

APPROVED
44-1985

Rockville, Maryland
October 8, 1985

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in regular session at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Tuesday, October 8, 1985, at 10:30 a.m.

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

Absent: None

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

RESOLUTION NO. 455-85 Re: BOARD AGENDA - OCTOBER 8, 1985

On recommendation of the superintendent and on motion of Dr. Cronin seconded by Mrs. DiFonzo, the following resolution was adopted unanimously:

Resolved, That the Board of Education adopts its agenda for October 8, 1985, with the addition of an item on Blair Area Schools.

* Dr. Floyd joined the meeting at this point. Mrs. Slye joined the meeting during the discussion on the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance.

Re: REPORT ON BOARD/STAFF RETREAT

Dr. Cody reported that two years ago the Board of Education had held a retreat to establish a set of priorities to guide efforts in meeting the MCPS GOALS OF EDUCATION during that school year. Last year the Board reaffirmed those same priorities, and this year the Board retreat focused on a discussion of long-range planning, and attempted to delineate issues that needed to be addressed over time. In addition, Board and staff reviewed progress on Priorities 1, 2, and 3a. He explained that they still had unfinished business to discuss the follow-up activities and future plans on the other priorities. At the close of the retreat participants were given a list of items now pending as present and future Board business and were asked to add or delete items and rank the issues according to their importance. The retreat dealt with three things: (1) long-range planning issues, (2) status reports on Priorities 1 and 2, and (3) a list of unfinished business items plus some suggestions of

new business.

Dr. Cody said that Mr. David Pearce Snyder was a consultant and workshop leader for a discussion of pending and emerging issues that might influence the education of children in Montgomery County. Among the topics outlined by Mr. Snyder were population and technological forecasting and the makeup of the economy. In discussing population forecasting, Mr. Snyder touched upon the job market, characterized as gray collars, employee recruitment and selection processes, employee benefits, working hours and wages, and immigration into the United States.

In regard to the technological forecasting, Mr. Snyder discussed changing work patterns, the makeup of the work force from 1860 to the present and predictions for the future composition of the work force in America. He explained population movement, changes in the configuration of the job market, worker and demand as it relates to vocational and technical education, the impact of the elimination of middle management as it now seems to be taking place and the burgeoning interest in what are called "quality circles." Mr. Snyder also discussed the cost of increased productivity and retaining personnel for the future, the impact of the computer on education and employee satisfaction.

The second part of Mr. Snyder's presentation called on retreat participants to put in rank order major issues for long-range study and consideration. Issues identified by the participants themselves as items of very high importance were staff training, student achievement, the impact of technology on schools and on society, minority student achievement particularly, staff quality in the future, facilities maintenance and the general labor shortage that we are anticipating across the county. Participants broke up into small groups to discuss the issues that would require direct action by MCPS or that could be identified for further study.

Dr. Cody said they then turned to a discussion of the priorities: (1) improve the academic achievement of all students and (2) implement a special emphasis program that will result in substantial gains in minority student academic performance and participation in extracurricular activities. Dr. Cody recalled that he had raised the question that they might want to consider the rephrasing or modification of the language of that, and no one picked up on that at all. It was a reaffirmation and a continuing commitment to those two priorities. Discussion topics included objectives and measures of accomplishment, the general strategy and approach that they were taking, what the current status was, and identified some next steps. There was a draft document on the status of priority efforts on the status of all five priorities which also identified some plans for the future.

Dr. Cody said the Priority 1 discussion generated several new suggestions for future study, including an assessment of the adequacy of college training for elementary school teachers and raised the

question of things they needed to attend to more in the school system. The second was to examine the question of whether one teacher in an elementary school could really adequately teach all the elementary subjects as they were now expected to do or whether some degree of specialization, particularly in the upper elementary grades, would be more appropriate. The third was to carry out a survey or otherwise get information from teachers and administrators about their training needs and problems they may be encountering with the implementation of the existing curriculum in the school system. The focus of the discussion was how to implement curriculum which was their major strategy in Priority 1.

Dr. Cody stated that discussion about Priority 2 included suggestions for adding additional activities and programs to the plan now underway. The first was to identify efforts in Montgomery County public schools and program that had been highly successful, describe their salient characteristics and disseminate those successful models throughout the school system. He explained that these were expanded thrusts that they would pursue. The second was to expand the pre-school and early childhood programs and services to include more children, more effectively. The third was to identify and analyze the needs of students who transfer into MCPS in the upper grades and expand, as appropriate, remedial programs for such students who were not in the school system in their earlier years. The fourth was to improve recruitment and identification procedures and perhaps provide special support to accomplish an increase in minority students in gifted and talented programs and high school honors courses. He said that the current strategy and approach was for each school to develop its own plans for increasing minority participation in these courses. Identification of that item here meant that the school system would look at those procedures and provide guidance and support on a more coordinated basis. The fifth was to plan and implement an expanded parent outreach program. In addition to these program initiatives, the need to draft a general statement concerning their goal related to Priority 2 was suggested. Also proposed was a study to analyze and help overcome the apparent fact that they were less successful with some middle class minority students than they were with majority students with a similar background.

Dr. Cody reported that the Priority 3A discussion raised suggestions about a review of curriculum implementation itself, the coordination of training to assure some kind of countywide consistency, the identification of training needs at all job levels, and the establishment of a database of training needs and a database on those who have completed various kinds of training. Since they did not discuss all of the priorities in the retreat, they intended to schedule an evening meeting in the next several weeks to finish up that business.

Dr. Cody indicated that the participants then turned to a "laundry list" of other unfinished or new business items that the Board was either in the process of discussing, had scheduled for discussion or had expressed an interest in discussing. The participants were asked to rank order the list and return the results to him. The newly

revised list would be scheduled for Board discussion in order to select which items have the highest priority.

Since the retreat, Dr. Cody said he and the senior staff had been reviewing notes taken during the retreat with three objectives in mind. The first was to expand on the draft document concerning Priorities 1 and 2 status, strategy and plans, and present it to the Board in early November. The second was to prepare descriptions of a series of studies that could be conducted under Priority 5 and presented to the Board of Education in early November. The third was to provide a list of other unfinished business and new business items ranked by the staff and Board in order of importance by late October so that Board and the superintendent could decide what to continue to pursue and what possibly might be deferred.

Dr. Cody explained that there were many more suggestions made, and these would be shared with the staff and the Board. There had been a couple of senior staff discussions on these topics.

Dr. Shoenberg added that despite some initial skepticism about what a futurist had to say to the Board and staff, he personally found the presentation absolutely fascinating. Although individual items were familiar to them, the gathering together of these items set their minds racing with implications for the school system. He hoped that they would be able to make that presentation available to a wide range of people. Dr. Cody had been struck with the comments about the upcoming labor shortage in the United States. Up to now they had been talking about a teacher shortage, but it had been redefined as a general shortage of manpower and employees in many areas. There

would be tighter competition with other employers and an increasing need to employ people who were not as well trained as in the past.

Dr. Shoenberg commented that the important thing to remember was that the shortage would be young people entering the labor force and jobs at the beginning level at the same time there was a compaction of opportunity for the baby boomers in the 35 to 44 year-old group including the potential for people in that group running out of opportunities for advancement. There was a possibility of finding there a number of people who would make outstanding teachers. One of the implications was a considerable role for the public schools in adult education and retraining not only of teachers. They needed to consider the public schools' educating its own staff of new entrants into teacher education, people who had not been through a certification program of some kind.

Mr. Ewing remarked that Mr. Snyder had introduced the notion of the knowable future and talked about what one could know based largely on demographic data which was based on that group of people who had already been born. One of the ideas that seemed to him to be one that they could pursue was to begin to make available to their students, counselors, teachers, and others in the community some of that information about what the knowable future contains, what the population trends are, what the components of the economy might be,

and where the jobs would be and what kind of jobs there might be. This was not to suggest that this was all foreordained for every individual, but simply to give some shape to what the next decade holds. He thought it would be one of the benefits of their retreat if they were able to share this information.

Mrs. Praisner reported that when they were talking with members of the County Council the other evening she had an opportunity to share a little bit of that with Mr. Fosler. She had suggested exploring the possibility of some components of county government sponsoring a conference which would permit them to have people like Mr. Snyder to talk about the knowable future. If other Board members agreed, she thought they should pursue this with Mr. Fosler. She suggested a Saturday or a series of sessions when civic leaders and government leaders of the county could come together with some specific tasks following the presentations.

Dr. Shoenberg thought it would be important that a great deal of this information be shared with the general public. Mrs. Praisner said that this kind of a Saturday session would allow civic associations or members of the Chamber of Commerce to participate. She said that she always enjoyed the retreat not only for what came out of it specifically, but also for the opportunity to have a chance to talk informally and formally on other than the specific action items before the Board with staff members. This was the second year in a row they had had principals there, and she thought they brought a valuable perspective to the discussions.

Dr. Cronin hoped that in the future they would be able to bring some teachers to the retreat. He said he had come off the retreat seeing somewhat of a depressing future insofar as the service and information areas were going to be the major areas of employment, and if there was going to be a middle level of management that was going to be compressed, then the expectations that parents have for their children might not be realized. He saw some alienation that was potentially there. Work at home would be a major part of the future. If that were true and if service areas became a major part of it, then they had best take care of the alienation already felt by minorities. This might cause a growing polarity of society between those having the technical capability to advance and those in the service areas. Therefore, Priority 2 and an accent on lifelong learning became very important.

Dr. Floyd stated that it was a valuable opportunity to participate in the retreat. They were able to consider their future in MCPS not in isolation but also in terms of trends in the metropolitan area, in the state, in the nation, and internationally as well. While the actual effects of the future were not knowable, it was a certainty in his view that unless and until they spent the time to try to be prepared for whatever occurred, they would not be able to take maximum advantage of whatever resources they had and whatever programs that needed to be put in place. He thought there was a lot that needed to be done, but this was a very important start.

Mr. Foubert said that one of the new things he learned was about the new types of careers that would be building. One of the issues was how to deal with a student's expectations of the career they wanted to get into, being put in a different career, and dealing with the dissatisfaction which they might encounter.

Mrs. DiFonzo said she was struck by the point Mr. Snyder made about the whole changing job market in the country. They might end up with college graduates going into the food service industry until such time as they began to find more jobs. She had three children who would be looking for jobs in the next few years. One of the things coming out of the retreat was the ability of the Board to sit down with staff as co-equals and to get to know one another. Normally the Board asked questions and received answers. They were rarely getting opinions from staff, and for her it was valuable to have an actual conversation with staff and find out what their priorities were. They would be continuing the retreat, and she suggested that they not do this around the Board table and set this up in the auditorium to facilitate discussion.

Mr. Ewing stated that one important thing was the need to examine the way they organized the delivery of educational services both at the elementary and secondary level and the desire to explore some alternatives. He hoped they would continue to pursue that, not as something they would expect to take on as a massive change, but as something that could be done in an organized and systematic way in a school or two or three.

Dr. Pitt commented that staff appreciated the opportunity to be in a situation where there was an opportunity for give and take. Dr. Shoenberg thanked Dr. Muir for setting up the conference.

Re: CAPITAL BUDGET/FACILITIES PLANNING
CALENDARS

Dr. Cody recalled that when they had last discussed this item, Board members had made comments and suggestions. The document had been modified. He explained that the preliminary recommendations would go out in the spring, community comment would be received, and the Board would meet in the summer to take a preliminary vote on alternatives. After the superintendent's final recommendations, there would be another work session in which the Board alternatives would be decided finally.

Dr. Muir added that the work session and the opportunity to initially propose alternatives would be in mid-July. Facilities would provide the data in early August, and there would be an opportunity for communities to react to Board alternatives before the October 6 meeting. Other alternatives could come up later in the process.

Dr. Shoenberg was concerned about about such a crucial session occurring in the middle of the summer. He felt that it was a potential problem. Dr. Cronin said he had raised a question about that. He said they needed to give some reassurances to the community

that if the Board came up with something in July that there would be ample opportunity for a community to react before the Board came in on October 6 to decide on final alternatives. Dr. Muir pointed out that there would be the whole month of September. He said that the superintendent had indicated the last time that staff should look at the process to see whether the process could be simplified. They concluded there was not a way to do this.

Mr. Ewing thought that before agreeing to this they ought to build in formally the notion of publishing what it was they did as of the July 14 meeting. This should be built into the list of calendared items. They should also build in a time by which they would expect to receive comments. In regard to the facilities plan and the possibility that the superintendent's final recommendations incorporated Board alternatives, he wondered what would happen if the Board adopted something different following the public hearings. The earlier procedures provided for due process and public comment, but that option was not here. He thought this might become a crucial issue. He asked about the content of the superintendent's final recommendations. He asked if the Board would decide what these would be or would the Board advise the superintendent and he would make his final recommendations.

Dr. Cody explained that it would be his final recommendations plus what the Board had asked to be presented to the public. Mr. Ewing said there might be two pieces to the document, the superintendent's final recommendation and the Board alternatives. Dr. Muir recalled that the superintendent's final recommendation on Northwood included three different alternatives. In the final analysis, he recommended one. Dr. Muir would envision the same kind of process here. The superintendent would list the alternatives he saw as viable and then he would recommend one to the Board. He thought there would be opportunity on through December and January to handle a Board decision and provide for community input if the Board's tentative decision was considerably different from the superintendent's recommendation provided it was not an immediate facilities decision. He explained that the reality was that decisions affecting the next year's capital budget had to be made by the first of December. He pointed out that they planned to come back in February with some recommended amendments to the long-range planning policy and the provision for that should be part of that policy.

Mrs. Praisner was not convinced that having the Board members introduce alternatives so early in the process was an improvement over what they had now. She said it was important for the community and for the superintendent to deal with what he and staff were considering as good options and to have the community react to it without the people making the decision involved in that process. Having the Board members come in later in the process allowed them to look through and consider what the communities might have suggested, to ask the superintendent why he and staff did not recommend those options, and to not necessarily vote for alternatives for the sake of having them on the table. If the Board were asked to put alternatives on the table early in the process, she was concerned

that for consideration of community perspectives and for respect for
due process