

APPROVED  
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Rockville, Maryland  
May 19, 1986

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in special session at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Monday, May 19, 1986, at 8 p.m.

ROLL CALL Present: Dr. Jeremiah Floyd, Vice President  
in the Chair  
Mrs. Sharon DiFonzo  
Mr. Blair G. Ewing  
Mr. John D. Foubert  
Mrs. Marilyn J. Praisner  
Dr. Robert E. Shoenberg  
Mrs. Mary Margaret Slye

Absent: Dr. James E. Cronin

Others Present: Dr. Wilmer S. Cody, Superintendent of Schools  
Dr. Harry Pitt, Deputy Superintendent  
Mr. Thomas S. Fess, Parliamentarian  
Mr. Eric Steinberg, Board Member-elect

Re: ANNOUNCEMENT

Dr. Floyd announced that Dr. Cronin was out of town.

Re: BLAIR CLUSTER ISSUES

Mrs. Kay Meek, cluster coordinator, expressed appreciation for the support that had been given their magnets thus far, particularly for their support of magnets as a positive way of addressing racial imbalance and for their support of the resources necessary to make the magnets more than a paper solution. She reported that it had been about ten years since the beginning of the magnets, and it was good to be in a period where they could see the accomplishments of some of the original goals set in 1976. It was good to appear before a Board of Education with the hope that the issues they brought before the Board would result in positive steps because that was not always the case in the early days of the magnets.

Mrs. Meek called attention to the first page of their report which was taken from their budget testimony. She reported that the new magnet at Eastern had attracted 107 students from outside its service area which had exceeded expectations and was beginning to address the 10 percent rise in racial imbalance in one year's time. She stated that their major concern was that the continued success of the magnets depended on the recognition by all Montgomery County that the desegregation magnets were an acceptable tool with which to address racial imbalance. They had some doubts that this premise was fully accepted beyond their own boundaries or even by all of MCPS.

Mrs. Meek said their first issue was that the math, science, computer science magnet at Blair, designed for at least 100 students per year,

was not meeting its recruitment goal even through its program had been successfully implemented. She reported that there were considerably fewer students applying this year than the first year of the magnet, and Blair had not met its goal of 100 students per year. They asked that the Board formally reaffirm that Blair was the countywide math, science, computer science magnet designed to implement the QIE policy. She said the Board must decide whether they meant it when they said they supported magnets for desegregation purposes. If they did, they must avoid creating any competing program because they could not have it both ways. They believed that the Board did establish the magnets as a priority and could prove it to the Blair cluster and the rest of the county by their continued complete support.

Mrs. Meek asked that staff immediately develop a plan of action to overcome the apparent reluctance of some local MCPS staff to cooperate fully in promoting the magnet at Blair. They asked for a creative, year-long recruitment plan for the Blair magnet and that the superintendent monitor recruitment efforts in the next year to determine if the action plan and new efforts were adequate. They requested that the superintendent monitor the enrollment histories of secondary magnet students to determine the attrition rate and its effect on the program. They asked that planning for the eleventh and twelfth grade years of the Blair magnet include opportunities for magnet student and parent input as well as the involvement of local Blair students in seminar-type courses. They requested that staff study the factors to determine why the two intermediate schools had been successful in meeting their recruitment goals and Blair High School had not.

Mrs. Meek commented that the Blair cluster secondary magnets were drawing heavily on several nearby Area 1 schools which were approaching the threshold of becoming racially imbalanced according to the Board's policy. She called the Board's attention to the attachments which indicated the uneven draw by area. She noted the number of students from Area 3 attending their magnets because they might not be aware of that area's vital contribution to the success of the magnet. They requested a study of the enrollment of the secondary magnets to determine areas most appropriate for future equitable draw. They asked for creative magnet publicity to target the identified recruitment areas.

Mrs. Meek pointed out that the secondary magnets emphasizing math, science and computer science were attracting a disproportionate number of males while the Communications Arts magnet at Eastern was attracting a disproportionate number of females. They asked that staff study the issue to determine how to encourage the participation of males and females in more equal numbers and that staff provide an immediate counseling support to encourage that participation.

Mrs. Meek stated that the fourth issue was that successful principals in the Blair cluster schools were quickly recruited for leadership positions in other areas. They requested that any move of a magnet school principal be very carefully weighed as to the effect on the

magnet program and the school. They asked that careful, long-range planning be initiated to provide continuity of leadership in magnet schools. They were concerned about the apparent lack of planning for a successor to Dr. Quelet. They asked that the internship program for principals continue to include opportunities for training in magnet school situations. They requested that consideration be given to extra compensation such as salary incentives or professional growth opportunities for principals accepting the extra responsibilities of leadership at a magnet school.

Dr. Michael Richman, cluster coordinator, said that the fifth issue was that space for magnet program was limited or not available at several schools. Magnet-program desegregation would not be possible unless space was available. They requested that staff annually determine the amount of additional classroom space needed for successful magnet implementation and publish that information. They asked that facilities relief for Blair, East Silver Spring, Montgomery Knolls and Pine Crest be provided by the spring recruitment period next year so as not to adversely affect 1987-88 enrollment efforts.

Dr. Richman stated that the effect of the current enforcement of the transfer review policy was creating less than desirable opportunities for within-cluster transfer at the elementary level. They asked that the Board reconsider the rolling transfer period since it appeared to have created unnecessary negative efforts on within-cluster transfers. They asked for a task force to consider the upcoming request of the Blair Advisory Council regarding the transfer review policy and problems created by its enforcement. They requested clear explanations of the transfer review policy as well as a plausible definition of the phrase "net effect" which must be developed and reviewed by the community and all staff involved in its implementation. They also asked for a review of the appeal process to determine if it was undermining the entire policy.

Dr. Richman remarked that the creative, resourceful and energetic magnet staffs, who were responsible for the implementation as well as curriculum revision to insure that magnets were truly unique and ahead of county curriculum, were valuable resources who deserved guaranteed support. They requested that the budget include provisions in magnet categories for EYE, travel, stipends and substitute time so that all magnet teachers were given ample opportunity for professional growth to keep abreast of the state-of-the-art techniques in their various fields. They asked that staff study the possibility of upgrading the position of the intermediate magnet resource teachers to reflect the demands and responsibilities of these positions. They asked staff to develop a long-range magnet staffing plan so that future needs, projected staff growth and/or changes were anticipated. He stated that the importance of this interdisciplinary training and the benefits of this expertise for magnet students and future magnet teachers must not be lost.

Dr. Richman said that the eighth issue was a community perception. The Board and senior staff assumed that all magnets were adequately funded, properly staffed and "could take care of themselves." The issue was that budget requests for some magnets continued to be rejected and schools wondered how they could continue to remain distinctive and competitive. He recalled that two years ago they had outlined a number of staff requests, and a great many of those had not been implemented. They recommended that the magnet coordinator review the staffing and funding of each magnet and determine whether improvements were necessary. Discussion with community and budget staff should take place prior to the writing of the superintendent's budget.

Dr. Richman stated that there was a concern that future issues might continue to be addressed in a catch-up or after-the-fact manner. For example, K-12 magnet planning and articulation must be developed. They suggested some sort of a pass-through plan to Blair for qualified Takoma Park Intermediate magnet students. They requested that the office of the magnet coordinator develop a magnet advisory committee to assist with the determination and resolution of these issues. The committee should include staff and community representatives.

Re: WELCOME TO BOARD MEMBER-ELECT

Dr. Floyd welcomed Mr. Eric Steinberg, Board member-elect to the table.

Re: CONTINUATION OF DISCUSSION WITH BLAIR CLUSTER

Dr. Shoenberg thanked the coordinators for their brevity and the clarity of their report. He said that some of these were on-going problems, some second phases of problems only partially resolved, and some of them were problems that resulted from attempted solutions to other problems. The transfer issue was one of these and space another. On the budget issues he hoped that they realized the Board could not do everything at once.

Dr. Shoenberg remarked that there was another set of issues that had to do with inexperience. That was true with the Blair magnet and the marked difference in male/female ratios. This had to do with the apparent resistance of some schools in the county to publicize the Blair magnet. He saw those recommendations as ones of great urgency, but they were also partly a matter of inexperience. He felt that some of these things would get better in time. He commented that the bottom line for this was that they were pedaling as fast as they could. However, he did not see anything in their report that he would call an unjustified request on their part.

Mr. Ewing stated that the report provided the Board with a solid agenda of items they needed to address as quickly and as effectively as they could. In regard to recruitment for the Blair magnet, it was clear that the community had identified a serious problem in

addressing ways they could make sure that students outside the Blair area knew about the program and were encouraged to explore it. While they had to be careful not to put other schools in the role of recruiting for the Blair magnet, they did have to be sure that materials about the magnet were available, clear, and specific. They had to make it clear to principals and counselors that they were obliged to do this, and he believed the superintendent was going to address this problem.

With respect to resources including space, Mr. Ewing believed they had tended to believe that the resources since they were beyond the norm for the rest of the school system must be adequate. He did not subscribe to that conclusion, and he thought there was a need to do a systematic examination of what it took to make the magnets operate effectively. In regard to an advisory committee, he remarked that they were not lacking in advice from the Blair area. On the other hand, he thought an advisory committee focusing on the magnets would be immensely valuable. It would help the Board address this whole range of questions.

Dr. Cody commented that the report was an extremely constructive one. In regard to the recruitment issue, he thought they needed to deal with the cooperation they received from across the school system for students who might be interested. He thought they had had a little bit of foot-dragging this last year, and that would be taken care of. The other issue had to do with the recruitment strategy. A crucial step was not carried out, and for that reason Blair's numbers came in about the same as last year or a little bit lower. This crucial step would be built in. He noted that until they had more space in the elementary schools, he could hardly go advertise. He felt that the resources available and provided by the County Council in terms of funds would make a tremendous difference in the elementary schools. He said that they needed a specific recruitment plan developed ahead of time with a thorough knowledge of what was to take place.

Dr. Cody said that the second issue had to do with transfer practices. DEA was preparing an analysis of the history of the elementary magnets and the consequences of the net effect policy. That would be useful information to look at the net effect procedures as well as their overall policy on transfers. They would be dealing with this in the next couple of months. Mrs. Meek suggested that it would be important for the community to know about this report because schools were studying the issue at the moment.

Dr. Richman stated that at Rolling Terrace because of its high minority enrollment they had looked at the transfer policy to see if it had adversely affected their school. He suggested that the other elementary schools monitor transfers in and out as the secretary at Rolling Terrace had done. He said that what was happening in Rolling Terrace not was supposed to be happening. Dr. Cody commented that the net effect policy was subject to different interpretation. In some cases it had had a very beneficial effect, but some of them were less beneficial.

Mrs. Praisner stated that it was important to make sure in whatever studies were done that they recognized whether the magnets as they exist now were the same as those in 1976 or that the communities had stayed the same or the effort by the school system had been the same. For example, they saw a significant change when transportation was provided.

In regard to budget, Mrs. Praisner said she found it uncomfortable at every budget session to vote up or down on an individual school piece of the magnets. It was important for them while maintaining strong support for the magnets to not give the perception to the entire community that their schools were suffering as a result of the Board's support for the magnet. She felt there had to be a continuing countywide commitment to the magnets and an understanding of that commitment. She would find it useful to have a committee review and a long-range plan for the development of the magnets. She said it would be helpful to spend time with the community with the committee prior to budget action. She explained that she was not talking about just the Blair area.

Mrs. Slye asked Mrs. Meek if she had more suggestions about Issue 1, request 7 on recruitment. Mrs. Meek replied that this was a new issue. They were pleased with 190 applicants last year and shocked with 140 in a second year. This needed an in-depth study. This year they were fairly certain that the reluctance of the rest of the county to support the advertisement efforts had a large part to play in this.

Dr. Richman said that the idea of seminar-type courses and magnet student and parent input was important. They wanted more community involvement in these programs, and they thought that at the eleventh and twelfth grade level there might be ways the AP students in the regular Blair program could participate in seminars. Mrs. Meek said that another part of this was to involve magnet students and their parents in a study of the reasons why the Takoma Park students chose not to go to Blair.

Mrs. DiFonzo called attention to the statement that the success of the magnets depended on the recognition by all Montgomery County that the desegregation magnets were an acceptable tool with which to address racial imbalance. She asked for a definition of "all" Montgomery County. Mrs. Meek replied that they meant all of Montgomery County, those people supporting the magnets with their tax money. She pointed out that all of Montgomery County did not know that the magnets were for desegregation purposes. For example, their recruitment materials in the first years did not mention the purpose of these magnets. She said they had to educate every single person involved in the magnets. The recruitment could not be there if there was resentment and lack of understanding. The other concern was the resentment that had built up in the rest of the county because they did not recognize the purpose of the magnets.

Mrs. DiFonzo asked how they would recommend getting that knowledge

out to the community in a way that they would accept it. Dr. Richman replied that Dr. Cody had stated last year that integration was the responsibility of all Montgomery County residents.

Dr. Cody stated that last year they had neutrality across the county. There was concern about increasing numbers of students leaving schools, and they had some discouragement. They had to deal with this head on. Recruitment would be taken up directly with the principals of the schools. This year the major technique used to attract to students was not carried out in the first go-around, and he did not know of any high school magnet that had been successful without the direct marketing to individual students and their families.

Mr. Foubert called attention to the disproportionate amount of males applying for the math/science/computer program. He said that this issue needed to be addressed in the whole school system. He saw that in his own school and imagined that it was across the school system. He asked that Dr. Cody and his staff respond to the very well thought-out list of requests of the Blair community for the Board's support.

Mrs. DiFonzo asked how they would respond to people who said the Blair magnet was not accessible and that MCPS was running an inequitable program. She said there was a substantial segment of the county which was calling the Board names for not providing program equity and accessibility of program to that substantial portion of the county. Mrs. Meek replied that this was not an easy situation. However, if the desegregation magnet was a priority, they had to take care not to destroy it. Mrs. DiFonzo asked what would happen if a similar program were put in somewhere else in the county. Mrs. Meek called attention to the draw from areas and stated that it was imperative that the entire county support the magnet. For example, there were more youngsters from Area 3 in the magnets than from Area 2. Dr. Richman commented that this was one acceptable way for desegregation. The other was to ride buses, and now everyone would have to ride the buses. It could not be just one way.

Dr. Floyd thanked Mrs. Meek and Dr. Richman for their presentation.

Re: AREA 1 ISSUES

Mrs. Dianne Smith, Area 1 co-vice president, stated that when she first took office she had only been involved in closures and consolidations. She became aware that Area 2 and Area 3 people were really not aware of what was going on in Area 1. A large number of people in Area 3 had no idea that the magnet had anything to do with quality integrated education. She found herself explaining about the QIE policy at every opportunity.

Mrs. Smith reported that she had been serving on the Richard Montgomery Task Force, and the people serving on that task force had no idea about what a magnet program was and why it was at Blair. She did not think that as a PTA person she should be explaining that

policy.

Mrs. Smith said that in Area 1 they had a tremendous communication network and met monthly with the coordinators and Dr. Vance. In addition, every cluster coordinator met monthly with their group. She noted that everything they were to present was unanimously supported. She explained that these were their concerns and anxieties based on fear. These questions were raised at the beginning of the year, and the cluster coordinators met with their cluster on these. They had requested a meeting with Dr. Wilhoyte in order to have understanding on the situation and had asked her about the number of magnet students, where they would normally attend, the programs provided for those not choosing the magnet and qualifying for advanced work, whether the magnets would help achieve the desired racial balance, and efforts to recruit additional students. They asked for information on the accelerated programs at the elementary and J/I/M level.

Mrs. Smith reported that they had had a very productive meeting. They had found that all of their concerns were actually realities. She said that Einstein had held a special meeting and decided to ask for additional information. The cluster met again and requested more information.

Mrs. Smith explained that Area 1 was trying to support the magnet program, but they were beginning to feel a little threatened. They found for 1986-87 those supporting the Eastern, Takoma, and Blair magnets were 177 from Area 1. From Area 2 there were 62 students, and from Area 3 there were 69. She pointed out that they were dealing with schools that also had a high minority. They were taking majority students from White Oak (47 percent minority), Banneker (35 percent minority), Sligo (46 percent), Lee (48 percent), and Parkland (38 percent). When they took majority students from these schools, they were affecting racial balance, and they were also taking a very large percentage of their bright students. She felt that the schools were doing a very good job in educating their diverse population, but people supporting gifted and talented programs were concerned. For example, Banneker would be sending 31 students to Eastern and Takoma Park. Out of these 31 students, four were black, 14 Asian, and 13 were white. Therefore, the majority of those coming from Banneker were minority students and were going to address a racial imbalanced program which did not make much sense.

Mrs. Smith pointed out that every year MCPS did an evaluation of how well schools were doing with their minorities. Yet the best minority students were being taken from these schools. She commented that the comprehensive high school was being discussed all over the country. In Area 1 they supported the magnet program, but there was a lot of talk about special programs being developed by the Board. Even if these were not called magnets, a special program would draw honors students into that school which was the same population served by the Blair magnet. Area 1 was struggling to keep comprehensive high schools. The Richard Montgomery parents wanted a comprehensive high school, and their first choice was not a special program. She noted



that every school in Area 1 had boundary changes, and she asked why underutilization was addressed by a special program instead of boundary changes at Richard Montgomery.

Mrs. Smith informed the Board of two PTA newsletters, one asking for a magnet programs and the other concerned about academically gifted students being drawn away from their school. Mrs. Smith said they were creating an image that a school without a magnet or a special program was inferior. She said that there was panic beginning in the county.

Mrs. Smith reported that the image was being created that the county was turning into an area school system, and that every time a decision was made to meet the needs of one area, the other two areas were ignored. She suggested it might be time to go into a long-range plan of academics in relationship to boundary lines and minority balance. She said that the community thought the Board was trying to solve problems with a myopic view and was creating other problems by their solutions.

Mrs. Smith reported that she served on the Edison Center board but Area 3 had no representation even though Magruder sent students there. She said they had put a lot of money into this program, and while it could house 1400 students split between the morning and afternoon sessions, it was used by 630 students. They had put a lot of money into a facility that seemed to be serving a small percentage of students. They had to begin justifying the expense. They all realized the budgetary restraints and that the county demanded an excellent school system in every category. However, they had to be realistic and understand that some proposals were very expensive. The magnet program would continue to take a lot of money to support. If the magnet did not succeed, the whole county would be affected. If the Board was going to start special programs, the programs would cost a lot of money. The county survey revealed that parents wanted reduced class size and better pay for teachers. She asked where they would get all the money necessary to support all these programs. She remarked that they elected Board members because they wanted decisive decisions. She said that while these decisions were difficult, someone had to begin to think decisively.

Mr. Bill Olmstead, Area 1 co-vice president, thanked Mrs. Smith for her summary. They saw three policies coming in conflict: QIE, the transfer policy, and the comprehensive high school. Mrs. Smith added that they needed comprehensive high schools throughout the county. She thought it would help if residents in Area 3 knew that they were going to have a comprehensive high school and that everyone did not need a special program.

Mrs. Judy Tankersley, Wheaton cluster coordinator, stated that they wanted Wheaton to be the neighborhood school providing a comprehensive service. The former Peary parents consolidated into Wheaton were concerned about the size of the school because of the Edison Center. Wheaton had room for 1300 students, which limited them to four grades of 300 which was the minimum under the Board's

guidelines. If they had 50 in a high level group, and some of these went to Richard Montgomery or to Blair, they would have problems maintaining honors and AP courses. They had been told this problem would be solved when they closed Peary High School, and next year they would have only eight students in AP European History. This was happening with only three grades in the school. She would like to know if the Board had decided they did not support the comprehensive high school and thought special programs were the only way to go.

Mrs. Jinny Guy, Einstein cluster coordinator, said their elementary schools had created their own gifted and talented programs. As these children moved to the J/I/M level, parents were concerned that the same type of accelerate program was not in place there. They were concerned that more students would go off to the Takoma and Eastern magnets, and there would not be enough students to support J/I/M gifted and talented programs.

Mrs. Ruth Joseph, Kennedy Cluster Coordinator, stated that she was unhappy when she read about the possibility of another special program that would draw students away from the county's program which had not met its quota. If they were truly for QIE, she would like the Board and the school system to say it every time. She said the school system and the county must address Blair as a countywide magnet, and when they started addressing special programs in other areas they did not do the county magnet justice. Mrs. DiFonzo commented that if they had a Blair-type magnet not used for integration purposes somewhere else it would still be the same kind of magnet. She asked what they would say to the people who were demanding access to the same special program. These people contended they were being discriminated against because some of them had to travel an hour and a half or more to avail themselves of the program. She explained that she was not making the case but was sharing these views.

Mr. Olmstead stated that they had fairly strong participation from people in parts of the county with the most difficult access and lower participation from schools in other areas that were much closer to Blair. Mrs. Joseph realized it was a problem for students from the far reaches of the county, but it was also possible that a student did not want to participate in a magnet program. She said that they had to address this issue not as an Area 1 special program but as a county special program addressing racial balance.

Mr. Olmstead remarked that in the Kennedy cluster some of their minority parents were saying that the Blair magnet was designed to balance Blair High School on racial grounds. If they were drawing from a school that was not representative of the county in higher numbers than they were drawing from schools which were more segregated that meant they had to draw more majority students out than minority students. They were concerned that minority students in Area 1 were being discriminated against in order to get an integrated balance at Blair. The school said this was not happening because they were still going on qualifications.

Mrs. Claire Iseli, Paint Branch Cluster coordinator, noted that they were the most remote school from Blair in Area 1 and yet they were sending 31 students from their junior high school. She said it was important to realize the effects that this could have on the home school, not only in terms of minority achievement but also in terms of numbers of honors students. Parents also wondered what was wrong with Banneker if so many students were going to the magnets. She remarked that their participation indicated the level of support they had given to the magnet program, but if they didn't address recruitment issues quickly, they would risk losing cooperation of the schools now participating in the program.

Mrs. Kathy Queen, Springbrook cluster coordinator, reported that while they supported the magnets, they were trying to say that the Area 1 schools could not support the magnet by themselves. She asked the Board to assure them that the county would support the magnet. They were concerned that White Oak would be sending 34 students to the J/I/M magnets, and 17 of these were majority students. If they send another 20 next year they would be worrying about White Oak's minority balance.

Mr. Ewing stated that the whole presentation had been helpful to him in understanding the perspective of the Area 1 community. As one who had watched Boards come and go, he said there was no doubt of the high level of commitment to achieve improved integration and improved quality of education on the part of the Board and the community. This had not always been so. He said they had expectations that they could make progress towards the goals they sought. At the same time it was true that the extent of public support for integration remained somewhat fragile. While it was possible for Montgomery County to remain something of an island of commitment, it was not the case that everyone supported integration. For himself, he expected to continue to support efforts to achieve integration as long as he was a Board member.

Mr. Ewing stated that one perception that was not a reality was that the Board was moving to create special programs all over the county. It was not. They had one at Blair and would have one at Richard Montgomery. Whether they would create another was not known. He thought comprehensive high schools were the way to go. They had a very diverse county and needed to educate all the children, and people had very different views on how that should be done. There was a view that the 30 percent of their children who did not go on to college needed programs. He had not supported the Edison Center, and he thought they built Wheaton High School too small. He suggested that they needed to relook at Edison and should not go pell mell in building a new vocational center up-county. Those questions depended on money, and on May 27 they had a question of money coming up when they had to decide whether to fund teacher salary increases out of improvements.

Mr. Ewing said it was his feeling that the Board was as concerned as the people in Area 1. Integration was something that they would have to work with and struggle with. The Board was as interested in

finding ways to solve the problem as Area 1 was. He said that the major problem was that they had yet to find a voice that would be loud enough to make it clear to everyone in the county where the school system was going. In addition, there was a vast turnover in PTA leadership and parental involvement.

Mr. Ewing stated that he would be interested in knowing whether there were specific circumstances where a particular school or program was not performing as well as it should. He felt it was important for the Board and superintendent to know where there were problems. Mrs. Smith reported that no one felt threatened by the magnet program, but when the decision came out with a special program for Richard Montgomery it sent waves through the county. It was an image problem because people felt their high schools were not comprehensive. She suggested that the Board and the staff had to do more to make county residents know there were excellent schools out there. When they put a special program at Richard Montgomery, the inference was that they could not make that a comprehensive high school. Dr. Floyd explained that even under the best of circumstances at Richard Montgomery it would be one tenth of one percent of the students in the county, and Mrs. Meek pointed out that these were the same numbers quoted for the Blair magnet.

Dr. Shoenberg remarked that this was almost a Catch 22. They set up a program designed to reduce segregation, and they created problems in a couple of other schools already heavily impacted by students going to the special programs. However, it was not quite a Catch 22 because there was a narrow line they could walk by achieving what they wanted on one hand without achieving negative effects. The Board had tried to approach things in a way that allowed all of the impacts to be understood and not to march too fast in one direction before they understood the impact. The Board would pay careful attention to the remarks tonight as they started to discuss another special program. In regard to Richard Montgomery, the Board put off making boundary changes because they did not want to act too narrowly. They wanted to make the boundary changes within as broad a context as seemed sensible, and to do that it made sense to put that decision off for a couple of years. Mrs. DiFonzo added that it was specifically because of the opening of Quince Orchard. Dr. Shoenberg said it probably was not sensible to deal with Richard Montgomery entirely by boundary changes; therefore, a special program was approved for that school.

Dr. Shoenberg explained that special programs were the kind of programs for which there were not enough students at every school to offer. To have a critical mass of students they had to aggregate their resources. The very highly gifted math/science program at Blair was a good example of that. It appeared that the international program at Richard Montgomery was such another kind of program. He would also argue that this program served an important social purpose for Montgomery County in terms of creating opportunities for students with high levels of language competency and an awareness of international issues. This program would exist right along with a comprehensive high school program. The Richard Montgomery program

would not be designed, as is the Blair program, to enroll only highly academically able students. The object was to draw all kinds of students to that program to take part in the international focus and to develop language competencies. The International Baccalaureate part of the program might draw academically gifted but it was only one part of the program. It would not draw exclusively majority students because they were not dealing with a desegregation problem, and it might also draw much more heavily from parts of the county that were not so highly represented at Blair. He agreed with the need to recruit more widely for Blair. He did not think the Board was in any way prepared to abandon the notion of comprehensive high schools, but for a variety of reasons they would have at some schools along with the comprehensive program some special programs which could only be done if they could aggregate the resources.

Mrs. Smith asked if the Board would be looking at special programs beyond Richard Montgomery. Dr. Shoenberg explained that they had no plans at this time for any special program beyond what they now had; however, it might prove that that was a sensible thing to do.

Mrs. Slye recalled that last spring the Board discussed whether or not it was appropriate to go ahead and consider additional programs of some special nature. She thought they were asking if there would only be magnet programs or would there be special programs of different kinds and if so what needs would they meet. She and Mrs. Praisner had raised the issue of whether or not there should be a discussion of comprehensive high schools before there was discussion of any additional special programs. She thought Dr. Shoenberg had done an excellent job of outlining why the Board established a special program at Richard Montgomery before taking the boundary change step. Mrs. Slye thought they should have this discussion so that community would know what to expect in terms of their local high schools.

Mrs. Smith suggested that if the Board had this discussion she hoped they would include the transfer policy. Mrs. Slye agreed and said it should not be the transfer policy as written but how it was played out in fact and the application of net effect. This became a key to maintaining the viability of the home schools as well.

Mr. Olmstead stated that he agreed with what they had done at Richard Montgomery, but he was concerned about how this was done. They had other special programs in the county, but in this particular case they had a statement that they wished to address a social issue, the enrollment. Then they looked at what aggregate program to put there, which got them into the issues of how much money would be invested and whether it was an investment policy fair to all the other students in the school system. For the integration magnet, he was willing to say spending more money there to make it more attractive and accomplish the social goals was good public policy. He would not necessarily agree that it was good policy to use this to keep a school open.

Mrs. Queen asked how a special program would address the problems of underenrollment. She asked how they would get 18 students in the U.S. History AP program so that they could offer it. Mrs. Praisner

agreed that it did not necessarily do that but neither did the comprehensive high school. It was not just numbers but it was the resources to offer the comprehensive program and the core of courses. There would also be differences in the options for students depending on the numbers of students in a school and the schedule. She explained that they were trying to minimize the problems for students so that they could get the courses they wanted. Mrs. Queen said that the school with 13 students in that AP class was concerned that it would not get the extra resources to offer a program.

Mrs. Praisner commented that the questions raised this evening should be discussed with the county as a whole. She noted that when the Board met by groups they reinforced the kinds of things that they were citing now. This was also a problem of having created clusters because people never looked beyond their cluster or their area at the county as a whole. She thought the Board should discuss this issue with the leadership of MCCPTA and with other interested groups. She said that in some cases there might be concerns that were not as serious when they began to discuss them, but they did appear serious to the parents and should be addressed.

Mrs. Praisner hoped that they could come to closure on process when they established any program. They had to clearly define what the program was for, communicate that to the public, and assess what the implications would be and what long-term commitment would have to be made. They had not done that yet, but the superintendent had assured her this would be done in the case of Richard Montgomery. She said that it was unfortunate that this was an Area 1 meeting and not a countywide meeting. She suggested they look at the report of the Secondary Schools Task Force which spoke to the issue of bringing together resources to provide programs where schools could not do it by themselves. She also pointed out that in Prince George's County they were advertising their special programs in grocery stores. She suggested looking at what their sister county was doing in their approach to articulating what they were doing.

Mr. Olmstead called attention to an article in the POST and another in the JOURNAL about parents in comprehensive schools in Prince George's who were complaining that they were not getting funds for books, teachers, and class size. Mrs. Praisner said that one of the fears they had to address was that all of the resources were not going into the magnet programs to the detriment of other schools. They had to be sure that people understood why they had the magnets, support them financially, and have a clear understanding of what was available in their own schools.

Dr. Floyd said that he wanted to argue the other side of the small group/large group proposition because there were assets and liabilities both ways. As a public official, there was a lot more security in meeting with a large group because there was not as much opportunity for people to be put on the spot. However, in a smaller group they got a lot more interaction and a lot more of the concerns.

Mr. Ewing commented that he was interested in cluster perceptions and

perceptions about individual schools. If meetings were countywide, they could not deal with anything other than countywide issues. While it was important for them not to make decisions solely on the basis of area or cluster, they did need to address area and cluster issues. He pointed out that the Board was divided on the Richard Montgomery issue. He thought it was important for the Board to take action promptly to add students to Richard Montgomery in the form of one or two additional elementary schools and change boundaries for this fall. He said that Richard Montgomery is a school facing a real crisis. It is a school with a public image that is on the whole not very positive; however, he thought it was a very good school. People were saying that it had too many poor students and too many black students to be a good school, and he thought the Board needed to deal with that by adding large numbers of additional students, but the Board did not do that. While the Board said it would do this in the future, he did not think it was going to find it easy to do that two years hence. He had supported adding a special program, but it was not quite accurate to say the community wanted this. The community wanted more students and would take a special program if that were all they could get.

For the record, Dr. Floyd said he heard the community saying not that they just wanted more students, but that they wanted more white, middle-class, college-bound students.

Mrs. Guy said that when they talked about comprehensive high schools they were not particularly worried about a comprehensive program at a school where there was a special program. They were worried about all the other schools. When they were dealing with school closure issues they were working school by school, and from there they had gone to working with clusters. Now they were working together as an area.

Mrs. Smith stated that they wanted the Board to examine the impact on the comprehensive high school created by special programs. They were concerned about how much they could do fiscally to meet all the needs. They were concerned about gifted and talented programs in J/I/M schools because those teachers also taught the regular population. If the Board showed their support for the GT program at every J/I/M school, it would help with the fear and image problem. She said that the Board had an awful lot of good programs to support and pay attention to, and she cautioned them to be careful about creating new programs. Mrs. Iseli added that it was important to assess the impact of any special program back at the individual school level. It had been mentioned that Blair was not accessible to every one, and she said it was not designed to do this. It was designed to solve racial imbalance.

Mr. Olmstead thanked the Board for meeting with Area 1. Dr. Floyd expressed the Board's appreciation to Area 1 for alerting the Board to their concerns. He said the Board needed their cooperation and help to address these concerns. He pointed out that they were talking about was one magnet program at Blair High School, two years in duration, and one special program just acted upon by the Board for

Richard Montgomery. These were two out of 20 high schools. While they heard Area 1, he wanted their help in making sure that all of their high schools were comprehensive, good high schools delivering the kind of educational program that was expected in Montgomery County.

Re: ADJOURNMENT

The vice president adjourned the meeting at 10:25 p.m.

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Vice President

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Secretary

WSC:mlw