

program. Mrs. Dacek said they had studied the graduation requirements and supported the extra year of math and fine arts. However, they had severe reservations about the diploma "with distinction." Mrs. Barbara Titland distributed copies of the EPI annual report. She said they were now running five programs: Hands-on Science, Foreign Language in Elementary Schools, Creative Enrichment, Showcasing, and Adolescent Sexuality. They had a seven-member board of directors which met on a monthly basis. ICB had asked them to look into writing a proposal to start a day care for latch key

children before and after school. For a variety of reasons, they were not sure they would like to do this.

Mrs. Titland reported that their science classes were increasing, and they had held a science festival in February with 500 people attending. FLES was doing well and enrollment was increasing. They had a waiting list for Creative Enrichment.

Mrs. DiFonzo asked why they did not want to get into day care. Mrs. Titland replied it would be difficult to get good employees. With Creative Enrichment, they had had problems with Health Department rules which were unbelievable. Mrs. Dacek added that Dr. Ayers was working with the Health Department to get some of their rules relaxed. She said that she would like to see MCPS take over all the EPI programs. Dr. Ayers was looking for a program for fourth to sixth graders which might be semi-educational. They were concerned about the scope of the program, because it was their feeling that it should be put in every elementary school. She suggested that the school system take the lead there, perhaps by using aides. She pointed out that it was difficult to find people to work two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon.

Mrs. Slye suggested that Dr. Ayers might want to contact the Montgomery County day care association to see if they had interest in such a program. Mrs. Dacek pointed out that there was a county task force of the 24 groups dealing with day care in Montgomery County. They would be studying this issue among others.

Mr. Ewing did not know whether they had ever given a serious look at the idea of MCPS taking over EPI programs. They would have to look at legal and financial issues. He felt there was a question as to whether MCPS could offer programs and charge for them. There was also a question about the extent to which MCPS could offer the programs at the current level and not have in mind some plan to make the services available much more widely. Mrs. Dacek commented that if all-day kindergarten prevailed, Creative Enrichment would go eventually. She explained that they were now phasing out computer classes from Hands-on Science because the school system was providing this.

Dr. Cody said he was making a note to have a feasibility study on the questions under discussion. He wanted to look at whether the school system could operate an extended day program on a fee basis and at whether there would be resources available for those who could not

pay the fee. He pointed out that they did run the summer school program and charge some students. They would have to ask the attorneys to look into this. He noted that there was precedent in other school systems throughout the country. However, the major question was whether or not the activity was something the school system wanted to take on. Mrs. Dacek thought that if the school system went in this direction Hands-on Science and FLES could be part of the program. Dr. Shoenberg reported that during the summer they would spend an evening or a large portion of an evening discussing foreign language instruction in the elementary and secondary schools.

Mrs. Mary Ann Bowen, Area 1 co-vice president, stated that communication was their first priority, and she felt that the cluster organization helped them to bring this about. They appreciated the willingness of the area office to meet with them. She thought the communication and mutual respect had enabled them to get through this past year and the difficult decisions faced by the Board. She said they had been through some difficult times in Area 1 this year, and the clusters had to deal with an energy and emotional level they felt could have been avoided. They felt that the Board had some responsibility to help communities to not have to deal with things such as responding to facilities alternatives. They understood that the Board's time element had been very short, but they would encourage the Board to take the time to run proposed alternatives by the staff before asking communities to respond.

Mrs. Bowen said that their second priority was to build a real team spirit in Area 1 and to bring about an identity with the Area 1 office. Mrs. Cordie Goldstein, Area 1 co-vice president, added that because of the cluster organization the role of the individual PTA had been broadened. They had a willingness to work together for common goals. At the beginning of the year the cluster coordinators decided to focus on budget and investigate ways that PTAs could get involved in the process prior to the development of the budget. In November they devoted their delegate assembly to the issue of involvement in the budget process. All of their clusters testified at the Board's hearings on the budget, and they thought the Board got a very good understanding of Area 1's specific needs. They were pleased with the Board-adopted budget and were going to the Council to express support for the budget.

Mrs. Marion Long, Area 2 vice president, reported that much of their effort had been devoted to getting the Area 2 Task Force underway. The task force was collecting information and interviewing principals, teachers, and parents. In a few weeks they would begin the process of interpreting the information in order to prepare their final report and recommendations by the end of June. She said there were several issues that had surfaced in Area 2. The main issue was the proposed study of the Area 2 schools, and there was a lot of anxiety about the boundary study. She asked that the study begin as soon as possible and that the communities be provided with a timetable of activities. She said that many of the clusters had expressed concern that they would not have any input. The other major concern in Area 2 was class size, and no one wanted this cut

out of the budget.

Mr. Ron Wohl, Area 3 vice president, explained that his goal had been to develop leadership throughout the area. One of the problems of a growing area was a constantly shifting leadership and the need to have people come up through the ranks and take positions at the county level. Another goal was to develop coordination of community interests. They were all upset to see the problems that occurred with closing schools where communities were pitted against communities. They did not want to see that occur in the up-county. This year they had the problem of maintaining the coordination of their various communities, and he was pleased to say they were working as one for broad issues. The main problems of the area were the recognition of the growing needs of a long under-catered-to population. He said they could not repair the problems of many years of neglect by a couple of years of action. They were happy for the attention they had received in the past two years. One of the problems was the need to examine the whole planning system because they did not have confidence in the numbers for the up-county. At one time the planning figures were based on 6,000 new houses, and then they were told it would be on 9,000 new houses last year. They had been told by Park and Planning that there were 12,000 houses last year and that they expected 9,000 to 12,000 this year. They had just heard a reference to 14,000 houses. They did not know what numbers to trust. However, they were living with a tremendously growing population. For example, each school was growing by five to seven students a week.

Mr. Wohl commented that in the planning process on boundary changes they had schools that were constantly mentioned in the press for potential changes to satisfy one person's needs. He reported that communities were in constant fear that their community would be the next one to go. He felt it was not fair to put those communities through the process of wanting to know what would happen if this idea were to occur but not being able to find out. They had two schools now involved in this situation.

Mr. Wohl stated that they would love to have small classes in the up-county, but they had no place to put them. If they could not reduce class size, they did need a commitment to add aides in those classes. They needed a commitment to the new high schools in Area 3 and did not want the Board's interest to flag. They had a problem with overcrowding in the up-county, and they probably needed more portables than had been budgeted. He agreed they needed all-day kindergartens, but he thought that one in each cluster was a drop in the bucket. He said that the Board had helped with the Area 3 Task Force and had recognized the need for additional schools. He hoped that the Board would continue to look out for Area 3.

Mrs. Marianne Young, Damascus cluster coordinator, reported that they had an elementary school under expansion and renovation. The day the construction started, they found out an additional 300 homes were to be constructed which had not been figured in the school addition. In the Cedar Grove area, 500 new homes were under construction.

Mr. Roger Martin, Magruder cluster coordinator, reported that they were pleased with the Board's budget. He noted that in the superintendent's preliminary facilities recommendation there was a proposed boundary change involving Mill Creek Towne and Candlewood, yet no one in the community had been consulted about it. There was a lot of concern in both communities, but when the superintendent's final recommendations came out there was a delay of one year for any changes. He hoped that both communities would be consulted in the future. He stated that Redland Middle had been one of five JIM schools nominated by the State of Maryland for the U.S. Department of Education's secondary school recognition program. Mr. Wohl added that Wootton was also on this list.

Mrs. Slye asked where the difficulty was originating with communication. She pointed out that in Area 2 rumors were flying, and she wondered whether the correct information was also in the community. Mrs. Long replied that she had never seen anything in writing about the Area 2 boundary study. Dr. Shoenberg remarked that the Board had said nothing about what schools would go where. He said a concern had been expressed that the community have some input; however, some kinds of input created more rumors because people were involved with trying out solutions to see if they would work. Mrs. Long explained that the communities would like to know when this was going to happen and have a timetable or something official about this study. Dr. Cody replied that this was on their list for preparation. Mr. Ewing explained that the Board had said it would start after the capital and operating budgets.

Mrs. Praisner stated that the Board was already getting letters saying they understood the Board was going to act on moving certain communities. She did not see the Board generating these rumors and did not know how they could stop them. Mrs. Slye was not sure that information had reached the principals and administrators.

Mr. Wohl said there were two schools, Richard Montgomery and Wootton, that were talked about every time the county executive talked about budget. The Board had not been drawn into this process. The county executive had created that stir, and the community needed some kind of response. Mrs. Praisner agreed that they needed to do that, but she thought that since MCCPTA was out in the community that they had a role as well.

Dr. Shoenberg commented that the Board could deal with only so much at once, and because they were not talking about something did not mean they had stopped paying attention to this. Dr. Cody agreed that they did need a facility timetable to bring to the Board. Mrs. Dacek offered to share the timetable with PTA presidents.

Mr. Ewing suggested the Board might want to consider a somewhat more systematic report on what the Board was doing on a monthly basis. This might be a good thing for the new director of information to have on his agenda. He reported that at the last meeting the Board placed on a future agenda the notion that they have a resolution

which committed them over a period of years to expand elementary counselors and all-day kindergarten and to reduce class size. This was underway and would list their expectations over a period of years. This would help people to understand that the budget exercise was one kind of plan, but the Board was interested in a longer range educational planning process. Mr. Wohl recalled that several years ago they had issued "Choices for Our Children" which had reached a lot of people and which expressed goals and priorities in a way that most people could understand.

Dr. Floyd pointed out that the Board had established a staff office for long-range planning. This office should help the Board do a better job of explaining where the Board was going and what communication devices needed to be put in place. He suggested that they could have a list of dates showing what items they would be studying in a certain time frame.

Mrs. Martha Rosacker, budget committee, explained that they were in their busiest season now but did see the budget effort as a year-long process. In the fall they had polled their PTAs via a questionnaire, and the top priority was smaller class size. They did have some input into the task force on budget format and said that parents had trouble understanding the budget book. They thought there might be ways of presenting the budget which would make it clearer to parents. They would also like to see some multiyear plans and projections for several years. They also expressed a desire to have early input into the budget process, and they suggested a calendar be prepared in September showing the entire budget process by date. In January, MCCPTA had adopted a budget position and had testified before the Board in support of the superintendent's budget and asking for a multiyear commitment for reduced class size and for seat belts on buses. They had also had a small meeting with Mr. Gilchrist to exchange views on the budget, and next week they would be testifying before the County Council. Mrs. Rosacker reported that they were keeping up a letter campaign to the County Council and would be monitoring Council budget action. They hoped next year to have an early dialogue with the Board and to meet in the fall with Dr. Shoenberg and Dr. Cody. Mrs. Ann Rose commented that they were grateful to the Board for giving them a budget they could be enthusiastic about.

Dr. Shoenberg thanked Mrs. Rosacker and Mrs. Rose for their support and agreed to set up an early dialogue. Dr. Cody suggested that it would be helpful if the MCCPTA survey were made available a month earlier, perhaps in October. Mrs. Praisner thought it would be helpful if the survey could explain what the Board was trying to do as far as a multiyear process.

Mrs. Virginia Donahue, counseling and guidance committee, explained that they tried to keep guidance issues in front of people. They had been working on weighted ranking, following the guidance study, and working on a booklet similar to "Changing Trends" which had been developed by the private schools.

Mrs. Holly Joseph, early childhood committee, explained that she had been meeting with the county task force on facilities. She hoped that day care and transportation would continue to be in the forefront. Mrs. Dacek said that another issue had just surfaced which was the cut off date for entrance to kindergarten. A number of parents were concerned that a lot of children born in December were not ready to enter kindergarten.

Mrs. Phyllis Fleischaker, human relations committee, reported that one of their priorities was broadening parent involvement in the PTA. She thought this was a complement to the Board's priority 2 because student achievement and participation were directly related to parent involvement in schools. She said that parents should be involved in local school efforts to implement Priority 2. This would lead to a cooperative effort to increase minority student achievement and minority student and parent participation. She understood that some schools did involve parents in their self study, but this was done only on an individual school basis. She asked that parent involvement be incorporated into this process at all schools, and she proposed that a parent be included on each local school planning team. Dr. Cody stated that he would like to look at the status of that activity. He explained that while they had specified what they wanted the schools to accomplish, they had been a little more cautious about prescribing to them how they went about doing this. He agreed to look into this and give information to the Board.

Mr. Ewing noted that research about effectiveness showed that parental involvement made a difference in education, particularly when it came from parents whose children needed special help. He thought that if they wanted to make real progress with Priority 2 it was important to think seriously about the proposal made by Mrs. Fleischaker. He said they had to encourage parental involvement in a fairly structured way. Mrs. Praisner asked about success they had had in encouraging that kind of involvement in the PTA. She acknowledged the excellent newsletter prepared by Harmony Hills Elementary which made itself open to non-English speaking members of that community. She would be interested in seeing whether they had been successful in spreading the good news about what Harmony Hills was doing and to what extent that was unique within the PTA newsletters. Mrs. DiFonzo added that there were facilities in the community which could help other schools to get out their newsletters in other languages. Mrs. Fleischaker said she had made efforts to get that word out, and there were other PTA newsletters making those efforts on an individual basis. She was hoping they could have a structure so that the word would spread out to every school.

Mrs. Pat Baptiste, legislation committee, reported that it had been a quiet year in Annapolis. They had been working on the bill on district elections for the Board of Education. They had testified again on a bill for tax-exempt status for PTAs which was defeated. Their executive board was in favor of the general concept of background checks for future employees. They were following the bill on the state bond issue for renovation and school construction. Mrs. Carole Huberman, safety committee, was pleased that the Board

had given attention to the seat belt issue. She said the Board had \$74,000 tentatively approved for seat belts on school buses, and she knew that some Board members were not convinced of the need. She said that seat belts had an educational value and avoided the chance of driver error because students were better behaved. She provided the Board with information from other school districts on

installation and implementation. She suggested that they include general seat belt information in the curriculum. She said the first several days of school they could have orientation by the school bus driver on safety regulations. She explained that most opposition on school bus seat belts came from school bus contractors who were advancing their short-term economic interests; however, in Montgomery County they owned their buses. She pointed out that one manufacturer was in opposition and was the same manufacturer of the buses used in the Canadian study. She requested that the Board provide seat belts on their newly purchased buses.

Dr. Shoenberg thanked the members of MCCPTA for all their work and for the good support they had given the Montgomery County Public Schools.

Re: Adjournment

The president adjourned the meeting at 10 p.m.

President

Secretary

WSC:mlw