

APPROVED
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Rockville, Maryland
December 4, 2012

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in special session at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Tuesday, December 4, 2012, at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Ms. Shirley Brandman, President
in the Chair
Mr. Christopher Barclay
Ms. Laura Berthiaume
Dr. Judy Docca
Mr. Michael Durso
Mr. Philip Kauffman
Mr. John Mannes
Mrs. Patricia O'Neill
Ms. Rebecca Smondrowski
Dr. Joshua Starr, Secretary/Treasurer

Absent: None

Ms. Loretta Knight, Clerk of the Montgomery County Circuit Court, administered the oath of office to Mr. Barclay, Mr. Kauffman, and Ms. Smondrowski.

Re: **STATEMENT BY MS. BERTHIAUME**

“Good evening. I am going to start my speech by doing something that is never done, and that is by giving myself a pat on the back. This particular pat on the back is for something that would probably seem trivial to most people, but it is actually quite an accomplishment for me. The accomplishment I am talking about is that I am here tonight, all these four years later. You see, on the fight or flight scale, I am WAY over on the flight end of things. I confess that this very night four years ago, having had a peek into life in the Board Room as it then existed, I was having a furious internal debate with myself over whether I was insane to take the oath. Knowing how many people I would let down if I did not, I went ahead took the oath, but from there on out it was a combination of both people and events that kept me here every time I was about to bolt. For example, there was the evening about eight months in after a particularly contentious Board Meeting when I was walking to my car and Shirley came walking fast up behind me and said “DON’T QUIT!” Who knew that in addition to all her other great qualities, Shirley is a mind reader. I also owe thanks to my oldest daughter for keeping me here. When I consulted her about the notion of resigning a while back, she told me that I should definitely stick with it and serve out my term. And so it has gone, and as I look back I am glad that I did persist, because this Board did manage to do some very good things.

I am just going to mention three things I am most proud of that this outgoing Board

accomplished. First, the Board refused to close Monocacy Elementary over the contrary recommendation of the previous Superintendent. Quite simple, we declined to rip out the beating heart of a community. Our refusal to do so meant that we as a Board understood that schools are more than just buildings and staffing numbers, they are the nexus through which people meet and social capital grows and in the end you just cannot capture the good that comes from that in a budget figure. Second, the Board fought a long, hard slog to ensure that the Thomas Edison High School of Technology will not only survive, it will thrive.

At the same time that we ensured that Wheaton High School and its surrounding community would get the attention and the facilities that it so very much deserves. The fact is that every Board member that I know of made campaign promises about the importance of having a variety of pathways not only to college but also to careers, and we put our time, our money, and our advocacy where our mouths were. That is something to be very proud of. Third, we undertook a Superintendent search together, which is a far from easy thing. Many a search group has devolved into backbiting, or factionalism, or dragged out the process forever. We did not do that. Every single Board member on the outgoing Board worked together in a way that was civil, professional, and engaged to conduct a search that was thorough and completed on time. That too, is something really worth celebrating.

I do have a number of thank-you's, but before I get to that, having really reflected on the past four years, I also want to take a moment for an apology. If you are here tonight, or if you are watching this and you were ever up at the Board table, particularly during those first couple of years of my term, there were some times I may have been pretty sharp with my comments and questions. At the time, it was the only way I could think of to cut through the . . . fog. I know now that your lives at work were probably difficult enough without have a Board member slice and dice your presentations, and if I added to your pressure and your misery, I am sorry for that. It is my sincere hope that life is better all around now and that whatever pain I inflicted on you then, that you are now benefitting by some of the changes since then. It has been my theory of action that those same sorts of changes in how we treat people will make its way all the way down to the school level and out beyond to how we as a system treat children and parents when they come to talk with us about their needs and their points of view on how we are doing.

Moving on to thank you's, I want to start by thanking the Board staff. Becky, Kathy, Martha, Glenda, Laura, and Suzanne, thank you for all your work and all your support. You have been tremendous. And of course, there is Roland. Roland wears a lot of hats, but I can truly say that he is one of those people but for whom I would not be here tonight. An island of integrity, Roland is also, in opinion, the deepest, broadest, and most open-minded thinker that I have met during my time at MCPS. Roland, I am going to really miss our talks. I only brought one present tonight and it is for Roland, to express all my appreciation for everything he does not only for the Board but also for the organization as a whole. Roland, I assure you that the minuscule size is due to the \$25 gift limit, not the size of the sentiment.

I also want to thank my fellow Board members. Under the leadership of Shirley and Chris, a new culture was established at the Board a few years back, and I was a direct beneficiary.

The culture of this Board for the past term has been one of true civility. We may disagree passionately about an issue, but it has very rarely turned personal. That is a very important quality, more so for me because I disagreed with Board so passionately about so many things. I know I must have irritated the heck out of most of you a lot of the time. Whether I was standing alone or almost alone on Pearson, or Eastern Middle School, or Brickyard, or on our approach to charter schools, or on any number of other decisions, you did not prevent me having my say and you did not hold it against me when I came in for the next meeting. These days, it is out of fashion to have the equivalent of a loyal opposition. Anyone with an opposing view is very often characterized as evil, or nuts, or racist, or just not worth listening to. I believe and hope the opposite to be true, that in the clash of opposing ideas, something better can eventually arise. I hope that you will accord Rebecca the same leeway and the same freedom of expression that you have accorded me. It is a way of doing business that is worth continuing and defending.

I have two more “thank you’s” tonight. The first is to my mother and my father. I have spent a lot of the last four years reflecting on children and how they are raised and how they are educated. More and more, I see everything that my parents did when raising me that at the time was completely invisible to me, although now I see their influence every day in my own actions as I raise my own children and try to give them the same things my parents gave me. Mom and Dad, you always demonstrated a commitment to your marriage and to our family, and so you gave me a safe and secure and loving home to grow up in. You transmitted your values by word and by example. Duty, honesty, punctuality, respect for others, industriousness, faith and personal integrity. You hauled me to church almost every Sunday and most Wednesday nights, and you made me go to school every day. You made it clear that a great education is worth working for and paying for, even when there are a lot of other nice things you could have been doing with all the money you spent on me. More than that, you have kept on helping me out with my own children. Thank you.

My final thanks goes out to my husband, Dave. It is a cliché for politicians to thank their spouses for their sacrifices, but the reason it is a cliché is because it is so very true. Time and again, Dave went to work early so he could come home early so that I could go to a Board meeting or a cluster meeting. His shoulder was always there to cry on, and his ears were always open to hear my thoughts, my hopes, and my frustrations. I don’t think either one of us had any idea of the time commitment involved in this job when we began this. To his credit, Dave ramped up his own commitment accordingly. For all that, and for being a great father and a loving husband, I want to say thank you and I love you. And no, honey, you aren’t talking me into running for anything else. At least not in Maryland.”

Re: STATEMENT BY MR. BARCLAY

“I love Thanksgiving and I am so glad it comes after the election. This year I had the privilege to spend time with many members of my family and to reflect on how important they are to me. I would like to speak about my three parents. My mother, my father and my step mother – all three are educators who have taught me key lessons that I carry with the today.

My mother taught me the power of service. I watched her teach elementary school children during the day and then go out and teach adults how to read at night.

My father taught me the power of preparation. Year after year I saw him prepare young people for college through Upward Bound programs and other youth development groups.

My other mother taught me the power of community. She always makes sure that her students know who they are and from where they come.

I AM BECAUSE WE ARE AND BECAUSE WE ARE THEREFORE I AM.

These three people have been my anchors, my advocates and my heroes. Most importantly, they have been my teachers. I thank them all for believing in me and teaching me why education is so important.

We are blessed to live in a county that has historically invested in education. For that I am grateful to the County Council, our County Executive and the citizens who have elected us to represent them in our respective positions.

Going forward, I believe we must invest in the children of this county in new ways. We must invest in creative structures that allow ALL of our children to reap the benefit of our collective wealth. I encourage us as elected officials to get down to the business of restructuring county government in a way that creates the One Montgomery that my friend Nancy Navarro spoke of this morning when she was elected the first Latina president of the county council. We owe the citizens of this county our best efforts to change how we do business to better serve children and families.

Just as my parents taught me to give back we must prepare our children for their best futures and to do the same.

To my family I say thank you for putting up with a dad and husband who is a board member.

To the voters - thank you for giving me the opportunity to represent you on the Board of Education!"

Re: **STATEMENT BY MR. KAUFFMAN**

"In preparing for tonight, I looked over the remarks I made four years ago and I considered how my perspective of the school system has changed after four years of service. I also considered how much our system has changed, how much it has stayed the same, and how much it will change in the coming years.

First, let me say that it is an honor and a privilege to be reelected as a member of the Board

of Education of Montgomery County Public Schools. While I certainly believed when I was first elected that it was an excellent system, I have grown to appreciate how truly special it is.

Despite the exploding growth in enrollment and simultaneous cuts to our budget, our system continues to excel. We lead the nation in graduation rates, we recorded our highest SAT scores, and our students enroll and perform in AP and IB courses in record numbers. As Maryland has been recognized as the best state school system in the country for the last four years, there should be no confusion that it is MCPS that is responsible for our state's ranking. The citizens of our county want a quality education system that prepares our children for the future and one that is an economic engine for our community. They can be confident that the investments they have made, and will be asked to make in the future, through their hard earned tax dollars, are paying off.

There are many who are responsible for the results we have achieved, but I would like to recognize two groups, our staff and our parents. We have outstanding administrators, teachers, and support service professionals in our schools. They have seen their workloads grow over the years as enrollment has increased while standards have been raised. The collaborative approach we enjoy with our employee associations to solve problems is one of the strengths of our system and stands out as a model for national school reform. I'd like to also recognize the contributions of parent organizations for our success, but most particularly the MCCPTA, where I have my own roots. The PTA is responsible for thousands of hours of volunteer labor, raises hundreds of thousands of dollars supporting our students, respectfully advocates for the needs of the schools in their communities, and through democratic processes develops their operating and capital budget priorities, which help guide our decisions. MCCPTA is a true partner for our system and we owe much of our success to the efforts of their members.

One of the most important tasks for a Board of Education is the selection of a superintendent. I am pleased to have raised my hand last year in support of the appointment of Dr. Joshua Starr. Together with our new Deputy Superintendents, Kim Stathem and Beth Narvaez, and Larry Bowers, as our Chief Operating Officer, we have an outstanding leadership team that will guide the Board as we revise our core values and strategic plan, face the challenges of implementing the common core curriculum and new assessments, transform the central office to provide more support for local schools, develop a technology plan to enhance instruction, and address the demands of the federal and state governments that we revise our evaluations systems. We have a lot to do, and we can only imagine the other challenges we will face, but I am confident we will get it done.

Campaigning provides many opportunities to hear the views of the community regarding both the successes of our school system, as well as our challenges. As I previously stated, we know we have many successes and our system meets the needs of many of our students. However, we must recognize that not all of our students are successful. The perception remains that many of our special needs students face a system that only reluctantly provides them the education they are entitled to under the law. Many contend that our more capable students are not receiving challenging instruction, especially in elementary and middle

school. While our African American and Hispanic students outperform their peers at the state and federal level, the achievement gap on many measures has not been closed. Too many of our students require remediation in math and reading when they move to Montgomery College. We need to improve our vocational and career programs to provide choices as we know that not all of our students will attend college. Despite diminishing resources, we need to address the needs of these students.

So now I would like to welcome Rebecca Smondrowski to the Board. I have known Rebecca for many years and I believe that the Board will benefit from her many strengths, including her passion to help all children, her limitless energy, and her desire to collaborate. I'd also like to recognize Laura Berthiaume for her service to MCPS. Laura and I joined the Board together four years ago. While we didn't always agree, she provided an independent voice that challenged our system to do better. I wish her well in her future endeavors.

As I close out this campaign, I'd like to thank those who supported me over the years. First thanks to my campaign manager, Steve Bolen, who took care of the details and kept reassuring me that things would work out. Sharon St.Pierre was my former campaign manager, and she provided whatever assistance Steve and I needed. Jay Goldman, my treasurer, made sure that the checks were cashed, the bills were paid, and the reports were filed. Thanks to all the organizations, elected officials and community members who endorsed my candidacy and provided needed support. Finally, I'd like to acknowledge my family. Four years ago, Rachel and Jordi had to watch the webcast of this event from their college locations. I'm glad they are here tonight to be with me. Last but not least is my wife Beth. Beth has been a true partner and has been with me every step of the way, through three campaigns. This night is for her also.

So I will end my remarks as I did four years ago. It is an awesome responsibility to serve on the Board of Education, especially in a county like ours that puts such a high priority on education. MCPS is a system that prides itself on embracing new challenges and in that spirit, I rededicate myself to the work that has already begun with energy and enthusiasm. I am honored that the voters have elected me and I am committed to doing what I think is right for all children."

Re: **STATEMENT BY MS. SMONDROWSKI**

"I would like to start by thanking all of you for coming here and sharing in this night with us. As I look out and see so many of my friends and supporters, some of them new and some of them old... from across the county and across the state, I am overwhelmed.

I am proud and humbled to have been elected to the Board of Education of Montgomery County. I began this journey like thousands of other parents - to ensure a quality educational experience for my children. I volunteered at my children's school and became involved in the local PTA. My advocacy grew outside of our home and school to include issues important to our community and county and I eventually found myself involved in the Montgomery County Council of PTAs. It is the lessons I learned as a parent advocate, my experience as a legislative aide in Annapolis and my passion for children and education that I bring with me to this position.

Time and again, throughout my campaign I asked to be your voice for education. I am honored by your vote of confidence and I reaffirm to you my commitment to that service. You shared your neighborhood concerns, your personal stories, and your perspectives on issues about our schools and your childrens' education. Whether you advocate for best practice special education, evidence-based gifted programming, or leveraged resources to close the achievement gap, I will listen to your concerns, value your advice, and represent your students in my Board decisions. There are many passionate advocates in our school district with whom open communication and collaboration is welcome. My hope as a Board member is to help continue moving MCPS forward in an effort to ensure a positive school experience for every student. In every action I take as your representative, I will keep the students my focus.

When I became a candidate, I ended my term with **MCCPTA** which represents the PTAs and PTSAs of the 202 schools in our county. Through the organization, I learned so much about our school system and made countless, valuable connections. My experience with them was critical in my growth and development as a parent and a school advocate. The years of mentoring and camaraderie has, without question, changed my life.

In the weeks since the election, I have been in training with the Board, and preparing for my new role. The importance of collaboration is undeniable and I look forward to working with the other Board members, as well as in collaboration with our Superintendent, and learning from their experience to ensure continued improvement and excellence in our school system.

To Chris Barclay and Phil Kauffman – I want to congratulate you on your re-election to the Board. To Laura Berthiaume, I wish you well in your retirement. I have appreciated your advocacy for our children and I am honored to be filling in your seat.

Achieving the objective of the Board will require effective partnerships and communication with local community and business leaders and with county, state, and federal government representatives. I will put my experience and professional relationships at the service of our students, embracing all of those components to strengthen the schools system for their educational benefit. To continue to provide our brand of top caliber education, we must be the leadership that secures a safe environment, encourages personal relationships in schools, and supports quality teaching and high standards and expectations. I will advocate for the policies, the conditions, the collaborations, and the community supports that foster this organizational support.

So, all of that said...

I did not make it to this point alone. And at this point I would like to take a moment to express my appreciation to the many people who helped get me elected to the Board. I am told the record number of people thanked during an Oscar's acceptance speech was 27 (by Olivia de Havilland). Though I could definitely break that record, for your sake, I won't, but I do want to acknowledge my supporters, and my campaign and advisory team.

Very first, a few people I could never thank enough. **My husband, Ken**, for his unwavering support and for always and faithfully championing my dreams. Your help, Humor,

(Connections) and strength got me through. You never complained about donning a bright yellow t-shirt and standing out in the cold passing out palmcards and winning me votes and for that I can't thank you enough! To **my children, Andrew and Sophia** - My very best ambassadors... you've been understanding and supportive during this *very* long year. I love you all and I hope that I will make you proud.

Maggie Gates, my Campaign Manager. The passion and dedication that you have shown to this campaign has been incredible. You gave so much of yourself this past year and I thank you! Your strength and involvement kept me on task and guided me through this long process.

My Treasurer, Catherine Grosh: On a pivotal, unforgettable day last November, we went hiking. You told me then that the past 10 years of advocacy and involvement had brought me to this undeniable decision and, win or lose, I would always regret it if I didn't try. Well, I tried – we tried – and we won. You were with me then and ever since, and I can't thank you enough. And of course, I can't leave out your husband Mark and sweet Jordan. All three of you have devoted countless hours of energy and support and I appreciate every minute of it.

My Communications Director, Frances Frost: Incredible doesn't begin to describe it. You made my life easier time and time again, and brought the joy and laughter back into some of the most trying times of the past year. You asked me once if I thought that you would ever let me down... YOU NEVER HAVE! I can't thank you enough.

JoAnn Burl and Shebra Evans: What can I say... you threw caution to the wind and joined me in making the most of our years working together in MCCPTA. The time that you gave accompanying me at events, attending forums, and helping me at the polls was priceless. Nobody does this alone and the two of you always made sure that I didn't have to.

Susan Byrne: Calendar Coordinator and Community Outreach. You were a tough competitor during the primary. Your vision and interest are clear and concise and were a definite asset on our journey. You are a great advocate, and it is an honor to have worked with you.

Mark MClaurin and Travis Simon: You were with me from day one! And... even though it may have taken a little while for others to come along... I always knew that you were there for me and supported me. You are lifetime friends, and having the two of you encouraging me, working with me, and looking out for me made this journey feel more secure.

My sister, **Holly McDevitt and her husband, Matt:** I am touched by all that you did for me! Your various contributions to our campaign, of which there were many, expanded any possible expectations and were invaluable in so many ways. Your help and support gave me a new sense of family that I will cherish and appreciate forever, and I truly and deeply thank you.

And then there is **Charlie... Delegate Charles Barkley:** My mentor - my personal and political coach, if you will - My friend. *You are my* ambassador of Quan? Not a single day went by this past year where you weren't available to me, helping me, and encouraging me. You guided me along the whole way and without you, everything we went through and

worked towards would have been so much harder.

I am also very proud to have been endorsed by **SEIU**, the **Washington Post**, and **MCCEO**. Your organizational support was immeasurable. Thank you for lending me the man-power for calls and neighborhood walks, your financial support, and the brain-power of some wonderful people. I also want to thank the Farquar Community and Progressive Neighbors for their tireless efforts and faithful presence at the polls, as well as the many other community groups who believed in me enough to promote my candidacy.

Very importantly, I want to say how much I appreciate the elected officials, individual community members, and my colleagues near and far who strengthened my campaign with **your endorsements**, your efforts, and your faith in me to be an independent voice for education on our Board. The fact that you were willing to couple your names and reputations to mine and to travel this campaign trail with me all the way... has meant the world to me!

And finally, to those not named... the thousands of individuals who have granted me this privilege to serve... who endorsed me with their votes **and** their contributions, I express my deepest gratitude. Thank you for the time you took to speak with me, to listen to me, and to share your concerns and help form the community vision for our schools. This campaign was won on the merits of your sincere interest in our public schools and our community. Thank you for having put your trust in me to serve on the Board as your voice for education.”

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

Board members welcomed the newly elected members as well as their work on the Board of Education and wished them well in the upcoming work of the Board.

Re: **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m. and was followed by a reception.

PRESIDENT

SECRETARY

JPS:gr