

APPROVED
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Rockville, Maryland
May 5, 1983

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in special session at the Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Thursday, May 5, 1983, at 8:10 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mr. Blair G. Ewing, President in the Chair
Dr. James E. Cronin
Mrs. Suzanne K. Peyser
Mrs. Marilyn J. Praisner
Dr. Robert E. Shoenberg

Absent: Dr. Marian L. Greenblatt
Mr. Kurt R. Hirsch
Mrs. Odessa M. Shannon

Others Present: Dr. Edward Andrews, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Harry Pitt, Deputy Superintendent
Dr. Robert S. Shaffner, Executive Assistant

Re: Announcement

Mr. Ewing announced that Mrs. Shannon was out of town, Dr. Greenblatt was unable to attend the meeting, and Mr. Hirsch was expected to attend the meeting.

Re: Interagency Coordinating Board

Mr. Ewing stated that the Board was interested in improving mutual understanding between the Board and the ICB and in identifying any issues.

Mrs. Barbara Cantor, chairperson of the ICB, explained that the establishment of the ICB was initiated by citizens. In the 1960's the school community centers program was established, and the 1970's saw an increase in the community use of schools. In the late 1970's the County Council looked at ways to avoid funding community use of the schools through the school system's budget. A task force was established and recommended that an interagency board be established. In 1978 legislation was enacted, and the ICB came into being. In 1979 Dr. Gail Ayers was hired as the executive director and assumed her duties on July 1, 1979. Mrs. Cantor explained that money from the county, state, and fees went into an enterprise fund. She reported that over the years they had increased the hours of usage. They set guidelines and priorities for users and attempted to make the fees somewhat consistent. She said that they still have many free programs and attempted to keep the fees as low as possible. She explained that they paid back funds to the school system for building service, utilities, and supplies. Their 1 percent utilities payback system had become a model nationwide.

Mrs. Cantor stated that the ICB had taken most of the cost of the community use of schools out of the school system's budget although some staff support was still required. Mrs. Zoe Lefkowitz added that they were one of the few groups that had decreased their requests for budget funds year by year.

Dr. Ayers reported that they were still carrying 15 community schools. They were presently looking at the Wheaton vocational center and two other school sites around the county. Their ICB meeting in May would focus on the socioeconomic characteristics of Montgomery County, look at junior high schools, and existing bus routes. She said that the study had taken six months and Board members would receive copies of it.

Mrs. Lefkowitz stated that she would like to emphasize interagency cooperation because that was one of her priorities when she joined the ICB. Dr. Ayers explained that the community schools were once free; however, when the ICB was established, an analysis was done of the user groups. They established a policy of certain activities being free no matter where they were. They coordinated requests for weekend use by using schools that were already open. They had had to increase the weekend fees which was still a serious concern for youth groups. They decided they needed a fee structure which would subsidize certain groups, while others paid the total cost.

The superintendent reported that they had tried to negotiate through a lot of problems internally with the heads of agencies talking together; however, the ICB was still an organization coordinating the use of Board of Education facilities to make them available at minimum costs. They had had a lot of problems with principals regarding the use of the schools, but the program was working. He emphasized the need to continue to work together.

Dr. Shoenberg asked about facilities other than school facilities the ICB dealt with. Dr. Ayers replied that other than closed schools they dealt with school facilities. The superintendent indicated that the Board had passed a resolution that the ICB consider expanding their services to all county buildings. Dr. Ayers replied that this issue had been brought up with the Office of Management and Budget which was completing a review of all publicly owned buildings. They expected a decision in two or three months. Mrs. Praisner asked if the closed schools were MCPS owned or county government owned. Dr. Ayers replied that it was both and indicated that it had been a different experience negotiating with tenants in the closed schools.

Mrs. Praisner commented that the Board had met with Park and Planning and the issue had come up of a tenant not making the building available to the community. The superintendent reported that the school was Clara Barton, and Dr. Ayers explained that some of the leases predated the establishment of the ICB. New leases did incorporate community use of the buildings.

Dr. Shoenberg asked whether the Recreation Department had a favorable status on the use of schools. Dr. Ayers replied that they did retain first priority after the school system. However, they felt they had lost some favorable position because they now had to pay for space they signed up for and did not use. Dr. Shoenberg said he was concerned that they were becoming so organized that informal groups could not use the facilities. Mr. Lew Roberts explained that they had improved on leases on the schools. At the public hearing on Ayrlawn, citizens wanted time to use the building on an unorganized basis.

In regard to budget, Mr. Ewing asked whether there were any concerns. Mrs. Cantor replied that they were making money because of their fine administration. Over the years there had been a major decrease in the contribution from the county. They were now able to earmark funds for special services and for equipment replacement. They were concerned about the charges levied on the use of playing fields and hoped that some money could be used to maintain these fields. Mrs. Ardythe Jones hoped that some funds

could be used for teenage centers which was a recommendation from their community services report.

Dr. Ayers reported that their total budget was \$1.2 million, and they paid back to the school system \$140,000 for utilities, \$12,500 for cleaning supplies, and \$9,000 for equipment replacement. They also had an emergency replacement fund which had not been used very often. The equipment money was going to be used for schools with heavy hours of community use. She said that they spent \$400,000 for building service workers, cafeteria personnel, and technical services assistants. She explained that the Board's negotiating a \$10 per hour fee for building service workers had saved them quite a bit of money. She thought that the clear guidelines for the use of the schools had also helped. The superintendent stated that in regard to building service workers they had had more grievances on this issue than any other. Staff and legal time were a result which was a cost to the Board. The recently elected president of the building services group had very different views on this issue. This whole issue might become a severe labor problem. Mr. Ewing indicated that he was not very supportive of the \$10 an hour fee because it had caused them problems. He thought it was very important to talk with the county executive and the Council president about this issue. The superintendent agreed that they could not do much more to help the ICB. This whole issue could be disastrous for internal labor relations. Mrs. Cantor thought there had to be some education to Council members on this issue, and the ICB had requested such a meeting.

In regard to the subsidy, Mrs. Jones explained that it was not really a subsidy but rather the county's contribution for the use of closed schools. Dr. Ayers explained that the county was getting its money's worth through the free hours of use of these facilities. She said that part of the success of the ICB has had was because of the shared responsibility and shared authority. She complimented

MCPS staff and principals who had assisted the ICB.

In regard to the Board of Education budget, Mr. Ewing said there was no line item on this, but they did expend considerable staff time in working with the ICB. He did not know whether there was any estimate of staff time; however, he thought it would be worthwhile to share this information with the county executive and County Council. The superintendent replied that they had thought about doing this when the Council cut secretarial positions. He said that there were many hidden costs, and in some cases the principal did this work. Mrs. Lefkowitz added that there was also the wear and tear on the school buildings which involved operating and capital costs.

The superintendent reported that at every principals' meeting there was a question about the ICB and the community use of the school buildings. Dr. Ayers had been very good about coming to these meetings and explaining the process. He thought it would be helpful to hear from the principals about this process. Mr. Nate Pearson, principal of Seneca Valley, commended Dr. Ayers for the leadership she had provided. He said that one of the things that bothered principals the most was the subsidy that MCPS continued to provide for all ICB functions. An informal survey had been done two years ago and over \$1 million a year was spent for salaries of secretaries, business managers, etc., doing this work. He commented that at a time when a National Commission criticized the public schools, they needed to focus their full attention on providing the best education for students. He suggested that the taxpayers should pay for these services and it should not come out of education for children.

Mr. Robert Hacker, principal of Kennedy High School, said they could not believe how much time was spent on ICB activities. There were problems with adults smoking in the building, breakage of equipment, answering questions and receiving complaints. However, he felt that the new guidelines were an improvement. Dr. Frank Masci, principal of Gaithersburg Junior High, explained that he chaired a subcommittee of the secondary administrators group. The problems seemed to be in the area of reimbursement and depreciation of equipment. The fees now seemed to be acceptable. When a community coordinator left, the assistant principal did the work. Now they had an excellent co-ordinator who was getting out into the community and starting a tutoring program. Dr. Masci stated that they needed community schools, and he was delighted to have such an excellent coordinator.

Dr. Cronin asked whether it would be possible to have the principal, business manager, secretaries, etc. log their time for a month to see how much time was actually spent on ICB activities. In this way the cost to the school system could be demonstrated. The superintendent said that this could show what the schools did for the citizens at large. He thought this might be a way for them to show their commitment.

Mrs. Lefkowitz stated that one of the purposes of the task force was to determine the cost of community education in Montgomery County. She felt that there was no way to separate this from the schools. However, they still needed to look at the full cost to the school system. Mrs. Praisner commented that it was a question of people not understanding how MCPS contributed already. She thought that the Board and the ICB could work together in educating the County Council and the public. She said they also had another problem with people driving by a closed school and thinking that it still belonged to MCPS.

The superintendent remarked that when they had one principal and one secretary in an elementary school there was a problem. Mrs. Cantor said that they recognized this. The true ideal of community education was to have a coordinator serving the community. Their dream was to have regional community schools with a coordinator and secretarial assistance.

Mr. Roberts commented that at budget time because of the press of decisions it was difficult to get this information across. Education might be beneficial for everyone, and information had to be shared with the decision makers. The superintendent explained that one of the purposes of the ICB was to get this coordination and communication. It was Mr. Ewing's view that they had to make the effort to acquaint the Council and the executive with these perceptions. The degree to which they were able to document these costs was an important factor. He felt it would be well worth their while to develop some approach to get this information. Dr. Ayers indicated her willingness to work with some of the principals to get an approximate cost.

Mr. Ray DeBalso, principal of Rockville High School, said that he had spoken with his business manager, who estimated that 20 percent of his time was spent on ICB business. They had recommended a set of amended guidelines in April; however, he felt these guidelines moved them a step farther in a direction they did not want to take. The guidelines included tape recorders, projectors, and pianos, and would involve taking school equipment and personnel with repair and replacement of the equipment. Dr. Ayers explained that some

principals had been letting the equipment be used, and the guidelines attempted to recover some of the costs involvement. They were now looking at what those charges might be.

Mr. Robert Hudak, principal of Ritchie Park, expressed his concern about service on equipment used. He was also concerned about the demands made on secretarial staffs when some elementary schools had only one secretary. The use of the elementary school gyms also required a lot of paperwork as well as the playing fields.

Mrs. Diana Phelps, principal of Fields Road, noted that the rooms in her school did not have doors. Therefore, she was very concerned about building security. She also questioned who was in charge when

the principal was on leave. Dr. Pitt commented that if there are situations where community use would not work they had to say the school would not be available and work with the ICB.

Mr. Ewing inquired about legal liability and insurance. Dr. Ayers replied that the building use form contained a statement written by the county attorney that people used the building at their own risk. The superintendent added that it was a "save harmless" clause and the county and Board were not liable. He believed that the ICB needed to consider certain groups taking out insurance as part of their fee. Mr. Ewing said that someone could come in and sue the group, the Board, and the ICB. The superintendent said that user insurance would solve this problem. Dr. Ayers explained that all profit-making groups had to have insurance. Dr. Pitt reported that the Board attorneys were checking into this whole problem. Mrs. Lefkowitz added that the PTA dues would now include insurance.

Mr. Ewing asked whether they attempted to recover costs in cases where there was damage. Dr. Ayers replied that in some cases they did, but the ICB did carry funds for emergencies. Dr. Arnie Rosenberg, Area 1, said that principals had trouble distinguishing between day versus night use.

Mr. Ewing said that he would like to discuss the future of community education. Mrs. Cantor replied that she would like to see equipment in the schools for the use of the community, but under supervision. Mrs. Jones thought they needed a community coordinator to assist with community education. The support of the principals was also needed. Mrs. Lefkowitz said she would like to be able to look at schools as central places for a lifelong educational process. They had to educate the community to the importance of the school as a place for all ages.

Mrs. Praisner inquired about plans to use college space or other public space. Mrs. Cantor explained that the present legislation stated "schools" but the county was looking into other areas. Mrs. Praisner asked about the use of the public schools for day-care and its effect on community use. Dr. Ayers replied that day-care was handled under the joint occupancy policy. The overlap would be on holidays and the weekends. When day-care programs used the schools on the weekends they had to deal with the ICB to have staff opening the buildings. She said that the ICB charged day-care programs for the use of the space to recover the cost of the staff only. Mrs. Praisner noted that Park and Planning's survey of space would also assess the potential space for day-care in the county. She commented that if space was used full-time for day-care it was not available to community use. Dr. Ayers reported that Mr. Short also had completed a day-care policy. Mrs. Cantor remarked that with closing schools there was a concern about loss of space for day-care in the consolidated school.

Mr. Ewing reported that the Council had finished with the Board's budget and on the whole had treated them well. However, \$1 million

had been taken from Category 1, Administration, and most of that was not new money. As a result they would have less infrastructure next year than this year, and yet there was the hope that the volume of community use of schools could be increased. He was worried about their ability to do this given the smaller number of administrative staff.

Mrs. Lefkowitz indicated that she had the same concern. Mrs. Lefkowitz noted that she and Mrs. Jones were the Board's representatives to the ICB. They would be pleased to share any concerns the Board had with the ICB.

Re: Adjournment

The president adjourned the meeting at 10:15 p.m.

President

Secretary

EA:mlw

