

APPROVED  
27-1996

Rockville, Maryland  
July 1, 1996

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in special session at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Monday, July 1, 1996, at 8:08 p.m.

ROLL CALL Present: Mr. Reginald Felton, Vice President  
in the Chair  
Mr. Stephen Abrams  
Dr. Alan Cheung  
Mr. Blair G. Ewing  
Mrs. Beatrice B. Gordon  
Mrs. Nancy King  
Mr. Charles McCullough

Absent: Ms. Ana Sol Gutiérrez, President

Others Present: Dr. Paul L. Vance, Superintendent  
Mrs. Katheryn W. Gemberling, Deputy  
Mr. Larry A. Bowers, Acting Deputy  
Ms. Rachel Prager, Student Board Member-Elect

Re: **ANNOUNCEMENT**

Mr. Felton noted the presence of former Board members in the audience: Mr. William Colman, Mr. Jon Sims, Mr. Shervin Pischevar, Mr. David Naimon, Ms. Allison Serino, Mr. Chan Park, and Ms. Carrie Baker. Mr. Felton also acknowledged the presence of Ms. Gail Ewing, County Council President.

Re: **SWEARING IN**

Ms. Molly Ruhl, clerk of the court, administered the oath of office to Ms. Prager.

Re: **STATEMENT BY MS. PRAGER**

Board members, family, and friends, I'm honored to be here tonight. This is a very proud moment for me. But more importantly, this is a time for reflection. I've been thinking about tonight for the last couple weeks, thinking about all the people who have made this possible. There are many, many people who have helped me reach this point, and many of these same individuals will help me continue. I am pleased to see these individuals here tonight.

When reflecting on my experiences and the people who have influenced me, my experiences in gymnastics come to mind. I was a gymnast from age three to thirteen at Marva Tots and Teens here in Rockville. Gymnastics was the sport in which I developed

my confidence, belief in my ability to succeed, and motivation. In the gym, I found that I could excel at whatever I desired if I was focused and goal-oriented.

My family also has largely influenced my development as an individual and has helped me attain my goals. I come from a large family; my parents and five younger brothers. By being from a large family, I have always had a large protective net around me. My family expects much but they give me the freedom to decide what I will pursue and how I will pursue it. My family gave me this freedom over eight months ago when I decided to pursue the student member seat. I only received positive reinforcement and support; that is until my mom found out that she would have to drive me to at least four schools a week for campaigning purposes.

My mother wasn't the only one driving me around during the campaign time. Often in the morning before first period, I would make an announcement to my group of friends along these lines of "I need to be at Paint Branch by 9:00 and Tilden by 11:00. Who can drive me?" One of my friends, Erin Medlin, always took me up on my offer. After a month and a half of campaigning, we knew our way around the county so well that we could perfectly estimate the driving time needed to get from one school to another. My debate friends during the campaign time dealt with me in my state of nervous agitation and in the end stayed my friends.

In looking through my debate quote box, I found a quote by UCLA basketball coach, John Wooden, that seems to apply to these last few months. He said, "Don't let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do."

For me this election defined what I could do and took my attention away from what I could not do. I came to acknowledge that progress involves risk. I found that I could not steal second base with my foot still on first. Running for an election is risky. You put your ego, your self-confidence, on the line. You risk being embarrassed and disliked. I remember going to high schools and speaking to sometimes skeptical or indifferent students. But this is not my most outstanding memory. What I do remember most clearly was the day before the election when I went to visit some middle schools. I stopped by Sligo Middle School on this day during lunch time and went to the lunch room. I approached the principal who was standing at the lunch room microphone demanding that the kids behave and refrain from throwing their food. I introduced myself to the principal and he announced my arrival over the loudspeaker. I'd never been welcomed with so much spirit. They acted as though I were a celebrity. They cheered and yelled for me to come over to their lunch tables. Many asked if I was really that girl on TV and wanted copies of my brochure. A number of sixth graders, smiling broadly, came up to me and asked if the phone number listed on the brochure was my home phone. Their amount of enthusiasm and faith in both the school board and the student member was incredible. Their excitement and positive outlook was beautiful. After seeing these middle schoolers, I know that I will work hard and meet their expectations. I feel a bond to all of them, and I want to do the best that I

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possibly can for them. I feel a connection with all Montgomery County students. There may be more than 120,000 of them, but I love them all.

I look on this coming year with the Board of Education with excitement and hopefulness. The Montgomery County Board of Education will achieve much for our students, and I'm glad that I can also make this happen.

**Re: PRESENTATION TO MR. MCCULLOUGH**

On behalf of the members of the Board, Mr. Felton presented Mr. McCullough with memorabilia of his stay on the Board of Education.

**Re: STATEMENT BY MR. MCCULLOUGH**

I stumbled upon this quote, "For all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these, it might have been."

I am proud to say that I look back without these words in my heart. In fact as protocol and history have said to demand, I ought speak of my success while a member of the Board. But I will not. This is not the place nor time and in that I have done would only be tarnished if I spoke it to you as if they were metals upon my chest. No, tonight is to congratulate and send well wishes to Member Prager, and let that be the sole call of tonight.

I will tell you though, of the movements I initiated, be they policy change, reinstated budget initiative, or organizations founded any trials encountered upon this path were made much easier by one person. A person who just happens to be the most beautiful person I know, of course, you all know her as my mother. So from the son that is eternally inappreciative, I say with no strings attached, thank you very much.

That being said, as so that I will hit the mark on brevity and its soul mate, wit, I will begin the process of fading away by answering the questions most often asked of me.

Those questions, "Will you be sad to go? Did you count the days? How will you handle being an old has been?" Well, how I came to politics, I do not remember. How I will finally leave it, I do not know. It will be a change, but change is the soul of life. I will have no choice but to adjust to it. But, I do know one thing as fact, I am eternally grateful for being "a has been" instead of "never was."

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Re: **COMMENTS BY BOARD MEMBERS  
AND THE SUPERINTENDENT**

Board members and Dr. Vance welcomed Ms. Prager and thanked Mr. McCullough for his work on the Board of Education and wished him well in all his future endeavors.

Re: **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Felton adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m. to a reception in the auditorium for Mr. McCullough and Ms. Prager.

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PRESIDENT

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SECRETARY

PLV:gr