



Mr. William Bowen, principal, welcomed the Board and superintendent to Poolesville. He introduced staff and thanked them for their work on the report which assessed the program and suggested plans for improvement at Poolesville.

Mr. Bowen noted that the school had been renovated in 1978 and served as a community center in upper Montgomery County. Since 1978, the student population had begun to excel academically and athletically. For example, the graduating class of 1984 had produced 12 presidential scholars, a physics olympics team, a regional football championship team, a county mock trial winner, and science fair winners. The staff was committed to producing the best education possible for the student body.

Mr. Bowen stated that in spite of an improved facility, a capable staff, and a student population achieving above the national form, the school had become the focus of concern. He described the history of the community and its change from a rural agricultural area to a transitional area with an increased demand for heavier emphasis on the academics. He said that growth in the area was now limited by lack of sewer hookups and a limited water supply; however, the Commissioners of Poolesville had recently announced that a new well was being drilled and had stated they would petition for an end to the sewer moratorium. If this happened, the population of Poolesville would increase from 3,500 to 6,000 in the next decade. The school enjoyed the support of the community, and the local Chamber of Commerce had recently adopted the school.

Mr. Robert Domergue, assistant principal, narrated a slide/tape presentation on the junior high school program. He reported that they did have self-contained gifted and talented classes and offered a program comparable to the offerings of other junior high schools. He pointed out the wide range of achievement levels in the junior high school and indicated that 75 percent of these students scored at or above the national level on the California Achievement Tests; however, they did recognize the need for help for their academically needy students. He noted that SAT scores had improved by 37 points in verbal scores and 56 points in mathematics. Poolesville's mean total test score was 928 as compared with the national mean of 893 and the MCPS mean of 968. He reported that over 60 percent of the graduating class had been accepted in postsecondary schools. Mr. Domergue commented that although their test scores were getting better, they had an active program to improve the scores. They had a test-taking program based on identification of student weakness. This year they had a weekly flex period to involve students in a variety of experiences to improve test-taking skills.

Dr. Stephen Checkon, assistant principal, stated that a question had been raised as to whether or not students at Poolesville were receiving equity in program offerings as compared to other county high schools. The issues centered around the basic core course offerings and the offering of honors courses. These issues were raised in the Area 3 Task Force report which included a recommendation for an advanced technology magnet at the school to

attract students and for additional staff to provide more self-contained honors courses. No action had been taken on the magnet, but the school had received additional staff.

Dr. Checkon reported that the senior high school had an enrollment of 445 students, ten fewer than last year. The average class size was 22.1. He re- marked that even with the additional staffing, teacher assignments were still varied with the average teacher having three or four different class preparations. More than half of the teachers were sponsors or coaches of extracurricular activities. The latest department consisted of seven teachers, and four academic disciplines and one vocational area had resource teachers. He pointed out that Poolesville was the only senior high school in the county without a resource counselor. He said that they did offer a comprehensive program although students might have less flexibility as to when a specific course might be taken. The number of different courses had rise by 15 from the 1983-84 school year. Improvements had been made in the enrollment and number of honors, advanced level, and advanced placement courses. Enrollment increased from 242 to 346 students in these courses. All ninth and tenth grade honors courses were now separate classes. Additional foreign language and math courses increased advanced level offerings from two to six, and student enrollments in advanced placement courses had almost tripled.

Dr. Checkon reported that staff was in agreement to strive for more effective teaching. They had requested training on teaching higher order intellectual skills, and had requested staff development assessment of their training needs.

Mr. Domergue cited goals for improvement and listed the following resources to achieve the goals:

- (1) In English, an additional 0.5 professional staff member and a 1.0 clerical aide.
- (2) In mathematics, an additional 0.4 professional staff member, \$5,000 for texts, and a 0.5 clerical aide.
- (3) In foreign languages, an additional 0.5 professional staff member.

Dr. Checkon listed goals for improvement and requested that consideration be given to providing the following resources:

- (1) In science, \$6,000 for texts, \$4,500 for materials of instruction, an increase in the aide position from 0.3 to 0.5, and some facility modifications.
- (2) In social studies, additional clerical support and \$2,500 for textbooks.

Dr. Checkon explained that they had a decline in enrollment in some of their elective course offerings, but they thought that five course offerings should be continued. They were career education, cooperative vocational education, driver education, industrial arts, and physical education. He noted that the home economics program

was taught by one teacher and required seven different preparations. They could increase offerings by adding a 0.5 staff position. In music, they would like to look into the possibility of sharing music staff with feeder schools to improve course offerings. In art there was a definite disparity between course offerings at Poolesville and other senior high schools. In business they were offering business law for the first time this year. They were currently offering five comprehensive industrial education vocational programs. They would like to see a formal evaluation of the long-term vocational needs of the students. Dr. Checkon said that although they did offer elective programs, transportation should be provided for students when the most appropriate program was at another MCPS school.

In regard to guidance, Mr. Domergue said they had only three counselors. They needed an additional guidance assistant and would like to expand the facilities of the guidance/career area. They needed funds to support the purchasing of career center materials as well. He also pointed out the variety of extracurricular activities in the school.

Dr. Checkon remarked that the special education program had not received the same level of scrutiny as that of other school programs. They needed additional instructional equipment, a 0.5 special education teacher allocation, clerical support, and instructional aide support.

Mr. Bowen stated that they would like to continue their primary goal to raise the achievement and skills level of each student to his or her maximum. He suggested that to maximize this effort, they needed the cooperation of Poolesville and Monocacy elementary schools. They would like combined planning time for the three schools, a plan to share staff allocations, shared facilities when elementary students had exceptional skills, and combined staff development activities. He summarized the resource implications for staffing, textbooks, materials of instruction, and facilities improvements. He also pointed out the transportation needs of the school and asked for a minibus so that a variety of field experiences could be provided the students.

Re: Community Comments

The following individuals appeared before the Board of Education:

1. Mr. Edward Sokoloski, PTSA president
2. Mrs. Janet Garrison, Poolesville cluster coordinator
3. Mr. Eugene Halmos, Poolesville Chamber of Commerce
4. Mr. Gary Hartz, Poolesville Planning Commission
5. Mrs. Mary Headman, Poolesville Elementary School PTA
6. Mrs. Margaret Kelly, Monocacy Elementary School PTA

Re: Board/Staff/Community Dialogue

Mr. Ewing remarked that they should all recognize the effort made

over the past year that had culminated in the presentation of the report. He said that while the Board had encouraged the preparation of the report, it had taken hard work on the part of the school staff, the area staff, and the community to prepare the report which was the way that things should work. While they could take pride in the report, he thought there was still more to be done. The report had requested long-term assistance and staff development assistance in the shorter term. He asked where they were in meeting the staff development needs. Dr. Lee Etta Powell, Area 3 associate superintendent, replied that schools could use part of their minigrants for staff development or request that a program be held in the school to respond to the needs of the school.

Dr. Cody assured the Board that he would provide a detailed response to the resources requested by Poolesville.

Dr. Cronin thanked the staff for their work and the successes they had reported. He agreed with Mr. Ewing that staff development needs should be examined. He inquired about the standard for designating a resource counselor, and Dr. Powell responded that generally there needed to be four counselors before that designation was made. Dr. Cronin asked about the possibility of staff training or an additional allocation of staff to ease the burden. Dr. Cody explained that they were not in a position to respond to particular items but would be providing the Board with a response in the near future. Dr. Pitt agreed to look into the textbook situation because they did have some flexibility there without waiting for the next budget.

In regard to vocational education, Dr. Cronin reported that next year the Board would be addressing vocational-technical needs in a comprehensive way. He asked for additional information on transportation needs. Mr. Bowen explained that, because of their location in the western part of the county, if they arranged a field trip to Washington they had only two hours there before the buses had to return for afternoon runs. In order to have field trips, they had to rely on parents to provide transportation. Dr. Cronin hoped that the superintendent would address this issue as well.

Mrs. Praisner pointed out that the Council had requested that the Board look into enlarging the transportation window so that buses could make more runs which was in conflict with the Poolesville situation. She, too, asked that staff look into this.

Dr. Shoenberg expressed his dismay about remarks made about the school at last year's public hearing. He said that these remarks did not match his knowledge about the school. He remarked that the school had presented a laundry list, and the Board did need to pay attention to these requests. He asked whether they had ever considered the advantages of a small school serving its community which could not be created in another situation. He pointed out that Poolesville was unique and presented the school with a challenge. It seemed to him that the school was trying to copy the programs existing in the larger schools in the county. He explained

that he served on a state task force looking at curriculum in Maryland high schools. They had discussed the need to look at different models rather than the seven-period day, five days a week. He suggested that Poolesville think about different ways of organizing the school day because the school was in a good position to lead the way. He said they could look at different ways to organize the curriculum and the student day without sacrificing the central MCPS curriculum. He thought that in this way Poolesville might serve as an excellent model for the schools in the rest of the state.

Mr. Ewing suggested that the superintendent look at ways of improving the image of Poolesville Junior-Senior High School because it was a good school and it was improving. He thought they needed to think about ways of communicating what was going on at Poolesville and perhaps some reporters could write about the school and its program.

Mrs. Praisner requested a staff response to the facilities questions raised by the staff because some of these modifications could be done by the MCPS maintenance staff. She thanked the staff and community of Poolesville for their warm hospitality and expressed the Board's appreciation for the work that was going on.

Re: Adjournment

The president adjourned the meeting at 10:20 p.m.

President

Secretary

WSC:mlw