

APPROVED
27-1984

Rockville, Maryland
May 3, 1984

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in special session at the Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Thursday, May 3, 1984, at 9:10 p.m.

ROLL CALL Present: Mrs. Marilyn J. Praisner, President in
the Chair
Dr. James E. Cronin
Mrs. Suzanne K. Peyser
Mr. Peter Robertson
Mrs. Odessa M. Shannon
Dr. Robert E. Shoenberg

Absent: Mr. Blair G. Ewing
Dr. Marian L. Greenblatt

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

Re: Discussion with Montgomery County
Council of Supporting Services
Employees

Mrs. Praisner welcomed Mr. Vincent Foo, president of MCCSSE. Mr. Foo introduced Jessica Dunkley, Bob Baker, Carol Barrons, and Nancy Bernard. Mr. Foo stated that MCCSSE had developed the image of being cooperative, playing by the rules, and being reasonable. They were watching with interest the outcome of teacher negotiations. He said that he would hate to see MCCSSE suffer, and they thought everyone should abide by the rules and the law. He recalled that when he had started in his position in 1970 there was a great disparity, and they could genuinely say that supporting services employees were second-class citizens. Over the years that had changed somewhat, and he would hate to see them go back again to the previous situation.

In regard to the ICB, Mr. Foo said he appreciated the Board's position; however, they did have a contract with the Board. It would be a difficult position to tell one group they were being treated differently, and he noted that most of the employees in that group were black. He stated that they tried to see that everyone was treated fairly and equally, and when the first flat fee was negotiated the perception of these employees was that MCCSSE had sold them out. He knew the County Council was having problems approving additional money, but he appreciated the Board's position and hoped everything would work out.

Mrs. Praisner reported that at the lunch hour there had been a meeting with the County Council and ICB for them to get a better understanding of the \$12 fee that was part of the MCCSSE contract.

It appeared to her there was some understanding of the whole issue of the use of schools from the Board's perspective and the negotiations process. However, the time ran out before the discussion ended, and some Council members wanted to talk further. Mr. Foo remarked that the Council overlooked the funds received by the ICB which had been put into a kitty which now amounted to over \$1 million. He said that when they negotiated the \$10 per hour fee there were dire predictions about people not using the schools because of the cost, but the use of the schools had increased. He felt that even with the \$12 fee, the usage would increase. He pointed out that typically four or five groups used the school on a Saturday, and the cost was shared. He said that their people did a lot of work for the ICB. For example, the business manager spent part of the time working for the ICB and the builder services manager had to prepare work schedules. He felt that supporting services staff spent a lot of time helping the ICB program to be successful, and yet no credit was given to them.

Dr. Cody thought they had made progress with today's discussion. He was not sure the Council members had changed their minds, but he thought there was a better recognition of the situation. He thought the ICB could continue to pay the \$12 salary, not change the user fees, and still break even. He said that the ICB was making a profit of \$300,000 to \$400,000 a year, and the program kept growing. Mrs. Praisner stated that to be fair to the ICB, they would like to have access to those funds but did not at the present time. She thought the County Council would be receptive to receiving information about ICB costs presently absorbed in the MCPS budget such as utilities, maintenance, and staff time.

Mr. Baker stated that there was an article in the Bulletin that the Board was considering changes to the MCPS retirement system to bring it in line with the state system. He felt that this was one of the best retirement systems in the country, and he did not believe they should change the rules after the game had started. He urged the Board to think about this. He said that Dr. Greenblatt and Mrs. Peyser were not running for reelection, and he wanted to say that they would be missed. Mrs. Praisner assured him that she would communicate his remarks to Dr. Greenblatt.

Mrs. Dunkley said she had spoken with the building services workers, and there was a bad feeling because of lack of cooperation and understanding about the ICB work. She pointed out the amount of work that secretaries did preparing separate payrolls for employees working with the ICB. Mrs. Praisner suggested that they might call on MCCSSE when they explained to the Council and ICB how much staff time was spent on ICB coordination.

Mr. Foo stated that they had had more grievances this year than they had had in past years. A pattern of disciplinary action was showing up, with more action in the case of building services workers. In some cases there was justification for this, but at other times he felt they had overlooked the situation of having young building service workers assigned to the high schools where they were close

in age to the students. He suggested they consider placing those young men in elementary schools. He was disturbed by the disciplinary action being heavily weighted against the building services group. Mr. Foo also pointed out that many of these workers were dependent on public transportation, and people had been disciplined for coming in late even though they were willing to stay later to make up the lost time.

Mrs. Shannon commented that she was taking cognizance of Mr. Foo's comments. She was interested in obtaining information about discipline inequities among students and would consider the statements made by Mr. Foo along with that. Mr. Foo explained that when these building services workers were placed in an elementary school, the supervision was not as close; therefore, it was a two-way street with more supervision in the secondaries with the likelihood of problems arising there. He said they would work with Personnel if they did see problems arising, and they would like to have a reciprocal arrangement with personnel. Dr. Cody said he would be supportive of such a working arrangement. What had happened was that when the problem got to their attention, it was too late to solve. He agreed that it should be solved before it got to be serious. He stated that the problem of young men assigned to high schools was not new, and school systems had been dealing with it for years.

Mr. Foo asked whether Board members had any suggestions to offer MCCSSE and its reasonable approach. Mrs. Praisner commented that they heard what Mr. Foo was saying, and she had always enjoyed working with MCCSSE. She thought it was obvious where they could do a better job of communicating with the general public and County Council. She pointed out that they had brought principals and central office personnel to Council meetings and perhaps they needed to look at other functions of the school system. She thought that at the Council education committee meetings an effort might be made to explain other roles in the school system and why these positions were important. She cited the position of business manager and how it saved the time of other people. She asked for MCCSSE's help in this endeavor. Mrs. Shannon remarked that she had always described MCCSSE as a "class act," and she would hate to see them change their act. She said it was also true that the squeaky wheel got oiled. She pointed out that they did have the power of a big organization and needed to let that fact be known. Mrs. Peyser added that it would be helpful if those responding to the squeaky wheel responded to those that deserved to be responded to.

Dr. Cody said there was a problem in the school system that needed a collective thinking-through. The Title IX Committee had cited problems of sex equity. In some types of occupations, the people were either all male or all female. As a consequence of that, there was discrepancy in terms of the promotion process. His inclination was to solve the problem over the long run by fair recruitment, employment, and training. However, they did need to discuss this. Mr. Foo cited a case in Colorado on pay equity. He said one area they had to look at was food services. This was the lowest paid

group and they were 100 percent female. They did have various complaints from time to time in this area. In particular, on one day the food services people showed up to work prior to the announcement that school had been canceled. He said that these people were really dedicated and were on their feet all the time and worked constantly. He thought the request for the extra hour of pay should not have been turned down because it would be good labor relations to approve this.

Mrs. Praisner thanked the MCCSSE members for a very helpful discussion.

Re: Adjournment

The president adjourned the meeting at 10 p.m.

President

Secretary

WSC:mlw