

ORIGINAL
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Rockville, Maryland
March 27, 1996

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in special session at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Wednesday, March 27, 1996, at 7:40 p.m.

ROLL CALL Present: Ms. Ana Sol Gutiérrez, President
in the Chair
Mr. Stephen Abrams
Mr. Blair G. Ewing
Mr. Reginald Felton
Mrs. Beatrice B. Gordon

Absent: Dr. Alan Cheung
Mrs. Nancy King
Mr. Charles McCullough

Others Present: Dr. Paul L. Vance, Superintendent

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 p.m. by Mr. Felton; Ms. Gutiérrez was detained at another meeting.

Ms. Luella Mast, president of the Montgomery County Council of Parent-Teacher Associations (MCCPTA) presented MCCPTA board members and PTA representatives. She introduced PTA members who would be making presentations to the Board.

Ms. Lori Rodich, chairperson of the Reflections Program, discussed the program in the schools and brought samples of student art. The program oversees a workshop for schools interested in extending Reflections to students affording them the opportunity to submit creative work in the areas of writing, art, and music. Winners within the county can progress through the state to national.

Ms. Patricia O'Neal and Ms. Carol Jarvis, Walt Whitman Cluster, presented the cluster's Pillars of Ethics. In response to concerns of the principals in the cluster, a group of parents organized to discuss what kind of people their children might grow to be and how the parents, as adults, may be able to positively affect that growth. The Whitman Cluster Ethics Committee has grown to not only include parents within the cluster but principals, teachers, and representatives from the greater Bethesda community including the police and Chamber of Commerce. Clearly, parents have the primary responsibility in the ethical development of their children. Their effort should provide an opportunity to develop skills necessary to determine right from wrong, to understand consequences, and to make appropriate choices. This development is most effective through a joint effort with the community, among parents, children and the school with all members consistently striving

to achieve the desired standards of behavior. In conjunction with all of the cluster schools, the Whitman Cluster Ethics Committee delineated the following core values as its "Pillars of Ethics." The community regard these as very basic and important standards of behavior, regardless of religious or political beliefs. They are: respect, honesty, cooperation, responsibility, moral courage, caring and empathy, and fairness.

Ms. Dana Rosenfeld, president of the Waters Landing Elementary School PTA, delineated two successful programs initiated at Waters Landing Elementary School: *Read to me, Talk to Me* and Homework Club.

Read to Me, Talk to Me supports the finding from the Commission on Reading in *Becoming a Nation of Readers* that states: "the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading, is reading aloud to children. A parent is a child's first tutor in unraveling the fascinating puzzle of written language. A parent is a child's one enduring source of faith that somehow, sooner or later, he or she will become a good reader." *Read to Me, Talk to Me* is a home activity program based on books suitable for children four to eight years old. The "library" of books uses the best in children's literature. Each book has a language activity to complete after the parent and child read the book together. The activities are easy and require only a little time. The program encourages enjoyable and goal-oriented, parent-child talks as well as ensuring that the child is ready to read. After the child completes the activity, the book and activity are returned to school. The classroom teacher encourages the child to share the books and projects with the class. The projects are displayed in the hall for everyone to enjoy. The child can then select another book to take home. Kindergarten students take two to three books home per week.

The Homework Club's purpose is to provide the child with a quiet place to work, clarify any homework directions, assist the child if he/she should need help, and provide the child with strategies that may be used to complete homework. The club meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays with 35 to 45 students in grades one to five, 11 staff member volunteers, four parent volunteers, 10 high school students volunteers, one PTA parent coordinator, and two staff coordinators. Snacks are provided by the PTA.

Ms. Linda Rigsby, president of the Gaithersburg High School PTA, presented ways to involve all parents especially minorities. One concept that has proved successful is the creation of a Parents' Guide to High School that includes: PTA mission, school calendar, registration information, school observations and conferences, problem solving and communication, activity buses, student directory, parent pledge network, health room, media center, intramural programs, extracurricular activities, athletic programs, Booster Club, music programs, volunteers, exams, report cards, discipline issues, tutoring, attendance, lockers, lunch, school store, and important phone numbers. This booklet will soon be translated into appropriate languages depending on the feeder schools and the population they serve.

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Another PTA strategy is the Parent Pledge Network. Over 200 parents have signed a pledge that states that parties for school-aged children in the parents' homes will be alcohol-free and drug-free and supervised by an adult. This network is growing every year. Pledge forms are printed in the PTSA newsletter, along with the names of the parents who have joined the network

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

PRESIDENT

SECRETARY

PLV:gr