



Mrs. Barbara Beadles, a fourth grade teacher at Candlewood, explained that this was her 25th year in teaching; however, she was scared because enrollment in her school was down and art, music, and physical education had been cut back from five to four and a half days. This loss affected her planning time. She had been teaching in a portable at Candlewood for five years, and the portable did not have water and at times the heating and air-conditioning failed. There were times when she could not get to the bathroom because of her schedule. Because they no longer had lunch room aides, she had lunch duty one day a week. Because of the loss of her planning time, she would not have the opportunity to do a thorough job of incorporating SES in her planning.

Mr. Mark Simon stated that after six years as president of MCEA he had returned to the classroom where he was now teaching five different courses in social studies. Planning time should provide him with the opportunity to develop creative lessons; however, while the planning time had not decreased, the demands on teachers had been increased. They were faced with curriculum changes, MSPP, and SES. The expectation in SES that they teach to every single student required planning time, and SES had a strong emphasis on a multi-perspective curriculum relying on a lot of different sources for information which also required planning time. He felt that it was ironic that they were facing these challenges at the time when budget cuts were taking away what they needed to meet the challenges. He was worried about the ability of teachers to meet these higher expectations.

Mr. Charles Barkley commented that he had taught mathematics for 20 years at the middle level. While he agreed that the concepts of the middle school were great, he thought that middle school teachers did not have the time to plan and work together. The math curriculum was good, but staff did not have the time to teach it. He believed that mid-level teachers were beginning to burn out. The changes in the program were good and were necessary to meet the needs of these students, but unfortunately they did not have the time to do all that was expected of them.

Ms. Bonnie Cullison said she would like to speak for the music, art, physical education, special education, reading, and ESOL teachers who felt like third class citizens. The present contract did not begin to meet the needs of these educators in giving them time to plan. They were asking for the ability to do their jobs better and meet the needs of their students. In her 14 years of teaching, she felt that her best lessons came when she was able to plan for hours, but she wasn't able to do that with only one hour a day of planning time. It was impossible to plan, individualize instruction, and evaluate the lesson. For example, a special education teacher might have students up to 10 sessions a day. In one session they might be working with a group of kindergarten children, and in the next session they might face third graders. Each one of these students had special

needs, and they couldn't switch gears that fast without adequate planning time. She cited the paperwork demands placed on special education teachers and talked about folders three inches high.

Mr. Ewing recalled that in MCEA's letter they talked about administrators who converted planning time to other uses. Mr. Simon replied that at the high school the instructionally-related activity area was in direct conflict with planning time. For example, this year they were starting a peer mediation program to cope with discipline problems in his school, but they didn't have staff to implement this. Teachers would handle this program, and this would come out of their planning time.

Mr. Randy Changuris reported that while their planning time was the same, the curriculum demands had expanded. To meet the needs of students through SES, the updated curriculum, or MSPP required planning time. At his school there were 20 or so special programs that the principal had put in, and it took time to plan for these programs. They had students with multiple problems, and they tried to meet their needs. The question was whether teachers worked on curriculum or worked with students. They could not just abandon these students who faced problems of sexual abuse, drug abuse, or poor mental health. This was where the morale problem came in because teachers could not meet the curriculum demands and the social demands.

Ms. Phyllis Jaworski commented that as an English teacher at Kennedy if she followed the loss of credit policy it would take her planning time every day to talk with students and to talk with parents. When a teacher deals with 140 students every day, they might find 10% absent at any given time, and it took time to follow up on absenteeism.

Mrs. Beadles remarked that in an elementary school they had planning time when the art, music, and physical education teachers were there, and when these people were absent, the teacher lost the planning time. Assemblies were often scheduled during the teacher's planning time. She had kept a record and last year out of 180 days, she had lost 26 days of planning time.

Ms. Whylla Beman noted that in a middle school such as Banneker teachers met for one period as a team. While this was a good concept, they spent a lot of time working on the problems of students at risk. EMTs were often scheduled during a teacher's planning period. As a special education teacher, she spent her planning periods working with students who needed special help.

Ms. Robinson said that the next issue was class size and case load. Ms. Cullison reminded the Board that she had spoken to them about case loads, and right now all special education case loads were high in all areas. Special educators had the goal of helping these students succeed, but it was difficult to do with

the present loads. If they had fewer students, they would have more planning time.

Ms. Robinson called attention to the issue of special education students returning to their home school. When these youngsters were mainstreamed, their teachers had to be trained to deal with the special needs of these students. Dealing with the needs of that one student and the impact on the other students took planning time and coordination with the special education teacher. In addition, teachers needed time to meet with colleagues to deal with that student as well. Educators wanted to do the best job they could, but they needed training, the support of the special educators, and time to talk with other teachers and parents.

Mr. Simon commented that class size and planning time illustrated the gap between rhetoric and reality. He believed that SES and the middle school policy were hinged on the assumption that class sizes would be lower. If they implemented programs requiring more individualization of instruction and more teaming and didn't decrease class sizes and increase planning time, they were left with the rhetoric. Ms. Robinson noted that this year they had hired new staff whose numbers barely covered the numbers of retirees and they had also reassigned area staff to the schools. She wondered what would happen next year when they needed more staff in the schools. She questioned whether the stress, the morale problem, and strain that people were experiencing right now would provide the program of excellence they had come to expect in MCPS.

Ms. Beman talked about paperwork involved in special education because they had lost aides. They could not take this work home and had to stay in school to handle the paperwork which impacted their jobs even more.

Mr. Ewing said it would be helpful to him to hear from the superintendent about reporting requirements--what the requirements were and why the requirements had grown. It would be useful if MCEA could give the Board some recommendations on containing the paperwork. Ms. Karen Craney replied that MCEA went above and beyond what was required at the state and federal level. While numerous committees had looked at the paperwork issue, it seemed to her that the demands grew after each study. They needed to look at it from the point of view of those filling out the forms rather than from those creating the forms.

In regard to noninstructional duties and unnecessary paperwork, Ms. Jaworski reported that teachers were overwhelmed by instructional duties, and the noninstructional duties often got in the way of teaching. They had to contact parents of children with attendance problems, follow up on lost books, and plan for back-to-school nights. They couldn't do this without additional

planning time. After 25 years of teaching, she still spent nights and weekends preparing for her classes and correcting papers. For example, it took her 35 hours every two weeks just to review the English papers she assigned to students. She resented being assigned study hall, hall duty, and cafeteria duty when a less qualified person could do the job.

Mr. David Kahn indicated that as a resource teacher at Gaithersburg High School he had just spent a day unpacking and counting books, pencils, and paper clips. There were things that teachers did on a routine basis that had little or nothing to do with the classroom. He pointed out that it did not take a master's degree and 25 years of experience to handle bus duty. He needed time to talk with other teachers and meet with students with problems. He felt that study hall was a holding area for students who had no classes and that a teacher did not need to be there to supervise. These were irritants that got in the way of implementing MSPP and planning, and he wondered whether he was fulfilling the function of an expensive clerk or a cheap professional.

Mr. Simon cited the remediation for the state functional tests which was becoming an instructionally-related activity that teachers were assigned in lieu of preparation time. He was not saying that teachers should not help with the remediation, but he was saying that it should not be an add-on to their duties. This should be a regular class with a regular teacher assigned to it. There were many duties given to teachers that could be performed by teacher aides.

Mr. Changuris pointed out that the contract guaranteed a 30-minute duty free lunch, but during that lunch period he ran practice tests for students. In addition, his principal had assigned teachers 10 minutes of lunch duty out of their 40 minute lunch period. While this only happened 20 days a year, his job was to stand by the recycling bin to make sure that students used the bin. He asked whether his time would be better spent helping students.

Ms. Robinson said that their next issue was tuition reimbursement and opportunities for professional development. She commented that prior to the changes in staff development, they felt they had a mini-university in MCPS which gave teachers an opportunity to hear about and use new technologies and teaching strategies. Ms. Mary Pat David reported that she worked with Staff Development and informed teachers about opportunities available to them for training. She had recently discovered that almost all of the tuition reimbursement funds had been encumbered by teachers taking summer courses and fall semester courses. Teachers knew that the MCPS university would no longer be there and while they had had no salary increases they still needed the course work. The message she was hearing from teachers was they

wanted to improve professionally but they were finding the course work to be expensive.

Ms. Craney said that since 1987 she had been involved with staff development, and she, too, was concerned about the lack of in-service courses. She had taught a course which was a state requirement in special education and was tailored to the needs of MCPS. Now teachers would have to take a course somewhere else which was not related to what actually happened in MCPS. They no longer had teacher specialists and supervisors to help teachers, and they had to come up with creative methods of giving people the staff development courses they needed. She wondered how the various requirements for in-service training in many MCPS initiatives would be delivered. It was Mr. Ewing's understanding that the Board would be discussing this on October 13, and he hoped that MCEA could be present for that discussion.

Ms. Robinson pointed out that there had been an increase in math and science requirements for teachers, and she complimented staff on the math training this summer. However, she pointed out that this had come out of the remaining staff development funds, and they still needed training in science. She said that their next topic was transfers and assignments.

Ms. David commented that over the summer she assisted people faced with involuntary transfers. She had worked on this issue for four years and would have guessed that involuntary transfers affected 300 to 400 people every year, but she had discovered that it was only 125. However, this was very traumatic for the people involved. She was concerned about games being played and the devaluation of staff. Mr. Rick Bank added that this one issue was probably the biggest waste of staff time. The problem was there was no procedure, and everything was decided on a case by case basis. If they had timelines and procedures, it would be a blessing for all involved. Ms. Beman commented that this one issue was the biggest morale buster they had. In the case of intermediate schools changing to middle schools, she found that different schools were getting different answers from the Personnel Department. The answers were vague, and even the principals didn't know what was going on. This was a problem that could be solved without additional funds--just some consistent rules for the process.

Mr. Ewing noted that a statement had been made that games were being played. He felt that if there were cases like this, the superintendent needed to know about them. Mr. Bank replied that in some cases principals hide positions, and in his experience the principal had the final say-so about which people got transferred and which people got hired. He could provide the Board with information where people in exactly the same situation were treated differently. When a person was faced with an involuntary transfer, it was about the most stressful thing faced

by a teacher. The economy was bad, the teacher didn't know what was happening, Personnel didn't provide information, and the individual felt helpless. Ms. Jaworski cited the case of a 60-year old teacher with arthritis who was assigned to Mark Twain where she was told about having to use physical restraint with students. Ms. David added that she did not want the Board to get the idea that people in the areas or in Staffing were bad people, but without rules, a lot of staff time was being wasted and the situation was causing discomfort for all involved.

Mrs. Hobbs pointed out that they were at the end of their time scheduled for this meeting, and Ms. Robinson suggested that they seek another date to continue the discussion.

RESOLUTION NO. 640-92      Re:    BOE APPEAL NO. T-1992-11

On motion of Dr. Cheung seconded by Mrs. Fanconi, the following resolution was adopted unanimously:

Resolved, That the Board of Education adopt its Decision and Order in BOE Appeal No. T-1992-11, a student transfer matter.

RESOLUTION NO. 641-92      Re:    BOE APPEAL NO. T-1992-12

On motion of Dr. Cheung seconded by Mrs. Fanconi, the following resolution was adopted unanimously:

Resolved, That the Board of Education adopt its Decision and Order in BOE Appeal No. T-1992-12, a student transfer matter.

For the record, Ms. Gutierrez thanked Ms. Phyllis Parks Robinson and the members of MCEA for a very valuable and informative session.

Re:    ADJOURNMENT

The president adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

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PRESIDENT

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SECRETARY

PLV:mlw