

APPROVED
56-1985

Rockville, Maryland
December 16, 1985

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in special session at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Monday, December 16, 1985, at 7:40 p.m.

ROLL CALL Present: Dr. James E. Cronin, President
in the Chair
Mr. Blair G. Ewing
Mrs. Marilyn J. Praisner
Dr. Robert E. Shoenberg
Mrs. Mary Margaret Slye

Absent: Mrs. Sharon DiFonzo
Dr. Jeremiah Floyd
Mr. John D. Foubert

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

RESOLUTION NO. 623-85 Re: ROLLING TERRACE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

On recommendation of the superintendent and on motion of Mrs. Praisner seconded by Mr. Ewing, the following resolution was adopted with Mr. Ewing, Mrs. Praisner, Dr. Shoenberg, and Mrs. Slye voting in the affirmative; and Dr. Cronin voting in the negative:

Resolved, That the Board of Education adopt Proposal D (removal of the existing facility and construction of a new elementary school) for Rolling Terrace Elementary and amend its capital improvements program to add \$875,000 for Rolling Terrace.

Re: ANNOUNCEMENT

Dr. Cronin announced that Mr. Foubert was attending an MCR meeting and Mrs. DiFonzo and Dr. Floyd were out of town.

Re: ANNUAL MEETING WITH THE MONTGOMERY
COUNTY COUNCIL OF SUPPORTING SERVICES
EMPLOYEES

Mr. Vincent Foo, president of MCCSSE, congratulated Dr. Cronin on his election to the presidency and thanked Dr. Shoenberg for the work he had done in the past year as Board president. He said that he had submitted a list of items MCCSSE would like to discuss.

Mr. Foo reported that they had done a survey on video display terminals and had sent it to their national union. He indicated that they were still concerned about the issues they had brought to the Board last year on VDTs: eye problems, muscular strain, stress, and the effect on pregnant women. He asked again that when this equipment was purchased that MCPS provide shields. He also requested

that pregnant women be allowed to move to some other type of work, if possible, and he suggested that the Board and superintendent work together with MCCSSE on this problem. Legislation on this issue had been introduced in 18 states, and in Maryland there was a bill that had gone to summer study. In this session of the legislature, a joint resolution was expected which would ask for a study to develop standards and guidelines for the use of VDTs.

Dr. Shoenberg asked for information on which employees worked at these terminals and for what periods of time. Dr. Cody agreed to provide the Board with information on this subject. Mr. Ewing asked that the paper include costs to cover the people affected by this situation. Dr. Cronin recalled that they had made a statement that pregnant women did not have to work with these terminals, and Dr. Cody stated that he knew of some cases where women had been reassigned. Dr. Cronin suggested repeating this option so that women would know that they could request other assignments. He also thought that they needed information on stray radiation where people were not actually working on the terminals but were in proximity to them.

Mr. Foo said that the next issue was pay equity and reported that MCCSSE was part of a coalition against wage discrimination for women. He noted that there were two court cases in Los Angeles and San Diego that questioned the classifications of positions that were predominantly occupied by women. He commented that here they had the opposing view that the market determined wages, but he did not think that it would take much to look at the various jobs and see that wages were lower when these jobs were held by women. He asked MCPS to look at its entire classification system and apply some fair standards for evaluating these jobs. He pointed out that this was different from their efforts to get women into jobs that were predominantly held by men.

Dr. Shoenberg asked about whether Mr. Foo had any points of comparison on jobs. Mr. Foo replied that the usual comparison was a secretary and a truck driver with the weighting biased toward the blue collar classification. Dr. Cronin stated that the problem was that the compensation task force had rejected the idea of comparable worth and wondered how they would go about conducting such a study when the concept had been rejected. Mr. Foo commented that they had written the compensation task force and requested that MCCSSE's views be heard. He did not think that the County Council had come out and said they would adopt the task force recommendations. Dr. Cronin inquired about the timetable for the Council to consider the task force report, and Mr. Foo replied that he had been assured that he would be notified when this matter came up. Mrs. Praisner requested an update on the task force activities.

Mr. Ewing remarked that this was an extraordinarily important issue but a tough one to analyze. However, he felt that it was worth a close look and developing a persuasive case. Ms. Diane Davidson called attention to the different job classifications of the pony mail drivers who were male and the food service delivery workers who

were female. She noted that these jobs were comparable and almost interchangeable. Mr. Foo reported that he had written to Dr. Cody about this situation and had been assured that staff was looking into this one.

Mrs. Slye commented that there were women who had learned to fear for their jobs. Certain things were accepted. For example, boiler mechanics were considered to have an element of risk in their jobs while kitchen workers were not considered to have that risk. Mr. Foo was optimistic that they could do meaningful comparisons of work. He reported that he had received a copy of a letter Dr. Cody had sent to the County Council on the task force report and thought that the position taken by Dr. Cody was a good one and something MCCSSE could support. He noted that they had collective bargaining because of a state law and not a county law. If the County Council was going to get into bargaining they would have to sit at the table; otherwise they should stay out of this situation. Dr. Cody felt that the County Council now had a better understanding of the collective bargaining process after a couple of meetings and conversations with them.

Mr. Foo stated that he had a problem with the survey done by MCCPTA because he thought the questions asked were leading. The emphasis was on teacher salaries and, while he had no problem with teacher salaries being increased either to retain or attract good teachers, the emphasis was one-sided to the exclusion of other employees in the school system. He pointed out that supporting services employees did their jobs and did them the best they could. He would hate to see support for taking funds from elsewhere in the school system to support teacher salaries because it might come out of the hide of MCCSSE employees. They had a good system because of the support from all areas of employees, and he hoped that people realized that supporting services personnel were not expendable. He suggested that the Board let people know that the system needed many, many people working together and doing their jobs to provide the good schools that they had in Montgomery County. Mrs. Slye thought they should seek additional information from MCCPTA because normally these were the first ones to tell the Board when there was a need for additional supporting services personnel. Dr. Cronin reported that the Board had also requested copies of the comments made on the MCCPTA questionnaire. When the Board received this, it would be shared with MCCSSE. Dr. Cody did not think that people were thinking of supporting services employees when this question was raised. Mr. Foo pointed out that the PTA represented the parents; however, the entire community paid taxes. He thought that if the survey went out to that entire community, the responses might be different. Mrs. Praisner noted that the Board members had raised this very issue when it had discussed the survey.

Mr. Ewing thought that there was a more fundamental issue here. He said that the school system generally did not go out of its way to make it apparent to the community at large the role that supporting services employees played in making the school system an effective

one. He thought that they could do some of this through their publications and make it clear that supporting services contributions were extremely significant. Mr. Foo suggested that people could react to the role of bus drivers. These people had their backs to students, drove the bus in traffic, and assured that students got to school and home safely every day. It was a tremendous responsibility.

Dr. Cody recalled a survey asking people to identify school personnel. First on this list was the school secretary, followed by the principal and the building service worker.

Mr. Foo said that the next issue was wheelchair safety. Ms. Davidson stated that she was concerned about the evacuation of wheelchair students in case of fire. Elevators could not be used, and many schools did not have ramps. These students were dependent on building service workers to lift the wheelchairs yet these people were not trained in lifting techniques nor were they clear about their responsibilities. She felt that they needed to look at regulations and fire codes. In her particular school, they had five wheel chair students, and in the event of a fire it would take four adults to carry down one child at a time from the upper level of the building. Dr. Cronin requested information on the extent of the problem and training needs in how to handle handicapped children.

Mr. Willis Johnson reported that he was one of the first wheelchair bus drivers and agreed that there was a need for training because these children could be hurt by improper lifting techniques. He pointed out that most of the time the bus drivers did not have specific information about the handicapping conditions of these children.

Mr. Foo stated that they had some concerns about the policy on AIDS. He had heard that teachers with AIDS might be placed in supporting services positions. Dr. Pitt reassured Mr. Foo that this was not true. Dr. Cody explained that in the recommendation before the Board the individual with AIDS would remain in the classroom and on the job except in certain circumstances.

Mr. Foo was concerned about seat belts on school buses. When they had talked about this, everyone thought it was a great idea and would save lives. However, in the everyday world they were starting to question whether this was the right decision. Ms. Isabelle Simmons reported that the buses were designed for safety, and if students fell forward they would hit the padded backs of the seats in front of them. She cited problems in getting the children to use the belts as well as the damage they had done to the buckles. She pointed out that the belts were difficult to use, made bus cleaning more difficult, and caused a safety problem when students tangled their feet in the belts. In discussing this with other drivers, she had found that no one was pleased with the belts and that students were not using them. She wondered about the liability of a driver if students were hurt. They had been told that they did not have to enforce the seat belt rule but were to report vandalism and injuries if students were hurt by the seat belts. Mrs. Praisner thought that

drivers were not liable. Dr. Cody added that seat belts were not required to be used, but it was expected that drivers would urge the use of the seat belts. He said that this issue would be revisited in the operating budget. In addition, they also had the Canadian study which would help the discussion. Mrs. Praisner recalled that the Board had requested a report for decision-making purposes, and Dr. Pitt indicated that there was a preliminary report available.

Mr. Foo urged that the Board consider a substitute-calling program, and Dr. Pitt reported that they would be recommending a pilot project in the operating budget.

Dr. Cronin thanked Mr. Foo and the MCCSSE executive board and assured them that they would be provided with copies of responses to the issues that had been raised.

Re: ADJOURNMENT

The president adjourned the meeting at 9:40 p.m.

President

Secretary

WSC:mlw

