





Resolved, That the president of the Board of Education be authorized to sign the Agreement which will be implemented by the Board on July 1, 1993.

RESOLUTION NO. 426-93      Re:    CLOSED MEETING - JUNE 3, 1993

On recommendation of the superintendent and on motion of Mrs. Fanconi seconded by Ms. Gutierrez, the following resolution was adopted unanimously by members present:

WHEREAS, The Board of Education of Montgomery County is authorized by the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and Title 10 of the State Government Article to conduct certain meetings or portions of its meetings in closed session; now therefore be it

Resolved, That the Board of Education of Montgomery County hereby conduct a portion of its meeting in closed session beginning on June 3, 1993, at 9:30 p.m. in Room 120 of the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, to discuss contract negotiations as permitted under Section 4-106, Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and State Government Article 10-501; and be it further

Resolved, That such portion of its meeting shall continue in closed session until the completion of business.

Re:    CONTINUATION OF DISCUSSION OF  
POLICY ANALYSIS ON LONG-RANGE  
FACILITIES POLICY

Ms. Ann Briggs, director of the Department of Educational Facilities Planning and Capital Programming, suggested that they resume their discussion with the matrix on implementation strategies.

Mr. Bruce Crispell, demographic planner, stated that this was the nuts and bolts of the policy where procedures were outlined. Their first responsibility was evaluating facilities utilization and recommending capital and non-capital plans. After projections were developed, they looked at all schools for space deficits which initiated planning for boundary changes or other facility changes. This would be continued in the new policy. Occasionally educational program changes also would lead to enrollment changes as would grade level reorganizations. Once facility planning was underway, the goals of the QIE policy would be incorporated in recommendations.

Mr. Crispell continued that their other proposal was to establish a role for the various program staff in facilities planning because they no longer had area offices. The next section dealt with guidelines for developing facilities recommendations which

appeared in several sections in the current policy. The first part would provide data on student composition by four major racial/ethnic groups and would eliminate "minority" and "majority." They did not envision a role for other issues in the QIE policy such as educational load and diversity profile because those were directed to different objectives in the QIE policy.

Mr. Abrams noted that the next item was listing appropriate demographic factors to use in balancing schools, including socioeconomic and mobility factors. The staff was keying this to the new QIE policy, and Mr. Abrams said the new QIE policy impacted on socioeconomic as well. Mr. Crispell replied that the QIE policy did talk about socioeconomics and these were linked.

Mr. Crispell said the next proposal listed items they would look at besides racial/ethnic balance and included socioeconomic and mobility factors. When they looked at the boundaries for Sally Ride Elementary School, there was a concern about using housing type as an indicator of socioeconomics, but they had been using this for years. For example, there were different costs associated with a rental unit, a townhouse, and a single family detached home. They believed that townhouses and apartment communities probably would lead to higher mobility rates. He pointed out that their objective was to achieve diversity in the schools, not just race/ethnic, but in socioeconomic levels and types of housing. They continued to believe that participation levels in the Free and Reduced Meal Program (FARMS) was a valid socioeconomic indicator. They also continued to believe that housing was an indicator, but they could go from housing type to the housing cost. They also believed that housing could be used as a predictor of mobility, but they could switch to owner versus renter housing. He reported that this summer they would work with Park and Planning to refine 1990 census data to school geography. However, all of these measures carried sensitivities to communities; and this would be a difficult issue to resolve.

The last part of this category was providing guidelines on the geographic scope of boundary studies. The current policy talked about the cluster and a 9-12 high school served by middle schools and elementary schools. They still thought the cluster as a geographic unit had a lot of merit. For elementary boundaries, they would probably stay within the cluster, but for high schools, they might go beyond the cluster. They could add some language about how broad a study area they might want to get into. There had been interest in talking about countywide boundary changes, but staff believed this was not a good idea because the county was so large and anything like this would disrupt a lot of communities.

Mrs. Brenneman asked what other jurisdiction used for socioeconomic indicators. Mr. Crispell replied that other communities used FARMS and housing in one way or another. Mr.

Ewing asked if they had any hard evidence about housing types being a good indicator for something like mobility. Mr. Crispell replied that Park and Planning had done a survey and found that the mobility rate in multi-family garden apartments was four years, townhouses were 4.1 years, and single-family detached housing was 12.9 years. The median cost in 1989 was \$287,000 for a single house and \$145,000 for a townhouse.

Mr. Ewing suspected that there was more variation now because increasingly people with good incomes who were choosing not to invest in housing because it was not a good investment. Apart from that, it was enormously abrading of community feelings about how these decisions got made. This would be true of any single factor used to make judgments on a whole group of people. He recalled that about 15 years ago the Board had met with staff from the Census Bureau and Park and Planning to talk about what the census could provide. He felt that if they could get census data closer to school boundaries it would be a preferable way of going because census data was more widely accepted.

Ms. Gutierrez agreed they should be looking to see if they could use census data. She felt they needed to use socioeconomic indicators, but they had to use them more smartly. She felt they were jumping to easy conclusions through gross generalities. Housing type by itself was not enough. They needed to use the terms, define them well, understand them well, and make sure they had enough information about an area. These factors should be taken into consideration but should not become a driving force. They had to look at geographical distance and the burden placed on busing students in one direction. She did not think they would have an easy formula they could plug in, but she had been uncomfortable with using housing type because they had not defined it well enough. She suggested that the linkage to the QIE policy be made clearer.

Mrs. Fanconi asked if there had been any change in housing over the past few years because houses were not selling. Mr. Crispell replied that they did not have the census update, but he would expect that tenure had increased in all types of housing. Mrs. Fanconi asked whether the staff was uncomfortable with the predictive rates of figures they had used or whether they were looking for new tools. Mr. Crispell believed that housing type was an indicator, but he shared her discomfort about what appeared to be social engineering. He thought that patterns did hold in terms of mobility and cost of housing and that the tools were helpful for boundary decisions.

Mrs. Fanconi said she would be more comfortable in saying they had too many townhouses rather than giving a dollar value to this housing. She agreed they needed a clearer definition. They had to end up with some sorts of predictors of what the school would be like in the future. She would like to know if they could

predict or avoid acrimony in the community by using different parameters. She suggested they needed concrete tools to be used consistently across the county.

It seemed to Dr. Vance that in chairing many of these committees that people had the feeling that their best interests were not being served and they had been excluded, ignored, or had not participated. In some cases they felt the agenda was pre-set, etc. His experience had been that communities come up with recommendations that were often better than those that staff had proposed. With Sally Ride, the real dissatisfaction was with the process although it was expressed as a townhouse issue. Mrs. Fanconi asked what could be changed in the process. Dr. Vance replied that they had to have far more sensitivity to the selection of who was doing what and the amount of time they had to get everyone involved, their preferences well known, and given equal consideration. He pointed out that if they were in Germantown or the Route 29 corridor they would not be able to avoid the townhouse issue or parents in single-family homes wanting to go somewhere as a group.

Mr. Ewing commented that they did not want to end up with schools where all children came from low income families or vice versa. There were two circumstances when people lived in townhouses or apartments. In one case people lived there because their income was low and their educational background was not great. In another case young professionals lived in townhouses but did not expect to live there very long because they were saving for a single-family home. These situations produced children with different backgrounds and readiness for school. Therefore, he thought they had to get at this issue through census data rather than housing type.

Mr. Abrams agreed that census data would give them richer information than housing type. He thought that socioeconomic factors were more relevant than racial composition in terms of educational load. In addition, they had talked about the Council's request for a look at countywide boundaries, and he would like to see this discussed further. He understood the arguments put forth, but not looking countywide put an artificial limit to their solutions. When they discussed the Blair issue he was struck by the fact the during those discussions, the smaller the area, the more vested the interest. He believed that if they looked at a larger area they would get a community or county view. If they were concerned about fairness, it would help if people believed that everyone was playing by the same rules and that there was a rational test being used. He argued that at some point there be a comprehensive review countywide.

In regard to housing, Ms. Gutierrez said that if they established a policy they should ensure that it would not have a negative impact in the community. Housing type should not become a way in

which communities separated or divided themselves. They did have an obligation to go through the process with standards that encouraged the overall goal of diversity concepts in the QIE policy, but she would argue against using some indicators at too low a level of granularity. As to countywide boundary changes, she thought that the Blair issue was the perfect example of why they should not look countywide. She did not think the most efficient use of space throughout the county should outweigh that vested interest in the school and cluster that was so valuable in building pride of ownership.

Mrs. Gordon asked how close they were in identifying neighborhoods regarding mobility. Mr. Crispell replied that they had information now by elementary school and used it in high school boundary changes, but they did not have anything about individual neighborhoods within an elementary service area. He explained that the census data had things such as owner versus renter and length of tenure, but the geographic units did not fit the small areas they were looking at. He was not sure census information would be better than the knowledge in MCPS that the area contained apartments or detached homes. Mrs. Gordon noted that there might be individual communities with large numbers of townhouses or rentals where there was stability. It might be worth seeing whether or not they could get this information. She pointed out that there might be discomfort in talking about housing types, but there was little discomfort in talking about mobility rates. The Board did need to discuss what part mobility played in academic performance or expectations of how well students did. They knew the student who moved around a lot was affected, but they did not know the effect on the rest of the population.

Ms. Briggs recalled that several years ago they built schools to house students from apartments along Bel Pre Road, and in the last few years they had a school that was exclusively apartments. They had heard about the stress level and impact on staff in dealing with a mobility rate as high as 50 percent. The more positive approach was to look at new schools and build in that diversity from the start so that a Board of Education would not have to correct the situation 10 or 15 years down the road. Mrs. Gordon remarked that part of the concern was the feeling on the part of single-family homeowners that they were being manipulated to provide that diversity and stability. The Board needed to look at how mobility affected that stable part of the community and persuade them that it was okay to be part of that diversity. To do this, they had to know how their children were affected by mobility rates.

Mrs. Fanconi pointed out that in San Diego they found that children were moving to and from four parts of the city. Perhaps they needed to look at whether Montgomery County had similar types of populations moving around a lot and whether these

students could be better served. The county government had produced "Pockets of Poverty" which defined where those in poverty lived. She wondered if staff had looked at this document to see what schools were impacted and how this data could be used. She believed that the issue of mobility was part of the larger policy of assuring success for every student, and she thought they did need to evaluate what mobility meant to students. She supported continuing to use housing as a guide and asked about how it could be used with census data.

Mr. Crispell explained that the census would allow them to calculate per capital income, median income, type of employment, etc. which brought them closer and closer to a dollar value for an area. Using this information might provoke strong reactions from the community rather than using housing type. He pointed out that this census data represented a geographic area and not actual children in the school, as did FARMS. Mrs. Fanconi recalled that when Watkins Mill opened the community had brought forth the higher level of education and median income in one school versus the other. She said these were valid issues, but she agreed that housing type might be a better way to address this.

Dr. Cheung felt they should not lose sight of the purpose of any plan which was success for every student. The quality of the plan depended on the quality of the data, and if the data could not stand up, the plan would not be a good one. Rather than looking at one predictor, they should look at a range of indicators. He said they should use the best data they could and get input from the community to update that data because if census data was a part of this it would be a few years old. Mrs. Fanconi asked staff to look to Frederick County's use of the age of the mother as the highest correlate of success. Mr. Crispell assured the Board that the policy could be written in general enough terms to allow them to bring in all these factors.

Mr. Crispell said that the next section was on the calendar of facility planning activities. There were editorial changes for CIP dates. The next area was the community involvement process. They wanted to provide flexibility for the community advisory groups to function in many different ways. The communities would like the staff to come to them with options to get the ball rolling. The advisory committee would propose alternatives to those options and might take a formal vote or provide input if they could not reach consensus. Mrs. Fanconi asked whether they told the community specifically what they had to consider, and Mr. Crispell assured her that this would be clearly stated in the policy.

Mrs. Gordon commented that she fully supported staff's coming forward with recommendations, but she thought that the community should have an opportunity to do some brainstorming about what



was important to them before staff provided recommendations. They might have a pre-discussion, options, and an opportunity for the community to respond to those options. She had a concern about the amount of time between the superintendent's recommendations and the Board alternatives because it was so short. They needed the time to work with the community so that the options would be viable. Ms. Briggs replied that the difficult was the time they had to back up from for the submission of the budget, and this had been a consistent complaint over the years.

Ms. Gutierrez didn't know whether the intent would be to give some guidelines to provide more expansive community participation than the original policy, but she felt they needed to broaden participation beyond the PTA. By using the PTA structure, they did not necessarily get the participation of all parents in the school, such as the new immigrants. Ms. Briggs said that a lot of groups were trying to bring in people, and she thought they would see more avenues for broadening participation. MCCPTA was trying to do just that. Ms. Gutierrez felt that the policy itself should encourage that.

In regard to the timeline, Mrs. Brenneman agreed that there was never enough time. This got into the notification process and the burden placed on the cluster coordinator to notify everyone, and she suggested that staff look into this.

As a former member of a study group, Mrs. Fanconi recalled that the Gaithersburg/Germantown group had first established parameters and then looked at what they could do which limited their choices. This got around a lot of dissention which was a good way to go about this process. She suggested that in presentations to the Board the staff could outline what the process was, who was involved, how were they notified, and what were the issues the group looked at, discarded, and why. She felt that this would be useful information for Board members

Regarding the timing, Mrs. Fanconi said there was mention of taking all action in February. She would like some discussion because it seemed to her this kept the community in a turmoil for a longer period of time and, knowing this would happen, the community would not gear up until February. Ms. Briggs said that putting the boundary proposals on the table in the fall and not acting until February or March would give the community more time but would lengthen the time for turmoil. In the present policy, it was clearly stated that decisions would be delayed until March if there were need for additional information. Staff would give consideration to this issue.

Mr. Ewing agreed that it was important for them to start with a process that involved at an earlier point the initial presentation of options by the staff. However, they had to

prepare for an element of human nature here. If they asked people to participate in a decision-making process who were not themselves the decision-makers, these people would complain if parameters were set or if parameters were not set. He did think that the present policy went too far in turning MCCPTA into an arm of the school system and allowing it to choose who would speak, serve, and participate. They wanted to cooperate with MCCPTA because they performed valuable roles, but MCPS was now asking them to go beyond what should be asked of the PTA. He said they should remember that parents would be there for a short term, but the building would be there for 30 or 40 years. They had to set up a system that encouraged the whole community to participate and not set up a system putting them through a maze of extra-governmental requirements. When the policy had been adopted, he had been uncomfortable with this section and still was.

Mrs. Brenneman agreed with Mr. Ewing's remarks. She said they had no definition of what "advisory" committee meant because when the Board disagreed with the advisory committee's recommendation this caused problems. Very often advisory committees thought that the Board would automatically accept their recommendations. She did not think they should build in an automatic postponement of decisions from November to the spring.

Mrs. Fanconi said she would like to have something in writing about the practical effect of not having MCCPTA decide who testified. She was not sure how the process would work without the PTA and wondered if more people would have to be involved from the beginning. She thought there should be a way of allowing the community to participate as observers, but she felt that parents of children in that school should be the voting members of that advisory committee. In regard to public hearings, they would probably have to add another night for more testimony if they did not use the cluster system. She would like to receive the pros and cons of this. Dr. Vance thought they could provide some options for the functions of MCCPTA and for expanding community involvement. Mrs. Fanconi suggested that they have only one committee to do site selection and boundaries rather than having two committees.

Mr. Crispell said the next addition to the policy would be the addition of the community role in site selection and architectural selection. The next was establishing a process for MCPS program staff to respond to community concerns without the area offices. The last section was on school closures and consolidations, and much of this was required by the Maryland Code.

Mr. Ewing said he has asked a question about site selection and size. They had a practice of selecting a site based on size, but they did not have a policy on site size. The long-range

facilities policy might not be the vehicle for this, but they should consider adopting some language.

Dr. Cheung thanked staff for their presentation.

RESOLUTION NO. 427-93      Re:    ADJOURNMENT

On recommendation of the superintendent and on motion of Mr. Abrams seconded by Ms. Gutierrez, the following resolution was unanimously adopted by members present:

Resolved, That the Board of Education adjourn its meeting at 9:30 p.m. to a closed session.

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PRESIDENT

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SECRETARY

PLV:mlw