

APPROVED  
24-1987

Rockville, Maryland  
April 27, 1987

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in special session at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Monday, April 27, 1987, at 8:25 p.m.

ROLL CALL      Present: Mrs. Marilyn J. Praisner, President  
                  in the Chair  
                  Dr. James E. Cronin  
                  Mrs. Sharon DiFonzo  
                  Mr. Blair G. Ewing  
                  Mr. Bruce A. Goldensohn  
                  Dr. Robert E. Shoenberg  
                  Mrs. Mary Margaret Slye  
                  Mr. Eric Steinberg

Absent: None

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

Re: MEETING WITH MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL  
OF SUPPORTING SERVICES EMPLOYEES

Mrs. Praisner reported that they had no agenda and planned to keep the meeting informal. She thanked Mr. Foo and MCCSSE members for their presence at the County Council budget session. She commented that it was obvious that they had a major educational process to go through with the County Council. She thanked MCCSSE for their continuing support of the operating budget and especially for the turnout at Richard Montgomery High School.

Mr. Vincent Foo, president of MCCSSE, stated that in regard to the budget it was a difficult situation. Minds seemed to be made up, and it was difficult to get any movement, especially from the county executive. He said that after the Board adopted its budget, Board members had to convince the County Council of the need. MCCSSE had been trying to convince the negotiator, the mediator, the county executive, and the County Council. Now they were in a situation where they might have to be back to convincing the Board. He remarked that as employees of MCPS they had always felt they were a family working together to provide students with the best education. He understood that teachers were prominent in any school system and rightfully so, but MCCSSE members were a diverse group and each one contributed individually to the school system. While some of their jobs were not glamorous, each one believed he/she was a part of the family. If there had to be a tightening up or economizing, everyone should be treated fairly.

Now that negotiations were over, Mr. Foo hoped that MCCSSE and the Board would resume a relationship that had been fruitful and decent for many years. He doubted that the county executive and County

Council would move from their budget positions, and the Board would be faced with big decisions. Whatever decisions were made would probably give MCCSSE some big decisions to make, too. He noted that the Council had stated that they were funding the contracts, and he hoped that the Board would do just that. He knew that if the Board did this, that they would have to do some things that were unpleasant. He thought that programs would have to be cut, and the parents and community would feel these cuts. He remarked that it was unfortunate that the Council did not understand what was needed for education, and he pointed out that they were sitting on a \$20 million surplus which was likely to grow. He thought the agreements with the employee organizations should be funded, although he knew it would be a tough decision for the Board.

Mrs. DiFonzo stated that she, too, was upset by the budget situation. She felt a personal commitment to fund the contracts if it could be done, but she agreed that they were going to have to make cuts. The improvements were gone, and she thought they were going to have to cut \$8 million more. However, the Board had not discussed this yet, and \$8 million in cuts would be an extremely emotional issue for her. Mrs. Praisner noted that they would have to wait until the Council acted on the final budget on May 11. At the evening meeting in May, the Board would begin the long process of reviewing the budget. Between now and then the Board would be receiving recommendations from the staff on how the cuts might be taken.

Mr. Ewing believed that the county executive and County Council were determined to make the Board of Education knuckle under and make the school system operate at a far lower cost. However, there wasn't any evidence that the Council and county executive possessed wisdom in educational matters that would justify the positions they had taken. He believed it would be unwise to give into pressure and that they should resume their efforts to gain what they needed to support education in Montgomery County.

Ms. Diane Davidson recalled that when MCCSSE had last met with the Board she had brought up the concern of evacuation of wheelchair-bound students which she felt had not been addressed. She said that she had not seen any new regulations. Dr. Pitt said he had asked Dr. Thomas to follow up on this issue. He believed there was a plan for evacuation, but he would have to check into this. Mrs. Slye asked about the special training needed to lift these children, and Mrs. Praisner asked that the Board receive a response in writing with a copy to MCCSSE. Dr. Cronin inquired about their liability if they made a conscious choice to have a wheelchair-bound student in a two-story building. Mr. Goldensohn reported that he had raised this question with the fire department and had been told that if there was no fire near the elevator, the child should be taken downstairs on the elevator. Mrs. Praisner asked staff to review procedures and to make sure that staff in the local school knew what the procedures were.

Ms. Marty Strombotny suggested that each Board member consider "adopting" a Council member to educate them as to what was going on

in the schools. Mrs. Praisner replied that they had already assigned Board members to Council members to maintain communication. This year they had arranged for a bus to take Council members to see schools needing capital projects, and they would try to continue to maintain those lines of communication.

Dr. Shoenberg said that the Council was always suggesting that there had to be better communication, and while there was a tremendous amount of communication, he thought it was difficult to get the Council to pay attention. He thought it might be well to invite them to the meeting on early childhood education as a starting point. Ms. Jessica Dunkley reported that Mr. Hanna had a thorough knowledge of special education because of his daughter's career and his having spent a day at Forest Knolls. Dr. Cody recalled that Mr. Hanna had supported improvements in special education.

Mr. John Green commented that he had been in building services for almost 26 years, and he had always felt a strong need for all building services people to be a part of and supportive of the educational process. With the recent issue of negotiations with the employee organizations, he wondered if the citizens and elected officials thought supporting services were part of the team or thought they were second class citizens. The other issue was community use of facilities and the problem of building service workers being able to earn time and a half. Last April he had no difficulties in supporting the program of giving Grade 6 employees the majority of the overtime, but now it still seemed to be a problem. He suggested that they needed to take a look to see if community use of schools could become part of the school system. He thought that this might go to referendum to get legislation to restore this function to the school system.

Dr. Pitt reported that \$248,000 had been taken out of the regular budget for building services, which would mean a loss of 16-18 positions unless the ICB issue was worked out. Mrs. Praisner agreed that the ICB issue continued to be a problem, and Mr. Ewing thought they should look into Mr. Green's suggestion. Mr. Foo was glad that the Board felt this issue should be reexamined. He pointed out that the ICB was sitting on a fund of \$2 million which had been made from charging people to use schools, but most of the work involved in using schools was done by MCPS personnel.

Ms. Isabel Simmons reported that last year she had made a speech about seat belts in school buses. This year she was even more adamant that seat belts should not be required, and she cited a story of a young student whose finger had been caught in the belt which required cutting the seat belt off and calling the rescue squad. She suggested that eliminating seat belts on buses might be one way of saving money. Dr. Cody added that he had seen a report about a new seat belt study and asked for assistance in obtaining a copy.

Mr. Howard Coleman explained that as a security assistant he directed traffic in front of Wootton High School. He was concerned about the hazard of parents dropping off children in front of the school and

blocking school bus traffic. Mrs. Praisner commented that this was not exclusively a Wootton issue, but as they had been building new schools the architects had been planning for two entrances to avoid this problem. She asked staff to look into the Wootton situation. Ms. Dunkley thanked the Board for putting in the contract that pregnant women could transfer when they were working with VDT's. She hoped they would be able to provide more computer training for office personnel. She was concerned about the substitute calling system and cited the need for a centralized system, and she pointed out that it was in the teachers' contract that they did not have to call substitutes.

Ms. Mimi Zaminsky suggested they needed a reclassification study in food services because of centralized kitchens and satellite service. Dr. Cody thought this was a good suggestion and agreed to look into it.

Ms. Nan Whalen said that she represented the instructional assistants. She thought there needed to be some special consideration of the instructional assistants who worked in the special education schools. She noted that most of the aides at RICA were college graduates who started as Grade 10's and ended up 25 years later as Grade 10's. She suggested that there be a pay equity study, and she would provide the Board with information she was gathering in a course she was taking. She said that they should look at the aides serving in Mark Twain, RICA, Longview, and Rock Terrace.

Mrs. Praisner remarked that as usual the MCCSSE Board of Directors had raised some important issues, which showed that the Board's annual meeting with MCCSSE was always extremely useful. She thanked the MCCSSE leadership for their budget support as well. Mr. Foo explained that they wanted to show their support for the Board of Education as well as to let the County Council know that MCCSSE did get involved in elections and would be around in four years and eight years.

Re: PROPOSED AGREEMENT ON THE REUSE OF THE  
NORTHWOOD FACILITY

Mrs. Praisner reported that the Board had received a draft agreement on the reuse of Northwood which had been prepared by the county attorney and which was acceptable to the county executive. The county executive had asked for Board comments by May 4, and she had contacted Dr. Rogers of OMB to report that while the Board would be meeting this evening they would not have final comments by May 4. The Board's attorney had reviewed the document and would review any proposed changes Board members had.

Dr. Phil Rohr, director of the Department of Educational Facilities Planning and Development, reviewed the plan developed by staff for housing the students from schools being renovated. He explained that from 1988 through 1994 they would be using Key, Woodward, Cabin John, Radnor and North Lake. If Northwood were available, they would use that facility to house Springbrook, Einstein and Kennedy when those

schools were renovated. This might also allow them to accelerate several projects because they would have more space for housing students; however, the acceleration issue had not been discussed with the county government. Dr. Rohr gave the Board a rough estimate of the costs involved in interim housing with and without the Northwood facility.

Board members reviewed the draft agreement and suggested numerous changes in the agreement. Mrs. Praisner indicated that the Board's attorneys and staff would prepare the next draft which would have to be reviewed again by Board members. The new document would then have to be shared with the county staff. At some point the Board would have to make a decision about whether or not a public hearing would be held and whether or not that could be a joint hearing with the county. If they held a public hearing, Board members thought the community should be given a clear set of specific issues to respond to in their testimony. Mrs. Praisner asked staff to follow up on questions raised during the discussion and to find out whether it would be possible to hold a joint public hearing.

Re: ADJOURNMENT

The president adjourned the meeting at 11:15 p.m.

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PRESIDENT

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SECRETARY

WSC:mlw