

APPROVED
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Rockville, Maryland
November 2, 1983

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in special session at the Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Wednesday, November 2, 1983, at 8:10 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mr. Blair G. Ewing, President in the
 Chair
 Mrs. Suzanne K. Peyser
 Mrs. Marilyn J. Praisner
 Mr. Peter Robertson
 Mrs. Odessa M. Shannon

Absent: Dr. James E. Cronin
 Dr. Marian L. Greenblatt
 Dr. Robert E. Shoenberg

Others Present: Dr. Wilmer S. Cody, Superintendent of
 Schools
 Dr. Harry Pitt, Deputy Superintendent
 Dr. Robert S. Shaffner, Executive
 Assistant
 Mr. Thomas S. Fess, Parliamentarian

Re: Announcement

Mr. Ewing explained that Dr. Cronin was attending a rehearsal for Sensitivity Awareness Day, Dr. Greenblatt was ill, and Dr. Shoenberg was expected to attend.

Re: Discussion with Montgomery County
 Association of Administrative and
 Supervisory Personnel

Dr. Frank Masci, principal of Gaithersburg Junior High School, reported that Mrs. Derby, the president of MCAASP, was attending outdoor education camp. He said there were three major items they wanted to discuss with the Board. They were unit composition, the minority achievement plan, and the coordination of that effort with the school effectiveness plan.

Dr. Masci explained that almost 10 percent of the total population eligible for MCAASP was excluded. In addition, there were other groups that might be interested in joining MCAASP. Ms. Ann Meyer, principal of Gaithersburg High School, stated that 40 people had been excluded because they were needed in the negotiations process. They had gone through one negotiations period, and they were not sure that all of these individuals were needed or had been used in the negotiations process. Dr. Pitt explained that they had excluded a large number of people because they did not know how negotiations were going to work. These people were not necessarily at the table but were critical in providing information. He said that this question should be reviewed with staff, Dr. Cody, and Mr. Cooney.

Dr. Paul Vance, associate superintendent, recalled that the superintendent had also selected people who were part of his confidential executive staff.

Mrs. Audrey Leslie stated that the Board had made the decision on the individuals excluded, and this had been done prior to negotiations. Mr. Ewing explained that Dr. Andrews wanted to be certain that people he considered crucial to the decision-making process were not in the bargaining unit. He suggested that Dr. Cody review this issue, determine what transpired, and see whether a change could be made.

Dr. Masci stated that the next part had to do with people who were members of another bargaining unit. He said the Board had resolved what groups were in which units. He asked for clarification of the way to proceed when a group wanted to join MCAASP, and he pointed out that negotiations with the employee groups were now taking place at different times. Mr. Ewing suggested that this could be checked out with their attorneys, and when they had the information they would get back to MCAASP.

In regard to the minority achievement plan, Dr. Masci stated that they supported the plan and were concerned that it work. Their concerns centered around resources and release time. Ms. Meyer encouraged the Board to look at this focus when considering the budget. She said it would be helpful to people in the schools to know that this would be a continuing objective so they could make their plans. She hoped the budget would reflect this and cited the .2 position for gifted and talented which had been enormously helpful. She agreed that they needed to do some catching up with students and in some cases this would require extra staffing or teacher training.

Dr. Masci pointed out that they set schoolwide objectives in April and May, and it would have been nice to gear this year's objectives to this priority. Mrs. Praisner suggested that they have a flow chart or calendar of when particular decisions should be made. Mrs. Joan Israel, principal of Wyngate Elementary, commented that the process of change in a school was a very delicate one. It was a real leadership skill to get people to do things because they thought it was important. Teachers had to be invested in a particular goal. In the spring they determined their school objectives for the coming year by looking at school system priorities, their special needs, and the area framework. In her school this was done in April, and they designed their in-service training and resources around this plan. She did not disagree with the Board's priority but did have some problems with the timing. She thought they would be better off looking at the data this year and deciding on the plan next spring. Now she had to have a plan by February and would have a hard job convincing her staff. She said that the plan had to come to the top but it was crucial that teachers bought into the plan.

Mr. Ewing agreed that this was to some extent a calendar problem

because they did not know until May what the resources would be for the next year. He noted that the Board had had both a change in composition and a change in views which resulted in a change in policies. He said that they had to work harder to make sure more effort was made to involve staff in the development of plans. He commented that when the Board adopted the priorities it said these priorities might have to be adjusted but would have a life longer than one year. Dr. Cody had reminded the Board these were ambitious priorities, and it was Mr. Ewing's view that while no one could predict what would happen in two or four years the priorities would probably remain for several years. He agreed with Mrs. Israel that for anything to succeed people had to be involved and participate. Mrs. Leslie reported that she would be participating on the assistance and review teams. She felt that principals would be looking for resources and for long-term training of some people. This training would cost money, and she wondered if the teams were going to get some parameters about what could be done from February to June. Dr. Cody believed that the area office was developing plans regarding time for schools to plan. Mr. Ewing said that this underscored the need to think about what was going to be in the budget for next year. It was his view that if the school plans showed a need, then the Board should consider asking for a supplemental appropriation.

Mrs. Israel remarked that in talking with her school about the planning the biggest morale boost was the idea of obtaining release time to plan. She pointed out that teachers saw everything as being added without taking anything away. She noted that the elementary schools suffered from not having enough horses to do the job and everything added was put on the elementary school principals. Dr. Cody said he heard Mrs. Israel saying she needed time with her staff which would be obtained through hiring substitutes or sending the children home early. Dr. Pitt commented that release time was not an unknown concept in Montgomery County; however, the day would have to be limited and well planned. He thought that trying to provide substitutes for a half day would be very costly.

Mrs. Praisner commented that part of the problem was getting community support. One way of doing this was to share information with the community on what was happening and the process they would be using. Mrs. Peyser said they had to let the parents know ahead of time when they would be having these particular days. She suggested that they have extra homework during that time so that parents would understand.

Dr. Cody remarked that while improving the performance of minority students was one priority there was another priority on academic improvements. They did not know yet how they would proceed on this overall achievement issue. Mrs. Leslie commented that whatever was done for minority students would have an effect on the achievement of all students. Dr. Masci indicated that the national emphasis on improving achievement may already have had an impact. He suggested that many schools had academic excellence as a goal. He said that if the priorities fit together and teachers bought it, it would

work.

Mrs. Israel suggested that they avoid developing one more piece of curriculum because of the time involved. She thought that as people got more comfortable with the process, academic achievement would improve. She remarked that one of the problems was that Montgomery County tried to do things too fast, and people were only human. They were now working in four different curriculum areas and were at different points in each. She noted that they were now receiving less and less specialist time, and it was hurting the schools. They had to recognize they were not supporting teachers in the way they should.

Mrs. Praisner reported that the Board would be discussing the impact of the area office and what was needed at the area level. Some of this discussion should take place with the Council's education committee, and principals and area staff were key to educating this committee.

Dr. Paul Vance, area associate superintendent, commented that one Council member had visited the area office and was amazed at the volume of calls received. The Council member was also impressed by the breath of service the areas were trying to offer. Mr. Ewing did not believe the Board had been wise in the major cuts it had made in the area offices in terms of services and the expectations they had. The result was that they continued to have a high level of expectation and not enough resources.

Mr. Ewing stated that the Board-adopted budget was in a large part a statement of the Board's priorities. One of the things they could do would be to translate that budget document to show what it meant to the school system. People saw just a budget and not a clear-cut policy statement with a set of priorities. Mrs. Praisner felt that the setting of priorities was a unique experience, but they might have to rethink the timetable. They had to consider when they did things so that it fit in with the people who would have to implement the goals. Dr. Shaffner suggested that the Board set its priorities even before January so that they would show up in the budget. Mrs. Praisner thought they had to be more honest about saying what they could not do and why. There were certain burdens placed on staff and students that might not be fair, and perhaps they should start identifying things they were no longer able to do. Mrs. Leslie felt they would not let anything go, and if they set a priority, people would expect full services. Mrs. Peyser pointed out that there were certain things that only schools could do, while there were things done by MCPS that other institutions could provide. She suggested that they start from this point. Mr. Ewing thanked the members of MCAASP for their comments.

Re: Adjournment

The president adjourned the meeting at 9:35 p.m.

President

Secretary

WSC:mlw

