

represented a very real response to citizens to the times they were living in. He said MCPS would be foolish to believe that after one year their problems with safety and security were disappearing. On the other hand, they were making great strides in addressing these issues. The community response had been very supportive due to the comprehensiveness of the Board's three-year plan. He noted that it was the only new initiative funded by the county executive last year.

Dr. Vance reported that the other part of their success was due to the work of a great many people, but he would like to single out one person, Mr. Michael Gough, the supervisor of safety and security, for particular praise. Mr. Gough had assembled his teams, designed his training and implementation plans, met with community leaders, responded to serious incidents, and moved very quickly to join the MCPS team. He wanted Mr. Gough to know how pleased they were with the progress of this initiative.

Dr. Vance explained that the notion of safety and security in schools was not limited to just the concept of police enforcement. The members of the safety and security teams were involved in the totality of the school experience and environment. They were mentors, coaches, activity sponsors, tutors, and a host of other support activities. These staff members involved themselves in the total life of their schools. This was a non-traditional approach to protecting students, staffs, and schools. This was also their approach in considering the next steps for the alternative school for disruptive youth. They must begin to break the mold of limiting themselves to the reactive enforcement of rules and respond to the more complex issues that generated threats to their safety and security. They had received outstanding interagency support for an alternative school program and for that reason their conflict resolution and peer mediation programs had begun to be recognized for their successes.

Re: UPDATE ON SAFETY AND SECURITY
EFFORTS AND OPEN LUNCH POLICY
REGARDING SAFETY AND SECURITY

Dr. Rohr reported that the attachments to the memorandum before the Board were the safety and security implementation status report. They had also provided information on the open lunch policy. In regard to the safety and security plan, Dr. Rohr indicated that the initiative continued to pick up momentum as additional staff came on board and they increased the unit's exposure to principals, staff, students, and the community. Channel 8 would be airing a news story about school security in metropolitan area school systems. Mr. Gough and Mr. Sims were interviewed. Yesterday, a security team leader and two Hispanic students appeared on a Hispanic radio show to explain the school system's weapons and beeper policies and the peer mediation process. Mr. Gough, the state's attorney's office, and the Baltimore City mayor's and superintendent's office had been

working with Montgomery County police to provide input for the police public information program on weapons safety. Staff training was well underway, and the central office-based staff were now able to respond to special security needs in individual schools. Mr. Gough had met with many, many community groups and would be making a presentation at the secondary school administrators conference. The FY 1994 operating and capital budgets included the second year of the three-year implementation of the security plan.

Mr. Gough thanked the Board and superintendent for their support.

The success of the security unit was due in large part to that cooperation. Their field coordinators were working to develop model investigation guidelines to share with the rest of staff on how to conduct investigations. The coordinators were providing input into construction plans. He introduced three members of their 60 member school-based team. The first was Ellen Beckwith, security assistant at Springbrook High School. She started with MCPS in 1969, and she was involved in a mentor program at Springbrook, an African-American support group, a PTA literacy council, and a youth drill team. Ms. Beulah Dutton, a safety and security assistant at Gaithersburg High School. She joined MCPS in 1973 and was involved in mentoring, peer counseling, an ebony awareness group, a youth choir, and the girls' sports association for softball. Mr. John Horwat, the security team leader at Einstein High School, started in November, 1992. He was in the mentoring program, the volunteer group, the advisory board of GUIDE, a director of Maryland's High School National Wrestling Team, and a secretary of the Maryland State Wrestling Association.

Mrs. Gemberling noted that the Board packet included the current Board policy on open lunch and a listing of schools with open and closed lunch. Two principals were in the audience if Board members had questions.

Re: PEER MEDIATION/CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Mrs. Gemberling explained that part of the overall approach on safety and security was preventative and included peer mediation and conflict resolution. Ms. Kathy McGuire, supervisor of the Guidance Unit, introduced a group of students from Wheaton High School. She explained that they had been doing peer mediation for two years, and this team just help train the security assistants.

Ms. Robbie Ward, Ms. Joanna Castro, Ms. Ermalinda Chicas, and Mr. Tim Colbert, peer mediators from Wheaton High School, acted out a typical peer mediation situation for the Board. Ms. Ward explained they mediated problems between family members, friends, two people who did not know each other, and people who loved each other. People also got referred to mediation by their friends or

their parents. Ms. Castro commented that the Wheaton school population was diverse, and their mediators spoke about eight languages. This facilitated communication if the disputants had a difficult time speaking English. Mr. Colbert reported that he was captain of the football and baseball teams, and he also played basketball. He got into mediation because he liked to help people on and off the field. When students saw an athlete in this role, they looked to him in a different way, and his presence encouraged other athletes into the program. Ms. Chicas commented that being a mediator helped her with everyday life and would be a tool for the future when she had a family.

Ms. Kathy Kolan reported that 42 students were trained as peer mediators at Wheaton High School. Their principal was very involved with the peer mediation program and would have been here at this meeting but the National Honor Society induction was being held this evening. Ms. Kolan was a special education and transition teacher and she helped Ellen Carroll, security team leader, run the peer mediation program.

Ms. Carroll introduced Doug Steel who worked with her in security at Wheaton. She said that she had found peer mediation to be a valuable resource. She and Doug were in the school and saw the problems. They offered the program to the students, and no one turned them down. She was extremely proud of the program and felt it helped her in her job.

Mr. Sims reported that he had heard a lot of great things about the peer mediation program at Wheaton and at Whitman. He asked what percentage of the fights in the school were referred to peer mediation. Ms. Carroll explained that once there was a physical fight there would be discipline, but mediation would lessen the discipline. Mr. Sims asked whether they saw the same people again and again. Mr. Colbert replied that he had done at least seven different mediations and had not seen the same people. Ms. Ward had been a mediator for two years and had seen a lot of repeat persons.

Mr. Abrams asked whether peer mediation was being used in the resolution of interschool conflicts. Ms. Carroll replied that they were going to do an in-service for the Edison center and hoped that these efforts would spread back to the students' home schools. She felt that the program could be enlarged to cover disputes at athletic events. Mr. Abrams asked whether they had a cut-off for mediation, and Ms. McGuire replied that there were issues involving weapons, suicide, and drug abuse where they could not be involved.

Mr. Abrams asked if they had looked to applications in other elements of student life. Mr. Colbert replied that it could be used at student parties, sports, and arguments they see among their friends outside of school.

Dr. Cheung asked about qualifications of mediators, the grade distribution, and how they selected mediators for each case. Mr. Colbert replied that Ms. Carroll knew every student in the school and whether or not they would be viable candidates for the program. Ms. Carroll said they had tenth, eleventh, and twelfth graders, but next year the ninth graders coming from Parkland would be trained. The mediators formed teams, and a team could consist of a senior and a sophomore. There were times when they needed a mediation in a foreign language. The referral form provided space for a student to request a mediator. If two girls were involved, she tended to pick two females for the mediation.

Mr. Colbert added that he had done a mediation with two young ladies, and it was successful.

Mr. Sims inquired about case loads. Ms. Carroll said that one day Mr. Colbert had done three in a row, but some weeks they did not have any mediation. They arranged it so that students doing the mediation did not miss any of their academic classes. Mr. Sims said he was pleased to learn about the variety of students doing the mediation, not all academic or all sports. He thought that peer mediation made violence unpopular. Ms. Kolan explained that at the beginning of the school year they gave the faculty nomination forms. The students had to be eligible and a leader.

The final selection went to the administrators and the security staff, and it was at this point they decided on the grade level distribution.

Dr. Cheung congratulated the students as true leaders and thanked them.

Ms. McGuire reported that they had a two-pronged approach. One part was peer mediation and a second part was conflict resolution, which was a curriculum approach. They were looking to teach all students how to resolve conflicts. This fit into the new health course as well as the counseling program. Enriched and Innovative Instruction had also put together an interdisciplinary approach to conflict resolution and had been doing staff training. At the elementary school, they were using the power curriculum developed by Forest Knolls which tied in language arts, communication skills, and guidance. Most elementary schools started this teaching in the fourth grade, and in the fifth grade peer mediators were selected. In two years they hoped to have all schools trained including the secondary schools. It took four days of teacher training and two days of working with students. Some schools were unwilling to wait and were using consultants for this training.

Ms. McGuire said that Mr. Sims had questioned why some schools were not further along. Most secondary schools were beginning to implement the program this spring, and it was almost a two year process. She felt that they were moving but that it would take

time.

Mrs. Fanconi was thrilled with how rapidly the program was progressing. At the conference on violence, it was stated that most violence occurred between friends. This strengthened her resolve to deal with how children dealt with anger. She knew that parents wanted this training, and she wondered if there were plans for this. Ms. McGuire replied that one committee in Voices vs. Violence was looking at how to do outreach to PTAs. In counseling, they would also look at how to incorporate this in some of their parent programs.

Mr. Ewing commented that it was probably early to be thinking about how to build this into their secondary social studies curriculum. It seemed to him that the same principles ought to operate in terms of national and international issues. There was a whole literature of conflict resolution, and perhaps they should ask the curriculum people to look into this. Ms. McGuire replied that Linda Barnes Robinson had been talking to Dr. Wilson about how it might be incorporated into social studies.

Mr. Sims asked whether peer mediation was mandated or so popular with the schools that there was really no need to do that. Ms. McGuire replied that she had a waiting list now, and she didn't know what she would do if it were mandated. She thought people felt it was mandated because they needed it.

Mrs. Gordon asked about what was being done in the primary grades where inappropriate reactions to conflict arose. Ms. McGuire replied that beginning in kindergarten there were competencies about how to get along with people and in a group and appropriate ways of expressing oneself. This intensified in the fourth grade and led to a unit on decision making in the seventh grade.

Mrs. Fanconi asked if they were compiling information on schools in the peer mediation pilots to see if they had reduced incidents. Mrs. Gemberling replied that they had not done a particular analysis of that although they were looking at suspension declines to see the programs in those schools. Mr. Ewing felt that at some juncture they ought to be able to assess what they were doing here. They were making a substantial investment in the program, and it seemed to him they needed indicators of impact for peer mediation, conflict resolution, and the security program. He wondered if they shouldn't consider doing some sort of community/parent survey using the capability of DEA to get a sense from the community as to whether or not their perception of the problem was the same as the Board's.

Re: ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

Dr. Vance introduced Mrs. Clara Floyd and Ms. Elaine Seikaly, co-chairs of the Commission on the Establishment of an Alternative School.

Mrs. Floyd stated that they were delighted with the opportunity to comment on their report. The report contained five items on which consensus was reached and the major program they recommended. There were 32 people on the Commission with one half from MCPS, 12 members were community and business leaders, and four represented the executive and judicial branches of county government, the Maryland General Assembly, and law enforcement. They met from September to December 1992, and they visited programs in Anne Arundel County and Pennsylvania.

Ms. Seikaly reported that the Commission believed they needed to assure the safety of all students by removing their most violent youth from local schools. Children under 16 had been placed on home instruction, but this was not an adequate program to meet their needs. They recommended a program be set up for violent youth which would provide more interventions, more structure, more staffing, additional recreational activities, and more nurturing. The instructional program should focus on social skills, academic skills, team building, and decision-making skills. In order to meet those needs, they needed to focus on the entire family not just the child in crisis. For this reason, they needed to work collaboratively with a number of social service agencies. Since their report Dr. Vance had made contact with the chief of police, the state's attorney, and heads of social service agencies to see what kind of joint venture could be developed. She thought they were receiving commitments from a number of agencies because this was not a school system problem but rather a problem for Montgomery County. They had provided staffing recommendations, the school size, and a proposed site at the old Montrose school.

Mrs. Floyd felt that there was broad-based community interest in the program they were proposing. The Commission recommended that MCPS join with other public and private agencies to provide comprehensive services to youth. They believed that MCPS should serve as the coordinating institution to galvanize the community.

Dr. Villani indicated that they were proceeding with the planning on the countywide group, and Dr. Vance added that they had had two meetings with agency heads. Dr. Fountain reported that their first meeting was about six months ago. After receiving the Commission's report, the superintendent and executive staff determined they did not want to create another alternative school similar to those already in existence. The superintendent felt it was a community problem, and they invited government officials

with decision-making powers to this meeting. Without exception, those leaders agreed that was a community issue. He would provide the Board with a report on their second meeting. The third meeting was scheduled for May 11, and at this time they would develop a prospectus to send out. The state's attorney would be working with a subgroup to looking at policies, procedures, and paperwork getting in the way of exchanging need-to-know information. On June 1 they would come together to flesh out their plans to have something ready for September/October. They were looking at short-term as well as long-term objectives to get at this problem. They were talking about wrap-around services, afterschool activities, and summer employment.

Mr. Abrams asked about the size and profile of the population they were considering. Ms. Seikaly replied that they were dealing with middle school students ages 12 to 16. These students had brought weapons to school, were involved in drugs, or were involved in assaults. They were placed on home instruction, and in April there were 91 students in this category. The placement would be interim, and their plan would involve doing some things to prevent these situations from re-occurring. Mr. Abrams asked whether they had discussed a residential component. Ms. Seikaly replied that they had discussed this, but it was not part of the charge to the Commission. It would be a co-educational program, but this population was heavily male. Mrs. Floyd added that this population was also heavily minority.

Mr. Abrams asked whether they had discussed whether families were the problem. Mrs. Floyd replied that they had, and in many situations the students knew nothing but violence to handle conflict. Ms. Seikaly added they had talked about therapeutic services, crisis intervention, community mental health, and drug and alcohol support programs for the family. Mr. Abrams asked whether similar discussions were taking place in other counties.

Dr. Fountain replied that Prince George's was looking at this, and MCPS was looking at their program of using adult males as more than mentors for these students. He explained that they might not be talking about a facility right now, but because of the nature of the target program they might be talking about a six- or eight-week boot camp where they would take the children away and bring them back to the county.

*Ms. Gutierrez joined the meeting at this point.

Ms. Seikaly commented that they did visit a school in Anne Arundel for violent youth and one in Baltimore City. All of the neighboring jurisdictions were wrestling with the same issues, and they had touched base with them.

Mr. Abrams was concerned about reintroduction of these students to the regular school. He wondered whether the progress made

would be sustainable once the students were returned to the regular programs. It might be better to have this as an option of choice.

Mrs. Fanconi was pleased to hear about the interagency work and how much support was being given. She was also pleased about efforts to move these students back into a normalized setting. She asked whether Mr. Gough had been involved in this and Mr. Brown, the new corrections officer. Dr. Fountain thought it would be a good idea to contact Mr. Brown. Dr. Vance explained that they had invited agency heads to participate, and on occasions they would bring staff to serve as consultants. Mr. Hussmann might bring Mr. Brown, but Mr. Brown would not be a permanent member of the committee.

Mrs. Fanconi asked whether they had revamped the start date for the program. Dr. Fountain replied that he would have a better answer after May 11. Mrs. Fanconi said she was very interested in the whole suspension process, the profile of the students, and how early they might have been identified as needing special assistance. In the late 1980's DEA had done a report on suspensions and dropouts, and a number of behaviors had been identified as early as third grade. It seemed to her that as a part of the alternative school they might want to look at individual students and track back. This probably should be an interagency look because families may have been involved with other agencies. She had some materials from New Beginnings and Cities and Schools which she would share with staff. She would be interested in any statistics they had in terms of percent of special education, race, gender, etc.

Mr. Ewing thought that as they developed their prospects there probably were some things that should be included. He was very supportive of this effort, but at the same time he wanted them to be clear eyed about the prospects for it in terms of its success and public acceptance. Over the years they had heard criticisms of public education. One was that they funded programs for students in trouble and for gifted kids, but everyone else got lost. Someone might say that MCPS was rewarding violence with extra bucks. They had to be able to respond to that in a way that said there was a tradeoff. If they were going to invest in this school, they were going to save money and lives. For example, what did it cost to keep a young person in a juvenile facility versus a school in Montgomery County, the state, and the nation. He thought it was important to be specific and indicated that there were trend data available from the Department of Justice.

Mr. Ewing said he had a second concern. He was awestruck by the assumption contained in the plan in the sense that violence was a difficult problem with which to deal. MCPS was assuming they knew how to deal with it and be successful. He hoped that MCPS

staff understood that this was an ambitious undertaking, to put it mildly. They had to prepared that there were kids for which such a program would not work. It was depressing to see the data on violent adult offenders because most of them were repeat offenders. He thought that MCPS had to be realistic in their expectations, but he also thought that what they had outlined was excellent and should be supported. Dr. Fountain replied that they did not intend to close Noyes or the Detention Center. This was a community problem and they were going into this wide awake.

Mr. Sims asked why they were not looking at students who were 17 or 18. Ms. Seikaly explained that their charge was to look at middle school students because there were a number of alternative programs for the over 16 year old including GED, Phoenix, and Kingsley. Mr. Sims felt that as soon as they opened the school it would be well known and very unpopular. He hoped it would convince students that violence was wrong and scare them. For those students referred to the school, they might give up. He said they had to consider this so that students attending the program did not give up. Mrs. Floyd commented that if students perceived this as a failure, the program would fail. As a teacher, it was her job to save children, not have them fail.

Mrs. Brenneman thought this was a great idea and that the approach was a good one. The collaboration of agencies was a key component to this. She felt that it was important to get this information out to parents. Parents would perceive this positively if their child was involved or whether it was someone else's child disrupting the classroom. When a child was on home instruction, the child had lots of time on his or her hands and was not receiving a full program of services. They needed to put a positive spin on the program so that people realized the child would have a full complement of help. She believed that the greater public would support the program if they knew the details of the program.

Ms. Gutierrez apologized for arriving late, but she had a previous commitment. She asked about the basis on which they were seeking this type of an alternative. Ms. Seikaly replied that they had 91 children on home instruction because of weapons, drugs, or assaults. They had violent youth in the 12 to 16 year-old age range at home on home instruction with six hours of supervision. These students needed additional interventions and supervision. Therefore, they had to have a program to help these students be successful and ensure the safety of the community. Ms. Gutierrez inquired about the outcome of the program, and Ms. Seikaly replied that one measure would be the successful re-entering of a local home school. Another measure would be that the students would not be incarcerated at some later date.

Dr. Cheung remarked that he liked what he had read, and his feeling was that it would succeed. He asked whether they would

have anything starting in September. Dr. Fountain said that each of the agencies intended to do something. He hoped that something would be moving in September or October, but he would know more in June. Dr. Vance said the Board would have to receive periodic updates. Before anything was implemented, it would have to be brought to the Board for public airing. Looking at the calendar, it would not be possible by September, but they were moving along on the process.

Mr. Abrams commented that they had not discussed confidentiality. It seemed to him that they had representation from the judicial community which might be the key in terms of a case management approach to overcome confidentiality. He felt that this would be a beneficial outcome and encouraged them to focus on this. He thought that Mr. Heller could assist in this regard. In addition, there was a movement at the federal and state level in terms of waiver authority on delivery of services which would be a useful area in terms of packaging for program coordination. The State of Delaware had addressed case management and might have some suggestions.

Dr. Cheung thanked the Commission and staff for their presentation.

Re: GENERAL COMMENTS

Mrs. Brenneman asked whether they had plans for staff development for bus drivers in relation to safety and security. Dr. Rohr replied that they had discussed providing training at the all-day session in August; however, he had not discussed this with Mr. Gough. Mrs. Brenneman asked about the urgent needs they were responding to at the elementary and mid level. Mr. Gough replied that in one instance it was a hostage situation near an elementary school and the school itself was being used as a command post. Mrs. Gemberling noted that many of these schools did not have a safety assistant in place, and Mr. Gough coordinated services on a needs basis.

Mrs. Brenneman thanked staff for the information on the open lunch policy. She had heard about security problems in the community, but the community had mixed opinions on open lunch. She thought that leaving it up to each school was the best way of doing this. In talking to principals, there was less concern about outsiders and more about the love/hate relationship that existed in the business community.

Mr. Ewing recalled that they had not had a battle over open lunch since the early 1980's when they ended up with the current policy. He thought they should hear from the principals. Mr. Abrams said he had heard the allegation that MCPS was picking up the cost of security personnel in nearby shopping centers.

Dr. Stephen Tarason, principal of Kennedy High School, reported that a couple of years ago he had received a complaint from a parent and a committee was convened. The parent went away convinced that open lunch was a great idea. Some students took care of business or had lunch with their parents or grandparents.

They took this opportunity to visit counselors or teachers. They did monitor the parking lots, and he had received a complaint from a business person. Dr. Tarason had closed the premises to Kennedy students, and the business person called and asked that the ban be rescinded. They had had no requests for extra security, but they did send security to one establishment for a couple of days to monitor the situation.

Dr. Jerry Marco, principal of Whitman High School, explained that their open lunch was a senior privilege. It was open to seniors with parental permission, and they had had few, if any, complaints. He pointed out that there wasn't a cafeteria that could house every student in two lunch periods. He had had some problems with trash, and the community took down license numbers.

He noted that in a matter of a couple of months these young people would be out on their own, and an educational foundation had to build itself on a foundation of mutual trust. As in any situation, a few students would get out of line.

Re: NEW BUSINESS

Board members introduced the following items of new business:

1. Mr. Ewing moved and Mr. Abrams seconded the following:

Resolved, That the Board of Education address the issues of legislation in the comprehensive safety and security plan with a view to reaffirming or changing their position.

2. Mr. Ewing moved and Mr. Sims seconded the following:

Resolved, That the Board discuss methods by which they could ascertain the success of their efforts in safety and security.

3. Mrs. Fanconi moved and Ms. Gutierrez seconded the following:

Resolved, That as an item of information or as an addition to a safety and security update the Board received information on how they were handling suspensions, a numerical tally of the suspensions, how many students were suspended and how many were expelled, the increase in suspensions, a profile of the students, the impact on principals and the specialists in the field offices, and whether or not there needed to be some administrative changes in the process of dealing with suspension; and be it further

Resolved, That the Board receive a recommendation from the

superintendent on what would be needed to study early intervention efforts on the present student population.

4. Mr. Abrams moved and Mr. Sims seconded the following:

Resolved, That the Board have a review of the role and weight given to safety and security considerations in prioritization of schools for modernization.

5. Mr. Abrams moved and Mr. Sims seconded the following:

Resolved, That a list of specific security modifications be developed which could be done apart from major modifications in existing facilities.

6. Ms. Gutierrez moved and Mr. Ewing seconded the following:

Resolved, That the Board of Education receive an item of information updating the Board on the staffing of the proposed safety and security plan by gender and ethnicity.

7. Mr. Ewing moved and Mr. Abrams seconded the following:

Resolved, That the Board of Education receive an item of information on the existing design criteria that relate to security issues.

RESOLUTION NO. 352-93 Re: ADJOURNMENT

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

Resolved, That the Board of Education adjourn its meeting at 10:20 p.m.

PRESIDENT

SECRETARY

PLV:mlw