

role.

Mr. Simon said there were three examples of the hierarchical approach. They were the minority student achievement plan, the snowy day, and the assertive discipline issue. In regard to minority student achievement, MCEA and teachers were supportive of that effort. However, this was a plan discussed by the Board and implemented by the superintendent and Dr. Scott. The message communicated to over 6,000 employees was that communication was perceived as a threat in some instances. In some cases principals perceived it as a threat, and they communicated the goals of the plan in such a way that they were not seen as totally supportive. While MCEA was out front and aggressive in its support of the goals of the program, they felt that teachers were being underutilized in this process. If a program was going to succeed, people had to buy into the program at the teacher level.

Mr. Simon stated that the next example was the snowy day. MCEA had felt from the outset that having a make-up day for the parent conferences cancelled on November 11 made sense. They had talked to Dr. Pitt and Dr. Vance about using December 10 for this purpose and had communicated with their membership about this issue. However, while principals had total authority to decide whether to use December 10, they had little information. Mr. Simon felt there should be a better process of communication between teachers and principals and for deciding how the make-up day could have been achieved.

The third example was assertive discipline, and some parents and teachers had already raised concerns about this. Mr. Simon said the problem was not with the program itself because the techniques had been available to teachers for some time. The problem came about when principals took it upon themselves to decide to implement the program and to provide in-service training for teachers. The teachers found themselves doing something that they had no opportunity to decide whether to do or not. He thought that the essential problem with the assertive discipline issue was the process that led to its implementation.

Mr. Simon congratulated the Board for establishing the Commission on Excellence and even more for not shelving the report of that group. It was clear from Dr. Pitt's implementation steps that they were moving forward. However, it was not clear on a philosophical level the extent to which the Board had bought into the principles of the report. He noted that the Board had spent time at several meetings discussing the role of the principal, and conclusions reached at these meetings may well contradict some fundamental issues raised by the Commission's report. In the meantime the implementation steps were going on. He said that for them the two central issues in the report of the Commission were Recommendations 22 and 27.

Mr. Simon said that Recommendation 22 states, "Teachers and principals be given increased responsibility, authority, and accountability for determining the structure of their school and how

they will achieve the goals for learning established by the Board of Education." Recommendation 27 is to "provide teachers the amenities that other professionals take for granted." For example, teachers did not have opportunities to confer with colleagues and did not have clerical support. He said that what was called for was the recognition that the primary responsibility for education rested in the hands of the teachers and that the structuring of education should be around the teachers. He recalled that during a discussion of the heavy burdens on principals, Dr. Cronin had asked if any of the principals had thought about sharing these responsibilities with other staff members. No one responded.

Mr. Simon remarked that it was his fear that the Board did not agree with this recommendation. Clearly there were things that must give the Board of Education pause. These included a potential loss of management prerogative as teachers were given more responsibility and budget implications for staffing schools so that teachers had the time to do this. He explained that MCEA was not advocating rushing in to do these things. They recognized that this effort would take a long time and that the best way might be to pilot some of these ideas. However, he wanted to see a recognition that the ideas in the report did have potential. They wanted the Board to begin to build a relationship with MCEA that would permit this to move forward. They understood that Dr. Pitt was including money in the budget for this purpose, and they suggested that the pilots occur in fewer schools but in more intensity so that they could really get into this.

Mrs. DiFonzo asked if they were intimating that teachers had problems with this because they did not think of this plan, did not initiate it, or did not own it. Mr. Simon explained that it was not the "not invented here" syndrome. If a school was going to implement a program, the staff needed to have an opportunity to decide if this was what they wanted to do and not have a decision made by one person.

Mr. Randy Changuris reported that Seneca Valley had just finished its Middle States evaluation, and one criticism was that the decision-making was top down and there was no communication from the bottom up. Therefore, teachers did not take ownership in what was going on and morale was not as good as it should be. He hoped that they would be able to discuss the Middle States report with Dr. Vance because here would be an excellent place to make a start in involving teachers in the goals of the school.

Dr. Cronin commented that in the three examples cited by Mr. Simon what he saw was a communications breakdown. For example, there was concern when decisions came from the top and when information came from the bottom. He personally liked Recommendation 22, and wondered how they could go about this. Mr. Richard Jaworski replied that he would recommend using surveys. For example, in the case of computer-controlled heat and air conditioning, they might give more autonomy to people in the building who knew what the needs were in that building.

Dr. Cronin commented that he saw in the superintendent's proposals an

element which would leave an individual school much more potential for developing its own future because the principal and staff would jointly decide what their goals would be. He reported that two Board meetings ago, the Board had given basic support to the principles of the Commission and Dr. Pitt's proposed implementation schedule. In regard to the three examples, Mr. Simon explained that it was not just communication. For example, in assertive discipline there was a mechanism in each school for a staff to decide whether to use the program, but these mechanisms were not used. The principals made the decision. In regard to the snowy day, some principals decided to do in-service on December 10. Dr. Vance put out a memo to principals saying it was to be a make-up day for conferences unless the staff and the principal decided it was going to be used for something else. Until that memo went out, the staff had no role in the decision whatsoever. He suggested that there had to be a structured way for teachers to make decisions.

Ms. Phyllis Robinson commented that MCPS was a large school system. There were managers in MCPS who were intimidated by staff participation and others who welcomed participation. She felt they were talking about a combination of issues, not just communication. Ms. Jane Stern added that a good example of the top-down syndrome was the way in which they had been handling the eight half-days when there was an early dismissal of students. Most of these programs were structured without teachers ever being asked what they felt they needed. She said that they had a captive audience and always pitched these programs as though everyone was at the same level of understanding. There was almost a feeling that unless this time was structured, the teachers would fritter away their time like young students.

Mrs. DiFonzo asked whether MCEA members felt that this "benign dictatorship" ran across grade levels or was more noticeable at one level. Mr. Simon replied that it might be linked to the training that people had. For example, they often used the word, "collegial," and yet most did not know what that meant. Ms. Stern thought that the problem was worse at the elementary school level and seemed to lessen at the secondary level.

Ms. Phyllis Cochran reported that in her school, the teachers did define the program needs. She suggested that where good things were happening they needed to look at these and provide some training to reflect what was going on in those schools. Mrs. DiFonzo commented that she had been in Mrs. Cochran's school and teachers appeared to be buying into the program. Ms. Cochran noted that this was a huge school system with many models out in the schools, and they really had to accentuate the positive.

Mr. Jim Politis agreed that the problem was more severe at the elementary level. The smaller the faculty, the more it was possible for the principal to keep his finger on every pulse. He noted that Gaithersburg High School was an example of how things could work well. In regard to December 10, Dr. Masci was persuaded to let the liaison committee decide, and the committee used their expertise to

put on an in-service program that was well received because it was put on by teachers.

Mr. Seth Goldberg stated that an important goal was to try and see whether the Board of Education and the Board of directors of MCEA were reading the same words the same way and talking about the same thing. For example, some had interpreted Recommendation 22 as saying the local principal needed more authority to run his or her kingdom. MCEA agreed with the national reports that this is a real problem and that something had to be done about the current hierarchical arrangements in schools. The power relationships in schools were such that teachers were disfranchised. He reported that in the text of the recommendation there were some loaded statements which spoke to a need to have a shift in the locus of power in the school system. MCEA agreed because when a lot of scholarship people studied education they had come to the same conclusion. He wondered what Recommendation 22 was saying to Board members. For example, did this recommendation empower teachers and recommend a shift in relationships.

Ms. Carole Lowe reported that at the secondary level teachers appeared to have more impact on decisions because of the leadership team. However, sometimes as the leadership team worked with the principal, the teachers felt they were not being well represented because this team was assuming a leadership role.

Mr. Ewing said that the section of the report MCEA had called attention to was the heart and the hardest part of the report to come to grips with. To him, it said there needed to be a profound change in the way the school system dealt with the professional. In the United States they did poorly in improving productivity because the method of work was hierarchical and authoritarian. This was more pervasive in education than elsewhere, he thought. The problem was that in the last 40 years they had a generation of people who were well educated and would not tolerate situations in which they could not participate. He thought it was necessary to move in that direction as rapidly as they could. They would not attract people into the classroom unless they did this. Many young people were not choosing education as a career because it was not well paid and was not held in high regard. This would not change unless they changed the way they treated the professionals. There were some schools where this worked well, and there were times in some schools where it worked well, but the model they were using in Montgomery County was one of authority.

Mr. Ewing said that people were worried about where accountability turned up. On pages 48 and 49 the Commission did talk about this including identification of measures of results. He said they were at fault for not determining what results they wanted to achieve. Instead they failed by trying to control. They would be better off if they would start to discipline themselves regarding results. He thought that this was fundamental, but he felt it did fly in the face of the whole tradition of education in Montgomery County and in American life.

Dr. Cronin cited his experiences in two schools in New York. One where the decision making came from the top down, and the other with a faculty council, and a quasi-partnership with the principal. In MCPS he would like to see a partnership between the principal and the staff; however, at some point when they did have a knotty issue the principal would have to make that decision. He felt that most decisions could be arrived at communally.

Mrs. Praisner said she was a little confused about their perception of a contradiction between the recommendations of the Commission and the discussion of the role of the principal. For example, they talked about appropriate in-service training for principals. Although the Board had spent the primary focus of its time on attracting and retaining teachers, they had to be concerned about other employees including supporting services and principals. Mr. Simon commented that it was not the amount of time the Board spent on these discussions. Rather it was the image of the lonely individual out there making all the decisions and evaluating staff and curriculum. Not once was there any hint that anyone else could participate in this process. When it was suggested that other people could help, no thought was given by principals to the possible involvement of teachers. This evening he was asking the Board for some reassurances.

Mrs. Praisner noted that there were some good models out in the schools. Their concern was to assure that individuals exhibiting appropriate behavior received recognition for this, and that people look for other strategies. Ms. Cochran commented that MCPS had a good situation in many ways. Mr. Simon had raised the point that principals were overworked and had not been able to delegate certain responsibilities. In negotiations they had raised the concept of team leaders on the elementary school level. She could cite a number of instances where her principal would be supported if she could delegate out some of her responsibilities. She said that from this last round of negotiations with teachers she now had half a day to do her report cards, and they were now beginning to address planning time for elementary school teachers.

Mr. Simon remarked that the distinction was being made that there were better situations in some schools, but they did not have a model to follow. Mrs. Praisner commented that there was not a perfect model. She thought there should be differences from school to school and said that could not happen if they had only one model. Mr. Goldberg explained they were looking for support from the Board. When he saw there was to be a discussion on the role of the principal, he thought it would be followed by a discussion on the role of the teacher. Mrs. Praisner commented that having started to discuss the recommendations of the Commission, she did not see discussing the role of the principal as slighting that issue. Dr. Cronin pointed out that they were discussing the role of the teacher right now. Mr. Simon pointed out that MCEA had initiated this discussion.

Dr. Cronin suggested they might be looking into what Frank Masci was doing at Gaithersburg High School which caused him to be recognized for running a good school. Mr. Simon said that what they were looking for was a fundamental reexamination of these models and a break from past tradition. There were no models for the recommendations the Commission had made on authority and responsibility. He asked if the pilots would be ground-breaking efforts.

Ms. Marsha Smith commented that the instructional councils consisted of resource teachers and others who were to make policy. One problem with the councils was that membership was selected by the principal. One break might be for these memberships to be selected by their peers. Mentoring was another possibility. They agreed there should be someone like a mentor in the schools, but they disagreed over who was to select the mentor. She believed these people could be selected by their peers, and these were two suggestions to break with tradition.

Mr. Changuris stated that this came down to leadership. The schools working well were the ones where the leadership on both sides was taking risks. The schools not working well were the ones where the lines of communication were one-sided. He suggested they should look at the training and selection of administrators. He thought that if they had good leadership they would get more value for their educational dollars. For example, the staff at Gaithersburg would do anything because of the leadership in that school.

Mr. Politis stated that there was the feeling that the new crop of administrators were turned out with two cardinal principles in their minds. The first was "don't let the teachers get anything over," and the second was "grind them down." The perception was that principals like Dr. Masci were a dying breed. Mr. Changuris explained that being a principal was more than having a degree in administration. The person had to let teachers have some input if he or she wanted them to follow. This was risk taking.

Mrs. Praisner asked if they had any sense of variations in the different assessment center models. Ms. Smith replied that the MCPS center was geared for people who had stepped over the bodies of their colleagues to get to the top. Another important thing was to learn the bureaucracy better than another person and to learn the fastest way to do things; however, a lot of things done in a school could not be done quickly. She thought that the assessment center was producing achievement-oriented people rather than cooperative managers. Mrs. Praisner said she was interested in their views about the process and the model. It was important to strengthen the process so that teachers were comfortable with the selection process.

Mr. Charlie Barkley commented that the perception in the schools was that the people getting the jobs were the people who could razzle-dazzle the interviewers. The colleagues most respected by teachers often did not make the list.

It seemed to Mr. Ewing that as he reviewed the literature, there did not seem to be anything about looking for people who had skills in participatory management. In addition, he did not see training offered in this area. Mr. Goldberg said that even if they had those things built into the principalship they were not looking at the central issue of orchestrating change. There was some agreement that the problems leading to disenfranchisement of the teachers were all structural, and the structure of the school system had to be addressed. If they made structural changes of how principals and teachers related to each other at the local school level, much less would be left to chance.

Ms. Cochran remarked that she had been listening to the discussion, and part of the problem was that people kept referring to the principal as "he." They saw this role as male, and yet this profession was populated mostly by women. The other thing was leadership by example. MCPS had to increase the number of females in positions of leadership. She pointed out that they were putting women in training programs that were probably led by men. She felt there were schools out there where there was opportunity for equality. She suggested they do different styles of pilots in different settings. She pointed out that Dr. Masci and his teachers were doing a good job because collectively they made him look good. Mrs. Praisner commented that they did not have principals coming to them and questioning why there was no commission to study ways of attracting and retaining good principals. Mr. Simon pointed out that there were no teachers on the Commission, and Mrs. Praisner pointed out that there were no principals. Ms. Cochran explained that she did not want a discussion of the role of the principal separate from a discussion of the roles of those who worked with the principal.

Dr. Cronin reported that at a recent meeting with student representatives they had talked about smoking in the schools and the superintendent's recommendation that student smoking be banned. The students had asked what teachers were teaching if they continued to smoke. Mr. Simon commented that the Board was going to hear several different viewpoints on this issue.

Ms. Stern remarked that she did not know how MCEA could handle the workloads if disciplinary action were taken against teachers. She pointed out that there were a lot of things that it was ok for adults to do and not for students to do. A lot of adults got into the smoking habit when not as much was known about the effects of smoking. These people would like to stop and probably could if their profession was less stressful. The best thing was for young people not to start smoking.

Mr. Goldberg commented that he had been addicted to cigarettes since he was 11. He did not think there was a difference between adult and student addictions. Prohibiting smoking came out of seeing students in a hierarchical relationship to adults. They had to accept the responsibility of doing something for students that would help them with this problem. Both adults and young people wanted to quit smoking. He suggested there might be things that schools could do to

help with that. There were a lot of successful support groups to help keep people from smoking. They could ask some insurance carriers to run programs in the schools and encourage staff, students, and parents to get involved with these programs. He thought about having students and teachers teaming up and helping each other.

Ms. Smith reported that she was a non-smoker; however, she recalled not being able to go into the bathrooms when she was in high school because of the smoking. She asked about the consequences for students who were caught smoking in school. If the ultimate consequence was suspension, she wondered if they were ready to see the suspension rates go up. She noted that in public places there were areas where smoking was permitted, but now they would have no areas for students. She suggested designating outside areas for staff and students. She also asked who would do the enforcing, because teachers were not going to do it.

Ms. Smith reported that she taught the unit on alcohol/tobacco/drugs to eighth graders. She recalled that when the smoking areas were established, the number of students smoking actually decreased. Ms. Cochran pointed out that they had to worry about the effect of smoke on non-smokers because the government had tackled this issue in their buildings. Ms. Stern suggested having a faculty smoking lounge and a faculty non-smoking lounge.

Mr. Goldensohn reported that Wootton High School had two lounges, but someone had put the soda machine in the smokers' lounge. He noted that there were pressures on the Board to make a decision soon. If they rejected the superintendent's proposal, they would have to come up with something else. Mr. Changuris asked if they had seen the preliminary reports from Seneca Valley. He had not thought it would work, but he had seen little evidence of smoking in the rest rooms. Mr. Goldensohn reported that the students themselves were enforcing the ban. Mr. Changuris added that if students were going to smoke, they did so off the school grounds. As far as penalties, the students were given five or six warnings before anything happened. They did not have many staff people who smoked, and they now had a room on a loading dock for this purpose.

Mrs. DiFonzo commented that if they passed a no-smoking policy, a student not wanting to be suspended would go off school grounds. If the student went off the property, the student would be suspended. When she had attended high school, smoking was not permitted, but students wanting to smoke stepped off the school property.

Mr. Jaworski remarked that society had to buy into laws, and the question was whether the students would buy into this one. He would argue for a lot of assemblies at the beginning of the school year to present programs about the dangers of passive smoking and lung cancer. He thought they needed a combination of education, peer pressure, and the law to make this work. Mr. Goldensohn understood that Seneca Valley and Walt Whitman High Schools had done just that. He noted that it was against the law to sell cigarettes to people under 16 as it was against the law to drive over 55 mph on I270. If

he drove over 55 mph, he was giving his daughter a message. If a rule was no smoking, once in a while an example had to be set. He reported that with his own daughter it was peer pressure. Her friends pressured others to give up smoking. Ms. Stern said that teachers would not police the washrooms or give up their free time to add this to their duties.

Mrs. Praisner asked what teachers were doing in Seneca Valley, and Mr. Changuris replied that teachers were not doing anything. The administrators and the hall monitors were handling this. Mr. Herscowitz reported that according to students there was a group of students who left the school to smoke, but the administration was choosing not to suspend these students. As a non-smoker, Ms. Lowe said she was in favor of the ban. In her work in junior high school they had concentrated on enforcing the ban, only to see smoking permitted in senior high schools.

In regard to the proposed bill on Anne Arundel County, Mrs. DiFonzo explained that the proposal was to have the Board of Education appointed by the county executive rather than the governor and the county executive wanted line item veto power. Mrs. Praisner reported that she had served on a panel at the recent MACO conference that had included a discussion of the Anne Arundel county executive's desire to do the negotiations on salary and financial issues. She said MABE was following the bill and would continue to do so. Mrs. DiFonzo explained that they were concerned about the precedent-setting nature of this bill.

Mrs. DiFonzo thanked the members of MCEA for attending the meeting and expressed her hope that the lines of communication between the two boards would stay open.

Re: ADJOURNMENT

The president adjourned the meeting at 10:10 p.m.

PRESIDENT

SECRETARY

PLV:mlw