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APPROVED  
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Rockville, Maryland  
May 2, 1991

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in special session at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Thursday, May 2, 1991, at 7:40 p.m.

ROLL CALL Present: Mr. Blair G. Ewing, President  
in the Chair  
Mrs. Frances Brenneman  
Mr. David Chang\*  
Dr. Alan Cheung  
Mrs. Sharon DiFonzo  
Mrs. Carol Fanconi  
Ms. Ana Sol Gutierrez  
Mrs. Catherine E. Hobbs

Absent: None

Others Present: Dr. Harry Pitt, Superintendent  
Dr. Paul L. Vance, Deputy Superintendent  
Mr. Thomas S. Fess, Parliamentarian

#indicates student vote does not count. Four votes are needed for adoption.

Re: ANNOUNCEMENT

Mr. Ewing announced that Mr. Chang would be late. He was attending another meeting.

Re: PUBLIC HEARING - FACILITIES  
RECOMMENDATIONS

The following individuals appeared before the Board of Education:

1. Lauri Rodich, Franklin Knolls Civic Association
2. Neal Meiselman, Woodmoor Civic Association
3. Judy Scott, Pine Crest PTA
4. Linda Lang, Whitman Cluster, and Carol Jarvis, Pyle PTA
5. Sue Borden, Meadow Hall PTA
6. Robbie Milberg, Travilah PTA

Re: REPORT OF THE BOARD'S TASK FORCE ON  
EFFICIENCY

Mr. Ewing stated that the report was an excellent and challenging one which would be very helpful to the Board of Education. The following committee members were present: Dr. Michael Richman, Dr. Robert Shoenberg, Mr. Keith Prouty, Dr. Jerry Floyd, and Mr. Ron Wohl. Dr. Richman thanked Ms. Melissa Bahr, staff assistant, for her help to the task force.

Dr. Richman said that they had established some clear principles to guide them in their deliberations. The first was that "more efficient" meant more than "less expensive." The efficiency ought to produce a result at least equal to what now existed. The second was that it was sometimes necessary to spend some money in the short run to spend less in the long run. The third one was that they did not understand their charge to require that their recommendations would result in immediate savings. Substantial savings usually required some time to implement if they were not to be disruptive.

Dr. Richman reported that the Board's charge to the task force fell into three general areas of consideration: how to save money and reduce the cost of operation; how employees and others think MCPS can be more efficient; and how to continue the assessment of MCPS's efficiency. They made two general recommendations they felt were important to restate at this time.

The first was "make your budget reductions and introduce efficiencies with a clear, articulated idea of where you want MCPS to be in the future." Recommendations for future directions were drawn up by the Board in the summer and fall of 1990. The task force asked the Board to re-examine those recommendations as they developed their image for the public schools of the next decade. The second was "give a high priority to maintain class size at the FY 91 level."

Dr. Richman said they had retained nine of the original recommendations and deleted four of them. The recommendations now had some ranking of priority. Their first recommendation was to return special education students to their home schools. Mrs. Cory Moore could not attend the meeting, and she had sent a letter of support for this recommendation, which Dr. Richman read. The committee was in full agreement with her letter.

Dr. Richman listed the following recommendations:

2. Examine the one teacher/one classroom model that prevails in the elementary school with an eye to possible efficiencies and improved instruction that might result from a different model.
3. Use volunteers and paid aides to handle classroom paperwork functions.
4. Until budget stringencies are eased, use certified teachers assigned to non-classroom duties as a "substitute bank."
5. Plan for considerably expanded staff development activities.
6. If current negotiations result in an increase of the

employee's share of health insurance, offset this added burden to employees by allowing premiums to be paid as a deduction from salary before taxes.

7. Reallocate funds to contract with staff to produce finished curriculum development products at a fixed fee.
8. Place income from all fee-bearing programs, including adult education programs, into enterprise funds to encourage self-support.
9. Maximize the extent to which special education service costs are paid for by Medicaid.

Dr. Richman stated that the report included a summary of what they thought the savings might be, the Board's reaction to the initial report, and their reaction to the Board's views. Dr. Pitt remarked that in terms of Medicaid they had had a debate with the Council. There was no question they needed to move in this direction, but other people trying to do this had found there were problems connected with it. He suggested that the Board might want to put this money in some sort of surplus fund to show the Council what might accrue. Mr. Ewing stated that about a year and a half ago he had provided the Board with a number of background papers from a consultant to other school districts that had utilized Medicaid funds in this fashion. Therefore, there were people who could be resources to MCPS in exploring this issue. Dr. Floyd added that Mr. David Tatel, a task force member, had reported that a number of school districts were doing this.

Dr. Richman listed the following new recommendations:

10. Reduce instructional staffing in high schools (perhaps by as much as returning to the six-period day) but introduce scheduling and curriculum revision strategies that allow students exposure to the same range of subject matter.
11. Take a new look at how resources are allocated to schools.
12. Give principals greater flexibility in the use of positions allocated to their schools.
13. Consolidate responsibilities within MCPS - merge all MCPS information-related activities into one unit under the Department of Public Information and merge all units responsible for some aspect of minority education or integration objectives.

14. Expand the duties of Chapter I specialists beyond their current responsibilities.
15. Review the role of the pupil personnel worker.
16. Share or consolidate appropriate services and facilities with other county agencies. These areas included recruitment, procurement, payroll, construction management, data processing, and printing.
17. Coordinate education and training objectives and responsibilities countywide.
18. Contract for independent review of health claim forms and bills.
19. Provide employee assistance services through an independent company.
20. Investigate new alternatives for providing health care.

Dr. Richman explained that the last pages summarized their internal workings. He indicated that the recommendations and proposals set forth in their report and the recommendations the Board had received from the superintendent's work group, while predicated on the current structure of MCPS, were designed to respond to both near-term fiscal constraints as well as longer-range educational development. To make the most effective use of its resources, any continuing assessment of MCPS efficiency must be founded on a vision of where MCPS was heading. In their view, no judgment was more fundamental to the responsibility and mission of the Board of Education. Thus, they recommended that the Board itself develop a means of evaluating efficiency which was compatible with its objectives for public education and which responded to its view of how best to achieve those objectives. They were confident that the educational community and the county as a whole would support the Board's leadership in continuing its assessment of efficiency.

Mr. Ewing asked whether Board members had questions about the original recommendations. He said that the Council had expressed its intent to expand the enterprise fund in much the way the task force recommended. Mrs. Fanconi asked about the process for doing this. Dr. Pitt replied that the Council had taken preliminary action to place monies in that sort of a fund. Mr. Larry Bowers, budget director, added that the Council would be doing that as part of their final action on the operating budget.

The next steps would be for MCPS to put together the enterprise fund, and right now they were looking at having an adult education fund. Their auditors were concerned that there not be too many enterprise funds. Mr. Ewing observed that the Department of Defense was currently consolidating its enterprise

funds to give them consistency in operations and accounting.

In regard to special education students being served in their home schools, Mrs. Fanconi asked whether they had had a detailed discussion about this because she had mixed feelings about this recommendation. Philosophically it was a good idea to bring students back to their home schools and putting the money in training rather than spending funds for busing. On the other hand, she did not understand why the 15 percent figure had been used. She asked whether they were thinking of defining a geographic area. Dr. Shoenberg replied that they could not do this all at once, and it required a phased approach. They had used 15 percent as an estimate of what they thought could probably be absorbed in a year until the training was in place. There were a variety of ways of doing this. They might take all the students with a particular kind of handicap, or they might do it by geographic area. Dr. Richman added that they expected this to come about in a fixed period of time and not be something recommended and allowed to lay fallow. Mrs. Moore had convinced the task force that it was now time to use this as a model to establish a policy.

Mrs. Fanconi noted that Mrs. Moore's letter had suggested a collaboration between general and special education. This was an excellent way of using skilled teachers in working with behavior management and teaching strategies for different kinds of students. Ms. Gutierrez asked for a clarification of where they were with this recommendation. Dr. Pitt replied that staff needed to give the Board information on what they were doing at the moment because they were moving in this direction. In many cases, they had moved young people into their home schools. He supported integration and the concept of total integration. Anytime they could move young people who had some kind of handicap into their home school they did a service to that home school and to that youngster. However, he was worried about one thing. He did not think they ought to use the concept of efficiency as the reason for doing this. The reason was that it was morally correct and it was the best educational support for young people. He was concerned about the idea that somehow they were going to save a lot of money doing this. He worried about people thinking they were going to save a lot of money.

Dr. Richman explained that they had modified the language of the recommendation to suggest a potential for saving several million dollars. Their final report did not say \$14 million. Dr. Shoenberg commented that many of them had argued on grounds other than efficiency that several of the things that were recommended ought to be done. This was one recommendation that tried to make a virtue of necessity. Dr. Pitt thought they might be sending a false message to people. While they should look at efficiencies, they should move toward doing this for other reasons.

Mrs. Fanconi explained that she was not talking about saving \$14 million. She had just pointed out that they currently spent \$14 million on special education transportation, but this did not educate the children. She did not want to have a lot of savings here. She wanted to be more efficient and do things better; therefore, she would want that money to go back into staff training or aides.

Mr. Prouty stated that he wanted to make clear how they construed efficiency. They construed it as not necessarily simply saving money but essentially in providing education better and more effectively. This recommendation fit that notion because this would make the educational mission more effective.

\*Mr. Chang joined the meeting at this point.

In regard to the recommendation on health insurance, Mr. Ewing thought they ought to try to offset the burden to employees of their current share of insurance by allowing those premiums to be paid as a deduction of salary before taxes. He said they should do this regardless of negotiations on this issue. Mr. Wohl commented that all three employee organizations had concurred in this recommendation. Dr. Pitt believed that this could be done legally. It was a question of how quickly it could be done. Ms. Gutierrez felt that this should be done as soon as possible.

Ms. Gutierrez asked for some explanation on the recommendation regarding high school scheduling. Dr. Shoenberg replied that this was worded so that they did not get into a situation of seven- versus six-period day. He suggested there were ways in which the integration of subjects in the high school curriculum could be handled. There were also ways in which teachers and students could interact with each other. The day could be scheduled and broken up. All of these options would permit some reduction in the number of high school teachers to deliver service of the same quality, maybe even improved quality. The recommendation was not for a six-period day.

Mrs. Brenneman asked whether they were talking about interdisciplinary teaching and combining disciplines. Dr. Shoenberg replied that all classes met five days a week now, but they did not have to. They could meet four days a week. He pointed out that the state was interested in getting away from Carnegie units. Mrs. Hobbs knew that they had some students currently doing independent study, and she would like to know how many students, what schools, and whether they had intentions of expanding that. Dr. Pitt replied that they allowed schools flexibility, and it would take some time to get that information.

Mrs. Brenneman asked about interdisciplinary teaching done now in addition to mid-level teams. Dr. Pitt replied that Blair High School had such a program in the mid-1060's, and there had been

others. He thought that Dr. Shoenberg was talking about something beyond that. This went to providing a lot of flexibility in the curriculum so that a variety of things could occur. He felt that there probably was some variation at the local school level which was probably more than they realized, but it was not typical. Mr. Ewing recalled that Einstein High School had tried to integrate English and social studies into a humanities course, but this had been abandoned.

Dr. Cheung asked whether they compared or evaluated staffing patterns when they tried out new programs such as Einstein's. Dr. Pitt indicated that evaluative programs were set up in such a way that they reinforced the present scheduling in the high school. He noted that at Blair High School now they had a real relationship between science and mathematics, but students were evaluated in individual subjects. Ms. Gutierrez commented that there were schools in Maryland that were already packaging the curriculum in more periods a day but fewer courses. She pointed out that they were already doing this by offering concentrated courses in summer school. Dr. Pitt remarked that these ideas had been around for a long time and most educators argued that they made sense. Part of the problem was that college entrance requirements did not promote that kind of program. Ms. Gutierrez thought that the new subject matter content testing did accommodate this new approach.

Dr. Pitt thought that the committee should look at Dr. Vance's staffing data. They were not staffing like they did in the 1950's. Mr. Ewing said that the Board did have a document showing how the schools were staffed. There were ratios for all schools with adjustments based on program factors. He thought that taking another look at that was a good idea because their elementary schools had changed dramatically in terms of average size.

In regard to the twelfth recommendation, Mrs. Fanconi asked how flexible staffing worked in other school districts. Dr. Floyd replied that a school would get an allocation of numbers of people, and at the school building level the principal and the staff would decide on who these people would be. Mrs. Fanconi asked staff to get data from other school systems on how this worked. Dr. Floyd commented that this was a decentralization trend toward school-based management. For example, in Kentucky every school system did this by law.

Mr. Ewing asked Board members if they had questions about No. 13, consolidating responsibilities in MCPS. He said that the Board was moving in this direction in response to the Gordon report. Last year the Board was concerned that the Department of Human Relations had responsibilities that extended beyond minority education or integration objectives. While this raised a question, it did not invalidate the recommendation. Ms.



Gutierrez commented that these were two very good and clear suggestions.

Mrs. Hobbs asked whether they had a Chapter I specialist participating in the discussion of Recommendation 14 and a pupil personnel worker on Recommendation 15. Dr. Richman replied that they did not. Dr. Floyd pointed out that they had an experienced former administrator on the task force. Dr. Richman said that they were trying to see whether there was a different model in Recommendation 14. The delivery model had not been evaluated or examined in many years. For example, could they find a different way to serve the schools that were eligible and not receiving services. It seemed to Mr. Ewing that they were talking about a Head Start model for Chapter I. Mrs. Fanconi commented that a lot of Head Start parents were dismayed when their children got to first grade and did not receive that kind of support. Dr. Shoenberg pointed out that they had a staffing ratio of one specialist to work with three or four schools, but there might be a better way of using their expertise. They were not suggesting that the position be eliminated.

In regard to the recommendation on PPW's, Mr. Wohl commented that this was suggested to them during their talks with other organizations. The suggestion was made that perhaps elementary counselors could do the work of the PPW's. Right now they had two different functions. They should look at the requirements to be a PPW versus the needs of the position. It might be possible to reassign parts of their jobs. Dr. Pitt was surprised that they had not looked at this in the larger context of providing social support services. Dr. Shoenberg replied that this had been a very late entry. Mr. Wohl hoped that this would be a stimulus to look at other roles. Mrs. Hobbs commented that this was the only recommendation where they implied that a position be eliminated. She found it hard to believe that this had not been thoroughly discussed before being suggested. Dr. Richman said that this was not their intention.

Mrs. Fanconi recalled that she had been told these were highly paid people and some of their functions might be handled by less highly paid staff. For example, they had to fill out a lot of forms. Mr. Wohl agreed that the language was not clear because this had been discussed rather quickly at their last meeting. Dr. Floyd explained that they were not suggesting the Board should ignore services to children in trouble. They were asking whether this was the most efficacious way of providing services. They could not answer that question until they looked at it.

Dr. Pitt thought that the long-term approach had to be looking at all the services available to young people in and outside of school in a more comprehensive way. It was his perception that they were not reflecting on the work of the person as much as the concept of whether or not there was a better way to do some of

this. He agreed they should look at this, and he pointed out that the problem was they did not have enough people to do all the things that were requested of them to do.

It seemed to Mr. Ewing that the Board needed to keep in mind that almost any person working for almost any government was busy doing work that was important. Some people were very overworked, but that didn't mean that all the work that people did was of the same priority or that it had to be done by them. Citizens could not distinguish between the work of the PPW's, counselors, psychologists, and social workers. He thought that this was a red flag to the Board that they needed to make sure they had the right people doing the right work at the highest level of priority in a time of short resources. Mrs. Fanconi remarked that much of what the PPW's did were actually social services that should be done by the county.

Dr. Vance asked whether there was any thought to efficiencies and cost savings as they related to the average and high achieving students in MCPS. For example, in the eighth grade about 27 percent of their youngsters were studying algebra, and by the time they graduated about 55 percent had completed trigonometry and higher levels of mathematics. This was not only remarkable for Maryland, it was remarkable for the world. He asked whether they had discussed these students because it appeared they had been discussing students at risk. Mr. Wohl replied that they had not. Dr. Floyd said they had this in mind when they were talking about high school configurations. Dr. Shoenberg pointed out that they did not recommend reducing services for gifted students although they had discussed this.

Mr. Ewing asked if there were questions about Recommendation 16.

Some of these issues were issues that the County's Commission on Efficiency would be addressing. Mr. Wohl explained that these were management issues, and the potential savings needed to be investigated vis-a-vis similar services countywide. For example, it might be more efficient to have one place for recruitment for MCPS and county government. The same thing was true of training of supporting service employees. Dr. Pitt commented that those savings would generally be those of the county government because MCPS was the larger entity. They did some services for the county government and saved them money. For example, they hauled fuel for everyone. Mr. Wohl suggested that they investigate charging back these services. They could look at electronic filing to eliminate paper which eventually ended up as trash for MCPS to haul. Dr. Pitt remarked that the incentive for doing this was greater if they could get some credit for these economies.

Mrs. Fanconi thought that a lot of these were probably very good ideas. They already did some procurement for the county government. There were some areas that concerned her because

they had to maintain their efficiency. For example, in construction they had a much higher rate of on-time completion than the county. Mr. Wohl explained that construction management was a systematic process. He thought that the individuals responsible for delivering these services might go en masse to this super agency, and in turn their efficiencies would be spread across the county.

Mr. Ewing said there were many ways to approach this. One was to ask the question of whether these were useful to consolidate. The second point was how they should do this if they agreed to consolidate. One way was to give one agency the job of being executive agent for everyone and do billable work. For example, the Navy did printing for the entire Department of Defense. Everyone was charged a reasonable rate based on a unit cost analysis of what it cost to produce the service. Dr. Pitt said they were moving in this direction, but the key was getting the pay back.

In regard to the final recommendations, Dr. Shoenberg said they would have an opportunity to test out providing employee assistance services through an independent company if they wished to do that. Mr. Wohl stated that one of the problems in looking at health care per se was how to keep the costs down. Health care cost management did not work when employees did it. There were companies that did this well and did it for a percentage of the savings. These companies knew they would not get a penny unless they showed savings year after year. For example, there was the concept of the HMO where the employee made the decision about how much they wanted to pay for something. The more privatized the service, the higher the cost to the employee. Those systems produced the highest degree of savings to the employer and produced a healthier employee. The task force already looking into this should examine the idea of a countywide health care system.

Mr. Ewing expressed the Board's appreciation to the task force for their excellent report. The Board looked forward to making specific decisions on these issues.

Re: ADJOURNMENT

The president adjourned the meeting at 10:30 p.m.

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PRESIDENT

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SECRETARY

HP:mlw

