

APPROVED
26-2010

Rockville, Maryland
September 22, 2010

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in special session at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Wednesday, September 22, 2010, at 7:15 p.m.

Present: Mrs. Patricia O'Neill, President
in the Chair
Mr. Christopher Barclay
Ms. Laura Berthiaume
Ms. Shirley Brandman
Dr. Judy Docca
Mr. Michael Durso
Mr. Philip Kauffman
Dr. Jerry Weast, Secretary/Treasurer

Absent: Mr. Alan Xie

The Board of Education met with the Executive Board of SEIU Local 500 and discussed the following topics:

- Update on Workplace English Program
- Update on Support Staff Hired as Teachers and A&S Staff
- Plan and Vision of the Delivery Model with Limited Funding

There was an update of the presentation from past years on the **Workplace English Program**. SEIU staff reported on the continuation and increase in the Saturday, pilot, and face-to-face classes. Overall, the participants are very pleased with the program, and supervisors are reporting that communication is better with the employees. It was reported that the program builds confidence and allows employees to seek promotions.

SEIU distributed a chart titled, ***Supporting Service Employees Hired as Teachers and Supervisory Personnel***. Support staff has received advanced education through tuition reimbursement and university partnerships. SEIU staff pointed out that the career ladder provides employees a chance to rise within the MCPS ranks.

Regarding the **Plan and Vision of the Delivery Model with Limited Funding**, Ms. Cuttitta stated that the looming economic crisis provides opportunities for innovation and refocus since support staff will be among those who are impacted. She was interested in the Board's plans even though they were not seeking answers but starting a dialogue. SEIU is interested in what the workforce will look like in the face of lost or blended positions. Mr. Barclay remarked that there are no predictions for the future, but he was committed to

continuing the conversation. He was clear about the critical issues—equity and excellence. The challenge will be to continue excellence and make changes in order to work with fewer funds. It is clear to him that the County Council wants MCPS to make the biggest sacrifice without a clear financial prediction. The process is important, and there is the hope not to erode what has been build over time.

SEIU thought there may not be growth in numbers, but employees could be repurposed as positions will morph into something new. Everyone is dedicated to the students, and there is a need to work together as a team. Mr. Rodich stated that SEIU is looking for collaboration and a new normal relationship. with management. It is critical to imagine what the new workforce will look like, and they are committed to redesigning positions in advance in order for employees to retool their skills. They do not want to be put into a position of reacting to budget reallocations. Ms. Cuttitta explained that support staff has 450 different job classifications, and the blending of positions will reduce or create different classifications. Furthermore, SEIU does not want to find itself competing with the classroom funding since a significant number of positions do not work in the schools. They want to maintain a strong culture of appreciation for what their members contribute.

Ms. Brandman stated that the Board knows that the classroom does not happen by itself, and there is a growing awareness of the whole child. The Board will stand behind its commitment to continue the present education model. There is a need to make good decisions with input from all stakeholders. Finally, we are allies in fighting to protect resources. Mrs. O'Neill commented that there is a need to work together to get the fiscal house in order. The Board is on a collision course with the County Council, and it is critical to clarify the fiscal picture. SEIU pointed out that they are the most diverse group based on hours and days worked. Dr. Hermann added that there are not competing forces since we all work together on a shared vision and values. Communication will not stop since collaboration is vital.

Dr. Docca remembered the past when unions were adversarial with the Board and administration. Teachers worked to the rule, and positions were outsourced. We will not return to those days since it did not work. Mrs. O'Neill realized that SEIU members are most impacted by bad economics. One SEIU member expressed pleasure with her SEIU and MCPS family, who have helped her and her husband with opportunities and advancement.

Mr. Kauffman stated that he has come to appreciate what makes the school system the gold standard. It is because we do things differently and collaborate with union partners. The new superintendent will operationalize the contract, and we will find ways to do the job better and faster with more ideas and savings from the employees. The Board has a commitment to hear SEIU's ideas on ways to transform jobs for efficiency. Mr. Durso found it disheartening that the press likes to demonize unions. It is important to remember that we will stick together as the pendulum swings.

Mrs. O'Neill thanked SEIU and said she looked forward to working with them. The Board will make sure the new superintendent values collaboration. Ms. Cuttitta thanked the Board for sharing and continuing the conversation.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

PRESIDENT

SECRETARY

JDW:gr