

APPROVED  
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Rockville, Maryland  
March 19, 1981

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in special session at the Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Thursday, March 19, 1981, at 8:25 p.m.

ROLL CALL Present: Mrs. Carol F. Wallace, President in the  
Chair

Mr. Joseph R. Barse  
Mr. Blair G. Ewing  
Mrs. Suzanne K. Peyser  
Mrs. Elizabeth W. Spencer  
Miss Traci Williams  
Mrs. Eleanor D. Zappone

Absent: Dr. Marian L. Greenblatt

Others Present: Dr. Edward Andrews, Superintendent of  
Schools

Dr. Harry Pitt, Deputy Superintendent  
Dr. Robert S. Shaffner, Executive  
Assistant

Re: Meeting with MCCPTA

Mrs. Zoe Lefkowitz welcomed the members of the Board of Education. She felt that Board should have an annual meeting with MCCPTA to learn of their activities. She suggested that they start with informal reports from the area vice presidents.

Mrs. Nancy Dacek, Area 3, said that in the Potomac area schools were concerned about drugs, not because they had a big problem, but because they were sensitive to this issue. They were concerned about the area reorganization and how it would affect them particularly in the Wootton area. She explained that everyone was concerned about the services they would lose. She said that school closings were big issues, and there had been a few squabbles over students. She reported that the seven-period day came up all the time and they would continue to fight for it. Mrs. Dacek said that articulation had been discussed in the sense of course coordination between elementaries, junior highs, and high schools.

Mr. Gene Sadick, Area 2, reported that his area was in a state of turmoil on several issues. In the Springbrook feeder areas, there were problems with school closings and minority balance. In the Sligo Cluster the emphasis was on school facilities that seemed to be moving away from them. He said that the Woodside community wanted their school renovation, and everyone was waiting for the Master Plan. He indicated that there was a lot of discussion in the Takoma Cluster about the transfer policy and how it would be enforced. He said that there was a lot of talk about the assignment of the area superintendent and the need for stability in this position. He said that they had a lot of problems with

transportation. The superintendent asked that Mr. Sadick provide him with details of the problem. Mr. Sadick reported that the testing program had created somewhat of a havoc at the ninth grade level at both Eastern and Takoma because the teachers were not preparing students to take the test.

Ms. Rita Rumbaugh, Area 1, explained that her area was defined by clusters and most of the concerns expressed were taken care of in the cluster organization. They were concerned about the Leland/Kensington/Western issue. They were glad that moving to a new area organization would cause other areas to be defined in clusters. She said that the Board knew about their PRIDE project. She indicated that they were working on painting the Metro fence around the Forest Glen station and when their Einstein students have a major production their elementary and junior high school students could walk to the performance. She felt that this kind of a model encouraged people to feel a part of the community, and she stated that they were not looking forward to the fifteen-year plan.

Mrs. Barbara Titland, Area 5, stated that the citizens in Gaithersburg were a little concerned about the boundaries for Martin Luther King Junior High School. A couple of their PTAs had asked for assistant principals for their elementary school. She indicated that they had a Project PRIDE in the Gaithersburg High School cluster. She said that they would like the Board not to eliminate middle schools in the near future. She said that they appreciated the help of Dr. Tom Peters and his fine staff in Area 5.

Mrs. Suzanne Carbone, Area 4, reported that they had had discussions about the California tests and the bunching of the scores. They were concerned about planning decisions and new growth in their area. There had been some comment about the fate of the junior high schools and why Key was not on the list of possible closures because rumors were circulating that it would close. Mrs. Wallace explained that the list published in the Journal was not based on information from the Board. Mrs. Carbone said there had also been questions about the timetable regarding the closures of the junior high schools and whether this would extend into the summer and fall.

There was a concern about the new area reorganization and the span of control. She said she had received questions about whether the new intermediate schools would be as child centered as the middle schools. She felt that there was a need to provide more information on the vocational/technical center at Wheaton High School. She said that at Paint Branch and Wheaton they had developed some good parent support groups. However, she felt that in her area they had lost volunteers, especially in the health rooms. They also had questions on how to involve increasing number of minority parents in the PTAs.

Mrs. Lefkowitz noted that because the Board had gone to three areas their organization would have to go to three areas and they would

restructure their whole organization. She said that on the thirtieth they would formally go into the high school clusters, but they had decided to do this before the Board had adopted its facilities plan. She reported that they now had a PTA article in the Advertiser every week.

Mrs. Zappone remarked that the minutes from the Blair Advisory Council were tremendous. She said that Mrs. Dacek had mentioned coordination among the various levels, and in Blair they did have people from each level; yet she had never heard this come up. Mr. Sadick replied that the issues were so widespread that they did not have time to discuss internal school problems. Mrs. Lefkowitz noted that the Blair cluster was an organization of its own and was not a formal PTA organization. Mrs. Zappone commented that once they had a straight line feeder pattern and without splits a lot of this could take place. Mr. Sadick remarked that in the Takoma area it was not clear to them that this was going to happen right away.

In fact, it was not clear to him that the area was being treated as an integrated area. He said that if they looked at the discussions in the Takoma cluster there was no idea that all of these various parts of the community would be coming together. Mrs. Wallace said that all Board members were aware that probably Blair was the only high school being fed by four junior high schools, and this was one of the problems that probably would be corrected. The superintendent added that three of the four junior high schools were under the 50 percent utilization factor. Mr. Sadick said they were also concerned about taking the computers out of Blair and sending them to the new vocational/technical school.

Mr. Barse remarked that he was interested to see that there was only one mention of the loss of parent volunteers and wondered whether the other areas sensed the same fall-off. Mrs. Dacek replied that she did because there were so many working mothers now. She said that at some of their elementaries they were getting the elderly to volunteer. Mr. Barse asked whether PRIDE was the exception, and Ms. Rumbaugh replied that it was because it could be done over the phone or in the supermarket and did not depend on going to the school.

Mrs. Lefkowitz explained that this year one of her goals was to involve more minority and single parents in the PTA. Mr. Barse asked whether the PRIDE model got to the elementary school level, and Ms. Rumbaugh replied that all five of their elementary schools were involved. Mr. Barse asked whether this would have the result of bringing parents into the elementary school to do volunteer work, and Ms. Rumbaugh replied that that was not necessarily so. Mrs. Lefkowitz added that they had to utilize the services of senior citizens, and she thought that Sally Jackson was doing an excellent job in this area. Mr. Barse thought that they had to do a real selling job of convincing parents that they would get a greater personal return to themselves if they volunteered their services to the school.

Dr. Pitt remarked that there had to be a close relationship between

the area PTA and the area superintendent and his or her staff because so many problems were resolved at the area level. They would be looking at ways of approaching this through a cluster approach. Mrs. Wallace hoped that the area superintendent could set aside a time once a week to meet with the PTA representative or a group. It was Mr. Ewing's view that decreased numbers of staff in the areas and the increased schools in the areas would mean less time to spend on parent involvement. He wondered how they would assure that the important questions would get addressed. Mr. Thomas Fess, ombudsman, pointed out that the community involvement process had a specific timeframe, but given the span of control they had to be more realistic regarding the response time to reply to a formal complaint. Mrs. Carbone inquired about the idea of placing a small PTA room with a telephone in the area office, and Mrs. Wallace thought that was something they probably could look into. Mrs. Wallace suggested that it might help if there was a time when an area superintendent could be available to parents. Dr. Pitt remarked that it was a two-way street because the areas did try to inform parents of problems that were coming up.

Mrs. Rumbaugh asked whether there was a timetable for the areas to work with the cluster schools. Dr. Pitt replied that the five area superintendents were working as a group to consolidate into three areas.

Mrs. Nancy Dacek said that her budget committee would be meeting with Mr. Gilchrist. They had sent out a questionnaire last fall and had tabulated the results of that. In addition, they were talking to all of the PTAs to get them involved in testifying before the Council and in writing letters. Mrs. Marilyn Frazier, community and joint occupancy committee, reported that the Interagency Coordinating Board and its citizens advisory committee would be holding a public forum on March 25 on the community use of schools.

Mrs. Wallace hoped that someone would make a plea for FLES and group piano so they did not have to pay fees. She also hoped that libraries and Park and Planning facilities could be under the jurisdiction of the ICB.

Mrs. Jingle Lutz, gifted child committee, expressed her appreciation for all the efforts the Board was making for countywide gifted and talented programs. She said that her group served as liaison between MCCPTA, the Gifted and Talented Association, and the superintendent's advisory committee. She said that one of their major objectives was the dissemination of information, and they received many calls from residents of Montgomery County as well as residents in the surrounding counties. They had an annual program on summer opportunities for gifted and talented children. They were planning to ask all of their local unit presidents to appoint a gifted and talented chairperson.

Mrs. Kay Davis, health committee, reported that she had been working with Sally Jackson and the Montgomery County Health

Department to put out a new booklet on health volunteers. She said that they would have people testifying for health services at the Council hearings on the budget. She believed that school health services were underfunded and that Health Department services were spread too thin. Originally the school nurse covered two schools, and now they were covering from four to six schools. She said that in the fall the Commission for Children and Youth had focused on sex education in the schools and found out there did not seem to be a countywide approach. She indicated that her committee was also very interested in the proposed comprehensive health curriculum. Mrs. Wallace suggested that she share her views about the curriculum with the Board. The superintendent explained that this particular curriculum had gone back to the drawing boards.

In regard to the school health nurse, Mrs. Zappone said she had heard they could not dispense aspirin. Mrs. Davis replied that the health assistants could not do a great deal. The nurses could do some things, but they were limited by school system regulations and the public education law rather than Health Department regulations. She felt that this was a topic the Board could discuss with the Health Department. Dr. Pitt replied that his staff had been working with the Health Department and communication was better than it was two years ago. He said they were working on a direct person-to-person basis, but one of the problems was that resources were limited. He felt that there were always going to be limitations on what the nurses could do.

Mr. Ewing recalled that the teenage pregnancy problem had been raised by the commission, but the Board had in his view ignored that. He wondered whether the county PTA was going to take some position. Mrs. Davis replied that the executive committee had passed a recommended position and wanted to establish an ad hoc committee of the chairs of the family life people in the secondary schools. She also pointed out that there were a number of schools which did not have the state-required family life committee. They supported getting statistics on what kind of a problem they had in the county.

Mrs. Phyllis Brush, public relations, explained that they sent out press releases and sometimes worked on feature stories. She felt that their new column in the Advertiser was going to be very helpful. Mrs. Wallace noted that not all people received the Advertiser and suggested it would be informative if copies of their columns were shared with the Board.

Mrs. Dianne Brasile, special needs, reported that her committee was involved with raising the awareness of any children having learning difficulties. They worked on the premise that parents can contribute to their child's education. They had a goal of having a special needs chairman in every school, and at present they had 76. She said that most of them were parents of children with handicaps. She said they offered parents help in organizing information about their child and trained them to sit down and work with their child. They also informed parents about the services

that were available throughout the school system and from other groups. They were now working with the Continuum Education in-service training unit. Mrs. Brasile said that they had worked out a program with Sally Jackson to train parent volunteers to work with children who were mainstreamed. She indicated that they were concerned about budget cuts and would like to work with the Board to educate the public regarding handicaps and services.

Dr. Gilbert August, senior high, stated that they were concerned that additional budget cuts would be taken out of the hide of the educational program. There was a fear that continued enrollment decline would compromise the high schools' ability to maintain a comprehensive program. He said that the loss of the seven-period day had devastated art, music, and business education programs. He recalled that if they had 1350 or less students in grades 10 to 12 the school could have a seven-period day. He said that the school system had the data to quantify how many students they needed to provide a comprehensive program, and he pointed out that if they had a 9-12 high school they still might have a small number of students per grade level. He said they were concerned about the high school core curriculum because Category A need not be given every year. They felt that the years in which these courses were to be given should be clearly listed in the senior high school catalog of courses. Their last concern was the possibility of using a weighted grade point average to compensate students taking honors courses.

Mrs. Wallace commented that all of them anticipated that the Council would be cutting back in the area of teachers and textbooks. She felt that this would also hurt the special needs children and that they all had a job to do to get the budget funded.

Mrs. Lois Williams, Spotlight, said they circulated 3,000 copies of their newsletter every month. She felt that they did have some outstanding PTA newsletters and were getting a lot more good principal newsletters. She said that one of MCCPTA's major goals was to inform people about public issues. Mrs. Wallace remarked that she truly appreciated those schools that sent their newsletters to the Board. She found them very informative. She hoped that they would continue to cooperate and communicate with MCCPTA. Mrs. Lefkowitz indicated that they did have some other topics and would be bringing them to the Board at the appropriate time.

Re: Adjournment

The president adjourned the meeting at 10:30 p. m.

President

Secretary

EA: ml