

Lake Seneca Elementary where they were 200 youngsters over projections; however, the staff had done a fine job in handling the additional students.

Dr. Cody said he had just received the fifth day report, and there were 92,714 students which was about 1,000 more than actual enrollment last year. He estimated they would pick up about 100 to 200 students by the end of the month. He said he had visited Lake Seneca and Flower Hill, and while the contractors were putting the finishing touches on the buildings the teachers had prepared the classrooms for students and were meeting in planning groups. Because of the situation at Lake Seneca, they were securing four portable classrooms. Mr. Ewing asked when they could expect to have these portables in place, and Dr. Pitt replied that the arrival date was September 23.

Mr. Ewing asked about the status of the other portables. Mr. William Wilder, director of school facilities, reported that four were in place at Einstein, two more were due this week for Einstein, and three were due at Rosemary Hills. They would be installing about six or seven portables per week and expected to complete installation by the first week in October.

Dr. Cronin noted that they had approved the portables in the budget, and he wondered why they were so late with the installation. Mr. Wilder explained that this was a large program, and the same manufacturer of the modular construction at Gaithersburg had received the contract for the new portables. Dr. Cronin asked what they had learned from this, and Dr. Cody indicated that they would examine the work of the company and the size of the contract. Mr. Wilder added that they were looking carefully at their specifications both for modular and relocatable buildings to maintain the same level of quality and yet encourage greater participation in the bid process.

Mr. Foubert reported that all was well at Blair High School. The renovation was complete enough for students to attend classes even though there were no waste baskets and pencil sharpeners. He thought that the magnet program was going well and was off to a good start.

Mr. Ewing requested specific enrollment data on the Blair and Takoma Park magnets.

Re: FOREIGN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

Dr. Shoenberg welcomed Dr. Myriam Met, coordinator of foreign languages, to the table. He expressed the Board's appreciation for the materials she had prepared.

Dr. Cody stated that the report contained a series of issues, described the current status of foreign language instruction in the school system, and indicated items the staff and considering as well as policy matters the Board might consider. He suggested they go through the report area by area.

Mrs. Praisner reported that a task force had looked at this issue several years ago. She asked that staff remind them when they got to issues that had been recommended by the task force. Mr. William Clark, director of the Department of Academic Skills, commented that after the task force had submitted its report to the Board of Education, a staff response was developed and presented. The response was divided into recommendations that could be implemented immediately and those that had long-range implications.

Dr. Shoenberg suggested that they begin with the curriculum area. He asked Dr. Met to comment on what she saw as the more important and less important purposes of foreign language instruction in the schools. Dr. Met replied that at a national level the United States had a pressing need for people who could communicate with other people across the world in the area of diplomacy, the area of economics, and in the area of interpersonal relationships. She said that very often political conflicts arose from misunderstandings that stemmed from an inability to communicate openly and an inability to understand the cultural background of people. She said that at the local level, Montgomery County was particularly fortunate to have so many people from varied ethnic and cultural backgrounds. She thought it helped to be able to talk to the people who lived next door and the people you met in the grocery store. She felt this was important if they were going to build the kind of society where people really understood one another. She noted that there were some other rewards of learning another language. Research showed that early beginnings in a foreign language and the resulting bilingualism resulted in improved cognitive flexibility and divergent thinking. Children who took a foreign language in the elementary grades tended to do better on tests of verbal intelligence later on. If children had had long experiences with foreign languages, there were positive effects on SAT scores.

Dr. Shoenberg asked what this argued for about curriculum and the way in which they designed curriculum. He asked where they should put their emphasis. Dr. Met replied that her personal agenda would include an early start for foreign language study. Young children seemed to do well in foreign languages, but learning another language was a time-consuming task. The longer the sequence they could provide students, the better the skills they would see as a result. If the early start could not begin in the elementary school, she said it certainly should begin at the middle school level and should involve every student in some way in an experience that provided an exposure to the language and culture of other people. Dr. Shoenberg asked if the emphasis would be on language and culture. Dr. Met explained that this was all tied together. The first skill was communication, both oral and written. However, she did not know how anyone could learn another language without learning something about the people who spoke the language. She thought that culture should be with a smaller "c", de-emphasizing the monuments, the art, and literature to the benefit of the customs and traditions of the people who spoke the language.

Dr. Cronin noted that on page 4 a statement was made that Latin was a

good foundation for the study of other languages. Much of that was a written rather than an oral language. He said that on page 2 they had said the future directions to consider were communication-based objectives for listening, reading, and writing. That sounded more tentative than saying they were an essential and integral part of learning. It seemed to him they were saying that oral proficiency was the baseline and they would get around to literacy later. Dr. Met explained that this was worded in this way because she had been with the school system for only two months. She said that revising the PROGRAM OF STUDIES for the speaking objectives was a primary goal because the whole foreign language profession was placing an extreme emphasis on the ability of people to talk the language that they were studying. She strongly felt that the listening, reading, and writing ought to follow, but finding out how the system worked had caused her to put that in a tentative form. Dr. Cronin commented that the complaint they often heard was that they were developing functional illiterates in English.

Dr. Lois Martin, associate superintendent, said she was overly apprehensive about putting everything on continuing to revise the PROGRAM OF STUDIES. She said that the PROGRAM OF STUDIES did have objectives and did deal with literacy in the broader sense of all four skills. It was the feeling of the earlier task force that they were shortchanging oral proficiency.

Mr. Clark reported that at a task force meeting an individual who headed up a university linguistics department had stated that essentially people studied a foreign language for one of two reasons, to look at the structure of the language or to attain some functional use of the language. It was the professor's feeling that school had been emphasizing the former and that students were not coming out with the ability to communicate with others.

Dr. Cronin noted that in the future directions section they had a reference to continuing in-service training. He asked whether they were thinking about doing this themselves or using other programs for proficiency training. Dr. Met thought it could be a combination of various sources of in-service. At the moment there were only three courses listed in the in-service catalogue that related to foreign languages, and none of them had been offered since 1982. Dr. Cronin suggested it might be just as effective to provide tuition to UMBC. Dr. Met said they would look at the needs and see what resources were available to meet these needs.

Mr. Ewing suggested that as they considered this issue they really ought to have a statement of purposes in front of them about why it was they thought the teaching of foreign languages was important. He remarked that school systems' enthusiasm for the teaching of foreign languages waxed and waned, but it was never as great as he thought it ought to be. This was regarded by a good many people in the community as a frill. He thought they needed to make a strong case in the statement of purpose about why the teaching of foreign language was not only important but an integral part of the education of children. It was his view that they had implied that the learning

of a foreign language was something only a gifted or talented student could do. However, the experience of other countries did not support this. In schools in Europe virtually everyone learned at least a second language. It was his view that they needed to make that case very strongly. He suggested some additions to the purposes Dr. Met had listed. One was that they really were in a situation in the world in which they were not only hampered in the arena of diplomacy but also in the arena of business. An argument had been made that one of the reasons why they had as big a trade deficit was because they did not have people who could negotiate contracts in the language of the countries to which they were sent. They assumed that wherever they went people would speak to them in English, and economically the United States could not afford this anymore. He thought that the argument that the public schools of the nation ought to contribute to the amelioration of that problem was a very powerful argument. He said they ought to make a strong case that not only was it desirable to communicate with people who were different, but that learning about that difference was its own reward. One of the characteristics of Americans was their intolerance of diversity at home and abroad. A very important part of learning about the other cultures included being able to read works of literature in another language which was also worth arguing for. Mr. Ewing thought they needed some kind of a statement which said why they were doing this. He thought the strongest argument for those who funded them was that the study of a foreign language improved a child's ability to master his own language. Mastery of one's own language was crucial to everything else. He felt that this case should be underscored with research findings.

Dr. Shoenberg agreed that they needed a statement like this to see, in fact, if what they were doing was something that was going to get them there. He commented that whatever they were doing now did not. He said that their students who had gone through the highest level of language instruction did not emerge from this able to communicate in any kind of effective way without some additional experience. Mrs. Praisner said that personally she did not agree with that statement.

Dr. Cronin was not sure that a statement of purpose and what was taught necessarily connected to each other. He was afraid they would never get down to the translation of this into a practical classroom experience regardless of what the statement of purpose was.

Mrs. DiFonzo thought that the knowledge of a foreign language should be an integral part of every child's liberal, well-rounded education. She said that her first two children had had problems with foreign languages, but the third one was successful. She thought that the key to their failure or success was the grounding that they had had in English. Her youngest child had had English teachers who drilled the classes in parts of speech, and her older children did not know what a direct object was in English, let alone in French. If what they wanted was students to be able to converse in a foreign language, then they had to go back and look at what they were doing in English instruction. They had to decide what they wanted children

to know in the language. She believed that if they taught a child about the culture of another country this would sensitize the youngster to be aware of similar idiosyncrasies in other cultures. Not only did it help them to be aware of the Spanish culture if they were studying Spanish, it helped them to be aware of similar idiosyncrasies in French or Orientals.

In regard to Latin, Mrs. DiFonzo did not know what went into Rolling Terrace's idea to offer Latin in their international school. She had recently read several articles which spoke to youngsters who had taken Latin in high school being able to puzzle through words on SAT's. It had also been pointed out that using Latin as a language for immigrant Hispanic children made an excellent bridge to English. She suggested they might wish to consider using a little more Latin structure with both sets of children for the same reason. She was interested in knowing whether there was a way they could longitudinally track the youngsters at Rolling Terrace who were taking Latin in the elementary school to see whether it helped Spanish-speaking youngsters in easing into the English language and whether it had an effect on standardized test scores and on SAT's later.

Dr. Cronin inquired about the statement that they wanted to give major attention to the management and mechanics of testing a classroom of students individually in a valid, consistent, and equitable manner. He asked about the programs they were envisioning and the changes that were necessary in the teaching mode. Dr. Met explained that this section referred to primarily the thought that if they taught for communication, then they tested communication skills. If they were teaching oral communication, they would test orally. It was difficult to find a way to do that in a consistent and equitable manner when they had a classroom full of students who had to be tested on a one-to-one basis. The emphasis on oral communication was an emphasis rather than an exclusion of other skill areas. She pointed out that for a long time they taught foreign languages so that no one could speak them. They were trying to put an emphasis on not just the ability to speak but to speak communicatively and to really be able to get a message across. In order to do that they had to set some time aside during the instruction period to make sure that students had real and meaningful practice in using the skills that they were getting whether through the written or the oral mode. That emphasis did not mean that they did not also teach reading, writing, and grammar. She reported that a researcher had computed the amount of exposure a foreign language student received in a high school or college setting to the amount of time a six-year old received in learning his own language. If they were going to replicate the amount of time on task, they would have to have their students listening to a foreign language for 81 years and speaking for 55 years. She said that in the nation and in Montgomery County

only four percent of the student body went on to the advanced levels of foreign language.

Dr. Cronin asked how they proposed to have their foreign language

teachers understand the delivery of instruction. Dr. Met thought they needed additional in-service training and that a course, teaching for oral proficiency, had been developed for the program. It was offered once and had eight participants, but they had approximately 250 foreign language teachers in MCPS. One area that had to be addressed was training people to change the way they had behaved in the past to accommodate a new methodology. Dr. Cronin requested plans on this as they were developed.

Mrs. Praisner said that to say this without knowing what was necessary and how it was to take place was to send the teachers and the community another unrealistic goal or objective. She was glad they had said there would be a balance because she was concerned that they saw in foreign languages and other areas a pendulum swing. She was wondering whether they were talking about this from the standpoint of modifications at different levels of the foreign language or a comprehensive change across the board. It seemed to her that based on the experience of her children they might have some models already available from the way the Japanese language was taught within their schools. Her daughter had studied Japanese for two years, had done well, and had gone on to study Japanese in college. Dr. Met said that more and more teachers were aware of the current trend in foreign language teaching and were teaching for communication purposes without the in-service and support they had discussed earlier. She felt they had a very excellent staff which was very sophisticated. She was particularly impressed with the resource teachers as a group, and she thought that a lot of these changes were beginning to take place within the classrooms already.

Mrs. Praisner said that when they were looking at directions to consider if they were talking about drill opportunities they were talking about having to look at the class sizes of the foreign language classes. Dr. Met commented that one of the major changes had to do with not only early language instruction but the way language was taught to young children. She knew that Montgomery County already operated programs at Rock Creek Forest and Oak View in immersion. The research had shown that the most successful mode of teaching a foreign language was through the immersion approach, and the earlier the start the more effective it was. She thought the county was already moving in the direction consistent with current thinking in the field of research.

Dr. Cronin stated that there was a nexus he was not sure he was comfortable with on the bottom on page 3. They made the connection between increased efforts to expand the enrollment in less commonly taught languages and to encourage students to go on to the upper level in languages. He saw these as separate issues. He wondered what other less common languages they were talking about and why. He thought the reasons for the decrease in enrollment ought to be in the forefront in every academic and vocational department, and he thought the study should be in process. Dr. Martin explained that it was costly to do major studies, and she added that MCPS was in the exceptional category of having 50 percent of their students taking a foreign language.

Dr. Cronin asked staff to address the effect that combination classes had on whether or not a student continued in the study of the language. He also asked why they would want to teach the less commonly taught languages. Dr. Met replied that they offered Chinese, Japanese, and Russian, but the total enrollment in those three areas was less than one percent. For example, there were 8,400 students studying French and only 100 studying Russian. The enrollment in Chinese would go up this year because it was being offered in three schools. She said that everyone in the room knew the number of people speaking Chinese and Russian and the political significance of these languages. In today's market Japanese was extremely important, and students planning to go on to careers in business and in international marketing would benefit from any one of these three languages. She said that the effect of combination classes was a significant one because of the hardship it placed on students and teachers. With only 50 minutes and two levels of instruction, it was difficult for a teacher to maximize the amount of skill learning. This required a great deal of independent study and for some students that was a very beneficial mode, but not every student was inner motivated. If their goal was foreign language proficiency in communication skill and if the teacher had to divert attention between two groups of students, neither group would get the full opportunity to speak. There were even classes that combined languages as well as levels, and this year one teacher had three languages together.

Mrs. Praisner recalled that they had discussed family life and that some students were not signing up for the class. She said that this was a Category 2 class and would be offered if 15 students signed up; however, some students were told before they started to register that the course would not be offered. She thought they had somewhat of the same situation happening with foreign languages. In some schools, students were being told that the language would not be offered. To say that less than one percent enrolled in Japanese or Chinese was not to say that less than one percent were interested in Japanese or Chinese, but to say they did not offer it. She thought that the school system had to recognize the impact of allowing students to register for whatever they wanted if it was listed in the PROGRAM OF STUDIES. She thought they should be consistent from school to school as far as the message sent to students and what was available. She said they should not have one teacher teaching three courses in one period, but she had the feeling that was the only way it could be offered at that school. When they started offering courses they might find that this was the end result, or no class would be the end result. She commented that she did not see students taking only level one or two of a language as necessarily wrong. She thought that this experience or exposure for some students was not necessarily a negative situation. She stated that they had to be clear about their objective, and this was where all of their mixed messages came into focus. She felt that their conclusions were almost contradictory as well.

Dr. Pitt pointed out that a school might get more staff based on

need. If they had 10 youngsters in Spanish V and three in Spanish VI, they could not afford to have separate classes. Therefore, they ended up with a combination class, and he agreed this was a problem. If they offered Japanese and had a teacher available for one or two periods who could teach something else in the other periods, it would be possible to offer Japanese. He commented that this was not a simple problem and they did try a variety of approaches. As they increased the number of youngsters going into a program, it became less of a problem. Dr. Cody added the question was whether or not they were going to put their resources into a class of three or say that under those terms they would not make the class available.

Mr. Ewing thought it would be useful for the Board to have an opportunity to look at the situation this fall in terms of numbers of higher level classes that were multilevel and multilevel in multiple languages. He had never thought this was a good idea and had thought it would be better not to offer the class. Dr. Pitt suggested that these youngsters might be on independent study and just be assigned to that teacher.

Mr. Ewing said he wanted to come back to the point about the extent to which they wanted to commit themselves to proficiency for everyone. That issue pervaded the whole question of when they started instruction, the immersion program, and how much encouragement they ought to give students to go beyond the first year or two of a language. It seemed to him this was not totally a matter for the school system to decide because parents and students made choices based on a whole range of factors. He thought they had an obligation to make clear what it was that students might benefit from if they were to learn those languages. He agreed with Mrs. Praisner that the degree of proficiency was not necessarily a goal for everyone enrolling in a foreign language. He said that there were benefits in taking a couple of years of a foreign language including learning about grammar, language structure, and another culture. Those kinds of limited objectives were legitimate and worthwhile for many students. He was not sure a student was better off taking six years of one language or two years of three languages. He felt that as a school system they needed to sort this out and decide how far they wanted to press in terms of setting objectives for everyone versus having multiple objectives to be met by a curriculum that was diverse and available for people to select from. He favored the latter, but he thought the former should be available for those students who needed it.

Dr. Floyd stated that they did need to keep in mind that they had 93,000 students. Secondly, they needed to concern themselves about making sure they had the offerings as to try to tailor-make each one of these instances. He said they did not know a lot of the answers as to whether split classes were better than something else. He hoped that they could keep their eye on the goal and then look at the mechanism they had in place to try to get them there. In regard to the staff paper, he knew it was not appropriate to assign the importance of concepts in a document on the basis of the quantity of the words used, but it struck him as incongruous concerning the

opening statement that Dr. Met made, the point Mr. Ewing made about setting up goals, and the difference between the two and a half pages for the secondary program and the few lines devoted to the elementary program.

Dr. Shoenberg explained that he did not mean to imply that proficiency ought to be their goal for all of their students or necessarily for the majority of their students. If they were going to make their argument in terms of global communication, they ought to at least offer greater opportunity for students within the high school setting to achieve a level of communication that was meaningful. He thought that generally they did not do that now. He said they needed to look for some other mechanism for doing it because 50 minutes a day, five days a week, was not enough for doing that. He suggested that if they were to take that same time, put it together, and set up some kind of immersion situation they would get a lot more accomplished. He was interested in their exploring a foreign language opportunity for everyone in the elementary school. He expected that would be very expensive not only in terms of personnel who might not be available but also expensive in terms of the time taken from other subjects. He expected that a few minutes a day devoted to language as part of the language arts time would probably have a beneficial effect on English. He said that it was very clear that if they were serious about language they had to start in the elementary school, see what would be required to do that, and factor this into their discussion. Clearly they could not have immersion programs for everyone. He asked staff to provide him with some idea about how the second language instruction was handled in other countries. He said they had to consider what kind of structure they could establish in the secondary schools that would be an immersion opportunity for students, even if only for a semester. He said they should discuss what they could do to provide for a pooling of students in one place who wanted some of the less commonly taught languages. He pointed out that they did not allow students to transfer from one school to another in order to get a foreign language, and he suggested they could have schools in various parts of the county that were basically language schools and which might offer five levels of Russian or a semester of language immersion. He asked for information about the possibilities of both of those.

Dr. Cronin noted that the next item on the Board's agenda dealt with special education. He said that as they discussed the teaching proficiency in the classroom he would like to see how they planned to handle the education of handicapped children in language art areas. He asked how they would handle children in a foreign language if the students had limitations in speaking or hearing.

Mr. Ewing reported that the Rolling Terrace program was designed to improve student mastery of English by the use of Latin and did not raise the problem of displacing something parents regarded as highly significant. The program was integrated into the English language program and was based on solid research on student achievement as a result of the program in Philadelphia, among other places. He thought it would be useful for the staff to provide information to

the Board on the Rolling Terrace program.

Mr. Foubert reported that yesterday he had had a discussion with his foreign language teacher, Mrs. DeBlas. They had talked about attracting students into the foreign language program and about language labs and cable television. She thought that the language lab did not pay off because a lot of material in the lab became obsolete, and the lab also required a lot of out-of-class time. He asked whether there were other technological means for supporting classroom instruction. Dr. Met replied that there were some emerging areas especially in the area of computers although right now most programs were drills. She reported that there were some exciting software programs coming up that were interactive language programs that did allow the student to talk to the machine. In addition, there were opportunities within the community that would allow students with an interest in a foreign language to pursue that language on their own.

Dr. Martin commented that there had been discussion of foreign languages for diplomatic and for trade reasons. People who travelled came home with the impression that there was less of a need for a foreign language because everyone spoke English. However, she pointed out a line in the Washington POST which stated that you didn't need a foreign language to buy something but you surely needed it to sell.

Mr. Foubert pointed out that there were a number of issues they did not get to, and Dr. Shoenberg thought that staff should review issues raised by Board members and that the Board should schedule an evening just to talk about foreign language. Mr. Ewing asked whether there was a scheduling issue for staff for budget purposes. Dr. Cody agreed that there were a number of things on which they had to get information, and he would add a request for information on the PTA-sponsored foreign language program. He did not recall any specific budget issues except the combination classes. He suggested scheduling the discussion in late October or early November. Dr. Shoenberg asked that they get an estimate of the availability of qualified instructors and the suitability of certification programs as preparation for the kind of instruction they were talking about. He thanked the staff for a good report and a good discussion.

Re: SPECIAL EDUCATION FACILITIES
STANDARDS

Dr. Hiawatha Fountain, associate superintendent, stated that in the initiatives paper they had discussed with the Board in July they had an objective on adequate and appropriate housing for special education. They were asked to develop some standards and criteria for getting that done. The paper before the Board dealt with a list of factors and criteria necessary to accomplish the goal they had set forth in facilities. In their initiatives paper they had talked about the planning and facilities staffs working with them on this, but there had been no opportunity for them to analyze the feasibility of the standards.

Dr. Cody inquired about the time schedule for the next stage. Dr. Fountain hoped that some of this could be placed in the facilities plan that would be developed this year; however, he hoped no one believed they were expecting all of this to happen this year. He hoped these factors would be considered as they moved toward the optimum housing for special and alternative education programs.

Dr. Cody recalled that last year's facility update had included in the outyears some changed locations for special education programs. This came to the Board without any kind of rationale, and this activity was intended to lay some conceptual groundwork to where special education classes and programs should be in the county. This would be applied to what they had and what they thought they would need in the future. When they talked about the facility update, there would be a rationale for any proposed changes. They had in mind another document that would apply the standards, almost cluster by cluster, to show adjustments needed.

Dr. Shoenberg assumed they were discussing the particular criteria on the first page of the document. A second item was the formats and whether these were adequately clear and responsive. He assumed they were not being asked to give any kind of endorsement to the particulars. Dr. Cody replied that the paper was for discussion only.

Mr. Ewing thought this was a useful approach, and he said the criteria made sense. It seemed to him the Board should see the standards before they were applied. He indicated that he had problems understanding some of the numbers, and he suggested that when they received the final document these should be understandable.

Dr. Cronin noted that on the sample resolution it said they had criteria but 14 were listed. Dr. Fountain explained that this really dealt with the initiatives paper. The third activity was an analysis by the facilities planners which had not been done. He did not want to suggest that this list was a complete and total list until after their review. Dr. Cronin suggested that they drop "other" as the fourteenth item on the green sheet.

Mrs. Praisner recalled that she had raised the issue of the enrollment of regular students in the school and the balance with special education students. She said they had to think about the number of regular students who had to be there to have an appropriate mainstreaming experience. They had to think about how many special education classes in a school became too many. It seemed to her they had to recognize what else was in the school.

Dr. Shoenberg shared her concern. It seemed to him that what they had w