

Resolved, That the Board deny the request of Appeal No. 1981-6.

Re: Announcement

Mrs. Wallace announced that Mrs. Spencer was sorry that she could not attend the ceremony, but there had been a death in her family.

Re: Swearing-in

Ms. Shirley Ashburn administered the oath of office to Mr. Jonathan Lipson.

Re: Remarks by Incoming Board Member

Mr. Lipson read the following statement:

I thank all the people who supported me and who had at times a lot more confidence in me than I had in myself. They know who they are, and they don't need to be named. Of course, I thank my family for their support as well as their ability to endure during the course of the campaign. The honor that has been bestowed upon me by the students of this county is somewhat overwhelming and in a sense humbling. As I said throughout the campaign, I bring no sweeping educational reforms with me. My sole intention is simply to represent as succinctly as possible the voice of my constituency--the students. To say that I am honored by the responsibility that has been given to me is to understate the matter considerably. I have been told by a number of people that this year holds a great number of conflicts. Honestly I can say that I am prepared to deal with them. In summation, I would again like to thank all those people who supported me, and I look forward to a productive year.

Re: Presentation of Certificate of
Appreciation

On behalf of the Board, students, and staff, Mrs. Wallace presented a certificate of appreciation to Miss Traci Williams, outgoing Board member.

Re: Remarks by Outgoing Board Member

Miss Traci Williams made the following statement:

I would like to begin by thanking all of you for coming out this evening. The last time we were sitting in this room as a Board we were having a discussion about a school closure, and I assure you it is a much friendlier atmosphere in here this evening. As the ceremony progresses tonight it is difficult for me to judge whether this is the beginning of the end or the end of the beginning, but whichever way it goes I am filled with a myriad of emotions. You have no idea of how much joy it fills me to know that I will no longer get four-inch thick Board packets delivered at my door every night. On the other hand, I wince at the realization that I will no longer be coming to Board meetings

twice a month to discuss matters of education with the policy makers in the county.

Aside from Jon and his family, I know of two people in the audience now who share my various emotions--my mother and my father. They have endured the late late hours of the Board meetings, the many, many phone calls, some of them long distance, the pride and the frustrations that came with my term on the Board of Education. I also know of one member of the audience who is glad it is the end of my term on the school Board and that is my brother Larry who will be a junior in high school next year at Walt Whitman and will no longer have messages for me or be known as "hey, you are Traci's brother."

As my term on the Board began to draw to a close, the Board watchers and people who were close to me knew of my frustrations on the Board and asked me whether if I had the chance I would do it over. Much to their surprise, I immediately answered yes. There is no better experience and no better way to learn about the real world of education and people than through serving as an actual member of a decision-making body. If I hadn't had this experience I would not have the perspective that I have gained now. However, I must be honest and say this experience has also opened my eyes to take a closer look as to whether I want to pursue a career in politics. I lean close to drama which with our Presidential administration seems to lean back to politics. I would like to state that the Board has taken some small steps forward in the past year in terms of student representation. Mrs. Wallace, the Board president, has almost always recognized me at the Board table when I had a point to make. I was allowed to state my vote for the first time in the election for the Board president this year. I have had a great deal of productive communication with the students, community, and administrators in the school system. I have been able to give some input and add amendments to motions that have been significant for the students of the county. As we traveled around the country for the national conferences, I found that Board members from other states were also interested in gaining student members on their boards of education. Unfortunately although I have made some individual gains, I feel we have a long way to go with the position of the student Board member and the status of students in the county. I have alluded several times and you might have noticed the frustration that is involved in the term of the student Board member, and I don't mean to scare Jon or give him any kind of bad feelings about the position, but I do feel a need to express to you some of the sources of my frustration. The mere title--nonvoting student Board member--is in itself one of the greatest disadvantages of this position. My nonvoting status has at times made me feel as if I were jousting at windmills at certain Board meetings. The knowledge that the most I can do for my constituency is to voice my opinions and represent the students, add amendments or give comments on various Board motions is often disheartening not because I feel it is impossible to have an effect on Board decisions this way, but

because in Montgomery County the decisions of the school Board involve much more than the mere merits of each proposal that comes before it. Each Board member, of course, has an individual agenda and individual priorities. So our ability to view issues with the same interest and our ability to come to the same opinions on things is often hindered and varied. The political implications of every Board decision are considered by several Board members and often times factors that do not directly consider the students or directly relate to the matter at hand are considered as major factors in a resolution. All of these result in what I see as a very uncomfortable and unfortunate situation around the Board table. Board members often come to the meeting with previous conceptions in their mind of how they are going to vote on certain matters, and it therefore seems that my input is falling on inaccessible ears. The problem is not as many people think that the Board members do not listen to the student Board member. I felt all throughout the year that my concerns were heard by the various Board members around the table. The problem is that the concerns of the student Board member are not necessarily considered by the adult Board members, and as a student member I was not always considered or included in the discussions that were held before the Board meetings to determine the various conceptions that would be brought about on motions.

I must confess there was a period during my term when I became so caught up in the politics of the school Board that I almost lost sight of my purpose on the Board and of the purpose of the Board itself. Because if I could do that with just one term, I wonder if that could happen with an adult Board member over a four-year term.

There are several matters that I feel are still hanging as I close my term, and I would like to state them now. The first is in regard to the report of the Minority Relations Monitoring Committee. I begin to worry when an us/them situation develops between the Board of Education and one of its committees or a portion of the community. As a student, my chief concern is to get the concerns of the committee report dealt with as soon as and efficiently as possible. Another area of concern is the implementation of the long-range facilities plan and the senior high policy. Both of these have had a great deal of publicity and a great deal of public reaction as they will affect a great many people within the school system. It is vital that the implementation of these policies be followed very closely by the students, community, and Board of Education. I hate to see people's lives changed because simply they are not aware of or do not understand a school Board policy. Finally in regard to the status of the office of student affairs, this office has been reduced, cut, shuffled, and downgraded during the course of the past months through various proposals. This office is the only one which directly deals with student concerns and student matters. Aside from the superintendent's support, the community support, the Montgomery County Council's support, the Board has

persisted in the various proposals dealing with this position. However, fortunately I am glad to say that one of the Board members had re-evaluated the situation and proposed a resolution to reconsider or look at the position before any cuts are made in the grade, and I appreciate Mr. Barse's input on that matter. Now that you are aware of some of the frustrations about the student Board member, I would like to inform you what pulled me through the various hard times that I went through aside from my friends and family. Dr. Ed Andrews, who is the superintendent of schools, has been a great supporter of students for as long as I have known him, and he has always been available to me for information, for help, and often for a shoulder to cry on. But he is in the forefront, and there are several people I would like to recognize and thank right now who are not really in the forefront and who are really behind the scenes in the Board office. Mary Lou Wood who has always helped me to get certain items in on time that I might have forgotten. Tom Fess who I consulted often on parliamentary procedure. Larry Bowers who ran things off for me and was a general good friend. Kate Newmyer who typed up my memos and often corrected my spelling mistakes. I owe much more than thanks to the next person I would like to mention. He has been a motivation and a source of information for me for over five years. His shoulder was always there for me to cry on and his advice to me was always to trust in my own opinion. To Mr. Mike Michaelson, I would like to give special thanks.

Re: Congratuations to Miss Williams

On behalf of Mrs. Spencer, Mrs. Wallace read a memo extending congratulations to Miss Williams. Mr. Charles Gilchrist, county executive, presented a certificate of appreciation to Miss Williams. Board members extended thanks to Miss Williams for her service on the Board and welcomed Mr. Lipson.

Re: Adjournment

The president adjourned the meeting at 9 p.m.

President
Secretary

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