gutierrez felt that the sheet would be very useful. It responded to concerns they had heard from the community, and it went a long way toward reorganizing the data. She found it easy to understand and quite complete. In regard to the form, she thought it would be important to have operational definitions for terms and what went into the various calculations. For example, average class size, other -- did this include physical education and art? In the same sense, they did have a definition of who was a drop-out, and an operational definition there would help.

Ms. Gutierrez thought there was a real misunderstanding in the general community that by doing something that reflected cost at the school level that they would have a representation of the cost to educate children in MCPS. This was not accurate. If they added up everything on the sheets, it would not add up to the total operating budget. There were enormous costs to operate a system this large. For example, it cost \$37 million for transportation. The sheets would not provide a comprehensive explanation of what it cost to run a very complex and large school system. The form would give them some sense of the elements making up part of the MCPS budget. She liked the inclusion of some performance data.

Ms. Gutierrez asked what data they would be using, and Mr. Bowers replied that they would use the most recent data. Ms. Gutierrez appreciated Mrs. Fanconi's comment on special education, and she

thought those costs could be presented in the demographic data column. Transportation costs per school might be something they would want to have as an average which could indicate what percentage of the overall transportation budget might be related to that school. Overall, she thought the document was an excellent first step.

Mrs. Fanconi suggested that they separate out special education supplies from instructional supplies. She agreed with Ms. Gutierrez that it was important to have information on transportation even activity buses because this might be one area where a school might want to use some flexibility. She thought it was important for the community to have individual sheets per school, but they also had to prove they had a curriculum-driven budget. They needed to be very aggressive in their search for a format that made it very clear that these were direct costs needed in order to get the kind of accountability results that they wanted which would include staff development. They might consider showing the staff development money going directly to the schools. On the SAT scores, they should show the number of children participating because they could have very high SAT scores if they made sure only the brightest students took the test, but this was not what they wanted. Dr. Cheung suggested they show direct operating costs which were not captured in the sheet.

Mrs. Fanconi said the fifth recommendation was on accountability. Dr. Villani stated that they had had a lot of discussion this evening about accountability. An accountability system undergirded the kind of institutional change they were talking about in the long-range planning task force. It was clear that the Board was committed to accountability because outcomes/assessment was one of the Board's ten action areas. The Board had discussed this five times in the past year. The primary accountability document was the Success for Every Student plan. That plan drove their budgeting, their staff assignments, their resource assignments, and their performance assessment. On December 13, the Board would receive an update on the Success plan. At that same meeting they would be dealing with two other accountability issues. They would be looking at enhancements to the school-based instructional monitoring system and their new process for reporting student progress in mathematics.

Dr. Villani reported that they had been working on a student performance assessment program which would give them lots of information to feedback into their continuous improvement process. They wanted a student assessment program which would tell them not only what students knew but what they could do and what opportunities they had had to learn. All three helped them shape their program. The CRT tests in math and reading/language arts, the performance assessments, and the portfolios being field tested would give them different dimensions and aspects of

performance for accountability. They were committed to the enhanced accountability program recommended by the task force. They were making sure what they were doing now was congruent with what the task force had been doing. The continuous improvement process was where their accountability pointed. In addition to the instructional program accountability which shaped their planning, the staff had been getting specific training in total quality management.

Dr. Villani pointed out that the last part of this recommendation spoke to the role of the Department of Educational Accountability in terms of doing program assessment and evaluation. That was their role, but over the last several years because of limitations of resources staff had been cut back. If they were going to make that a higher priority, they would have to provide additional resources to DEA. They had the accountability system under development, and they would be presenting it to the Board as it evolved. The student assessment accountability program was being developed very deliberately and very cautiously, but it was already providing them with information they needed to shape their program.

Dr. Cheung was pleased to see they now had an individual student profile. They should look at what students should know and how well they performed vis-a-vis other students, but they should also show the improvement within each student. The student might score at one level and yet have improved 150 percent since the beginning of the year. This could give the child self confidence and the incentive to continue to improve rather than always being compared with other students.

Ms. Gutierrez thought this was one area where linked with their planning efforts they had made enormous strides in coming up with better measures of how they were doing. She sensed that accountability was an integral part of how they wanted to do business in MCPS. She felt that program effectiveness was an area where they might need to do some more to build in some of the measures into programs. They pointed to DEA as the source for evaluation, but they had been seriously cut, and it took time before they could have enough data collected to be able to evaluate it. DEA had been moving towards getting more data points built in to the program, and perhaps this should be a major initiative of even standing programs to get measures of their effectiveness.

Ms. Gutierrez recalled that they had talked about DEA's doing surveys, and this might be an area they wanted to move into. Much earlier the Board had also discussed doing an annual report, and this might be something to consider again because they were in better shape to gather the data. She thought there were people who would be interested in knowing more about the plan and how MCPS performed against that plan.

Mrs. Fanconi commented that when it came to evaluation and accountability, the most valuable evaluation was the one going to the people who were delivering the program. As they did the global technology, she would like to see teachers being able to look at goals and data points to work on specific issues. It was important to give people access to data to allow them to set their own goals and to move forward at a much faster pace. This might mean they needed more people in the directors' positions to hold those people accountable and to assist schools in setting goals.

In terms of the kinds of reporting, Mrs. Fanconi said the Board had just received a report from the minority advisory committee talking about different ways of presenting the data. She thought they had to look at this issue. It was important that they provide data to the Board and to the community that said these were areas they were concerned about and where was that they were doing to do about it. She did not think this should wait for an annual report.

Mrs. Fanconi stated that the sixth recommendation was on partnerships in education. Dr. Hiawatha Fountain, associate superintendent, commented that this issue was well known to all of them. The school system had always had partnerships with parents, and in recent times they had developed some additional partnerships. One of the Board's action areas was to strengthen partnerships, which had been discussed four times in the last year and a half. The third goal in the Success plan also included strengthening partnerships. The CPME and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute were other examples of the interest the Board had demonstrated. They had added a new task in the Success plan to underscore their concern for partnerships in education. In October the Board would be looking at ways to centralize the focus by examining the possibility of the need for an office at executive level to pull all of the issues of partnerships together, especially intergovernmental and business and industry.

Mrs. Gordon agreed they had done a tremendous amount of work recently in expanding traditional partnerships. She thought they needed to work more closely with the colleges and universities because they were rich in the number of resources they had at the higher education level. They needed to get meaningful input and foster this cooperation. The focus they had had on business partnerships had been outstanding, and she was glad to see they were moving forward with those initiatives.

Mrs. Gordon said that in regard to Board advisory committees, task forces, study groups, work groups, etc., she would like to see something in addition to a once a year report from advisory committees. If they were going to play a role in advising the Board, at any given time an issue arose it might be helpful to have some kind of input from them. She suggested they had to

look at how they used their committees. They had to do some additional work in assuring people that their time, energy, and input would be taken seriously. Sometimes because the Board was overwhelmed with information, the Board did not always give the impression they were really going to take their reports into consideration. If they wanted this partnership with committees, the Board would have to make a commitment to listen to them and take their advice. They did not always have to agree with committees, but they should seriously consider the advice they received. She believed this was a Board issue as opposed to a system issue.

Dr. Cheung stated that in terms of outreach to universities, he knew staff had done a lot in this area especially with the University of Maryland. He suggested that they approach colleges and universities to see if they could adopt a couple of clusters of schools. For example, hospitals affiliated with medical schools. Perhaps the universities could have some competition in terms of staff development efforts and student teacher training.

Ms. Gutierrez thought that this was again an area where they had done an excellent job, particularly with the corporate partnership which exceeded all of their expectations. She wanted to ensure that they continue that close relationship, and she was not quite sure where they were with CPME. She commented that their partnerships had focused on external relations, and she would like them to think about building our internal partnership. The task force had looked at schools and at parents and building stronger partnerships within the school system. For example, there could be forums for staff input. She did not know whether they had looked at their own rich resources to also strengthen their ability to serve students.

\*Mrs. Brenneman left the meeting at this point.

Ms. Gutierrez knew that they had a parental involvement policy, but there was still room to foster greater partnerships with parents. There were some challenges, particularly with parents who were not used to working with the system or parents not culturally comfortable with the system. In the federal government, they had the alternate work schedule when people had Mondays or Fridays off. Perhaps they should start thinking about how to get those parents into the schools on a regular basis.

Mrs. Fanconi stated that the final recommendation was on school reform initiatives.

Mrs. Gemberling said the staff would want to be on record as supporting a school environment that did encourage creativity and innovation. There was a history of this in various forms over time in MCPS. For example, they had magnet schools. They had a wide range of diversity from community to community, and they did

not necessarily have the unlimited kinds of resources every time they wanted to try a new innovation or a particular program. They had found that sometimes a program that was effective in one community was not as effective in another. They were trying to move away from the idea of "one system fits all." However, schools and communities did compare themselves to one another.

Mrs. Gemberling noted that the first recommendation and this one were interrelated. The question was how much flexibility they wanted to turn over to the schools. They had scheduled meetings on school reform initiatives. They had a study on various high school organizational patterns. They would be providing the Board an update on challenge schools. They would also be hearing from the controlled choice study group and the group looking at year-round schooling. In regard to charter schools, there were different directions in different states. There had to be a clearly defined definition if the state board and Montgomery County were going to move in this direction. Staff was suggesting that the Board might want to seek reading material from DEA. She believed they had to provide an opportunity for communities to address the clients they served.

Ms. Gutierrez commented that this area was an important one for them to look at. She said that the response from the superintendent struck a very important chord which brought the whole debate on school reform initiatives to the essential part which was to see whether the organizational restructuring actually produced academic improvement beyond what they would have accomplished under the current system. In the past several years there had been many innovative proposals, but they had to take care that they not lose sight of the fact they had to focus on how well students did in that new environment.

Ms. Gutierrez thought it was notable that MCPS was flexible and encouraged flexibility particularly at the high school level to look to see community-based solutions for the challenges they were facing. She was involved with what Bethesda-Chevy Chase was doing currently to look at itself in a more strategic way, perhaps as the model urban school of the year 2000. It was one of the strengths of MCPS that they were able to support those kinds of ideas as a school system. She believed that there was a wealth of successful practices that MCPS could imitate, but there was no one solution to solve all their challenges. She was delighted to see so much on the agenda.

Mrs. Fanconi called attention to the fall dissemination conferences. She said it was exciting to see some of the things going on. For example, they had a sessions on promoting equity in a multi-cultural interdisciplinary model, strategies for a successful reader, and logic activities for primary students. She noted that one of the Board's priorities was to disseminate successful practices.

Mrs. Fanconi thanked staff for bringing the paper to the Board. The next in-depth discussion would be on October 17. She thanked the task force for their recommendations.

RESOLUTION NO. 648-94      Re:    ADJOURNMENT

On recommendation of the superintendent and on motion of Dr. Cheung seconded by Mrs. Gordon, the following resolution was adopted unanimously by members present:

Resolved, That the Board of Education adjourn its meeting at 9:50 p.m.

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PRESIDENT

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SECRETARY

PLV:mlw