

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: MUST ACHIEVEMENT GAPS PERSIST? THE
STRUGGLE FOR EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

Cheryl LaChae Jones, Doctor of Philosophy, 2011

Dissertation directed by: Professor Eric M. Uslaner
Department of Government and Politics

This project begins with the position that the persistence of the academic achievement gap suggests the need for a new way of thinking about the gap and the efforts to eliminate it. To be successful, reform efforts need to address both the school and community issues that impact academic achievement. Community stakeholders must come together as a community to build an education regime that has improving academic achievement as its agenda.

This work presents a case study of a community in need of a new education regime, Prince George's County, Maryland. The county has a majority African American population and a large black middle class. For years the county's school system has produced disappointing results on state assessments. Additionally, the system

has been hampered by the existence of a governing regime focused on its own preservation instead of academic achievement.

In 2002, county residents interested in educational reform were handed an enormous opportunity to challenge the existing education regime when the elected school board was dissolved by the state legislature. This action came after years of subpar academic performance, after repeated allegations of fiscal mismanagement, and after months of feuding between the school board and superintendent.

This work posits the ouster of the elected school board was a focusing event that disrupted the existing regime and provided an opportunity for regime change. An examination of county education politics after 2002 shows that regime change did not occur. The county was unable to move beyond the first stage of a three stage process of regime change. Regime change efforts were hindered by a number of obstacles. The most prominent was the near constant turnover of school system leadership since 2002. Other obstacles to coalition building and regime change include; a political environment hostile to cooperation, a disengaged citizenry, and a dearth of prominent reform advocates. For these and other reasons, the old regime still maintains control of the education arena and the system still struggles to improve academic achievement.

MUST ACHIEVEMENT GAPS PERSIST? THE STRUGGLE FOR EDUCATIONAL
REFORM IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

by

Cheryl LaChae Jones

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
2011

Advisory Committee:

Professor Eric M. Uslaner, Chair
Professor James G. Gimpel
Professor Karen M. Kaufmann
Professor Betty Malen
Professor Irwin L. Morris

© Copyright by
Cheryl LaChae Jones
2011

Dedication

This dissertation is lovingly dedicated to my parents, Annie and Robert Jones, my biggest and longest supporters.

Acknowledgements

Getting to this point has been a long and at times a seemingly endless journey. Yet despite the obstacles along the way, I have finally arrived at the point at which I can say this journey has come to an end and another is about to begin. But before moving on, I find it important to acknowledge all of those along the way who have contributed, in ways large and small, to the successful conclusion of this journey. To everyone who has helped to make this journey a success, I thank you.

There are two people who stand out for helping to put me on this particular journey. The first is Dr. Clarence Stone. Dr. Stone introduced me to the study of education politics. He gave me the opportunity to participate in meaningful research that has had an impact on an important public policy. He also afforded me the ability to interact with and learn from a number of extraordinary researchers. They showed me that I could have a career that was both meaningful to me and an asset to the community.

Perhaps the person most responsible for me being on this particular journey is my committee chair, Dr. Eric Uslaner. He has always been supportive of me, and more than once prodded me to action. I say Dr. Uslaner is responsible for me being at this point because it was a simple question he asked me near the beginning of my time at the University of Maryland that started this journey. One day after class, Dr. Uslaner asked me if I was going to pursue a PhD. Until that point I had not considered pursuing a doctorate. As I later pondered his question, it became clear to me that pursuing a PhD

was the right course for me. So I must thank Dr. Uslander for starting me on my journey.

Thank you.

Table of Contents

Dedication	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	v
List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	xi
Chapter 1: Introduction: The Academic Achievement Gap and Education Politics in a Suburban Community	1
The Complexity of the African American Achievement Gap.....	6
The School and Community Linkage	12
Civic Capacity and Education Reform	16
Urban Regime Theory and the Politics of Education	18
Regime Change and Policy Change	27
Thesis	31
Methods	32
Contributions and Limitations of the Dissertation	34
Preview of Upcoming Chapters	36
Endnotes	38
Chapter 2: An Overview of Prince George’s County.....	39
Introduction	39
Early History of Prince George’s County	40
The Suburbanization of Prince George’s county by the Decades	41
The 1970s	43
The 1980s	45
The 1990s	47
The 2000s	48
Prince George’s County and the Washington Metropolitan Region.	49
The Federal Government in Prince George’s County	54
Municipalities in Prince George’s County	57
Prince George’s Government Structure and Politics	68
Tax Reform in Prince George’s County	71
Demographic Change Leads to Political Change	74
Summary	81
Endnotes	84

Chapter 3: Prince George’s County Public Schools: The Not So Calm Before The Storm	88
School Desegregation in Prince George’s County; A Decades Long Struggle..90	
The Pre-Vaughns Years	90
Court-Ordered Busing Comes to Prince George’s County	94
Desegregation in the 1980s: A New Plan Emerges.....	100
The Beginning of the End of Court-Ordered Busing	105
Analysis..	110
School Performance and MSPAP	112
TRIM and Its Impact on PGCPs	118
The Budget Process: Shared Authority.....	118
Education Politics in a Nutshell.....	126
Endnotes	133
 Chapter 4: Political Upheaval: Removal of the Elected School Board.....	136
Timeline of Significant Events in the School Board--Superintendent Feud.....	138
A New Superintendent is Hired	139
Restructuring Gains Momentum in the General Assembly.....	145
The Endgame.....	147
 The Story Behind the Story: External and Internal Pressures on the Education Regime.....	151
Increased State Control: The Link between Funding, Accountability, and Education Reform in Maryland	152
Paying the Price to End Court-Ordered Busing.....	155
The Performance Audit and MOP.....	157
The Baltimore Settlement as Template.....	161
The Role of Delegate Howard Rawlings.....	163
The School Cartel’s Response to Attacks.....	165
A Succession of Weak Superintendents.....	167
An Entrenched Bureaucracy Will Not Acquiesce.....	169
The School Board-Superintendent Relationship Becomes Problematic Quickly	172
The School Board Seals Its Fate.....	174
Endnotes.....	184
 Chapter 5: Education Politics in Prince George’s County after Dissolution Part 1: 2002—2006	186
Public Reaction to Maryland’s General Assembly’s Action.....	188
The Appointed Board Takes Over.....	193
The School Board--Superintendent Relationship: New Cast, Same Story...	199
A New Beginning: Enter the CEO.....	206

Balancing the Budget.....	212
Restructuring the Administration.....	212
Magnet Programs	214
School Attendance Boundaries	217
Academics	218
The CEO’s Management Style Creates Tension.....	220
The Hornsby Scandal	224
The Loss of State Level Reform Advocates	232
County Politics	234
The Interplay between Race and Class.....	238
Community Involvement	245
Summary	256
Endnotes	259
Chapter 5: Education Politics in Prince George’s County After Dissolution	
Part 2: 2006-2010.....	262
Enter the New CEO, Again.....	263
2006: The Elected Board Returns.....	270
Board-Superintendent Relations.....	278
The Board Faces a Controversy	282
Money Issues Again Impact PGCPS	283
State Legislators Make Their Presence Felt	285
Move School Headquarters at Your Own Peril	285
School Construction: Who Gets a Slice of the Pie?	291
Round Two in the School Headquarters Fight: Score One for State Legislators.....	295
The System Endures More Change at the Top.....	301
Can You Spare a Dime? There is a Hole in the Budget.....	307
Maintenance of Effort.....	310
School Consolidations.....	314
Community Involvement Prospects Dim	324
2010: Here We Go Again.....	334
Endnotes	338
Chapter 6: Back to School: The Impact of Political Change on Academic Achievement.....	342
Academic Achievement in PGCPS Prior to Dissolution.....	344
Academic Achievement in PGCPS after Dissolution.....	350
Data Description.....	351
Methodology.....	352
Analysis and Findings.....	355
PGCPS Black-White Test Score Gap.....	374
Endnotes.....	384

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Prospects for the Future.....	385
A County Environment Hostile to Cooperation.....	389
Community Disengagement.....	391
A Shortage of Educational Reform Leaders	393
More Challenges to Coalition Building and Regime Formation.....	397
Implications for Regime Change.....	398
Some Hopeful Signs for the Future.....	399
Prospects for Future Study.....	400
Conclusion.....	401
Appendix.....	403
References.....	415

List of Tables

Table 2-1: Prince George’s County Population 1970-2007	44
Table 2-2: Prince George’s County Comparison with Regional Neighbors, 2000	50
Table 2-3: 2000 Socioeconomic Comparison Prince George’s County, Maryland, and United States	53
Table 2-4: Top Ten Prince George’s County Employers in 2009	55
Table 2-5: Prince George’s County Municipalities by Income, 2000	61
Table 2-6: Prince George’s County Municipalities by Poverty, 2000	62
Table 2-7: Top Ten Prince George’s County Municipalities by Race, 2000	65
Table 2-8: Prince George’s County Median Family Income by Race, 2000, 2007	66
Table 3-1: Prince George’s County Public Schools Student Enrollment, 1968-984.....	96
Table 3-2: Prince George’s County Public Schools Student Enrollment, 1985-2001.....	104
Table 3-3: Maryland Accountability Program Results for Prince George’s County and Neighboring Districts 1973-1974.....	113
Table 3-4 MSPAP Results for Prince George’s County and Neighboring Districts, 1993 & 2001.....	115
Table 3-5: Prince George’s County Public Schools and Maryland Special Student Populations	117
Table 3-6: Per Pupil Spending for Prince George’s County and Neighboring Counties	124
Table 3-7: PGCPS Operating Budget Requested & Approved 1980-2002	125
Table 5-1: Prince George's County Maintenance of Effort 2003-2010.....	312
Table 5-2: PGCPS Student Enrollment	315
Table 6-1: PGCPS Reading MSPAP 1993-2002	347
Table 6-2: PGCPS Mathematics MSPAP 1993-2002.....	349

Table 6-3: 2003 District Ranking, Math and Reading AYP	356
Table 6-4: 2003 District Enrollment by Size and African American pct.....	357
Table 6-5: 2003 District Rankings, Black-White Gap for AYP Reading & Math.....	358
Table 6-6: 2010 District Ranking MSA Math and Reading.....	360
Table 6-7: 2010 District Per Pupil Expenditures & Wealth per Pupil.....	362
Table 6-8: 2009 District Enrollment by Size and African American pct.....	365
Table 6-9: 2003 and 2010 School District FARMS Participation	367
Table 6-10: 2010 District AYP Math and Reading by Race & Black-White Gap.....	369
Table 6-11: 2003, 2010 MSA Math Advanced & Proficient pct by Grade	371
Table 6-12: 2003, 2010 MSA Reading Advanced & Proficient by Grade.....	373
Table 6-13: 2003-2010 PGCPS & Md. Math MSA Gap and Proficiency Gap Closure..	375
Table 6-14: 2003-2010 PGCPS & Md. Reading MSA Gap and Proficiency Gap Closure	378
Table 6-15: PGCPS AYP Black-White Gap & Effect Size 2004-2010.....	380
Table 6-16: PGCPS & Maryland AYP Black-White Gap and PGC 2004-2010.....	382

List of Figures

Map 2-1: Municipalities in Prince George’s County.....	59
--	----

Chapter 1

Introduction: The Academic Achievement Gap and Education Politics in a Suburban Community

If anyone has any doubts about the importance of education, they need look no further than the unemployment rate during the Great Recession of 2007. In 2009, the national unemployment rate was 7.9% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2011). It was 9.7% for high school graduates and 14.6% for those who did not graduate from high school. Conversely, the unemployment rate for people with bachelor's degrees was 5.2%. It was 2.5% for people with doctoral degrees. As the Bureau of Labor Statistics website says, "Education pays" (Ibid.). A recent report argues America's economy is becoming a college economy (Carnevale 2010). A college economy is one in which most jobs require a college degree or college level training. The Great Recession only accelerated the country's movement to this new economy. Because blacks tend to trail whites educationally, this trend is potentially devastating news for the African American community.

African American students are less likely than white students to go to college and more likely to drop out of high school. In 2007, the dropout rate for whites was 5.3%. It was 8.4% for blacks (Aud, Fox and KewalRamani 2010). The percentage of white students enrolling into college immediately after high school was 71.7% in 2008 (Ibid.). It was 55.7% for blacks. Further movement towards a college economy will only exacerbate the disparities between blacks and whites. In November 2010, the unemployment rate for blacks was nearly double that of whites: 15.2% for blacks versus

8.4% for whites (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2011). The employment gap is likely to grow as America moves further towards a college economy. It will worsen unless something is done to close the academic achievement gap between blacks and whites.

The federal government has been addressing the academic achievement gap problem in one form or another since 1965 when the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was signed. Closing of the achievement gap between whites and minorities is a cornerstone of the current federal education law, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). While NCLB has had some success in raising standards and achievement for all students, the gap between students still remains and has barely budged in years (Vanneman et al. 2009).

Of course, the federal government is not alone in attempts to eliminate achievement gaps. Efforts at the state and local level have been going almost non-stop for years. The state of Maryland has long been involved in efforts to raise academic achievement. In 1972, the Maryland legislature enacted a law mandating statewide goal-setting and testing that focused on minimum competencies (Governor's Commission on School Performance 1989). This system was replaced by a new assessment program, Maryland School Performance Program that focused on high standards and proficiency (Ibid.). This new program's testing battery, Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP), exposed academic achievement differences among various groups of students. In 1997 the Maryland State Education That is Multicultural Advisory Council was appointed to study the achievement gap in Maryland and make recommendations for addressing the problem. The Council found, "definite and looming disparities in academic achievement for minority students in Maryland" (Maryland State Education

That is Multicultural Advisory Council 1998, 53). The Council added, “Resolution requires concerted effort from the public, business, political and educational arenas. If the disparate academic situation of [minority] students is not eliminated, there are consequences for them, for all” (Ibid.). Prince George’s County is one Maryland community that has had to deal with those consequences as it has struggled for years to raise the academic achievement of African American students.

Prince George’s County is a suburb of the District of Columbia and has a population of just over 820,000 (U.S. Bureau of Census 2008). The county has a majority-minority population with African Americans comprising the majority at 63.4%. Whites are 24.3% of the population and Hispanics are 12.8%.¹ The county’s school system, Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS) is the 21st largest public school system in America (Sable, Plotts and Mitchell 2010). It has an enrollment of more than 130,000, of whom 75% are African American (Maryland Department of Education 2010).

For years PGCPS has suffered from the persistent underperformance of African American students. On the latest state assessments, African American students scored an average of 19 percentage points lower than white students in mathematics and 14 percentage points lower in reading (Maryland State Department of Education 2010).² For years, the county has lagged behind almost all of Maryland’s other school systems. The only system it has consistently outperformed is Baltimore City’s school system; Baltimore City Public Schools is the only central city system in the state.³ Today, even Baltimore City has outperformed Prince George’s as PGCPS is the only school system designated to be in “Corrective Status”. This designation is given to school systems that

have failed to meet state educational targets for 4 consecutive years. Baltimore moved out of corrective action in 2009 after meeting state goals for two consecutive years.

One would not expect PGCPs to perform so poorly. Prince George's County is a community that on its face would seem to be well positioned to address the African American achievement gap. Because the county is majority African American, one would expect a heightened sensitivity to the problems of African American academic achievement. The achievement gap stops being an abstract problem when it is your child that is falling behind. The county is a relatively affluent county with a median family income of \$82,004 that is almost 30% higher than the national average of \$63,366 (Census 2008). Its family poverty rate of 4.1% is less than half of the national average of 9.7% (Ibid.). The county is not in the position of many impoverished inner-cities with abhorrently high levels of poverty and no economic base upon which to draw. Prince George's African American population is more highly educated than African Americans throughout the country. 27.5% of blacks hold a bachelor degree or higher compared to 17.5% of blacks nationally (Ibid.). Highly educated people tend to demand educational quality more than those without such degrees (Hess 1999, 127).

Being adjacent to the nation's capitol with so many residents either working for the federal, state, or local governments or working for companies and organizations doing business with local, state, and federal governments tends to give residents a heightened political awareness. Additionally, Prince George's is located in a state that has been in the forefront of state-level education reform efforts. For some time the county has been encouraged—some would say pressured—by the state to improve academic achievement.

The county does not appear to suffer from the racial strife that is evident in many central cities. It is probably impossible to have a majority African American county in America and not have race become a contentious issue at times. However discussions of race in Prince George's, while at times contentious, have not taken on the venomous tone race has elsewhere. Perhaps most importantly, Prince George's African American population is fully incorporated into the county's political system and would appear to be in a position to direct the county's political efforts in the education arena. For all of these reasons, Prince George's County would seem to be in a prime position to resolve a problem that has often eluded others. It has not. The question for this project is, why not?

I propose a reason why the county has not done a better job closing the achievement gap is because the county's educational arena is controlled by a governing regime incapable of implementing the policies and initiatives capable of closing the gap. The county's education arena is governed by an employment regime that has self-preservation and self-protection as its agenda. The county has had opportunities to change its approach to education and the gap however. In 2002, county residents interested in educational reform were handed an enormous opportunity to challenge the existing education regime when the elected school board was dissolved by the Maryland General Assembly. This action came after Prince George's Public Schools (PGCPS) students recorded years of subpar academic performance on state assessments. It came after allegations of fiscal mismanagement. And it came after almost two years of feuding between the school board and Superintendent Iris Metts.

The ouster of the elected school board in 2002 was a focusing event that provided a window of opportunity through which the existing regime could be disrupted and the process of regime change could begin. It is the argument of this dissertation that regime change did not occur. It did not occur because disrupting the current regime is only the first stage of a three stage process of regime change. Prince George's County was unable to generate enough civic capacity to develop the broad-based coalition that was needed to form a performance regime to replace the existing employment regime. This project will attempt to show why Prince George's was not able to move beyond the first stage of regime change and to this day continues to grapple with closing the African American academic achievement gap.

The Complexity of the African American Achievement Gap

Over 50 years after *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* 347 U.S. 483 (1954) desegregated schools the gap in the academic achievement levels of white and African American children persists (National Center for Education Statistics 2005). Initially it was assumed that the act of desegregating the schools would close the gap by giving black students access to the resources given to their white counterparts. Clearly that has not been the case. While the achievement gap has diminished from its initial high, progress has been much slower than expected. Desegregation and other civil rights efforts as well as initiatives part of the War on Poverty have been credited for the decline of the gap in the 1970s and 1980s (Jencks and Phillips 1998). However, as the United States Supreme Court retreated from its commitment to desegregation and anti-poverty programs fell out of favor, progress on closing the gap stalled (Ipka 2003). Current

federal reform efforts have most often focused on increased accountability for students, teachers, and administrators. Despite some success in raising overall achievement levels, national test data show little change in the achievement gap between blacks and whites between 1992 and 2005 (National Center for Education Statistics 2007). Identification of the cause or causes of the achievement gap might reveal why the gap has been so difficult to eliminate.

In a review of the research on achievement gaps, Paul Barton searched for the “life and educational experiences associated with continual development and school achievement” (Barton 2003, 3). He identified 14 correlates of achievement. Six are related to what happens inside schools. They are rigor of the curriculum, teacher preparation, teacher experience and attendance, class size, availability of appropriate technology-assisted instruction, and school safety. The other eight correlates are related to what occurs outside of schools. These are, weight at birth, exposure to lead, hunger and nutrition, student mobility, reading to young children amount of TV watching, parent availability, and parent participation. Deficits in any or all of these correlates lead to achievement gaps Barton found.

In his research on desegregation, David Armor (2006) distills many of the explanations on the existence of the gap into four major theories. The self-esteem theory argues blacks internalize their inferior status (second-class citizens) in a white dominated society and then sink to meet the low expectations society has for them. The educational input theory asserts school resources (quality teachers, smaller class size, etc.) affect achievement, and many minority children are being deprived of resources necessary for a quality education. The peer group theory is the black culture argument. That is,

proponents of this theory argue that minority students are in the grip of a "culture" that does not value educational achievement and may even promote action in opposition to it. Lastly, the family risk factor theory points to family characteristics and habits such as poverty, poor parenting skills, and low IQ levels as the explanation for the gap.

Mano Singham (2005) distills the causes of the gap into three models generally aligned with the ideological spectrum in the country. The first model is the socioeconomic model favored by liberals. In this model, the gap is caused by economic disparities between blacks and whites that result from the legacy of slavery and racial oppression. Eliminating these disparities will eliminate the gap. Accordingly, eliminating the gap depends on taking actions--addressing social conditions and economic policies--that lie well outside the schoolhouse. The second model Singham identifies is the sociopathological model. This model tends to be favored by conservatives. As its name suggests, the sociopathological model points to social pathologies within the black community. Unstable families, high levels of incarceration and teen pregnancies, poor parenting, and black culture more generally contribute to poor academic achievement. The solution in this model lies in African Americans' controlling themselves. The third model Singham presents is the genetics model. This model argues that blacks do not have the genetic intelligence that makes them capable of competing equally with whites. In this model, the gap cannot be eliminated. The best that can be accomplished is a mitigation of the gap's consequences.

Rod Paige and Elaine Witty (2010) add two other explanations to Singham's models: black identity and educational deprivation. The black identity explanation aligns with the work of John Ogbu (2003) who argues that blacks as involuntary minority group

have developed an oppositional culture that equates education with the dominant white institutions. From this perspective we get the “acting white” phenomenon which equates doing well in school to acting white which of course is the opposite of “acting black”. This argument is basically a peer pressure argument and the key to confronting it is either changing peer pressure or giving students the tools to withstand that pressure. The educational deprivation argument claims deprivation occurs when, “a child is deprived of fundamentals essential to sound cognitive development, most especially, high expectations and great teaching” (Paige and Witty 2010, 71). This explanation asserts that effective educational practices can overcome the problems laid out in the other explanations of the achievement gap. This model lays the solutions directly in the schoolhouse.

From multiple explanations for the gap come multiple solutions for closing the gap. Increasing school funding, reducing class size, improving teacher quality, developing a stronger curriculum, expanding preschool education, expanding after-school programs, enhancing parental education, and instituting parental choice have all been touted as solutions. Some reform advocates argue the need to counter the increasing resegregation of schools perhaps through regional enrollment policies (Orfield and Easton 1996). Still others call for policies that address the unequal position of minorities in American society through housing policy, antipoverty policy, employment policies, and health policies (Rothstein 2004). The currently popular reform measure that has come to prominence is the emphasis on greater school and school district accountability as championed by the NCLB.

A number of the proposals, particularly the school related proposals, have been tried. So far, none has been shown to consistently and substantially close the achievement gap between white and African American students. Even in schools that have successfully raised the academic achievement of poor and minority students, the gap still remains (Chenoweth 2009). The question is why?

I would argue that most efforts to close the achievement gap fail to meet expectations because they are one-dimensional solutions used to solve a multidimensional problem. Eliminating the achievement gap will not come in a neatly packaged program, or two for that matter. Indeed evidence suggests that fragmented efforts aggravate the problem (Hess 1999). Karin Chenoweth spent two years visiting schools that have made progress in improving student performance. What she saw convinced her that, “there is no one single factor that is at the core of a successful school. That is, there is no one structure, or one curriculum, or one set of policies and procedures that, if every school in the country were to adopt it, would transform them into high-achieving schools. Schools are complex organisms that can’t be changed that easily” (Chenoweth 2007, 213). The stubbornness of the gap suggests reducing it will require the simultaneous implementation of a variety of programs and practices that go beyond what schools typically do.

Paige and Witty describe the achievement gap as, “a complex phenomenon that has powerful tentacles, buried deeply not only in school quality but also in African American home and family life in African American community sociocultural life” (Paige and Witty 2010,153). Like many organisms with tentacles, cutting off one tentacle will not kill it. In fact, many organisms have the ability to regenerate the severed

tentacle. Multiple tentacles need to be severed before the organism dies. So it is with the gap. Multiple tentacles of the gap need to be attacked in order to eliminate the gap. Because those tentacles stretch both into schools, and into homes and communities, strategies that attack the tentacles in all three places need to be developed and deployed.

Reform efforts that only focus on what happens in the classroom are destined to fail because they do not take into account that what happens in the home and the community also affects achievement. Permanently closing the achievement gap requires pairing school-focused reforms with efforts that address the home and community factors that contribute to the gap (Rothman 2007; Paige and Witty 2010). This will require multi-layered reform of schools and school districts. More importantly, it suggests the need to change the way we approach the achievement gap. To that end, some researchers have focused on the school community connection (Goodlad 1984; Portz, Stein and Jones; Lawson et al. 2007). For example, Larry Cuban and Michael Usdan (2003) argue that one of the reasons why seemingly powerful reform efforts have limited results is because the reforms fail to take into account the context of the cities and communities surrounding schools. To have a deeper impact, reforms have to be tailored to a city's unique context and political coalitions. Paul Barton and Richard Coley write that closing the achievement gap, "will not happen unless there is first widespread understanding of the nature and magnitude of the problem, and a considerable degree of consensus about it" (Barton and Coley 2010, 37). They add, "Solutions will have to be crafted with the involvement of [the black] community, for [the black] community, often by the community ... and not without it" (Ibid.). That communities have become a focus of attention should not come as a surprise. Schools and communities are inexorably linked.

The School and Community Linkage

Schools are important to communities. Schools are the places outside of the home most responsible for nurturing a community's children. Schools also serve as the venue for many community activities. Because of their prominent position in neighborhoods, schools are a natural focus for community development efforts (Stone et al. 1999). The quality of schools can affect the economic well being of a community also (Weiss 2004). A well educated workforce is likely to increase a community's wealth. Good quality schools are an important tool used to attract businesses. The quality of a community's schools can impact the value of homes in the community, and in turn impact the wealth of homeowners and the larger community. As a large employer and contractor, a community's public school system is an important part of the local economy.

On the other hand, schools are impacted by the community in which they exist. Children are products of their communities and they bring the impact of those communities with them to school. Further schools tend to be a reflection of their neighborhoods. Because a significant portion of education funding comes from local revenues, the economic well-being of schools is directly tied to the economic well-being of the local community.

For all of these reasons and more the community affects schools and schools affect the community. It is in the community's interest for its schools to be successful. Therefore, school improvement is good for both schools and the community. Simply put, school reform is not just an education matter. It is a community concern that needs to be addressed by the community. This characteristic makes school reform a political issue

There are other reasons why it is advantageous to have communities involved in school reform. Some individual schools can create a broad array of learning opportunities for their students and establish the ad hoc partnerships to support them, but this strategy will not work on a district level because not all schools have such capability and ad hoc arrangements are difficult to maintain (Rothman 2007). Efforts to scale-up school level initiatives to the district level and sustain them at the district level can benefit greatly from broad-based community involvement.

Community involvement can also strengthen the effectiveness of reform. Cuban and Usdan show in their book, *Powerful Reforms with Shallow Roots* (2003) that reform efforts focused on a schools-alone approach to improving education are likely to have moderate and extremely fragile success. They show that in places in which relationships with the community are cultivated reforms seem to extend deeper and have a greater chance of being sustained.

In her survey of successful schools, Chenoweth identified 25 characteristics of a successful school. They boiled down to one axiom: The adults in the profiled schools, “expect their students to learn, and they work hard to master the skills and knowledge necessary to teach those students” (Chenoweth 2007, 226). I submit that if communities and the nation as a whole are going to close the achievement gap, adults in communities and in the nation have to come to believe that all children can learn, and more importantly, must be willing to do what is necessary to help children do just that. Children must believe that the adults in their lives, both inside and outside the classroom, believe in their ability to achieve.

The primary reason why communities or broad-based coalitions should be involved in education reform is because

education is fundamentally a political process. Instituting reform cannot be analyzed simply as a problem of program design because program designs mean little if they cannot be actualized. Rather programs for reform must be considered in the context of the political environment in which they will either wither or take root...the failure of education reform should be understood as a failure of political leadership to generate a sustainable coalition to bring together the political and social resources necessary to implement real change (Henig et al. 1999, 274-275).

A strong, broad-based coalition is needed because without it fundamental change is unlikely to occur. The type of reform necessary to close the achievement gap is not the piecemeal type of reform that is usually implemented but rather substantive reform that in many ways seeks to restructure relationships and institutions. It is difficult to push such reforms without the backing of influential stakeholders.

A strong group of community stakeholders would seem most capable of countering and overcoming the inevitable opposition. Further, because it often takes considerable time to see the results of new efforts it will be important to maintain the drive (momentum) to continue with the reform efforts as those frustrated by the pace of progress begin calling to abandon efforts when they fail to show immediate results. A large community coalition would seem to be best positioned to withstand these demands.

As Jeffrey Henig and colleagues say,

The challenge may be less one of gaining attention and commitment than sustaining attention and commitment, less one of reorganizing educational bureaucracies than of organizing whole communities so that the education enterprise keeps moving in the right direction even when attention and commitment flag. Successful school reform requires selectivity, institutional capacity, and sufficient political support to maintain positive momentum in the face of various forces that can block, contain, or gradually erode promising initiatives (Ibid., 14).

Paul Hill and colleagues add,

No initiative is likely to survive if it threatens more people than it attracts, if it threatens too many people gratuitously, or if its leaders do not anticipate opposition. For a reform strategy to survive, its leaders must build as broad a coalition as is consistent with a focused initiative and either channel opposition in productive ways or meet it with countervailing ideas, organization, and political pressure (Hill et al. 2000, 106).

This political approach to educational reform does not concentrate on the promotion of specific educational programs. Instead this approach emphasizes the need for the community to come together as a community to determine which programs and strategies, educational or otherwise, will allow the community to improve the academic achievement of the community's children. The challenge for communities is to establish the political conditions that support applying efforts to a system-wide level and sustaining those efforts so that all children are given an equal chance to succeed. It requires communities to change the way they approach education. Community members need to understand the role they play in education and more fully understand the importance of the school-community relationship. Continued participation in a broad-based coalition can give people a new understanding of education, the reforms necessary to improve it, and most importantly, their role in educational improvement.

Effectively addressing the achievement gap requires communities to have a conversation about the connections between home and school, and the community and school. The community must come to understand that closing the achievement gap is a community responsibility, and, as a community responsibility, will require community action. Achieving that understanding and then acting on it requires what Clarence Stone calls an activation of a community's "civic capacity" (Stone 2001).

Civic Capacity and Education Reform

According to Stone, “civic capacity concerns the extent to which different sectors of the community—business, parents, educators, state and local officeholders, nonprofits, and others—act in concert around a matter of community-wide import. It involves mobilization—that is, bringing different sectors together but also developing a shared plan of action” (Ibid., 596). Civic capacity is the extent to which different segments of the community view themselves as having a stake in solving to an issue that is in need of solving by the community. But civic capacity is more than merely supporting a plan. It involves the active participation of stakeholders in the promotion of that plan. Thus civic capacity is about a community’s ability to build a coalition capable of affecting change in an identified community matter.

Stone and colleagues caution that a community’s civic capacity is not necessarily transferrable from one issue area to another (Stone et al. 2001). Civic capacity mobilized in support of economic development does not insure the activation of civic capacity in support of education reform. Civic capacity must be developed in each issue area, and the nature of that development will likely vary with the context of each issue area.

Dorothy Shipps (2006) also contends context influences the shape of coalitions. Writing about education reform, Shipps states,

There is no template; the composition of a reform coalition and the viability of its agenda are contingent on the institutions—the local economy, community demographics, political history—and traditions of school governance (e.g., elected or appointed school board, independent or dependent financial authority, the strength of collective bargaining) (Ibid., 8).

The ability to form a coalition and the shape of that coalition varies from city to city, from issue area to issue area, and from one time period to another.

For Stone, civic capacity is a matter of degree. It is “the degree to which a broad, cross-sector coalition comes together in support of a task of community-wide importance” (Stone 1996, 4). Thus civic capacity lies on a continuum from high to low. The level of civic capacity rises as the breadth of the coalition widens. High levels of civic capacity involve engaging a broad base of participants instead of a narrow collection of elites. Educational reform capable of closing the achievement gap requires a high level of civic capacity.

Shipp outlines five key components of civic capacity (2003, 846). First, the governing regimes developed through civic capacity are not electoral coalitions though they may contain some of the same members. Second, as was stated above, civic capacity is agenda specific, dependent on local history and not transferable from one arena to another. Third, civic capacity is created and maintained by a combination of governmental and nongovernmental partners and resources. Fourth, leadership is needed to mobilize and maintain a cross-sector coalition for reform. Fifth and last, the composition of the coalition and the relationships among members help to shape the agenda. To some readers, these components might sound suspiciously like the components of an urban regime. Indeed, civic capacity is the application of urban regime theory to urban education reform. “Institutionalizing systemwide urban school reform involves the formation of a new stable and active school governing regime, typically including the core constituents of an initiating reform coalition. Urban regime

theory thus highlights the resources and coalitions—the civic capacity—that are needed to enact and sustain change” (Ibid., 844).

At its core, educational reform that is substantial and fundamental and not just the usual piecemeal effort is about changing relationships. It is about changing relationships inside the classroom, changing relationships throughout the school building, and changing relationships within the community. Regime analysis provides a useful tool with which to examine relationship change. “Regimes are a way of understanding how we act as political communities” (Stone 2006, 28).

Urban Regime Theory and the Politics of Education

Urban regime analysis originates as an explanation of the influence of business in the governance of urban cities. Urban regime theory argues the formal structures of government are insufficient to effectively govern communities because of the fragmentary nature of power in America (Elkin 1987; Stone 1989; Ferman 1996; Mossberger and Stoker 2001). Others outside the formal governmental structure hold economic resources the government needs to address the complex matters affecting the community. Because cities cannot effectively operate without the exercise of both political and economic resources, public officials must form collaborative arrangements with private entities in order to pursue desired goals.

These arrangements are informal because they rely not on formal codified structures but rather on an unofficial arrangement of cooperation. Thus, by definition, an urban regime is, “the informal arrangements by which public bodies and private interests

function together in order to be able to make and carry out government decisions” (Stone 1989, 6). Through cooperation, the members of the regime coordinate their efforts and resources to achieve their shared objective.

All regimes have four main elements. The first is an agenda to address a distinct set of problems. There must be a concern and an approach to addressing that concern around which a group coalesces. Second, regimes have a governing coalition formed around the agenda. The governing coalition is composed of core members of the regime who make important decisions for the regime. It is this governing coalition that determines what policies will be chosen and how those policies are pursued. It is the actions of this core group that effectively govern the community. Third, regimes must have the resources for the pursuit of the agenda. Those resources are brought to the regime by the members of it. Fourth and last, regimes must have a scheme of cooperation through which coalition members contribute to the task of governing. Creating and sustaining a governing coalition necessitates working out the terms of cooperation and the resources each participant brings to the relationship (Stone 2006, 29). As a result, some regimes are easier to establish and maintain than others. Those regimes pursuing a broader agenda tend to have a more difficult task than regimes pursuing a narrower agenda because generally speaking, it is easier to coordinate the collective actions of a smaller regime than a larger one.

Regime theory holds that public policies are shaped by the composition of a community’s governing coalition, the nature of the relationship among members of the coalition, and the resources the members bring to the governing coalition (Stone 1993; Ferman 1996). Stone has identified two regime types pertinent to the issue area of

education: the employment regime and the performance regime (1993, 18). The types differ on the extent of the policy agenda they intend to pursue, the number of actors involved and their motivations for participating, and the amount of resources required to pursue the regime's agenda.

The easiest type of education regime to build is the employment regime, or what Wilbur Rich (1996) calls the "school cartel". The cartel is, "a set of well-organized insiders, striving to retain their autonomy and focused mainly on the immediate rewards and compensations of their current positions" (Pedescleaux et al. 1994, 24). A school cartel usually consists of a relatively small group that includes professional school administrators, the school board, superintendent, union leaders, and school activists whose job it is to promote the interests of the cartel's members (Rich 1996, 5).

Employment regimes are also characterized by limited business and parent involvement.

Employment regimes develop in the education arena because public school systems are not just places where children learn (Henig et al. 1999; Orr, 1999). Public schools wield a great deal of economic power in many communities. They often have large budgets and employ large numbers of people. Frequently, school systems are one of the largest, if not the largest employers in a community. Public school systems also can be places where people are able to wield a significant amount of political authority (Orr 1999). And school board membership is frequently a springboard for those desiring higher political office.

Employment regimes prefer to concentrate on "bread and butter" issues like salary increases and job security rather than substantive reform. Board members are

likely to be focused on constituency service and small attainable goals. They are more apt to micromanage the day-to-day affairs of the school system rather than concentrate on broader policymaking responsibilities.

An employment regime frequently will pursue educational policies that serve to cement the security of its member's positions. Since the goal of the school cartel is self-preservation it usually works toward stasis. As a result, employment regimes are likely to resist the kind of reform needed to close the achievement gap. That kind of substantive reform calls for a change in relationships. More importantly it calls for movement away from the status quo. Since the status quo is a source of strength for the employment regime, any movement away from it is a potential threat to the regime. Indeed, the employment regime is apt to favor "policy churn," (Hess 1999, 6) the constant recycling of reforms. The repeated starting and stopping of programs eventually lead to efforts that go nowhere. This "churn" ultimately helps maintain the status quo and keep the regime in control. It is for this reason that the kind of educational reform needed to close the gap is not likely to occur while the school cartel controls the education arena.

Sitting in contrast to the employment regime is the performance regime. The performance regime is characterized as a coalition of community stakeholders formed around the agenda of academic improvement of all students (Stone 1998). A performance or reform regime consists of "those political arrangements, coalitions and understandings that are conducive to changing school cultures and pedagogy in ways that will improve the performance of ...children" (Shipps 2003, 851). In this regime improving the academic performance of children is seen as a community issue to be addressed by the community as a whole. This regime requires significant resources in the

pursuit of the most substantive change. Acquiring needed resources in turn requires a larger number of participants, many of whom are likely not used to participating in such an endeavor or working together. The performance regime is extremely difficult to build and maintain, “because so many actors need to be engaged, and the regime must be sustained for a long period to lead to deep educational change” (Bulkley 2007, 160).

Stone argues that core members of a performance regime include parents, educators and business elites. The importance involving educators is obvious. Although, educators are often identified as obstacles to reform, children cannot be educated without them. Thus, educators must be drawn into the new coalition though their position within the regime may not be as dominant as it was in the employment regime.

Of course parents are core members of the regime. As discussed above, what happens in the home influences outcomes inside the school. Successfully closing the achievement gap will require melding what happens at home with what happens at school into a comprehensive strategy to improve academic performance. Getting parents to trust educators, and conversely getting educators to earn the trust of parents and support change may require the inclusion of community-based organizations that can mediate between the two.

Stone includes business elites as a core member of the performance regime. For Stone and others political economists, business has a special place in American politics because business controls private resources that elected officials find beneficial to their ability to govern (Lindblom 1977; Elkin 1987; Stone 1989). Business has resources that other institutions may not be able to provide. Business often has a level of influence

others do not possess, and that influence can be used to more effectively promote the agenda of the new regime. Additionally, for disadvantaged communities, business represents a path to the economic mainstream.

In her formulation of a performance regime, Dorothy Shippo (2006) argues that the position of business is not a necessary component of the regime. In fact in her formulation of education regimes, Shippo argues business participation is not required in a performance regime. She gives the performance regime a much more specific agenda than Stone and colleagues give it. For Shippo, a performance regime is focused on changing school culture and pedagogy. Because closing the achievement gap will require changes in school and community habits and practices, I agree with Stone in that the business sector must be a participant in a performance regime.

Shippo adds elected officials as core constituents of a performance regime. They supply “legitimacy and function as political buffers or mediators, permitting educators the freedom to learn new methods without the premature scrutiny that can end experimentation” (Shippo 2003, 853).

Shippo posits two other education regime types; the market regime and empowerment regime. Both regimes lie between the employment and performance regimes. A market regime pursues educational change that is only slightly removed from the stasis of the employment regime. The size of the regime is limited to business elites, elected officials, and occasionally parents. Applying the tenets of the market to education reform, these regimes pursue corporate-style market change.

The empowerment regime is the other regime Shipps puts forth. The empowerment regime lies between the market regime and the performance regime. The agenda of this regime is the authorization of “new decision makers to enable better and more innovative decisions” (Ibid., 853). Core constituents of this regime include those groups represented by the new decision makers. It also includes government actors capable of sanctioning the new power arrangements. Building an empowerment regime is more difficult than a market regime but less difficult than a performance regime.

I submit that in 2002 a school cartel controlled Prince George’s educational system. Like a typical employment regime, protection of employees was a key component of the regime’s agenda. But job protection was not this regime’s only agenda. Another agenda was maintaining the authority of African Americans in control of the system. A number of regime members saw African American control of education as a measure of the increased political power of African Americans in the county. Thus the regime’s ability to maintain control was equated to the ability of African Americans in the county to wield political power. When the regime was challenged on the system’s poor performance, board members usually interpreted the challenge as an attack on African American authority. The school board in particular rejected reform efforts that it believed infringed upon its authority.

I argue that in order to improve the academic achievement of the county’s African American students, and all students for that matter, the employment regime needed to be replaced with a new performance regime that had improving academic achievement as its agenda. This undertaking is easier said than done.

With so many potential participants it should come as no surprise that a performance regime is difficult to build and maintain, and is considerably more fragile than the employment regime. Employment regimes are rather easy to build and maintain because the goal of the regime is closely aligned with the immediate interests of the regime's members. School employees want to keep their jobs. School board members want to maintain their position of authority. In order to achieve these ends, members simply have to keep doing what they are already doing. The employment regime does not require much more than the pursuit of narrow interests, and for this reason, employment regimes find little difficulty in maintaining themselves.

Conversely, performance regimes must often overcome several challenges. Members of a performance regime are asked to focus on broader interests. Sustaining this focus may be difficult for people to do. It may be especially difficult for those members for whom the community goal is less of an immediate concern. Another challenge is maintaining the steady involvement of the various members of the regime despite the existence of competing considerations. Even if people agree that reform is necessary, there may be disagreement over the shape of that reform. And of course the usual collective-action problems apply.

For the performance regime, the variety of motivations for involvement is likely to be as varied as the stakeholders who hold them. Parents are obviously concerned with the education of *their* children. Business is motivated by a desire for a better workforce. Educators have professional and employment concerns. Other community groups may see education reform as part of a larger community development issue. And we cannot ignore the fact that some will view education reform through the prism of racial politics

and be motivated by a desire to protect hard won political gains. These various motivations might impede consensus building efforts. Further, numerous stakeholders with various incentives to participate make it likely that competing issue definitions will exist (Henig, 2004).

Part of the task for reformers is to frame education reform in such a way as self-interest gives way to public interest; “recasting issues in terms that reflect shared interests and reveal areas of agreement can minimize divisions” (Puriefoy 2005, 245). Levin and Fullan argue,

Reformers often have a tendency to think that their approach is self-evident to every reasonable person. But . . . , there will always be different points of view, different priorities and different understandings in a public system. People will inevitably misunderstand or misinterpret what is happening, either from lack of understanding or for purposes of their own interests. The nature of human interaction requires constant efforts to communicate, and never more so than when some significant change from the status quo is being attempted (2008, 298).

Developing the means for overcoming these difficulties is the role of leadership.

Leaders have to convince people that their cause is worthy. They also have to convince people that the goal of the cause is achievable (Chong 1991).

Convincing people is easier said than done. There will be opposition. First, a legacy of failed reforms tends to diminish the desire to attempt additional reforms. Second, the more reforms differ from the norm, the more difficult they are to implement (Fuhrman 2003). Third, reform requires change and makes the status quo unacceptable. However, there are those who benefit from the current system and they likely resist change.

Naturally the employment regime benefits the most from the current system. Thus, substantive education reform that is capable of closing the achievement gap requires the displacement of the school cartel. “It requires at least a limited destruction of the existing policy subsystem [regime] because the existing subsystem [regime] is invested in the current arrangement or current set of implemented solutions” (Stone et al. 2001, 52). Civic capacity involves the mobilization of a broad array of community interests to remove policy-making authority from the employment regime (Ibid., 7). How does one go about dismantling the existing regime?

Regime Change and Policy Change

Marion Orr and Gerry Stoker have posited a theory of regime change as a three stage process (1994, 68). The first stage is taking advantage of opportunities to question the legitimacy of the existing regime during periods of changes in the political environment. This questioning is done by raising doubts about the regime’s capacity to govern and the validity of its policy agenda. The second stage is a conflictual stage in which groups compete to establish alternative agendas with the hope of creating a new regime. This second stage is the period of coalition building in which support for a new regime is built. The third stage involves the institutionalization of the new regime. Members pursue efforts and strategies that help to maintain, stabilize, and strengthen the new regime.

Carter Wilson (2000) posits a five stage process of regime change. He lists the stages as: stressors/enablers, paradigm shifts, power shifts, legitimacy crisis, and organizational and policy change (Ibid. 260). The stages do not necessarily occur in

sequence and can occur simultaneously. The first stage involves external factors that impose stress on the regime or enable change. “They weaken policy regimes, create conditions favorable for change, or act as catalysts for change” (Ibid., 260).

Stressors/enablers stimulate paradigm shifts which are part of the foundation of regime change. “A paradigm shift involves a process that leads to the discrediting of the dominant paradigm and the ascension of an alternative or opposition paradigm” (Ibid. 262).

Stressors and paradigm shifts often interact to produce a legitimacy crisis. The crisis occurs when people start to question the capabilities of the old regime. Power shifts occur when old actors leave the policy regime and/or new members enter. Shifts can occur with grassroots mobilization or the emergence of new sources of power.

Wilson writes the final stage of policy change, “generally culminates in the reorganization of the policy implementation structure. This reorganization is accompanied by changes in policy goals, shifts in the policy paradigm, and changes in power arrangements” (Ibid., 265). Change culminates in the formation of a new regime. To recap, “regime changes occur when regimes become stressed, alternative policy paradigms arise, legitimacy crises occur, and shifts in power become evident” (Ibid., 266).

From the discussions above, it is clear that regime change is a difficult endeavor. The difficulty favors the continuance of the status quo. Yet regime change does occur. The key to regime change in both Orr and Stoker’s and Wilson’s account is the presence of an external stimulus that puts stress on the regime. One such stimulus is a focusing event.

Focusing events are sudden extraordinary events like crises, disasters, or scandals that shock the system and focus attention on a problem that needs addressing (Kingdon 1984; Birkland 2004). Often they shock the system by reinforcing some preexisting perception of a problem or by moving forward a problem that was already “in the back of people’s minds” (Kingdon 1984,103). Focusing events dramatically highlight policy failures and provide opportunities for policy learning (Birkland 2004). “A focusing event shifts the presumption away from the status quo and toward the proposition that policy change is necessary” at least momentarily (Ibid.,181).

Although focusing events can be very powerful, focusing events need not lead to substantive policy change. The focusing event or external stimulus on its own does not create the capacity to develop and sustain an agenda. A political or civic actor must initiate a reform coalition to tackle the problems the focusing event or external stimulus reveals (or constructs) (Shipps 2003, 846). Wilbur Rich writing of the resilience of the school cartel offers, “The rascals are repeatedly thrown out, but they usually return to power. Besides cartel members have an uncanny ability to clone themselves” (Rich 1996, 8). Thus, disrupting the regime is not enough. It is only the first step in the process of regime change. The second step is for reformers to coalesce.

For reformers, the political challenge is to build a new set of arrangements in which “*academic performance is a focal concern*” [emphasis in the original] to take the place of the old regime (Stone 1998, 9). Advocates of regime change must be able to activate a community’s civic capacity to produce the coalitions necessary to support the formation of a new regime. Disrupting the current regime is not enough. If reform

efforts are to endure, the disruption must be followed with the institutionalization of a new performance regime.

Today, outward appearances suggest Prince George's reformers were not successful in creating a new performance regime. As researchers have mentioned, "the formation of a new education regime comes about through a fresh set of relationships, even though some of the players remain the same" (Stone, Orr and Imbroscio 1991, 13). One might be inclined to assume that the restructuring of the board and hence the removal of key actors from the regime would have resulted in the needed changed relationships. This assumption would be wrong. Structural changes do not guarantee that the basic nature of relationships within the regime will change. Changing the formal arrangements of governing does not ensure a change in the informal arrangements of governing. While state legislature made a dramatic structural change in the county's education subsystem, it precipitated only minor changes to the nature of the relationships among the actors within the subsystem. The structural changes did not themselves create the capacity to develop and sustain a reform coalition. Moreover, in Prince George's, it does not appear that relationships between the board and other members of the governing coalition and other stakeholders in the county have changed significantly.

This project argues a performance or education reform regime was not created in Prince George's County. However, the old regime was destabilized and did not return as before. It is not clear what type of regime is in control at this moment. It might well be a reconstituted version of the old regime. It is clear that a small group of people are in control of the education process in the county so in that sense the new regime looks like the old employment regime. However, the board does not seem to be as noticeably

focused on its own welfare as the old regime had been. And recently, it appears that a more cooperative attitude has taken hold in the county as people are less likely to reject change out of hand. Thus, outwardly the regime presents a façade that suggests a genuine concern for educational performance.

Thesis

This project studies educational reform efforts in Prince George's County, Maryland. I argue regime change is the key to educational reform in the county because the regime that was in control of education in 2002 pursued an agenda at odds with substantive educational reform. Because of the power of the school cartel, educational reform would be unlikely to occur without regime change. Before reform advocates could develop a community strategy for closing the gap, they would need to supplant the existing employment regime and replace it with a reform-minded performance regime.

It is my contention that the dissolution of the school board was a focusing event that directly questioned the legitimacy of the school cartel. The dissolution of the board also disrupted the organizational structure of the cartel. Thus, the dissolution put the regime in a weakened position and made it vulnerable to attack from opponents.

It is also my contention that in Prince George's County was not able to move beyond the first stage of the regime change process. Reform advocates were unable to activate the county's civic capacity on behalf of education reform. The goal of this research is to determine why reformers were not successful. In addition this research hopes to ascertain the nature of the current regime controlling county education. Was the

old regime able to withstand the disruption? Was it replaced by a new regime that is neither an employment regime nor performance regime? Basically, this project seeks to answer the question, what happened after the school board was dissolved?

Additionally this project is interested in the impact of the failure of regime change on the academic achievement and the achievement gap. The premise of this project is that regime change is necessary to produce a significant improvement in African American student's academic performance and narrow the Black-White achievement gap. Because this project posits that a performance regime was not established, no significant rise in African American achievement is expected. Further little change in the achievement gap is expected.

Methods

This project uses a single case study approach to study regime change. Case studies attempt to examine a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context (McNabb 2010, 237). The use of case studies is well suited to the study of urban regime theory. At the heart of regime theory is the proposition that context matters. Thus urban regime theory and the case study method are well suited for one another.

Sometimes the case study method is criticized because study results are not generalizable to broader set of cases. I would argue, the specifics of the case study can expose the practicality of those broader generalizations. Explanations or theories can be so broad that they explain nothing of real relevance. Explanations that are too broad are

likely to miss the specifics that actually matter. By studying the specifics, case studies can help refine broader theories.

This case study applies both qualitative and quantitative methods. The centerpiece of the qualitative methods is the use of semi-structured interviews. Respondents were chosen by two methods. First, key educational, political, and community elites were identified. Second, once interviewing began, a snowballing technique was used. This technique involves expanding the interview sample by asking respondents to identify others potential respondents for interviews.

Three interview schedules with open-ended questions were used. One schedule was used for people who are no longer involved in county education or politics but were involved in or before 2002. A second schedule was used for people currently involved in county education or politics but not involved in 2002. The last schedule was designed for school board members. The first two schedules were nearly identical save for the elimination of questions concerning time periods for which respondents were inactive. The school board schedule contained a number of questions included in the other schedules. It also contained additional questions pertaining to the school board and its relationship with other educational actors.

In total 48 people were interviewed between June 2009 and April 2010. Interview respondents included educators, politicians, business and community leaders, activists, and parents. To encourage people to speak freely, respondents were given anonymity. The length of the interviews ranged from 23 minutes to 2:30 hours with most lasting about an hour.

In addition to the interviews, newspaper articles and primary source documents were used to develop a more vivid political picture of the county. To produce a demographic picture of the county, local, state, and federal census data were used as well.

The centerpiece of the quantitative methods was the use of test data to analyze changes in the black-white test-score gap. For the study the results of Maryland School Performance assessment Program are analyzed. A more detail discussion of the data set and the methods used to analyze the data is presented in Chapter 6.

Contributions and Limitations of the Dissertation

Studying Prince George's underscores the pervasiveness of the problem of minority academic achievement. Stone's conceptualization of civic capacity is based on its application to urban education. But as John Ogbu (2003), Ronald Ferguson (2002), and others have shown, poor student performance is not limited to poor communities. Studies like this one remind people that while most of the students in large city schools are minorities, not all minority students attend big city schools. A sizable number of minority students attend suburban schools. The ubiquitousness of the achievement gap is illustrated in case studies of non-central city communities like Prince George's County.

Prince George's is a suburban school district. And like many big-city systems it is large and diverse. But unlike many big-city systems it is not overwhelmed by the problem of concentrated poverty in the way that many big-city systems are. Because its problems are large enough to warrant concern, but not so large as to seem intractable, the county provides an environment that would seem to be suitable for community

mobilization. Further, because of its size and diversity, Prince George's offers potential lessons about community mobilization that might apply to other localities. Additionally, many education reformers advocate a greater community role in education policy formation. This study can help highlight the difficulties of getting that community involvement.

This project began with the question of how does a community go about solving the problem of poor African American academic achievement? In the past, educators have tackled this issue alone as they enjoyed a high level of professional autonomy. Today, however, the notion of bureaucratic insulation has given way to the belief that schools cannot close the achievement gap on their own. At the same time schools are connected to the broader political, economic, and social community surrounding them (Wong 1991; Reed 1991). Accordingly, to adequately address the problem of minority achievement the role of the community must be considered. I have suggested the key to developing and maintaining a successful reform effort lies in the ability to mobilize various influential actors in the community, build a consensus on the nature of the problem or problems, and coordinate efforts to solve them. I have argued that regime change is a key to this process. The complexity of this process is confirmed by in events in Prince George's County, Maryland.

This study also is important from a normative point-of-view. Education is not an abstract pursuit. Real consequences and real lives and futures are at stake. I would argue that a goal of political scientists and education researchers should be to help society solve some of its problems. It is not enough to simply observe the achievement gap and its impact on the children who are victims of it. Part of our goal should be to bring light and

information to the problem with the hope that the information may help those charged with closing the gap. By illuminating the obstacles that stand in the way of reform, researchers can help reformers in the development of strategies for achieving successful reform.

A limitation of the study may be its timeframe. Some researchers of regime change suggest that a historical perspective is necessary if one is to accurately gauge attempts at regime change (McGuinn 2006; Shipps 2006). It may be that my nearly decade-long timeframe is not long enough. The implication being that the county is still in the midst of undergoing change. Paul Sabatier argues that explaining policy change requires a “time perspective of a decade or more” (Sabatier, 1993). Another limitation may be in the fact that Prince George’s County is not the typical suburban county. While the value of a case may lie in its uniqueness, it may be that the county is so atypical that what happens in it has no applicable value to any other community.

Preview of Upcoming Chapters

Chapter 2 presents a historical overview of the changes in Prince George’s County as it moved from a majority white population to a majority African American population.

Chapter 3 presents an examination of Prince George’s County Public Schools. The chapter identifies three issues; desegregation, testing and finances, that have shaped the education arena in the county.

Chapter 4 presents a detailed discussion of events leading to the school board's removal in 2002. It then turns to a discussion of why the dissolution of the school board occurred. The chapter digs below the surface and reveals an employment regime under significant pressure.

Chapter 5 chronicles events after 2002. It continues the discussion of reform efforts and details the failure to establish a performance regime. Because of the significant amount of change experienced in school governance, the chapter is split into two parts. The first part covers the time period between 2002 and 2006. The second part covers events since 2006.

In Chapter 6 this project comes full circle with an examination of the impact of county education politics on educational outcomes. This chapter uses test data and other indicators to determine whether academic achievement has improved or declined since 2002.

Chapter 7 concludes the project with a final analysis of Prince George's County education politics. Several county characteristics that present obstacles to regime change are discussed.

Endnotes

¹ Asians are 4% of the population.

² The average mathematics score was 83.65% for whites and 64.43% for blacks. The average reading scores was 88.86% for whites and 13.99% for blacks.

³ Maryland has 24 school districts 23 of which are county districts. The city of Baltimore has its own district and has always landed at the bottom of all state assessments.

Chapter 2

An Overview of Prince George's County

Introduction

The state of Maryland has been referred to as a microcosm of the United States (Callcott 1985). Sitting just below the Mason-Dixon Line, the state is neither wholly southern nor wholly northern. It has both coastlines and mountains. It is both rural and urban, and increasingly it is suburban. Economically, the state has both great wealth and staggering poverty. The population is as diversified as the nation, if not more so.

In some ways Prince George's County is a microcosm of Maryland. While it does not have mountains, it does have the coastline of the Potomac River which separates it from the state of Virginia. The county has several densely populated communities that resemble the central city (Washington, D.C.) they border. At the same time, it has wide expanses of farm land. Suburbanization has transformed the county from a tobacco farming town steeped in a southern plantation tradition into one of the largest, affluent, majority African American counties in the country.

Geographically, Prince George's County is located in central Maryland. The county sits on the east side of the District of Columbia and is about 37 miles south of Baltimore. The county seat is Upper Marlboro in the south central portion of the county. One of 24 local units in Maryland, the county along with Montgomery County, which sits on the District's west side, is part of the state's suburban Washington region.¹

Early History of Prince George's County

Prince George's County was established on April 23, 1696. Its early growth was directly related to the growth of the tobacco trade (Virta 1991). It was with the growth of the tobacco trade in the 18th century that slaves were brought to the county, and by the middle of the century almost half of the county population was slave.² By the time of the Civil War, African Americans (overwhelmingly slaves) outnumbered whites in the county. During the 19th century, Prince George's was the greatest tobacco producing county in Maryland and was one of the more prosperous counties in the state as a result (Virta 1991, 88).

Accompanying the tobacco trade was a plantation lifestyle that resembled the plantation culture of the antebellum South. The plantation gentry ruled Prince George's social and political life. And while there was strong Unionist sentiment in Maryland, Prince George's sympathies lay decidedly with the South (Pearl 1996, 10; Virta 1991, 120; Callcott 1985, 19).

The Civil War and the subsequent end of slavery in Maryland effectively killed the tobacco trade in the county.³ Without the slaves needed to sustain it, the old plantation system died and the land was broken up into small farms. The county entered into a new era of "small farms, quiet country villages, and modest living" (Virta 1991, 135). Although a number of freed slaves left the county after the Civil War, most blacks stayed in the county continuing on as tenant farmers and sharecroppers.

Prince George's County's first encounter with suburbanization came in the years after the Civil War with the expansion of the federal government in Washington, D.C. (Virta, 1991, 190). The District of Columbia's population doubled in the 1860s and grew

by an additional third during the 1870s and 1880s. In a story to be repeated later, city workers searching for affordable housing were forced to look outside the city to the less expensive homes of the surrounding counties, and Prince George's was more than happy to accommodate them. The introduction of the streetcar to the county in 1897 led to further suburbanization as it made the county more accessible to an increasing number of workers looking for affordable housing outside of Washington. Thus the county's reputation as a bastion of affordable housing for the working class was established early on. Despite the growth, however, the county remained essentially a rural hamlet for decades.

Prior to the Civil War, blacks lived in all of the counties of the Washington region (Virta 1991, 213). Only in Prince George's did blacks build new suburban towns during the streetcar era of the late 1890s.⁴ North Brentwood was Prince George's County's first African American town formed in 1890 and incorporated in 1924 (Pearl 1996, 24). Fairmount Heights was also one of the earliest African American communities in the county. Incorporated in 1935, it was one of the earliest black middle class suburbs in the county (Pearl 1996, 12, 65). It was populated by blacks who worked for the federal government in the District of Columbia (Thornton and Gooden 1997, 164).

The Suburbanization of Prince George's County by the Decades⁵

The county's more transformative encounter with suburbanization occurred in the period between 1930 and 1970. During this period, the county's population ballooned, swelling from 60,000 in 1930 to just over 660,000 in 1970.⁶ Not surprisingly, the beginnings of this population growth rested in the New Deal and an explosion of new federal programs as President Franklin Roosevelt tried to pull the country out of the Great

Depression. The New Deal doubled the size of the federal government and dramatically increased the size of its workforce—a workforce in need of housing. Because of the expense of the District, workers once again looked to the areas surrounding the nation’s capitol for affordable housing. As one of those communities, Prince George’s County became a prototypical bedroom community of homes and consumer services businesses (banks, supermarkets, retail stores, etc.).

Although the surge of suburbanization occurred in all of the jurisdictions surrounding the nation’s capitol, the suburbanization that took place in Prince George’s differed from that of neighboring Montgomery County. Prince George’s drew middle and working class people while Montgomery drew more affluent residents (Virta 1991, 213). Perhaps the greatest reason for the difference was geography. That is, what happened in Prince George’s and Montgomery counties was an extension of what was happening inside the city of Washington.

Montgomery County lies on the western edge of the District and Prince George’s lies on the eastern edge. The western side of the District was (and remains) the affluent side of the city while the eastern side was (and remains) more working class. As city residents moved to the suburbs, they just moved outward from the communities in which they lived. The affluent moved further out westward, and the working class moved further eastward. Those living in the western portion of the city moved out further west into Montgomery County in Maryland. Those on the eastern side of the District moved into Prince George’s County.

Another reason for the difference was the penchant of Prince George’s leaders to court any kind of development while neighboring jurisdictions such as Montgomery

County were more selective in the type of development they encouraged (Granat 1986). Prince George's leaders gladly welcomed the developers of garden style apartments and condominiums that were rejected in Montgomery County in favor of single family homes and more upscale development.

Blacks were part of the suburban migration (Wiese 2004). Of the new residential communities built in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, blacks primarily moved to those in Prince George's (Virta 1991, 213). These new communities were usually near the old towns built by blacks earlier during the streetcar period.

The 1970s

Between 1970 and 1980, the total population size in Prince George's remained relatively unchanged growing by slightly less than 5,000 during the decade (U.S. Bureau of Census 1980). Some of the slowing population growth was tied to the slowing growth of the federal government during the 1970s. Additionally, a state ban on new sewer construction curtailed development in the county at the same time that affordable land became more available in other jurisdictions (Virta 1991, 213). And of course, an end to the baby boom of the 1950s and early 1960s slowed growth everywhere.

The overall flat population growth does not give an accurate picture of what was happening in the county however. Although the numbers suggest little movement within the county, the exact opposite is true. Between 1970 and 1980, the county's white population shrank by 170,049 (Table 2-1). The dramatic reduction in the white population was matched by the dramatic increase in the black population. Between 1970 and 1980, the black population increased by 156,052. So while the overall size of the county's population did not change appreciably between 1970 and 1980, the racial

composition of the population changed significantly. Whites who were 85% of the population in 1970 declined to 59% in 1980. Blacks who were 14% of the population in 1970 grew to 37% in 1980. It should be noted that the growth of the black population was not limited to Prince George’s County. The Washington region also saw an increase. During the decade, blacks increased from 8% of the metropolitan population to 16.7% (Feinberg 1981).

Table 2-1: Prince George’s County Population 1970-2007

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2007
Total	660,567	665,071	729,268	801,515	828,770
Black	91,808	247,860	369,791	502,550	531,127
pct	13.90%	37.30%	50.70%	62.70%	64.10%
White	561,476	391,427	314,616	216,729	182,250
pct	84.90%	58.80%	43.10%	27.00%	22.00%
Hispanic	14,586	14,421	29,983	57,057	100,769
pct	2.20%	2.10%	4.10%	7.10%	12.10%
Asian	4,478	17,064	28,255	31,032	31,295
pct	0.70%	2.60%	3.90%	3.90%	3.80%

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of the Population 1980, 1990, 2000; American Community Survey 2007, American FactFinder.

These changes reflected a national trend of increased black suburbanization resulting from a growing black middle class (Wiese 2004). Further, the elimination of discriminatory housing laws gave middle class blacks more freedom to move and allowed them to search for the suburban “utopia” whites had found earlier. In fact, during the 1960s and 1970s the number of black suburbanites more than doubled (Ibid., 211). This is not to say that blacks could move wherever they liked or that housing discrimination did not occur in the 1970s. This is certainly not the case. While, codified discrimination

ended, the more insidious, informal discrimination in the form of “redlining” by banks and “steering” by real estate agents continued (Gale 1987). This informal discrimination coupled with the existence of established communities helps to explain why more blacks migrated to Prince George’s instead of other areas in the region.

The actions of whites also played a role in the concentration of blacks in the county. The desire of whites to limit their contact with blacks has been a critical factor in segregation (Massey and Hajnal 1995). The “white flight” from the county was in part a reaction to the increased migration of African Americans into the county. Opposition to court-ordered busing to desegregate the county’s schools in 1973 further accelerated the process.⁷

In addition to being rejected by fleeing whites, migrating blacks were met with more white resistance in the form of violence and considerable police brutality. The brutality was such that the police department was sued by the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Legal Defense Fund, and investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (Gregg 1983a; Harriston 1987). The reputation of the police force was so bad that it was dubbed “the police brutality capital in the world” by the head of the county chapter of the NAACP in 1975 (Whitlock and Fallis 2001).

The 1980s

The relationship between the police department and blacks in the county began to improve during the 1980s.⁸ Moreover, African Americans moving into Prince George’s during the 1980s did not meet the white resistance that greeted earlier blacks. This is most likely because African Americans had reached large enough numbers by the 1980s

that they had become more integrated into the county (Pearl 1996, 13). Also those whites most likely to be resistant had fled the county during the 1960s and 1970s.

The demographic shift of the 1970s foretold the beginning of another transformational period in Prince George's County. Between 1980 and 1990 the number of county residents grew from 665,071 in 1980 to 729,268 in 1990 (Table 2-1). A closer look at the numbers shows an even more dramatic change. During the 1980s, the white population in the county actually decreased by 76,811. This decrease was surpassed by an increase in the county's minority population. The number of Asians and Hispanics doubled during the decade. The African American population increased by 121,931. As a result of all of these changes, Prince George's became a majority-minority county with blacks becoming 50.7% of the population while whites decreased to 43.1%.

This second wave of black migration into Prince George's was a part of a continuing national migration away from central cities. Washington, D.C. saw its population drop by 31,433 during the 1980s (U.S. Bureau of Census 1990). Ironically, the influx of blacks into the county was propelled in part by the county's efforts to attract white professionals. The county's Economic Development Corporation began a campaign to draw white professionals to the county by courting new industries in the county and enticing developers to build new subdivisions for the executives of those new industries (Dent 1992, 22). However, before whites could come in, blacks moved into these new upscale communities. As a result, African Americans migrating to the county during the 1980s were considerably more affluent than those coming in the earlier wave. In fact, Prince George's became the first majority-black, majority-affluent county in the

nation (Wiese 2004, 270). Prince George's became the rare community in which its affluence grew as the concentration of African Americans grew.

The 1990s

The 1990s saw a net population gain of 72,247 for the county, making Prince George's the second largest county in Maryland. Its total population of 801,515 was only surpassed by Montgomery County whose population grew to 873,341 in 2000 (U.S. Bureau of Census 2000). Along with the increase in population came an increase in the percentage of the population that was African American. By 2000, blacks were 62.7% of the population while whites in the county continued to decline becoming just over a quarter (27%) of the population. During the 1990s, developers were actively marketing homes to middle class African Americans (Wiese 2004, 274). The black, upper middle class golf course communities of Woodmore and Lake Arbor were built in the 1990s as affluent blacks moved further out in the county.

Along with the continued influx of African Americans, Prince George's saw a significant increase in its Hispanic population during the 1980s and 1990s. During the 1980s, the county's Hispanic population doubled growing from 14,421 to 29,983 (Table 2-1). Only 2.2% of the population in 1980, Hispanics became 4.1% in 1990. During the 1990s, the Hispanic population nearly doubled again growing by 90.2%. By 2000, Latinos were 7.1% of the county's population numbering 57,057. In a related trend, Prince George's saw a significant increase in the number of foreign-born immigrants to the county in the 1990s. By 2000, 14% of the county's population was foreign-born.⁹

Once again what was happening in the county echoed a trend happening throughout the metropolitan region. Between 1990 and 1996, the Washington region's

population increased by 7.1% (Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy 1999). The percentage of the population that was minority grew by 3.6%.¹⁰ Conversely, the white percentage of the population decreased by 3.7%. So during the 1990s the entire Washington metropolitan region grew more diverse with Prince George's leading the way. By 1996, the county was home to 35% of the metropolitan area's minority population.¹¹

The 2000s

Between 2000 and 2007, Prince George's total population grew by 3.4% to reach a total of 828,770 (Table 2-1). The African American population grew 5.7% while the white population continued to decline dropping 15.9%. The Hispanic population saw the most dramatic change. In seven years the Hispanic population grew by 76.6% and became 12.2% of the total population. The county's increasing Hispanic population points to a trend occurring throughout the metropolitan region: the growth of foreign-born residents. The foreign-born population accounted for 50% of the region's population growth between 1990 and 2007 (Greater Washington Research at Brookings 2009).

Another demographic trend occurring in Prince George's was the out-migration of middle-class African Americans. Many leaving the county have moved to neighboring Maryland counties. Like those leaving the District earlier, many middle-class, African American Prince Georgians left the county in search of lower priced housing, better schools, and less crime (Rucker and Thomas-Lester 2007). In a study of county migration between 1993 and 2003, Brooke DeRenzis and Alice M. Rivlin (2007) found that those moving into the county had lower median household incomes than those

moving out of the county.¹² While middle-class blacks led the migration into the county during the 1980s and early 1990s, those migrating to the county in the late 1990s and 2000s tended to be foreign born and have lower incomes than those leaving (Ibid.).

Prince George's County and the Washington Metropolitan Region¹³

The characteristic that most distinguishes Prince George's County from its suburban neighbors is the fact that it is the only majority-minority jurisdiction, in the region, save for the District of Columbia. The county is 81.7% minority. No other suburban Washington jurisdiction has a concentration of African Americans or minorities anywhere near as high as Prince George's. In Virginia, Alexandria city has an African American population that is 21.8% of the total population and a total minority population of 32%. Charles County comes closest in Maryland with an African American population of 38.2% and a total minority population of 45% (U.S. Bureau of Census 2007). Interestingly, many of these African Americans are former Prince George's residents and include many of the upper income blacks who left the county (Marimow 2005).

As part of the Washington metropolitan area, Prince George's County is frequently compared to its neighbors, and the comparisons are usually not kind. As Table 2-2 shows, Prince George's does not measure up well against some of its neighbors on a number of socioeconomic indicators.

Table 2-2 Prince George’s County Comparison with Regional Neighbors 2000

	Prince George’s	Montgomery	Fairfax	Washington Metro
Total Population	729,268	873,341	969,749	7,608,070
Minority Population	73%	35.2%	30.1%	37%
Median Family Income	\$62,467	\$84,035	\$92,146	\$66,909
Family Poverty	7.2%	5.0%	4.3%	8.3%
Unemployment	4.1%	2.2%	1.9%	3.1%
High School Graduate	27.3%	5.3%	13.9%	23.2%
Some College or BA Degree	47.4%	48.4%	52.5%	45.5%
Post Grad Degree	10.2%	27.5%	24.4%	16.3%
Bachelor or Higher	27.2%	54.6%	54.8%	37.1%
Home Ownership	61.8%	68.7%	70.9%	65.0%
Median Home Value	\$145,600	\$221,800	\$233,300	\$161,600

Source: 2000 U.S. Bureau of Census. 2000 Census of the Population.

It is less affluent than several of its neighbors and has higher levels of poverty and unemployment. The level of educational attainment is lower as well. The disparities even extend to home ownership and home prices. Lower home prices are one reason why the county tends to attract a greater percentage of working class and lower income minorities than its neighbors. On the positive side, for many of these residents Prince George’s provides a “pathway to the middle class” (DeRenzis and Rivlin 2007). Because they are neighbors, are in the same state, and are the largest counties in Maryland, Prince George’s County and Montgomery County are often compared to one another. Once

again the comparison is not kind to Prince George's (Table 2-2). Part of the reasons for the county being less affluent than its western neighbors has to do with geography and good old-fashioned greed.

As mentioned above, Prince George's sits to the east of the District of Columbia while Montgomery sits on the west side. As the west side of the District is more affluent than the east, Montgomery and other western counties reaped the benefits of an affluent population moving out away from the core city. A second geographical reason for Prince George's less affluent status comes as a result of its position along the B&O Railroad. The railroad brought heavy industry and made the county a natural distribution center for large multi-chain companies (Granat 1986, 198). Warehouses tend not to encourage the development of upscale residential property nearby.

Additionally, loose zoning laws allowed developers to come into the county and build numerous relatively low-cost apartments that attracted less affluent individuals while neighboring counties used more restrictive zoning laws to attract more affluent individuals. Political officials in Prince George's believed that any development was good development as long as it brought a quick financial return. However, in their rush for quick money, politicians failed to consider the long-term consequences of their actions. The result was "an urban planner's worst nightmare. The worst of suburbia came to Prince George's County; randomly placed strip shopping centers and squat apartment buildings that turned into instant slums" (Granat 1986, 200). In time the politicians realized their mistake and tightened zoning laws but by then the pattern had been set, and Prince George's reputation as a county of the working class had been firmly planted in people's minds.

Race has also played a role in Prince George's position relative to its neighbors. Restrictive zoning laws constrained the migration of African Americans to the neighboring counties. With their choices limited, minorities (primarily African Americans early on) were led to Prince George's. Because African Americans do less well as a group on a number of socioeconomic indicators than whites as a group, it was perhaps inevitable that Prince George's with its large concentration of African Americans would be less affluent than its neighbors who have large concentrations of whites (Dawson 1994).

Race played another role in the county's economic status. The forced integration of county schools in the 1970s made many businesses shy away from Prince George's. Businesses were skeptical of the willingness of their white workers to live in the county and send their children to the county's public schools where they were likely to be bused (Granat 1986). Busing created a drag on the county's ability to attract the commercial base from which it could generate the jobs, income and revenues that would allow it to keep pace with neighboring jurisdictions. While companies have begun to pay more attention to the county, it still lags behind its neighbors (Meyer and Behr 1997).

That Prince George's is less affluent than some of its majority-white, neighboring counties does not mean the county is not doing well economically. It is still one of the more affluent counties in the country.¹⁴ Moreover, some of the comparisons are a bit unfair. Four of the top ten wealthiest counties in the United States are part of the Washington metropolitan area (U.S. Bureau of Census 2008).¹⁵ As a result, Prince George's County is being held to a higher than normal standard. Table 1-3 provides a

comparison of the county with the United States as a whole and with the state of Maryland.

Table 2-3: 2000 Socioeconomic Comparison Prince George's County, Maryland, and United States

	Prince George's	Maryland	United States
Total Population	729,268	5,296,486	281,421,906
Minority Population	73%	36%	24.9%
Median Family Income	\$62,467	\$61,876	\$50,046
Family Poverty	7.2%	3.2%	9.2%
Unemployment	4.1%	6.1%	5.8%
High School Graduate	27.3%	26.7%	28.6%
Some College & BA Degree	47.4%	43.6%	58.3%
Post Grad Degree	10.2%	13.4%	8.9%
Bachelor or Higher	27.2%	31.4%	24.4%
Home Ownership	61.8%	67.7%	66.2%
Median Home Value	\$145,600	\$146,000	\$119,600

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census. 2000 Census of the Population.

Prince George's does considerably well when compared to the nation. The county has lower unemployment (4.1% for the county and 5.8% for the US) and poverty rates (7.2% and 9.2%) than the nation. Its median income is 12.4% higher than the national average. The county also has a higher number of college graduates. The county holds its own compared to the state. The median incomes of the county and the state are almost identical at \$62,467 for the county and \$61,876 for the state. The county does have a

higher poverty rate than the state (7.2% and 3.2% respectively). However, the county has a lower unemployment rate (4.1%) than the state (6.1%). Despite these generally positive numbers, Prince George's cannot rid itself of its reputation as the poor second cousin to its wealthier neighbors.

The Federal Government in Prince George's County

Prince George's County has been referred to as, "the gateway into the United States" (Bunting and D'Amario 1998, 92). This is because the county is home to Andrews Air Force Base where heads of state and other dignitaries visiting Washington, D.C. alight. It is also home to Air Force One, the president's plane. With a population of almost 8,000 (U.S. Bureau of Census 2000) and a workforce of over 15, 000 people (Maryland Department of Business & Economic Development 2009), the base is a significant fixture in the county. It is not however, the only federal government presence in the county. The county is also home to the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, the Census Bureau, and the Department of Agriculture's Beltsville Agricultural Research Center. Additionally, the National Archives has a research facility in College Park, and the Internal Revenue Service has offices in New Carrollton.

Table 2-4: Top Ten Prince George's County Employers in 2009

Rank	Employer	Product/Service	Employment
1	University of Maryland System	Higher Education	15,768
2	Andrews Air Force Base	Military Installation	15,000
3	U.S. Internal Revenue Service	Revenue Collection	5,539
4	United Parcel Service (UPS)	Mail & Package Delivery	4,220
5	U.S. Census Bureau	Demographic Research	4,158
6	Giant Food	Groceries	3,609
7	NASA-Goddard Space Flight Center	Space Research	3,083
8	Verizon	Telecommunications	2,738
9	Dimensions Healthcare Systems	Medical Services	2,500
10	Safeway	Groceries	2,400

Source: Maryland Department of Business & Economic Development. Prince George's County Brief Economic Facts. www.ChooseMaryland.org.

The federal government presence in the county is such that of the top ten employers in the county (Table 2-4), four are federal government entities.¹⁶ In 2007, 8% of the county workforce were federal government employees (Ibid.). The national average is 2.5% (U.S. Bureau of Census 2007). Another 18.5% of county residents work for state or local governments. The presence of the federal government has given the Washington region a measure of economic stability. In 2000, the unemployment rate for the Washington metropolitan area was 3.1% (U.S. Bureau of Census 2000). The national rate was 5.8%. The unemployment rate for Prince George's was 4.1%. While the region is not completely recession-proof, the federal presence does tend to minimize a recession's impact.

In addition to having a significant federal government presence, Prince George's County is also home to the flagship campus of the University of Maryland System. The University of Maryland at College Park has an enrollment of 37,000 and employs over 13,000 people.¹⁷ Other colleges in the county include Bowie State University, University of Maryland University College (both part of the University of Maryland System) and Prince George's Community College. Combined these institutions enroll more than 85,000 students.¹⁸

Of the private employers on the list, all but one is a national corporation with national headquarters elsewhere. As such, they tend to view Prince George's county through the prism of a larger regional perspective. Consequently, they are not as fully invested in the welfare of the county as a homegrown company would be. Dimensions Healthcare Systems, the one local company in the top ten, is a not-for-profit health care provider serving Prince George's County that operates the county's public hospitals. For years it has languished near insolvency in part due to the large number of poor and uninsured patients it serves. In 2008, the state agreed to sell the hospitals as a means of stabilizing Dimensions' financial condition. As of May 2010, the hospitals had not been sold (Sinha 2010). Most of the businesses in Prince George's County are small businesses. In 2008 there were 15,500 businesses in the county (Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development 2009). Only 350 of them had more than 100 employees. The overwhelming majority of businesses in the county are small businesses.

The county does have a number of business organizations including a county Chamber of Commerce. The county also has a Black Chamber of Commerce that was formed in 2001. Additionally, the county has an alliance of chief executives, The Greater

Prince George's Business Roundtable. Both the county Chamber and Roundtable have education subcommittees. There is another business association, the Bowie Chamber of Commerce. The Bowie chamber is comprised of business within the community of Bowie, the county's largest city. The Bowie chamber's efforts are directed at the Bowie community. It also has an education committee.

Municipalities in Prince George's County

“In a region composed of very large counties, three of which are nearing one million residents, county-wide indicators do not provide a precise account of all that is happening inside these county borders” (Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy 1999, 10). Differences within the county are sometimes as great if not greater than they are between counties in the region.

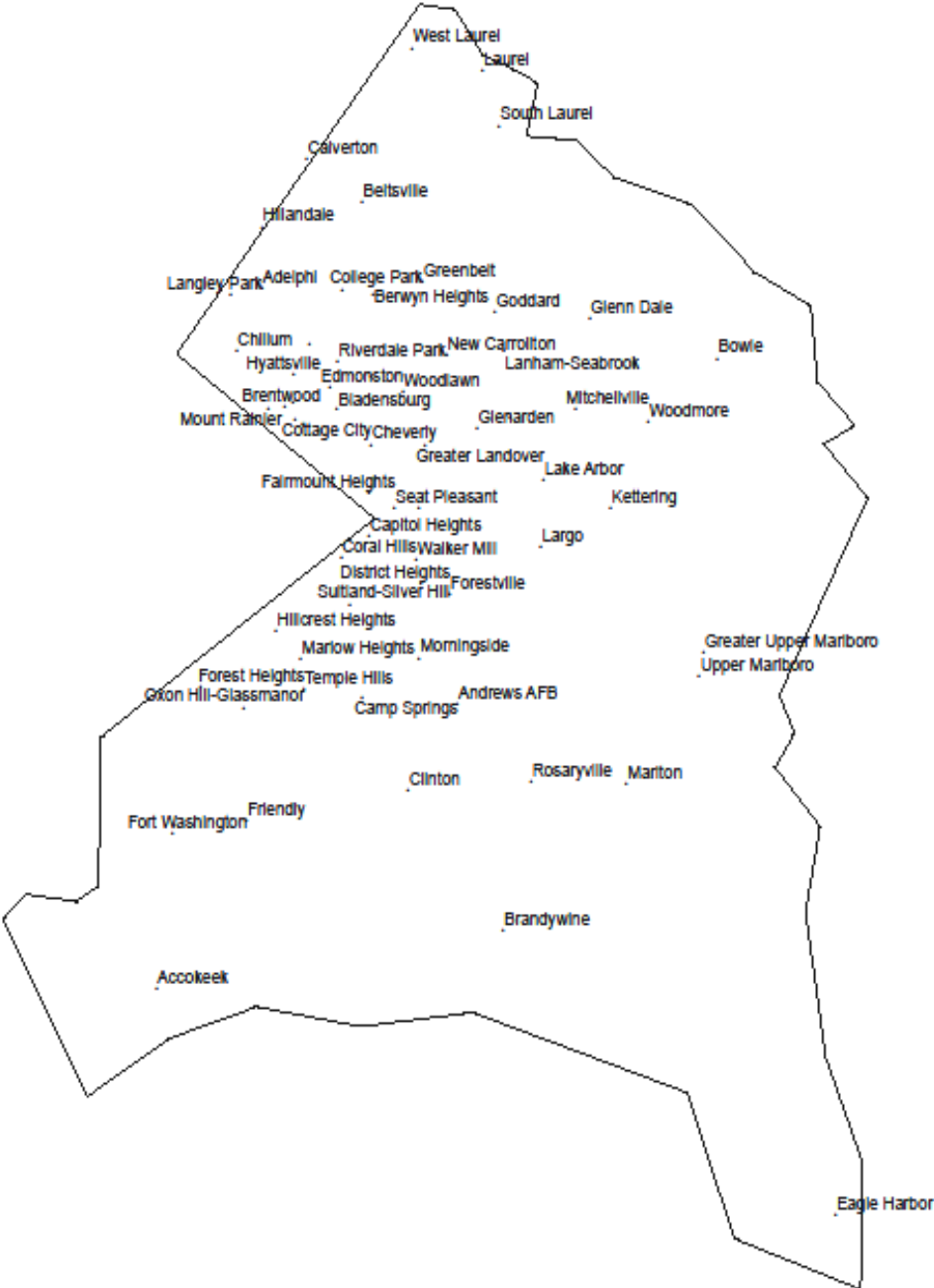
The earliest towns in Prince George's were commercial ports, and most served as inspection stations for the tobacco trade (Denny 1997). As was typical, the early towns in the county were built along the B&O railroad that ran through the northern part of the county. Bladensburg, Beltsville, and Laurel were the earliest settlements in the county with Bladensburg, and Beltsville becoming some of the county's earliest cities. Even back in the late 1800s, Prince George's encouraged unrestrained development with its inexpensive land and low tax rates (Virta, 1991, 190). With the county's introduction to the streetcar in 1897, numerous suburban-like towns sprang up. Hyattsville was the first county suburb; home to commuters and local businessmen (Virta, 1991, 191). The towns of Mount Rainier, Brentwood and Cottage City were also built during this period. A second streetcar line led to the creation of Seat Pleasant, Capitol Heights, and Fairmount Heights.

In addition to the streetcars, there were two additional rail lines in the county. The small villages of Glenarden, Ardmore, and Dodge Park developed along the line of the Baltimore and Annapolis Railway. Along the other line, the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad, grew the towns of Lanham, Seabrook, and Bowie. Unlike the towns along the B&O, these towns were rural in character.

Map 2-1 shows most of the current municipalities in the county today. It also shows that most of the county's early towns and cities lay close to the District of Columbia. This is notable because, as we shall see below, the communities closest to the District line are some of the poorest neighborhoods in the county. Most of these communities tend to be the most heavily minority communities in the county as well.

Today Prince George's has 27 incorporated municipalities.¹⁹ Additionally, Prince George's has thirty-nine census designated places.²⁰ The communities range in population size from 50,269 in Bowie to 55 in Eagle Harbor.²¹ The median population size for county communities is just over 8,100. Ten communities have populations greater than 20,000 and ten communities have populations less than 2,000.

Map 2-1: Municipalities in Prince George's County



Source: Data from U.S. Bureau of Census. Cartographic Boundary Files, Maryland, County Subdivisions.

In addition to the changes caused by the introduction of the streetcar, transportation has influenced county development in other ways. United States Route 1 (US1) moves from north to south through the county, connecting the District of Columbia to Baltimore. Many communities have sprung up along its path. Perhaps the road of greatest significance in the county is US 495 or the “Beltway” as it is referred to locally. The Beltway travels in a loop around the District of Columbia passing through Prince George’s and Montgomery counties in Maryland and Alexandria and Arlington cities in Virginia. When it was built in the early 1960s, the Beltway served as the dividing line between the developed (urban) and undeveloped (rural) sections of Prince George’s County. The urban areas lay inside the Beltway and the rural areas lay outside it.

Today the Beltway still serves as a *de facto* dividing line between communities in Prince George’s. Communities lying inside the Beltway tend to be significantly less affluent than those outside of it. Table 2-5 shows the communities with the highest and lowest median family incomes. The county communities with the lowest median family incomes lie inside the Beltway.²² In contrast, the communities with the highest median incomes lie outside of the Beltway. The one exception is University Park which lies inside the Beltway and has the second highest median income in the county. The town sits adjacent to the University of Maryland and is home to many of the university’s professors and administrative staff who account for most of the town’s high median income.

It must be kept in mind that although Table 2-5 lists the poorest sections of the county, most of the county’s communities are still relatively affluent compared to national averages. In 2000, the national median family income was \$50,046 (U.S.

Bureau of Census 2000). Forty-nine of the sixty-six municipalities in Prince George's County had incomes above the national median.

Table 2-5: Prince George's County Municipalities by Income, 2000

Top Ten	Municipality	Beltway Location	Median Family Income	Bottom Ten	Municipality	Beltway Location	Median Family Income
1	Woodmore	outside	\$103,438	1	North Brentwood	inside	\$45,893
2	University Park	inside	\$96,349	2	Seat Pleasant	inside	\$45,332
3	Mitchellville	outside	\$91,297	3	Coral Hills	inside	\$45,288
4	Lake Arbor	outside	\$89,775	4	Brentwood	inside	\$45,244
5	Hillandale	outside	\$88,802	5	Suitland-Silver Hills	inside	\$43,635
6	Fort Washington	outside	\$88,374	6	Andrews AFB	inside	\$42,866
7	West Laurel	outside	\$86,797	7	Bladensburg	inside	\$41,394
8	Glenn Dale	outside	\$85,448	8	Mount Rainier	inside	\$39,060
9	Rosaryville	outside	\$85,225	9	Greater Landover	inside	\$38,315
10	Marlton	outside	\$82,936	10	Langley Park	inside	\$36,018

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census. 2000 Census of the Population.

Of that number five had incomes five percent higher than the national median. Forty had median incomes at least ten percent higher.

Table 2-6 shows the highest and lowest poverty rates in the county. The national poverty rate for families with children was 9.2% in 2000. In Prince George's twenty municipalities had poverty rates higher than the national rate.²³ Only two communities, Seat Pleasant (24.1%) and Glenarden (22.3%) had levels high enough to classify them as areas of concentrated poverty.²⁴

Table 2-6: Prince George’s County Municipalities by Poverty, 2000

Top Ten	Municipality	Beltway Location	Poverty Rate	Bottom Ten	Municipality	Beltway Location	Poverty Rate
1	Eagle Harbor	outside	50.0%	1	Marlton	outside	1.9%
2	Seat Pleasant	inside	24.1%	2	West Laurel	outside	1.5%
3	Glenarden	inside	22.3%	3	Kettering	outside	1.4%
4	Greater Landover	inside	16.6%	4	Lake Arbor	outside	1.0%
5	Landover Hills	inside	15.1%	5	Bowie	outside	1.0%
6	Langley Park	inside	14.3%	6	Edmonston	inside	0.8%
7	Brentwood	inside	14.1%	7	Berwyn Heights	inside	0.6%
8	Riverdale Park	inside	13.9%	8	Friendly	outside	0.4%
9	East Riverdale	inside	13.6%	9	Hillandale	outside	0.0%
10	Temple Hills	inside	13.2%	10	Upper Marlboro	outside	0.0%

Note: Poverty rate is for families with related children under eighteen.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census. 2000 Census of the Population.

Table 2-6 also shows that all of the communities with the highest poverty rates sit inside the Beltway save for Eagle Harbor which is something of a statistical anomaly because of its miniscule size.²⁵ Conversely, almost all of the communities with the lowest poverty rates in the county lie outside the Beltway. University Park, Edmonston, and Berwyn Heights are the exceptions. Edmonston and Berwyn Heights are both relatively close to the University of Maryland and have large white middle class populations. The three towns hint at another interesting characteristic of the county—residential segregation.

Despite its growing diversity, Prince George's was still very segregated residentially in 1990 (Johnson 2002). Blacks tended to live in heavily black communities while whites lived in overwhelmingly white neighborhoods. More than half of all census tracts in the county were at least 70 percent white or 70 percent black (Dent 1992, 21).

This type of segregation is not unique to the county. Myron Orfield (1999) denotes the concentration of blacks in segregated communities regardless of their socioeconomic status. Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton (1987) found that the rate of segregation was almost as high for affluent and middle class blacks as it was for poor blacks. In his national study of suburban segregation, John Logan (2001) found virtually no change in the level of segregation between 1990 and 2000. Further he finds that the level of segregation is higher for those suburbs with a higher proportion of minorities leading to the existence of ethnic enclaves within suburbs.

A desire for whites to limit their contact with blacks has been critical to the continued segregation (Massey and Hajnal 1995). While blacks prefer to live in neighborhoods that are 50% black and 50% white, whites prefer to live in neighborhoods that are 80% white and 20% black (Pattillo 2005). This said, it must be noted that whites are not alone in their desire to segregate. Observers have noted a trend of some middle class blacks to choose to live in majority African American neighborhoods (Chappell 2006; Lacy 2007).

According to state data, the level of segregation for Prince George's' whites has decreased (Maryland Department of Planning 2002). In 1990, 72.5% of whites lived in neighborhoods that were at least 50% white while 38.2% lived in neighborhoods that were at least 75% white.²⁶ By 2000, the number of whites living in neighborhoods more

than half white had dropped to 47.1% and the number living in neighborhoods at least 75% white had fallen to 14%. While the level of segregation for whites decreased, it increased for blacks. In 1990, 78.6% of blacks lived in neighborhoods at least half black while 51.9% lived in neighborhoods at least 75% black. By 2000, the numbers had risen to 84.6% and 58.4% respectively.

It does appear some blacks have moved to Prince George's County because they wanted to live in an African American community (Wiese 2004). This attitude seems to be borne out in the sentiment expressed by an attorney and county resident who says, "This is the place where I can live, work and accomplish all of my goals. And feel comfortable. You walk out of your home and you see people who look like you, and have the same mind-set as you. They're professional" (Chappell 2006, 89). So while past and present discriminatory practices (redlining and steering by real estate agents) help keep blacks segregated, a certain amount of self-segregation is also occurring in the county.

Table 2-7 shows the municipalities with the highest concentrations of blacks and whites. All of the communities with the highest African American concentrations lie inside the Beltway. Of the top ten communities with the highest percentage of white residents, seven lie outside the Beltway. The three that lie inside the Beltway are University Park, Berwyn Heights, and College Park. As stated above University Park and Berwyn Heights are near the University of Maryland which is in College Park.

The most heavily concentrated Hispanic populations are inside the Beltway. Only one neighborhood is majority Hispanic; Langley Park which is 63.5% Hispanic. Langley Park is part of a six-square-mile northwestern zone just inside the Beltway that is about

30% Hispanic (Aizenman 2001). The area includes the communities of Adelphi, Chillum, Hyattsville, Langley Park, Lewisdale and Riverdale Park. The concentration of blacks and Hispanics inside the Beltway is due in large part to the abundance of cheaper housing stock and apartment complexes in the area. Thus while blacks and Hispanics are most concentrated inside the Beltway, whites are more concentrated outside of it.

Table 2-7: Top Ten Prince George’s County Municipalities by Race, 2000

Rank Black	Municipality	Beltway Location	Percent	Rank White	Municipality	Beltway Location	Percent
1	Carmondy Hills	inside	96.9%	1	University Park	inside	85.5%
2	Seat Pleasant	inside	96.7%	2	West Laurel	outside	84.5%
3	Glenarden	inside	95.8%	3	Berwyn Heights	inside	71.8%
4	Fairmount Heights	inside	95.8%	4	College Park	inside	68.8%
5	Walker Mills	inside	95.0%	5	Andrews AFB	outside	65.3%
6	Coral Hills	inside	93.6%	6	Bowie	outside	62.6%
7	Hillcrest Heights	inside	93.2%	7	Brandywine	outside	56.2%
8	Suitland-Silver Hills	inside	93.0%	8	Hillandale	outside	55.4%
9	Capitol Heights	inside	92.8%	9	Laurel City	outside	52.2%
10	Largo	inside	92.7%	10	Upper Marlboro	outside	51.5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census. 2000 Census of the Population.

The municipality tables show significant population variation between neighborhoods. Communities inside the Beltway tend to be older, less affluent and more majority-minority than most of the communities outside of the Beltway. Although recent municipal estimates are not available, recent county population numbers suggest that the

county's minority population has continued to increase--with the Hispanic population nearly doubling-- as the white percentage has continued to fall (Table 2-1). Thus the concentration of minorities in the county seems to be increasing. This trend might well have a significant economic impact. Hispanics have a significantly lower median family income than African Americans, and African Americans have a lower median family income than whites (Table 2-8). The continuing out-migration of whites and middle class African Americans coupled with the increase in Hispanics might lead to a decline in the county's median income.

Table 2-8: Prince George's County Median Family Income by Race: 2000, 2007

Median Family Income	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
2000	\$62,467	\$70,177	\$60,810	\$43,193	\$61,472
2007	\$79,373	\$92,082	\$78,943	\$52,337	\$93,205

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census. 2000 Census of the Population; 2007 American Community Survey.

Another important trend occurring in the county is the declining inner Beltway population. In 1970 nearly two-thirds of county residents lived inside the Beltway. By 2000, less than half of county residents lived inside the Beltway (Prince George's County Department of Planning 2004). The county attributes this pattern to two factors; the declining number of persons per dwelling and the increased development outside the Beltway. This shift in population has led to repeated complaints by inner Beltway residents who say they have been ignored by county leadership in its efforts to bring new up-scale development and new business to the county (Granat 1986, 264; Kennedy 2002).

The county's Chamber of Commerce accused the county government of a "lack of commitment" in the area saying; "our policy makers clearly have invested all their attention and energies in the outer-Beltway communities" (Thompson 1990). The Chamber also accused the government of racial politics by cutting funding for older neighborhoods while luring development to more prosperous, predominantly white communities like Laurel and Bowie.

Not surprisingly all of the variation in the county has at times led to tensions among the different county constituencies; the inner and outer Beltway divide being just one of them. In an area with such a diverse population conflict between the races are likely if not inevitable. As mentioned before black and white conflicts occurred during the 1960s and 1970s. And occasionally, black-white conflicts still emerge. In 2001 some white Bowie residents wanted to secede from the county because they believed their community (predominantly white) was being ignored by the increasingly black political leadership. One local commentator suggested the effort was an expression of "white angst" at becoming the minority in a county they once dominated (Frazier 2000a). The rapid growth of the Hispanic population in the county has also sparked tensions. In a clash of cultures reminiscent of the clashes between whites and blacks decades earlier, blacks and Hispanics have clashed with blacks claiming Hispanics are destroying their neighborhoods and Hispanics arguing they are the victims of prejudice (Aizanman 2001).

Sometimes the clashes are class-based instead of race-based. In 1998 residents in the Mitchellville subdivision of Woodmore South erected a large planter that served as a barrier to through-traffic and separated the community from a neighboring subdivision (Meyer 1998). Woodmore South at the time was a community of \$400,000 homes.

Residents claimed to have erected the barrier out of a concern about crime and traffic, and a desire to protect their property values. The subdivision the community wanted to distance itself from was the subdivision of Kings Forest where houses sold for \$200,000 and some annual incomes topped \$100,000 (Ibid.). The most interesting aspect about the dispute is that both communities are almost exclusively black communities. Thus in a county with a large affluent, black population, class not race sometimes becomes the tie that binds (Lacy 2007). Sometimes the influence of class even shows up in the politics of Prince George's.

Prince George's Government Structure and Politics

Prince George's County's has a county executive and county council form of government with nine council members elected from nine districts. The county has 31 state representatives to the Maryland state legislature, the General Assembly. This number includes eight senators and three delegates from each of eight county districts.²⁷

Prince George's politics has been described among other things as "byzantine", "a snake pit," and "rough and tumble" (Krause 1974; Eastman 1980; Abramowitz 1993a). Political feuding is more the norm than the exception. Steven Pearlstein, a financial columnist for the *Washington Post*, said this about Prince George's politicians, "Despite some stiff competition, Prince George's County may now have the most dysfunctional and ethically challenged political leadership in the Washington region. Major decisions are made not on the basis of what is best for the public, but what is best for elected officials and their supporters" (Pearlstein 2007). To get a better sense of this culture, it is necessary to review the political history from which it has evolved.

As was mentioned above, early Prince George's was primarily a rural area. Tobacco was king and large plantations dotted the landscape. County politics were controlled by the plantation aristocracy and their politics tended to be of a laissez faire style that eschewed government and government control (Granat 1986). During the 1930s and 1940s, the Democrats became the controlling political party in the county.²⁸ With party domination came the development of a political machine in the 1930s. But unlike the machines of the northeast (Erie 1988) that relied on patronage for support, the county machine drew much of its power from the "political indifference of the unconcerned" (Callcott 1985). The machine became powerful because no one bothered to challenge it—at least for a while.

The machine, led by Lansdale Sasscer was ultraconservative and was comprised of lawyers and banking interests in the county. The machine's composition helps explain why the county became the epicenter for the building of cookie cutter houses and garden-style apartments. They were cheap to build for developers and returned a quick profit for the banks supplying construction loans. As one commentator put it, "houses replaced tobacco as the cash crop" in much of the county (Virta 1991, 238). The belief of the machine was that "all development was good, that low taxes and minimum services promoted development and that politicians and developers had much to gain from each other" (Callcott 1985, 63). Not surprisingly such a cozy relationship led to scandal. Accusations of kickbacks and bribery were alleged leading to the eventual conviction of some machine members (Gregg 1983b).

During the 1960s, a political movement to overthrow the existing conservative machine and reform government gathered force among young white Democrats who

were more progressive than the existing regime. These “insurgent” Democrats were part of a suburban political revolution that swept through the metropolitan region (Homan 1965). In the county, the movement was led by middle class professionals and housewives who saw no benefit in sustaining a machine that catered to the working class with jobs and to developers with contracts. In 1962, their reform slate managed to win several county seats. This first attack was one of many that eventually succeeded in ousting the old machine.

As a result of reform efforts, a new government structure was chartered in 1970. County residents voted for home rule and abandoned the commissioner form of government that had served as the power base for the old machine. This new system called for the election of a county executive and a county council.²⁹ The charter enactment represented the final death knell for the old Sasscer machine.

The decline of the machine and its organizational power brought to the surface an underlying factionalism within the Democratic Party. The reform group that seemed so formidable in 1962 was itself challenged by even more liberal groups in the county and by maverick politicians who had been held in check by the old machine (Osno 1968). In 1966, there were three Democratic slates. That number increased to four in 1970. Internecine fighting within the Democratic Party led to the election of a Republican county executive in 1971 even though Democrats outnumbered Republicans by at least 2 to 1 (Krause 1974).³⁰

During the 1970s, in an attempt to bring some unity to the Party, a handful of Democratic elites met bimonthly over breakfast to discuss strategy and tactics (Johnson 2002, 29). This “Breakfast Club” selected people to run for office and picked appointees

for boards and commissions. The Club continued the machine tradition of running slates by creating “Blue Ribbon” slates and insuring financing for slate members. Critics of the group complained it was a new machine. Club members did not see it this way of course. To them, their group was “simply an efficient, democratic melding of various feuding factions in order to get things done better” (Meyer 1977).

This new group dominated county politics until 1978. The Club’s downfall was much like the machine’s before it in that the public began to tire of the seeming concentration of power in the hands of a few. In 1978, Democrats lost control as Republican Larry Hogan was elected county executive.³¹ Additionally, the county was swept up in the wave of anti-tax, anti-government sentiment sweeping the nation the same year.

Tax Reform in Prince George’s County

If one single thing has had a major impact on the county, it is the tax referendum passed by county residents in 1978. County politicians have long complained that it handcuffs them and does not allow the county to provide the types of services that would allow it to compare more favorably with its neighbors.

The measure dubbed Tax Relief in Maryland (TRIM) permanently froze the amount of money the county could collect through property taxes at the 1979 budget level which was about \$140 million. The measure was modeled after California’s Proposition 13 and was part of a tax revolt sweeping the country.³² It was also part of a backlash against property taxes which soared as a result of the population explosion of the 1960s. The swelling population led to increased demands for services. The burden to provide those services primarily fell on homeowners because the county lacked a large

enough commercial tax base from which to extract the revenue (Granat 1986, 201).

Support for the effort was also fueled by unrestrained development and a zoning process that led to allegations of corruption for which a county official was convicted (Gregg 1983a).

The Prince George's measure was particularly radical because it did not allow adjustments for inflation nor did it include an emergency clause. Any changes to the measure would have to be done through referendum. Nonetheless, most of the county's elected officials supported the measure or declined to publicly oppose it even though they had concerns about its impact (McQueen and Shapiro 1983). They should have spoken up for the negative impact of TRIM was immediate. The measure's passage led to immediate and deep cuts in the county's budget (Shapiro and McQueen 1983). The school system and police department were particularly hard hit.³³ TRIM's impact on the budget was so severe that it was amended in 1984. Voters allowed the total amount of revenue collected to be increased but they also voted to freeze the property-tax rate.

In 1992, voters rejected another tax proposal that would have limited annual increases in total property tax collections to the rate of inflation, up to 5 percent. The measure failed in part because the county council preempted it by passing its own measure that limited the increase in a homeowner's assessment to the same rate for one year. Additionally, the council voted to place a charter amendment on the 1994 ballot to make the assessment limit permanent.

An economic downturn led to more budget cuts in the 1990s, and an effort was made to repeal TRIM in 1996. This time the effort was spearheaded by a well-funded group of business and community leaders and had the support of most county officials.

Not only did voters reject the measure even though officials said the increased revenue would be used to improve schools and combat crime but they voted to toughen TRIM by requiring that any local tax increase be approved by voters (Neal and Perez-Rivas 1996).

In 2003, the newly elected County Executive, Jack Johnson called for TRIM to be repealed arguing the county's future and its ability to provide adequate services depended on TRIM's repeal (Wiggins 2005). However fear of political retribution caused Johnson to drop his efforts and TRIM remains in effect today. TRIM's intent was to reduce the tax burden on Prince George's residents. And while the measure has kept property assessment rates lower than they might otherwise have been, it has also led to the increase in other taxes, licenses, and fees (Beyers 1990; Wiggins 2003).

Part of the reason why TRIM was popular to begin with and continues to be popular with residents is their distrust of county politicians. The cozy relationship between politicians and developers at the perceived expense of residents coupled with past indiscretions made people hesitant to give the government more of its money. Ironically though, it is partly because of TRIM that county officials' have focused on economic growth as a way to overcome the tax constraint. Because of the limits set by TRIM, any increase in the total revenue the county collects is dependent on the growth of the tax base. Thus every county administration has made economic development a priority which has a times led to the types of cozy relationships with developers residents reacted against (Fallis and Wilson 2000; Thompson and Flaherty 2008). Moreover, this push for economic development has been a continuing source of conflict in the county, and has created another fault line along which the county is divided.

Demographic Change Leads to Political Change

The 1980s began with the Prince George's Democratic Party badly fractured. Rocked by the devastating losses of 1978, the party structure that had kept the various factions together decayed. The factional split was so bad that some tried unsuccessfully to resurrect the "Breakfast Club" (Shapiro 1981). Attempts to unify the party were also hurt by election changes. In 1982, the at-large elections that determined county council seats were replaced with single district elections. Being able to appeal to a narrower electorate afforded politicians the opportunity to be less dependent on the party machinery that was beneficial in a county-wide race. As a result, campaigns became more personal and candidate focused. The change gave "maverick" candidates, or candidates independent of the Party a better chance of winning elections. State legislators started creating their own slates which they headed. Thus dueling slates became the norm.

Some of the factionalism is a result of one party politics. As expressed by V.O. Key, when one party dominates a community's politics, there is no opposing force to serve as the focus of the party's attention (Key 1958). As a consequence focus is shifted to the party itself and the individual goals and ambitions of its members. Another reason for the level of factionalism in Prince George's County is the diverse nature of the county itself. Going back to the end of the 19th century, the county has had something of a split personality. It was at once rural and suburban. The multiplicity of personalities has only increased as the county has grown and aged. The county has been so many contradictory things at once. It has been rural-urban, northern-southern, conservative-progressive, old-timer-newcomer, working class-middle class, black-white, and inner Beltway-outer

Beltway. Given this, it is not surprising that the county has a reputation for political theatre.

The political arena in Prince George's County was changed in another important way. During the 1980s, Prince George's was beginning to feel the effects of a black population that was in the early stage of stretching its political muscle. However, early in the 1980s, the level of interest in county politics for many blacks was low and voter turnout among blacks was low (Wynter 1981). Many of the new black residents were still connected to their former communities in the District of Columbia and directed their social and political activities there. However, the 1984 presidential campaign of Jesse Jackson helped inspire some blacks to take an increased interest in county politics (McQueen 1984). As people turned their attention to the county, it became clear to many that the level of black representation in county politics was not keeping pace with their growing numbers.

The first countywide "Convention of Black People" was held in 1984 at Bowie State University, the county's historically black university (Thornton and Gooden 1997, 188). There were approximately 300 attendees and the topics of police protection, education, the black family, and economic development were discussed. A particular focus of the convention was black political empowerment. No specific goals came out of the meeting. However, the convention did represent a significant attempt on the part of black residents to form a consensus. A second convention was held a year later. A tangible outcome of these efforts was a unified demand that Alexander Williams, a black attorney, be placed on the Democratic Party ticket as the state's attorney for Prince

George's County instead of the white incumbent, Arthur "Bud" Marshall. Williams was placed on the ticket and was subsequently elected state's attorney in 1986.

The 1990s saw the continued growth in black political influence as African Americans became the majority in the county. Two important events had a significant impact on county politics in general and the increase in black political power in particular. The first was the imposition of term limits on the county council and executive in 1992. The referendum limited officials to no more than two consecutive terms. Further, it applied retroactively to the sitting council and executive. As a result, the county executive and six of nine council members were barred from running in 1994.

Some people felt the push for term limits was an attempt by whites in the county to diminish the growing political power of African Americans (Meyer 1992). But others felt term limits would likely increase opportunities for blacks to gain elected office. Interestingly, the term limit measure that was passed by a margin of 51% to 49% in 1992 was reaffirmed by the voters in 2000 when 60% of voters rejected a county council led ballot question to have the limits repealed (Honawar 2000). Apparently, a majority of African American voters did not believe limits diminished their political power.

Perhaps a reason why term limits did not have the deleterious effect some feared had to do with the second major event impacting county politics; the 1990 Census. The Census confirmed the county population's transition to majority African American and required a redistricting that led to the creation of a majority-minority Congressional district that included Prince George's and Montgomery counties.³⁴ In 1992, Albert Wynn (D), an African American state senator from Prince George's was elected to the United States House of Representative.

Redistricting also necessitated the redrawing of the county's council districts. Five of the nine districts became majority African American. As a result four African Americans sat on the county council after the 1994 elections. An interview respondent explained the reason why only four African Americans were elected was because although the district was majority black, the district's voters were majority white. Even so, until 1994 no more than two African Americans had served on the council at any given time (Johnson 2002, 76).

The continued decline in the ability of Democratic Party leadership to direct politics in the county continued in the 1990s. As a result, party unity was almost nonexistent. The large influx of middle class African Americans into the county during the 1980s brought new players to the political game. Many of these new political aspirants were young, ambitious, and perhaps most importantly, not beholden to the old party structure. Not content to wait for the Party to give them their turn, many challenged the Party establishment. This is evidenced by the fact that 73 people filed to run for 29 state legislature seats in the 1994 elections. (Meyer 1994a).

A vivid example of this changing dynamic can be seen in the 1994 race for the 25th Legislative District's state senate seat. The seat was vacated by Beatrice Tignor who chose to run for county executive. The Democratic primary featured two state delegates; Ulysses Currie (elected in 1986) and Michael E. Arrington (elected in 1990). Currie was supported by Congressmen Steny H. Hoyer and Albert R. Wynn, both of whom formerly represented the district, and Maryland Senate President Thomas V. "Mike" Miller, Jr. whose district includes Prince George's County. Reacting to the endorsement, Arrington called Currie a "token" and a "pawn" and added that leadership attempts to dissuade him

from running were “an effort to keep someone like myself, who is ambitious and independent and can't be controlled, from going over to the Senate” (Meyer 1994b). After a lively battle, Currie defeated Arrington. What made this race particularly interesting was the fact that both candidates (and the outgoing incumbent) were African American. So not only was there little unity within the Democratic Party, there was little unity among black politicians.

Arrington's comments might suggest race was a divisive issue in county politics. Such was not the case. While it would be disingenuous to say race played no role in county politics in the 1990s, it was not the volatile issue it had been in the 1970s. This time race was primarily an issue of black empowerment as the majority African American county tried to carve out a new political identity. The 1994 elections represented the first real opportunity for blacks in the county to wield significant political power.

This said, other issues like education, crime, development and taxes were more of a priority for voters (Meyer 1994c). Even in the 1994 historic county executive primary election that would lead to a first, an African American or female county executive, all three candidates in the campaign tried to play down race as an issue.³⁵

Conventional wisdom had been that the two black candidates, Wayne Curry and Beatrice Tignor would split the black vote allowing Sue Mills, a white former councilmember, to win with the white vote. The voters proved conventional wisdom wrong. Not only did Curry win a large share of the black vote, he also garnered a large share of the white vote even beating Mills in what was supposed to be her stronghold.³⁶ These results prompted state Delegate James C. Rosapepe Jr. (D) who is white to say, “I

think the assumptions of racial polarization were grossly exaggerated before the primary. The results show that at least the majority of Prince Georgians cast their votes based on their evaluations of the candidates and all their complexities” (Abramowitz 1994).

Why did it take so long for blacks to garner a larger role in the county’s power structure? Some claim that for quite a while county blacks, having been District residents, were more concerned with what was happening in the District than with what was occurring in the county. Others blame white power brokers in the Democratic organization who while putting blacks in appointed positions on boards and commissions, kept them off election slates for major offices (Granat 1986).

In her examination of African American political incorporation in Prince George’s County, Valerie Johnson (2002) concludes that by 1994, African Americans in Prince George’s County had not achieved full political incorporation. She cites four impediments to the realization of incorporation (131). The first, and she adds the primary impediment, is “the distinct and divergent class interests within the African American community”. Second, is African Americans’ inability to mobilize to elect officials in numbers in proportion to their numbers in the population. Next, is the inability of African Americans to form a consensus around a policy agenda. Fourth and last has been resistance on the part of the dominant white governing coalition to African Americans’ becoming equal partners.³⁷ Notice that the first three obstacles are related and are the result of diversity within the African American population. The black population in Prince George’s, like the county itself, is not monolithic. This would become more apparent as the county moved into the 21st century.

The 21st century began with African Americans having a firm grip on county politics. Term limits once again created a massive turnover of political leadership in the county. The county executive position and seven council seats were open in 2002. No fewer than five people ran in the Democratic primary for county executive. Jack Johnson emerged victorious and became the county's second African American county executive. African Americans became a majority on the county council as well.³⁸

With African Americans being a solid majority of the population, it seems as though many people have begun to move beyond race as a primary political motivator. In 2002, Edythe Flemings-Hall, head of the county's chapter of the NAACP said, "We've had an opportunity to experience government under African American leadership. Now we've moved to a higher plateau where, no matter who the leader is, we must make sure they're acting in our main interests. We need to make sure that the person who's in office will be responsive to the voice of the African American community and not just represent us in complexion" (Schwartzman 2002d)

But as race continues to fade as an issue at the turn of the century, class has emerged as the dividing line in county politics. Once again the Beltway serves as a *de facto* dividing line between the classes. Both sides are interested in reducing crime, improving the school system, easing traffic and drawing economic development. However, residents inside the Beltway focus on reducing class sizes, hiring certified teachers, pumping new life into tired, old strip malls, ridding neighborhoods of drug dealers, and punishing abusive police officers. Outside the Beltway residents focus on controlling suburban sprawl, building new schools and luring high-quality restaurants and retail to Prince George's (Schwartzman 2002e). The Reverend Robert Clemetson, a

leader of the Interfaith Action Communities, a coalition of county churches, said, “When you look inside the Beltway, the politics is about seeking equity, seeking stability. The politics of outside the Beltway is maintaining and building on what they have” (Ibid.). People inside the Beltway want to recapture the “suburban dream” they have lost while those outside want to hold on to the dream they have been able to create for themselves. In a county that often finds itself financially constrained it is unlikely both sides can be fully satisfied. Choices must be made, and with so much at stake, these choices are inevitably contentious.

Summary

Many of the changes in Prince George’s County politics are directly related to the dramatic rise in county population and the demographic changes occurring in the county since the 1930s. The bulk of these changes began in the 1960s when the county’s population grew by 80%. The newcomers were not steeped in the southern traditions of the older residents, and had little interest in a bucolic life. They wanted a suburban oasis complete with all of the amenities and services that went with it. In some ways what occurred in Prince George’s County was a prototypical culture clash. Further the rapidity of the population change was bound to exacerbate matters. In some ways the tax revolt of 1978 can be seen as an attempt by some to return to the simplicity of Prince George’s’ past rather than the complexity and uncertainty of Prince George’s’ future.

The 1980s were just as transformational as the 1960s because of the county’s continued demographic change as middle class African Americans migrated to the county. Evidence of the tremendous political changes in Prince George’s County comes in the fact that a county that voted for segregationist George Wallace in the 1972

presidential primary just 12 years later voted for Jesse Jackson in the 1984 presidential primary. By the turn of the century, African Americans had become over 60% of the county's population and were fully incorporated into the county's political structure.

Prince George's County has undergone tremendous change over the past seven decades. The county has transitioned from a mostly white, rural backwater town with a southern tobacco heritage to one of the largest, most affluent, majority-black communities in the country. For a county that has changed so dramatically, it managed to do so with relatively little turmoil. No doubt a fair amount of conflict that has occurred has been caused by the rapidity with which the county has changed. And a great deal of the factionalism emanates from the contradiction that is Prince George's County. "The same heterogeneous quality that makes Prince George's [a] microcosm of the United States also makes it a battleground of the social and economic conflicts that trouble the country at large" (Eastman 1980).

That Prince George's County is one of the wealthier counties in the nation is often lost in the shadows cast by its proximity to some of the wealthiest counties in the nation. While it might not measure up on a comparative scale on any objective scale, the county is doing well. There is need for some concern however. While the county as a whole is relatively affluent there are pockets of relative poverty in the county. Communities inside the Beltway have been in decline for years and in many ways resemble the inner neighborhoods of city they border, Washington, D.C.. If Prince George's does not address these problems beginning with the improvement of its school system, the county is in danger of losing even more of the very middle class that has made the county a

jewel. A discussion of Prince George's County's school system is the subject of the next chapter.

Endnotes

¹ These 24 units include 23 counties and the city of Baltimore. Frederick County which abuts Montgomery County on its northwest side is also part of Maryland's Washington suburban region.

² In addition to slaves, there were a small number of free blacks. By 1860, the white population was 9,650 while the slave population was 12,500. There were almost 1,200 free blacks in the county (Virta 1991, 88).

³ The state of Maryland passed a new state constitution ending slavery in 1865. It should be said that this new constitution was rejected by Prince George's County (Virta 1991).

⁴ This is most likely because of the large freed slave population in the county.

⁵ The population figures for Prince George's include the town of Takoma Park which was part of the county until 1997. Up until that point, Takoma Park had been a divided town with one-third of the town in Prince George's County and the other two-thirds in Montgomery County. In 1995, Takoma Park residents voted to unite the town and become part of Montgomery County. Census data prior to 2000 include Takoma Park in the counts.

⁶ The county's population was 660,567 in 1970.

⁷ The desegregation of the county's schools is discussed into chapter 3.

⁸ Relations between the police department and the black community improved to such an extent in the 1980s that a majority of African Americans surveyed felt satisfied with the police department although a significant portion thought excessive force was still a problem. This attitude was most expressed by those living in high-crime neighborhoods likely to have the most contact with the police (Harriston 1987).

⁹ During the decade, the county's foreign-born population grew by 60% (DeRenzis and Rivlin 2007, 6).

¹⁰ African Americans led the way with a 1.9% increase in their percentage of the population. According to the report, Asians saw a 0.8% increase while all other minority groups saw a 0.9% increase. These other minorities were primarily Hispanics. No explanation was given for why Hispanics were not treated separately.

¹¹ The next three jurisdictions with the largest minority populations were the District of Columbia with 23% of the metropolitan region's minority population. It was followed by Montgomery County at 15% and Fairfax County in Virginia at 13%. No other jurisdiction in the region had a minority population that comprised more than 5% of the region's total population.

¹² The adjusted median income of in-migrants ranged from \$28,000 to \$30,400 while the range was from \$23,900 to \$27,100 for out-migrants.

¹³ The Washington Metropolitan Statistical Area is composed of the District of Columbia and the Maryland counties of Calvert, Charles, Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George's. It includes the Virginia counties of Arlington, Clarke, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Warren as well as the independent cities of Alexandria, Falls Church, Fairfax, Fredericksburg, Manassas, and Manassas Park. It also includes the West Virginia county of Jefferson.

¹⁴ In a 2004 ranking of county median family income, Prince George's ranked 60th out of more than 3100 counties (U.S. Bureau of Census 2004).

¹⁵ They include the counties of Loudon (1), Fairfax (2), and Prince William (9) in Virginia and Montgomery (7) and counties in Maryland. Howard County which borders Prince George's on the east but is part of the Baltimore metropolitan area is the third wealthiest county in the country.

¹⁶ The list of top employers excludes post offices and state and local governments. For that reason, the table does not include what is in fact the largest single employer in Prince George's County; Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS). As of the 2007-2008 school year, PGCPS employed 18,689 instructional and non-instructional full time equivalent staff personnel (Maryland State Department of Education 2009).

¹⁷ The enrollment number includes both undergraduates and graduates. The employment number includes over 4,000 graduate assistants.

¹⁸ Other higher education institutions in the county include Capitol College, Washington Bible College, and TESST College of Technology. Together they have an enrollment of just over 3,000 (Maryland Department of Business & Economic Development 2009).

¹⁹ The cities are Bowie, College Park, District Heights, Glenarden, Greenbelt, Hyattsville, Laurel, Mount Rainier, New Carrollton, and Seat Pleasant. The incorporated towns are Berwyn Heights, Bladensburg, Brentwood, Capitol Heights, Cheverly, Colmar Manor, Cottage City, Eagle Harbor, Edmonston, Fairmount Heights, Forest Heights, Landover Hills, Morningside, North Brentwood, Riverdale Park, University Park, and Upper Marlboro.

²⁰ The Census Bureau defines a Census designated place as a statistical entity comprising a densely settled concentration of population that is not within an incorporated place, but is locally identified by a name.

²¹ These were the populations as of the 2000 Census.

²² The exception is Andrews Air Force Base which has the fifth lowest median family income. This can be attributed to the large number of young military families living on the base. These families receive in-kind benefits such as free housing and receive free medical care which helps mitigate the effects of a low-ranking military salary.

²³ This number does not include Eagle Harbor. See note 29.

²⁴ The Census Bureau considers places with poverty rates above 20% to be areas of concentrated poverty (Bishaw 2005).

²⁵ Although Eagle Harbor has the county's highest poverty rate, it is a community of only 55 and has just 13 families. Only two of these families fell below the poverty line. Of the two, one has children under 18 making Eagle Harbor's poverty rate 50%.

²⁶ In 1990, there were 338 neighborhoods in the county. There were 488 in 2000. A neighborhood is defined as a census block group.

²⁷ One district the 27th Legislative District encompasses parts of Prince George's and Calvert counties. As a result the district has only two representatives from Prince George's.

²⁸ The Democratic Party has been the dominant party ever since. Democrats outnumbered Republicans by 5 to 1 in 2002. By 2008, the margin was 8 to 1 (Maryland State Board of Elections 2002, 2008)

²⁹ The council elections were at-large rather than district.

³⁰ A special election was held in 1971 to elect a county executive and county council in accordance with the new county charter passed a year earlier. Republican William Gullett won.

³¹ Hogan was the second of only two Republicans to serve as county executive. He was able to win because he sided with those opposing the remnants of the old machine. Both Hogan and Gullett served only one term.

³² In 1978 there were tax limiting measures on the ballots in 16 states (McBee 1978). Montgomery County rejected a similar but less radical anti-tax proposal there.

³³ TRIM's impact on education will be discussed in the next chapter.

³⁴ About 2/3 of the district lay in Prince George's County while the other third in Montgomery County.

³⁵ Because the county is overwhelmingly Democratic, most elections are settled in the primaries.

³⁶ Mills' stronghold was supposed to be the southern portion of the county which is more conservative than the northern portion of the county. Mills also lost in the county's primarily white districts (Keary 1994b).

³⁷ White resistance to sharing power with blacks was an obstacle that had been overcome by the late 1990s.

³⁸ Five of nine council members were African American in 2002.

Chapter 3

Prince George's County Public Schools: The Not So Calm Before the Storm

Just as demographic change has played a defining role in the Prince George's County at-large; it has played an even larger role in the county's public education history. At the time of the school board's removal in 2002, Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) operated 196 schools with 135,039 students (Maryland State Department of Education 2002). It was and remains the second largest school system in the state with only Montgomery County's system being larger.¹ Of those nearly 140,000 students 77.4% were African American, 10.3% were white, 8.6% were Hispanic, and 3.2% were Asian (Ibid.). Of the 24 school systems in the state, Baltimore city's system was the only other school system with a majority African American student population.²

The growth of the school system paralleled the growth of the county in its rapidity, especially in the last half of the 20th century. In 1919, 795 students were enrolled in the public schools (Prince George's Board of Education 1965, 36). By 1939, the number was 17,125. Enrollment tripled by the 1960 growing to 69,675 (Ibid., 2). By the 1970 school year, student enrollment had again more than doubled, growing to 160,900 (Maryland State Board of Education 1980, Table 4). PGCPS enrollment peaked in 1972 with 162,828 students (Ibid.).

Growth is usually accompanied by change, and change is not always easy. Such has been the case for education in Prince George's County. While it could be argued the county's educational system has made the transition from a small rural school system with a majority white population to a suburban (almost urban) mega-district with an

overwhelming majority black population better than most, it has not done so effortlessly. There have been difficulties. For almost thirty of the last fifty years, PGCPS has been engaged in an ongoing struggle over the integration of its schools.

The struggle over desegregation has had a profound impact on education politics in Prince George's County. Desegregation and the debate surrounding it have played a large role in creating an attitude of skepticism (or mistrust) of school and government officials that runs through the county population. It also has exposed class fissures within the African American community that have made it difficult for blacks to coalesce around a single educational vision. Both the skepticism and class divisions make any attempt to bring the community together on behalf of education reform even more difficult than it is already. More ominously for education reform, it increases the likelihood that the status quo will prevail by making coalition building much more difficult than it already is—if not impossible.

Two other issues have contributed to the creation of the challenging environment; Tax Relief in Maryland (TRIM) and the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP). TRIM is the voter initiative that capped property taxes in the county. It has significantly restricted the amount of money available for education which in turn has made the quest for education funding a continuously contentious matter. MSPAP is the state test that is given to children annually. PGCPS's poor performance on the test is a constant reminder of the system's failures, and as such contributes to the public's skepticism of the school officials in charge of it.

TRIM and MSPAP will be discussed later in the chapter. First, any discussion of PGCPS must begin with a discussion of desegregation because desegregation and its

tumultuous history are most responsible for shaping the environment of county education politics.

School Desegregation in Prince George's County: A Decades Long Struggle

As stated above, enrollment in PGCPs reached its zenith in 1972. By 1979 enrollment had dropped to 127, 529 (Ibid.). This drop in enrollment was driven by two things. The first was the end of the baby boom in 1964 which caused enrollments to drop across the Washington metropolitan region and the nation. The second reason for the decline was more specific to Prince George's County: desegregation. In 1972, the County was ordered by court decree to desegregate its schools [*Vaughns v. Board of Education of Prince George's County* 355 F. Supp 1034 (D. Md. 1972)]. For the next thirty years, desegregation defined Prince George's County education. But before getting into a discussion of those thirty years, it is necessary to go back to PGCPs's beginning.

The Pre-Vaughns Years

At the same time Maryland's General Assembly passed the School Act establishing public school systems in 1865, it passed the Public Instruction Act (Thornton and Gooden 1997, 129). The Act allowed for some of the taxes paid by blacks to be used for the construction of schools for black children. A third state law passed the same year required white and black children to be educated separately (Ibid., 133). Prince George's, however, did not begin to publicly educate black children until 1872 (Thornton and Gooden 1997, 130). The county's dual school system lasted until 1965 when it was

officially abolished. However, partly because of residential patterns, schools remained highly segregated (Virta 1998, 241).

As was discussed in Chapter 2, many early African American migrants settled into the communities just beyond the District of Columbia's borders, and as blacks settled into those inner communities, whites ventured further out into eastern sections of the county. These residential patterns helped contribute to a school system in which out of 180 total schools, 10 had all black student populations, 9 were majority black, and 112 had student populations that were 95% or more white (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights 1976). 61% of all black students attended majority black schools while almost 66% of white students attended schools that were at least 90% white (Denton 1972a).

School demographics were also influenced by the Board of Education's reaction to the United State Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, 347 US 483 (1954) which struck down the practice of racial segregation in schools. The board's first reaction to *Brown* was to ignore the ruling. When it became clear that would not be possible, the board turned to a strategy of massive resistance that involved a series of "freedom of choice" plans and bureaucratic non-responses (Thornton and Gooden 1997, 146). The "freedom of choice" plans allowed a few select black students to apply for a transfer to a school close to their home. A very small number of black students were allowed to attend white schools. Loopholes in the transfer program also allowed whites to transfer away from black schools where they had been assigned. Additionally, new schools built to accommodate increasing enrollment were set at sites that insured the schools would be racially identifiable. All of these actions were part of the county's attempt to delay implementation of *Brown*. In fact, when these plans ended

in 1965, schools were more segregated than they were when the plans began in 1955 (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights 1976, 98).

The response of Prince George's school board stands in stark contrast to the actions of Montgomery County's Board of Education. In 1955, Montgomery also adopted a voluntary transfer program. However, after two years the plan was scrapped because only token progress was being made (Bowie 1961). A board member remarked, "We realized that if desegregation was not to take 20 years or more, we would have to take the initiative" (Ibid.). The board did take the initiative and by 1961, 72.9% of Montgomery County's 3,230 black students attended integrated schools (Ibid.). Meanwhile only 6% of Prince George's 7,800 black students attended integrated schools. Prince George's board had no intention of changing its policy of gradual (no) desegregation. Moreover it was clear, the school board was more than willing to take 20 years or more to desegregate their schools. Indeed a *Washington Post* editorial called the county's transfer plan "a device, not for desegregation, but for the discouragement of desegregation" (*Washington Post* 1962).

The Civil Right Act of 1964 was supposed to end this kind of foot dragging. However, the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) allowed the county to continue stalling as the two negotiated an acceptable desegregation plan. (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights 1976). Finally in 1969 the two developed a plan that redrew attendance zones and desegregated two all-black schools. The board in a five to three vote approved the plan. An opponent of the plan Board President Carroll Beatty said he, "would rather have a court tell me to do this than justify this to the people of our community" (Ehrlander 2002, 95). Despite intense

opposition, the plan was implemented. However, the OCR questioned the plan's implementation as a large number of transfers undercut its effectiveness (Ibid., 98).

Despite the OCR's concerns, the school board refused to review the transfers.

In January 1972, OCR scheduled a non-compliance hearing against the county and threatened to withhold federal funds from PGCPS. However, the OCR essentially gave the county another year to desegregate when it removed its threat to withhold funds from the school system in March. Once again, the county was allowed to stonewall.

While the federal government was willing to wait for change, others were not. A week later, March 29, 1972, the Prince George's County chapters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed suit on behalf of eight black parents [*Vaughns v. Board of Education of Prince George's County*, 355 F. Supp 1034 (D. Md. 1972)]. The plaintiffs accused the board of operating a dual system in direct violation of *Brown*. The parents were joined in their lawsuit by two school board members; Jesse J. Warr, the board's only black member and Ruth S. Wolf, a supporter of desegregation.

Using the County's own data, United States District Court Judge Frank Kaufman, found PGCPS in violation of *Brown* and ordered involuntary busing to desegregate the schools. On January 29, 1973, busing formally began in Prince George's County. In accordance with the court order, the black enrollment at each school was to be no less than 10% of the total school population and no more than 50%. Bus rides were to have total maximum times of 35 minutes with an average of 14 minutes one way. It must be noted that the court order increased the number of children being bused to school by less than ten percent (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights 1976, 345). Prior to the court order,

48.4% of students were bused. After the order, 56.1% were bused. While many were opposed to busing and there were numerous meetings and rallies against busing, fears of significant violence proved unfounded as busing's commencement was relatively peaceful.³

Court-Ordered Busing Comes to Prince George's County

Busing had some immediate consequences. The most immediate came the day after busing began as members of the county's state delegation introduced a bill in the Maryland General Assembly to have school board members elected. School board members had been appointed by the governor. The drive for an elected board was led by people angry about busing, and the inability of the school board to stop it. County Delegate Frederick C. Rummage (D) said, "We are going to thank the school board for its inaction by passing an elected school board bill this year, which we hope will make them more responsive" (Walsh 1973). The bill passed, and in the county's first school board election, six of eight candidates backed by Citizens for Community Schools, the county's largest anti-busing group won seats on the school board (Krause 1973).

What more the board could have done is unclear. At every turn, the board sought to delay desegregation. In fact, the board had delayed significant desegregation until forced to do so by the court. Even then the board tried to delay busing's start date. The board's behavior did not go unnoticed by the court. Judge Kaufman called the board obstructionist and said, there had been "repeated and continued attempts by the school board to avoid changes required by law, to develop varying methods for circumvention of the law, [and] to delay any changes which the court ordered" (Denton 1972b).

Apparently this was not enough for desegregation opponents. It is slightly ironic that

thirty years later, the majority black, elected school board that was to be ousted in 2002 owed its existence to the actions of anti-integrationists.

The other immediate reaction to court ordered desegregation was white flight. Table 3-1 shows changes in PGCPs enrollment from 1968 to 1984. Enrollment was steadily increasing until 1972 when enrollment dropped by 859 students. The drop was attributable to a decline in white students. Between 1971 and 1972 PGCPs lost 4,926 white students. The steep decline in white students was offset by an increase of 3,947 black students. [In 1971 the number of white students also declined. However, growth in the number of black students compensated for the white decline and PGCPs's enrollment actually grew by 1931 students.] Some of the white decline was caused by an aging white community. The children of many of the residents flocking to the county during the 1950s and 1960s aged out of the system. Further the end of the Baby Boom contributed to a decline in enrollment. But since declines were across all grades, something other than the normal attrition had to be at work. That something was desegregation.

Table 3-1: Prince George's County Public Schools Student Enrollment: 1968-1984

Year	Total Enrollment	White	African American	% Change White	% Change African American	% Students in Desegregated. Schools
1968	146,976	124,663	22,313	84.8%	15.2%	23.2
1969	153,937	126,783	27,154	1.7	21.7	24.0
1970	160,897	127,570	31,994	0.6	17.8	24.8
1971	162,828	123,952	36,450	-2.8	13.9	29.2
1972	161,969	119,026	40,397	-4.0	10.8	32.2
1973	154,305	107,397	43,649	-9.8	8.1	89.0
1974	150,022	101,757	45,988	-5.3	5.4	86.0
1975	148,336	94,838	49,975	-6.8	8.7	83.6
1976	144,532	86,939	53,667	-8.3	7.4	74.3
1977	139,302	78,476	56,711	-9.7	5.7	65.3
1978	133,613	70,309	58,785	-10.4	3.7	61.2
1979	127,462	62,195	60,415	-11.5	2.8	52.3
1980	121,893	56,031	60,793	-9.9	0.6	47.4
1981	116,309	50,348	60,569	-10.1	0.4	44.2
1982	111,805	45,843	60,273	-8.9	-0.5	42.3
1983	108,196	42,128	60,305	-8.1	0.1	37.1
1984	105,830	38,816	61,118	-7.9	1.3	82.5

Source: Maryland State Department of Education. Annual Reports

As the reality of busing became clear, whites began to leave PGCPSS. In the first year of court-ordered busing, 1973, the number of white students enrolled in PGCPSS dropped by nearly ten percent more than doubling the rate of the previous year. The white population continued to decline, falling to 38,816 in 1984. In 15 years, the white student population in PGCPSS declined by 69.5%. Conversely, the black student population increased 91% moving from 31,994 in 1970 to 61,118 in 1984.

Needless to say, the changing demographics had a profound impact on the county's efforts to keep its schools desegregated. Just before court ordered busing began, 46 schools had black majorities (Feinberg 1976). That number fell to one majority black school when busing began in 1973. But because of the rapidly changing demographics, the next year eleven schools that had been desegregated became resegregated.⁴ By 1975, 46 of the county's 233 schools again had black majorities (Feinberg 1975). In 1976 the number had jumped to 67 (Feinberg 1976). And by 1978, 94 of the county's schools had black majorities (Feinberg 1978). Of those, 10 were more than 80% black. Conversely, six elementary schools had populations that were less than 10% black. Those schools were located near the white enclaves of Laurel and Bowie.⁵ By 1980, 120 of the system's then 216 schools were outside the original 10/50 guidelines (Wynter 1982). Moreover the percentage of racially identifiable schools, 45%, almost equaled the 48% that existed before schools were originally desegregated in 1973 (Ibid.).

In addition to demographic changes, part of the increased segregation was caused by the school board's failure to redraw the attendance boundaries created at the start of court ordered desegregation. Once again, the school board chose inaction as its approach to dealing with desegregation preferring not make the difficult but needed choices sure to draw complaints. The board seems to have chosen a strategy of waiting for the court to force it to take action. Doing so allowed the board to direct criticism towards the court and avoid taking responsibility. As we shall see in the following chapter, the issue of board responsibility is a reoccurring theme in the county.

Because of the changing demographics and limitations on bus travel time, most of the burdens of busing fell on blacks. Most remaining whites lived well beyond the

Beltway out in the northern and eastern portions of the county. They were too far out to bus to the schools inside the Beltway. Thus, it was left to blacks from inner Beltway communities to be bused to schools just beyond the Beltway. Blacks living in integrated middle class neighborhoods in the center portion of the county saw no need in having their children bused to other schools when they could attend neighborhood schools that would be naturally integrated. Even more, the failure to properly update the busing plan resulted in some black students being bused from integrated or majority black neighborhoods to attend majority black schools. For many this situation made little sense, and by 1979 a significant number of blacks had become as weary of busing as whites. It was this weariness perhaps that led to a pact between Norman Saunders, school board chairman and William Martin, president of the county chapter of the NAACP.

The two agreed to reduce the number of children bused by allowing children in integrated communities to attend neighborhood schools. The plan would also allow some schools to become almost entirely black if the affected communities approved. Though the school board was willing to accept the plan, it was not received well by the membership of the county NAACP for at least two reasons (Feinberg 1979). First the agreement was reached after a series of secret meetings between Martin and Saunders. People did not like being left out of the loop. Second and most important, people in the local chapter felt the agreement represented a dangerous retreat from the NAACP's long struggle to integrate schools. Opposition to the effort was so great that Martin was suspended by the national NAACP for violating policy, and the NAACP refused to endorse the plan, thus killing it (Henry 1979).

Although it was rejected, the plan exposed a growing difference of opinion within the black community; differences based on class. Poor and working class blacks living in the older, inner Beltway communities tended to be most supportive of desegregation efforts. For them busing was a matter of equity. They did not necessarily want their children bused more than anyone else. They simply wanted their children to obtain the resources and advantages that those outside the Beltway enjoyed; busing was a means to that end. On the other hand, middle-class blacks living beyond the Beltway already enjoyed those resources and as a result were less passionate about the need to desegregate. For them desegregation was a philosophical or moral issue rather than a personal equity issue.

The plan's rejection did not stop attempts to end busing. After trying unsuccessfully for years to develop a proposal to end or reduce busing in the county, the school board unilaterally approved a proposal to reduce busing by 25% in 1980.⁶ The county chapter of the NAACP opposed the plan fearing it would lead to the resegregation of schools. The organization moved to have the original desegregation case reopened. This time the NAACP alleged that altering the busing plan was a violation of the court's order. The plaintiffs also tried to broaden the case by including additional equity issues. Among them were the underrepresentation of minority students in Talented and Gifted (TAG) programs, an overrepresentation of African Americans in special education programs, a high number of black suspensions, and the creation of racially identifiable classrooms (Court Appointed Panel 1997).

Desegregation in the 1980s: A New Plan Emerges

In 1983, Judge Kaufman found that though not the result of intentional discrimination, the school system was in violation of his *Vaughns* ruling. The judge found that the school system had not achieved unitary status and directed the county to take additional measures to desegregate schools. Acknowledging the county's changing demographics, Judge Kaufman changed the racial guideline for schools from 10/50 to 10/80 and increased the upper level for black concentration in a school from 50 to 80 percent. With the new guidelines, 29 schools had populations greater than 80% black and two schools had populations that were less than 10% black.⁷

In his ruling, Judge Kaufman also appointed an expert panel to develop a desegregation plan for the county. The panel's report, dubbed the "Green Report" after the panel's chairman Robert L. Green, called for a number of wide ranging adjustments to the existing desegregation plan (Green 1985). It suggested sending children from majority black communities inside the Beltway to majority white communities outside the Beltway and vice versa. The busing would leapfrog integrated communities in between. In those integrated communities children would be allowed to attend their neighborhood schools. The panel also suggested closing 32 schools as well as pairing schools and dividing grades between them as a way to integrate.

The report drew an immediate response from the county; most of it negative. As expected the school board which had consistently looked for ways to reduce busing opposed the possibility of increased busing. School officials cited the large number of schools in black communities to be closed as part of the reason for their opposition to the panel's plan (Vobjeda 1985a). This objection was ironic because it was in part the school

board's attempt to close 22 schools, most of which were in majority black neighborhoods, that led the NAACP to ask that the original desegregation case be reopened. White parents also reacted negatively to the Green Report. John Rosser, a plaintiff in the original 1972 desegregation lawsuit, claimed the report inspired such uproar because, for the first time, large numbers of white children would be affected (Vobjeda 1985b).

Opposition to the report was not limited to whites however. The Black Coalition Against Unnecessary Busing, a parent group organized by Parent Teacher Association (PTA) leaders, also rejected the Green Report's recommendations (Vobjeda 1985c). The group claimed the county's educational problem could not be solved with increased busing. Instead, the coalition preferred children attend neighborhood schools and additional resources be spent in schools that were underperforming. Many blacks were tired of bearing the brunt of busing and did not want to see more of their neighborhood schools closed.

As an alternative to the Green Report proposals, Superintendent John A. Murphy developed a more voluntary desegregation plan that was based on the creation of magnet schools. These schools would have specialized programs unavailable in neighborhood schools and would thus act as a magnet attracting children from outside the neighborhood to the school. In Prince George's, the magnets would be used to attract white students to schools with black student populations over the court allowable limit and black students to majority white schools with black populations lower than the court sanctioned minimum. While the proposed magnets would not eliminate the current busing plan, the hope was that in time the magnets would reduce the amount of involuntary busing in the

county. Using a remedy allowed by the U.S. Supreme Court in another desegregation case, *Milliken v. Bradley*, 433 U.S. 267 (1977) (*Milliken II*), the plan also called for extra resources to go to those majority black schools too geographically isolated to make busing feasible.

In the summer of 1985, the school board and the NAACP met to hash out a compromise solution using Murphy's plan as a template. On June 21, all parties to the lawsuit signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) governing desegregation in the county (Court Appointed Panel 1997). The centerpiece of the agreement was the implementation of the magnet program to be used in conjunction with continued busing. For those schools with high black populations for which busing would be impractical (*Milliken II* schools), additional resources were to be provided to compensate for their racial isolation. The goal of the new desegregation plan was to have 85% of all county schools within the 10/80 guideline within three years. Additionally, the plan was to remain in effect until such time as black enrollment became 65% of the county's total enrollment.⁸

The new plan came after thirteen years of wrangling between the school board and the NAACP. Judge Kaufman noted as much when he said, "We've now been about our efforts to try to achieve unitary status [desegregation] for more than a decade If we could have a little bit less fighting and scrapping about every little issue, we could move ahead" (Vobejda 1985d). The constant struggle created a contentious environment and led to feelings of mistrust on both sides.

In August 1985, PGCPS began the new school year with magnet programs in twelve schools and ten compensatory (*Milliken II*) schools.⁹ The magnet programs were

an immediate hit. Around 1,900 white parents completed applications for the 1,000 TAG magnets seats (Vobejda 1985e). The magnets were able to change the racial balance at eight of the twelve schools in which they operated. The magnets were so popular that 17 new magnet programs were opened the following year and another 13 opened in the fall of 1987 (Marquand 1987). Moreover, between 1984 and 1987, 4,000 children switched from private schools to PGCPS (Ibid.).

The magnets also drew national attention to the school system. Congressional leaders and even President Ronald Reagan gave the system accolades with Reagan calling PGCPS, “one of the great success stories of the educational reform movement” (Eaton and Crutcher 1996, 277). Even the Milliken II schools seemed to be thriving. In 1988, Columbia Park Elementary, a Milliken II school, won a national achievement award from the U. S. Department of Education.¹⁰ For the first time in a long time, PGCPS was being perceived of in a positive light. Unfortunately, the good feelings would not last.

The magnets were initially successful in integrating schools. 81.4% of Prince George’s students (the goal was 85%) attended schools that were within the court’s 10/80 range by 1988 (Norris 1988). However, as the African American percentage of the student population continued to grow, the ability of magnets to desegregate schools was diminished. An examination of Table 3-2 shows the steady climb in African American enrollment which was matched or exceeded by the continuing decline of white students.

Table 3-2: Prince George's County Public Schools Student Enrollment: 1985-2001

Year	Total Enrollment	White	African American	% White	% Black	% Students in Desegregated Schools
1985	102,997	35,804	61,342	34.8	59.6	81.1
1986	102,530	33,567	62,778	32.7	61.2	81.1
1987	103,325	32,042	64,714	31.0	62.6	80.8
1988	104,090	30,968	66,219	29.8	63.6	81.5
1989	105,595	29,706	68,072	28.1	64.5	77.2
1990	107,575	28,675	70,212	26.7	65.3	76.9
1991	109,897	27,681	72,888	25.2	66.3	75.6
1992	111,132	26,079	75,165	23.5	67.6	70.8
1993	113,570	24,906	78,235	21.9	68.9	71.4
1994	116,383	23,502	81,844	20.2	70.3	72.0
1995	119,951	22,334	86,141	18.6	71.8	74.2
1996	122,831	20,665	89,990	16.8	73.3	76.6
1997	128,347	19,580	96,000	15.3	74.8	n/a
1998	130,259	18,115	98,755	13.9	75.8	n/a
1999	131,059	16,583	100,385	12.7	76.6	n/a
2000	133,723	15,303	103,224	11.4	77.2	n/a
2001	135,039	13,876	104,518	10.3	77.4	n/a

Sources: Court Appointed Panel Vaughns v. Prince George's County Board of Education, 1997; Maryland State Department of Education, The Fact Book 1998-2001

Table 3-2 shows the percentage of students in desegregated schools. After the 1988 school year, the number of children in desegregated schools never reached 80%. There just were not enough white students, and you cannot integrate what you do not have. It was becoming clear that student demographics were making any idealized version of integration impossible.

Along with concerns about the magnets' desegregation effectiveness, were other concerns about equity. There was some concern that whites were benefiting more from the magnets than blacks since more whites were admitted to the magnets than blacks. Additionally there was concern that the magnets might create a "school within a school" scenario in which those in the magnet are separated from those outside it with little or no contact between the two. The advisory committee formed to oversee the desegregation plan, Community Advisory Council on Magnet and Compensatory Educational Programs (known as the Committee of 100) noted these concerns in its second annual report (Community Advisory Council on Magnet and Compensatory Educational Programs 1987). The Committee was concerned that people saw the magnet schools as better than non-magnet schools, and they indicated that parents had expressed concerns about a 2-tier system of "haves and have nots" in which magnets get more money, the best teachers, and innovative instructional materials that non-magnet schools cannot get (Ibid., 33). Some parents at comprehensive schools—schools that were neither magnets or Milliken II—worried that their schools would become second class schools because they were not given any new programs or additional resources.

By the early 1990s, the desegregation plan that seemed so promising had lost its aura as it became clear that magnets were not the answer, and the tide had turned against court-ordered busing.

The Beginning of the End of Court-Ordered Busing

Many in the county began to believe that traditional desegregation approaches had reached the limits of their effectiveness. The Committee of 100 said as much in its fourth interim report when it stated the magnets and Milliken II schools while effective at

elevating educational quality, “have gone as far as they can in meeting racial percentage guidelines” (Community Advisory Council on Magnet and Compensatory Educational Programs 1991, 13). Alvin Thornton, a committee member and future school board chairman said, “We must move beyond numbers to a new definition of equality” (Leff 1991a). This definition focused on “educational equity” which required providing the resources given to Milliken II and magnet schools to all schools. According to Superintendent Murphy, “We have to focus more on outcomes than on how the numbers look, whether our children are getting equal access to quality education” (Ibid.). In fact the Committee of 100’s new definition of a “unitary” school system was one in which, “each child has an opportunity to leave the school system equipped to fulfill their potential (Community Advisory Council on Magnet and Compensatory Educational Programs 1991, 17). The new definition had no mention of race or integration. The Committee even went so far as to recommended considering the elimination of forced busing (Ibid.,13).

Many in the county had come to question the wisdom of involuntary integration altogether. While whites in the county had generally opposed desegregation from the outset, more and more African Americans had become just as skeptical. Through the years blacks’ frustrations with busing had increased as they continued to bear a disproportionate share of the burden of busing. A 1991 school system report found that 89% of about 11,000 children bused for desegregation purposes were black (Gonzalez 1991). Moreover, the report showed that as many as 1,650 students were being bused for no apparent reason. Also blacks grew frustrated as integration did not bring the academic

benefits they had hoped. PGCPs students still performed below state averages on multiple assessments (Leff 1993a).

The strongest opposition to involuntary desegregation came from middle class black parents who were dubious of its purported benefits. Many in the black middle class were happily ensconced in outer Beltway, middle class neighborhoods and had no more desire to have their children bused to the poor neighborhoods inside the Beltway than whites did. Also, many new black residents rejected the premise that their children needed to sit next to white children in order to get the education they deserved (Leff 1991a). Wayne Curry, who would become the county's first African American county executive in 1994, said of these parents, "They are tired of chasing white kids all over this county, especially since their kids are now in the majority" (Ibid.). Many middle class blacks had come to the county precisely because they liked the idea of an affluent, majority-black county in which they could determine their own destiny. The notion that they needed white children to secure a quality education for their black children was unacceptable.

In September of 1992, County Executive Parris Glendening proposed a major school construction program designed to return children to neighborhood schools and end court-ordered busing. His proposal called for the building or renovation of about six schools in the inner Beltway communities that had schools closed during the 1970s and 1980s as enrollment declined. Lacking sufficient funding or political support, the plan died. Two years later the school board presented for discussion its own proposal to end busing in July. The nearly \$350 million plan called for the building or reopening of 16

schools and the expansion of 22 more. Though generally positively received, funding concerns also put this plan on hold.

The difficulty in ending busing despite widespread opposition by both blacks and whites was due in part to racial politics. In 1992, the majority of school board members were white as was the superintendent. They were afraid of stirring the racial pot without having something to offer the NAACP which was reluctant to end busing. Blacks on the other hand were suspicious of the white leadership. A black board member Frederick C. Hutchinson said of black activists, they had “no confidence the school system could be trusted, given the [majority-white] constitution of the school board” (Leff 1993b). Also, many were loath to relinquish the leverage the court order gave them. Hutchinson added, “Suppose you are suing me and you had the legal upper hand. All of a sudden I decide I want you to withdraw the suit and relinquish your upper hand and [I] promise [I] will be good -- this time. What would you do?” (Ibid.). The result was the status quo remained despite widespread dissatisfaction. Kenneth Johnson, another black school board member described the stalemate thusly, “What the busing brought was nobody trusting anybody. We need to let go of some of the fears that have grown up with us over the years” (Ibid.).

Two years later in 1996, the school board tried a different approach. Rather than trying to end busing, it preferred to modify the county’s desegregation plan. The board unilaterally decided to abandon the court-ordered racial guidelines for the county’s magnet programs by opening up 500 seats to black students. The seats had been reserved for white students as part of the county’s desegregation plan but were empty because there were not enough white children to fill them. At the same time 4,000 black children

sat on a waiting list to get into the magnet programs (Frazier 1996a). The school board was caught between parents who wanted their children to attend what they believed to be PGCPs' best schools and others who feared increased segregation as a result of the change. In response to the board's action, the NAACP petitioned the court to block the board's decision.

To the surprise of everyone, the judge now presiding over the case, U.S. District Judge Peter J. Messitte, decided to do more than just rule on the legality of the board's action. He decided to conduct a comprehensive review of the county's desegregation plan. Judge Messitte appointed a panel of experts to review the plan, but encouraged both parties in the case to reach a settlement on their own. The review panel found that continued busing contributed little to desegregating schools, and the magnets had reached their limits of effectiveness as desegregation tools (Court Appointed Panel 1997). Moreover, because of the changes in student demographics, the racial imbalance in some schools had worsened since 1974. The county's demographics made the county's ability to make any further progress on desegregation unlikely. As a result, the panel did not oppose PGCPs being declared a unitary district. However, it did recommend that certain requirements be met; the greatest among them was the development of a master plan of action for the system's new status (Ibid., xxiv).

Faced with the likelihood of busing being ended without making provisions for the building of new schools, the school board and the NAACP began discussions on the board's six-year plan for a return to neighborhood schools. The plan, which had been floating around since 1994 and now called the "Community Schools Education Plan," would cost \$333 million for the construction and expansion of schools (Task Force on

Education Funding Equity 1998). It would also require \$500 million in operating costs over eight years, and this time there appeared to be the political will and funding necessary to support the plan. An NAACP official part of the negotiations said the NAACP was willing to reach a compromise with the school board because the judge insisted on it. “They all realized this could go on and on and on, costing more time and money.”¹¹ Also the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals was a conservative court. If the judge ruled in favor of the school board and released the system outright, the NAACP was not likely to win an appeal. Reaching a new MOU would force the school board to pay attention to the NAACP’s concerns.

On March 20, 1998, County Executive Wayne K. Curry, Board of Education Chairman Alvin Thornton and NAACP President Hardi Jones signed an agreement to end court supervised desegregation in the county. The agreement called for the phasing out of mandatory busing as new schools were to be built between 1999 and 2002 (Frazier 1998a). The magnets would be maintained and Milliken II schools would continue to receive compensatory support. Additional money would also be spent on comprehensive schools. The agreement also required PGCPs to develop a plan to reduce the academic achievement gap between African American and non-black students. In September 1998, Judge Messitte approved the MOU after county and state officials committed funding for school construction. Finally in 2002, PGCPs was declared unitary and the desegregation lawsuit that had defined (plagued) the system for thirty years was dismissed.

Analysis

Desegregation, an already complicated issue was even more so in Prince George’s County. The initial strategy of passive resistance employed by the board of education led

to frustrations on both sides of the debate. Those opposed to desegregation wanted the school board to more actively resist. Supporters on the other hand wanted full compliance. Thus neither side was satisfied. Once the board complied with the court's order, it spent much of the next thirty years trying to reduce the mechanism necessary for compliance; busing. The repeated attempts made blacks doubt that the board was acting in good faith. The lack of results from the attempts made whites doubt the effectiveness of the board's efforts.

Over time, white resistance to busing based on racial animus decreased as those most opposed left the county. However, black resistance increased as African Americans became a larger percentage of the population. New, middle class blacks rejected the core premise of busing; the necessity of black children to attend schools with white children in order to receive a quality education. At the same time older working class blacks had grown weary of shouldering the burden of desegregation. By the time busing ended, just about everyone in the County was glad to see it go. Yet, because of changes in the county's demographics, many Prince George's schools were as segregated in 2002 as they had been in 1972. And in addition to being racially segregated, schools were also segregated by class.

Busing in Prince George's County has had an enormous impact on education politics in the county. Among other things, court-ordered desegregation exposed deep divisions within the county's African American population. It became clear that the interests of middle and upper class blacks differed from those of working class and poor blacks. Not only were the interests different, but they at times worked against each other. The lack of unity within the black community diminished the pressure on the school

board to improve the quality of education for African American children which after all was the intended purpose of the original lawsuit anyway.

Additionally, the struggle over desegregation led to increased levels of mistrust and skepticism throughout the county. First, there was increased racial mistrust between blacks and whites. Second, as the difference in their interests became apparent, middle class and working class blacks became more skeptical of each other's motives. Third and most importantly for PGCPS, the public as a whole became increasingly skeptical and mistrustful of school officials as year after year school officials struggled to develop and maintain a desegregation plan acceptable to all constituents. Of course with various constituents wanting competing outcomes, pleasing everyone if not most was most likely impossible. This was especially true given the system's rapidly changing student demographics.

But what did years of desegregation do for those most affected by busing; the children? Not much according to *Washington Post* columnist, William Raspberry who wrote a week after the settlement was reached in 1998, "In a nutshell: Twenty-five years of often-bitter warfare has ended with little to show for it, either in racial integration or in academic performance (Raspberry 1998)." By the end of court-ordered desegregation, a school system that had been 69.6% white had become 77.4% African American (Maryland State Department of Education 2002). And as we will see in the next section, desegregation apparently did little to improve African American achievement.

School Performance and MSPAP¹²

In 1972 PGCPS was sued because parents were dissatisfied with the quality of education their children were receiving. In 2002, thirty years later, parents were still

dissatisfied. In a 2002 *Washington Post* poll, only 43% of surveyed Prince Georgians gave the schools a favorable rating while 52% considered the schools to be a major problem (*Washington Post* 2002). The number one reason cited for the negative evaluation was the poor performance of county schools on state performance tests.

Maryland has had a state testing program since 1971 when Maryland’s General Assembly, taking the lead on education reform, passed a school accountability law designed to improve education by making state and local officials responsible for meeting their own educational goals. The program used national norm referenced tests and focused on minimal competencies (Governor’s Commission on School Performance 1989). Table 3-3 shows some of the results from the first test given during the 1973 school year. PGCPS lagged behind the state and its immediate neighbors, Montgomery and Howard counties. It did outperform Baltimore city. So even when PGCPS had a majority white student population the system performed poorly on state assessments.

Table 3-3 Maryland Accountability Program Results for Prince George’s County and Neighboring Districts 1973-1974

	Language	Mathematics
Grade 3		
Maryland	3.93	3.61
Prince George's	3.86	3.61
Montgomery	4.4	4.04
Howard	4.46	3.97
Baltimore city	3.36	3.08
Grade 5		
Maryland	5.5	5.53
Prince George's	5.34	5.45
Montgomery	6.15	6.15
Howard	6.08	5.96
Baltimore city	4.89	4.82

Source: Maryland State Department of Education Summary Highlights, MAP 1974-75

In 1991 Maryland began a new school performance program: the Maryland School Performance Program (MSPP). This program was designed to be more rigorous and set higher standards than the previous program. Instead of focusing on minimal competencies as the initial program did, MSPP focused on proficiency. Students were given a series of assessments (MSPAP) on a number of subjects.¹³ A school district or school achieved the proficiency goal when 70% of its students met the “satisfactory” standard and 25% met the “excellent” standard.

Achievement standards were deliberately set high. So high in fact that school systems were not expected to meet the standards until 1996.¹⁴ As an incentive to improve test scores, the state used a carrot and stick approach by giving bonuses to schools that made significant progress while threatening failing schools with state takeover. Each year schools and school systems were expected to make improvements. Schools that failed to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) were put on a watch list for potential takeover. To be on the list, schools must have been far from standard and have shown little or no progress for multiple years. If schools remained on the list for two consecutive years they became eligible for reconstitution, state takeover or other corrective action.

Since the tests began, PGCPS has ranked either second from or next to the bottom and in 2002 only Baltimore city schools fared worse than Prince George’s schools (Hill 1994b; Trejos 2002b). Table 3-4 shows the MSPAP scores in reading and mathematics for Prince George’s and neighboring jurisdictions.

Table 3-4 MSPAP Results for Prince George’s County and Neighboring Districts, 1993 & 2001

% Sat.	1993					2001				
	PG	Mont	Howard	Balt.	MD	PG	Mont	Howard	Balt.	MD
Grade 3										
Reading	19.4	41.6	38.8	11.7	28.6	21.4	37.6	60.1	17.4	36.5
Math	13.9	41.3	45.8	10.4	27.4	20.1	43.4	57.8	20.4	37.8
Grade 5										
Reading	18.3	38	39.2	9.5	25.9	26.5	49.4	66.5	21.8	44.6
Math	28.9	62.3	62.3	20.5	42.9	21.7	52.2	60.2	23	42.6
Grade 8										
Reading	13.7	38.6	36.6	7.1	24	18	33.4	39.8	9.6	26.6
Math	17.2	53.2	55.3	6.9	34.2	24.7	63	67.3	14.3	47

Note: % Sat=percentage of students performing at satisfactory level. Satisfactory goal is 70%.
1993 is the baseline year.

Source: Maryland State Department of Education. Maryland School Performance Report 1993 & 2001.

While none of the jurisdictions met the 70% proficiency level, Prince George’s scores were significantly lower than its neighbors. Montgomery and Howard counties performed above the state average while Prince George’s and Baltimore city performed below the state average. Baltimore city was the only district to perform worse than PGCPs. Table 3-4 does show that the county has made some gains since 1993. This fact however is tempered by the reality that all of the county’s neighbors made improvements. As a consequence Prince George’s scores remain at the bottom. What perhaps is most problematic is the distance between the results for Prince George’s and the other jurisdictions. PGCPs’s scores were 20 to almost 40 points lower than Montgomery’s or Howard’s scores.

Prince George’s also surpassed its neighbors in the number of schools on the state’s watch list. When MSDE began to identify schools eligible for state takeover in 1995, PGCPs did not have any schools on the list. By 1998, nine PGCPs schools were

on the list (Maryland State Department of Education 1998). By 2002 the number had climbed to 20 (Maryland State Department of Education 2002). The only school system with more schools on the list was Baltimore city with 85 schools on the list. Since 1995 only three other school systems have had a school on the list: Anne Arundel, Baltimore County, and Somerset.

The annual publication of test data has served as a continual reminder that Prince George's schools were not meeting state expectations. Undoubtedly, the system's poor performance helped to feed the negative opinions of the school system. Residents complained about the quality of PGCPSS and its negative influence on the county's ability to attract new business investment and hold on to middle class residents (Frazier 1997). In response to the negative scrutiny of MSPP results, school officials argued that PGCPSS was not as bad as people believed. While they admitted the system had problems, they claimed PGCPSS would perform better if it was better funded. They pointed to Montgomery County and the fact that it spent significantly more on education than Prince George's County did.¹⁵

School officials also pointed to student demographics as an explanation for why performance lagged. "Factors related to poverty and race continue to impact heavily on student performance, with the poorest performing schools having a demonstratively higher percent of both African-American students and students participating in free and reduced-priced meals programs" (Prince George's County Public Schools 1999). In addition to PGCPSS's student population being overwhelmingly African American (Table 3-2), PGCPSS's student population also included a significant number of poor students. Table 3-5 shows the number of students participating in the federal government's free

and reduced meals programs (FARMS). FARMS participation is often used as a proxy for poverty status. The number of FARMS participants grew steadily from 1992 to 2002, rising from 28.6% to 44.3%. The number of children attending schools receiving Title I¹⁶ funding rose even more dramatically. The number of Title I children exploded between 1992 and 2002. There is a sizable amount of research on academic achievement showing a negative correlation between minority race, poverty, and achievement (Jencks and Phillips 1998; Rothstein 2004; Paik and Walberg 2007). The growth of these populations made improving academic achievement more difficult.

Table 3-5: Prince George’s County Public Schools and Maryland Special Student Populations

Year	Prince George’s		Maryland	
	FARMS	Title 1	FARMS	Title 1
1992	28.6	6.2	26.1	9.0
1993	34.1	6.8	28.2	8.4
1994	36.7	5.2	29.2	7.7
1995	39.7	3.8	30.4	6.8
1996	41.2	4.8	31.0	7.7
1997	41.7	17.3	30.9	13.1
1998	41.3	20.4	30.9	14.3
1999	39.2	29.0	30.5	16.9
2000	41.1	31.8	29.2	18.7
2001	43.1	31.6	29.9	18.5
2002	44.3	33.6	30.3	19.2

Note: Year is school year. Title I is Chapter I for years 1992-1995.

Source: Maryland State Department of Education. Maryland School Performance Reports, 1992-2002.

School officials argued that poor students come to school with several disadvantages related to poverty. Overcoming those disadvantages and improving academic achievement required a significant amount of resources, resources PGCPSS did

not have because it was not receiving the funds it needed. And the reason for the lack of adequate funding, in the opinion of school officials was TRIM.

TRIM and Its Impact on PGCPS

For most of the past thirty years, school funding has been an issue for Prince George's County. In 1978, homeowners placed a cap on property taxes through the referendum known as TRIM.¹⁷ Ever since its imposition, TRIM has been the subject of much debate, and its impact on Prince George's County cannot be underestimated. It can be argued that TRIM has generated a level of contentiousness that has negatively influenced education politics. But before discussing the impact of TRIM, a discussion of PGCPS's budget process is in order.

The Budget Process: Shared Authority

PGCPS does not have independent taxing authority. Local funding for schools is provided through the county government's budget.¹⁸ Because education is not separately financed, educational priorities must be reconciled with other priorities such as public safety and economic development. Even so, education typically receives the greatest percentage of the county's budget and accounts for nearly half or over half of the county's entire budget.¹⁹ In 2002, PGCPS accounted for 49.6% of the county's budget (Department of Legislative services 2008).

The budget for PGCPS is actually two budgets; an operating budget and a capital improvement program (CIP) budget. The CIP budget is basically the school construction budget. The operating budget covers all other PGCPS activities including day-to-day

activities. When people talk about the school system's budget, they are usually referring to the operating budget.²⁰

The budget process begins with the presentation of the Superintendent's Proposed Budget to the Board of Education by mid December. The board then can make changes to the superintendent's proposal and must adopt a requested budget by March 1 at which time it is presented to the county executive. The county executive then prepares the county's approved budget of which education funding is a part. It is at this point that the school board's funding request may be funded in full or reduced.

The county's approved budget must be submitted to the county council for ratification by March 31. The council can move funding from one area of the budget to another, however it cannot change the budget's total. Thus any increases in one area of the budget, education for example, necessitate offsetting decreases elsewhere, say economic development. The council must adopt the budget by June 1. The board then reconvenes in June to reconcile its budget request within approved funding levels, making needed changes by June 30. The adopted budget becomes effective July 1 at which time a new fiscal year begins.

Two important features of the budget process need to be noted. First, neither the county executive nor county council has the authority to change specific line items within the school board's requested budget. Only major category totals of the board's budget can be changed. For example, the council can change the amount of money allotted for instruction. It cannot determine which instructional programs receive funding.

Second, since 1985, Maryland has required "maintenance of effort" (MOE) on the part of local governments. MOE sets a minimum on local government education funding

by requiring local jurisdictions to spend as much on education per pupil in the current budget year as they did in the preceding budget year. The MOE is designed to guarantee local jurisdictions continue to fund education at a consistent level and not use state revenues to offset reductions in local funding. Jurisdictions failing to meet their MOE requirement must have state educational funding withheld. MOE provides a minimum level of funding. Nothing prevents counties from providing funding above the MOE required level.

These two features have, at times, contributed to a tense relationship between the board, council and executive especially when the county faces a budget shortfall. For example, in 1995, the county faced an estimated \$108 million dollar budget shortfall for fiscal year 1996. Since counties are prohibited from carrying deficits, severe cuts had to be made to the county's budget. As part of those cuts, County Executive Wayne Curry recommended funding for PGCPs at \$706.9 million, an increase of \$8.9 million over the current school budget (Mercurio 1995). The allocation was \$24 million less than the school board requested. Further, the executive's budget required the school board to contribute \$15 million to the county's "rainy day" fund.

Board members accused the executive of not meeting the county's MOE requirement by only increasing the budget by \$8.9 million. The board argued MOE required a \$17 million budget increase and the \$15 million fund payment put the county under that minimum. The Curry countered that at least some of the \$15 million should be included in the calculation of the county's MOE requirement. School board members argued that since the money cannot be used for school services it should not be counted. Board Chairman Frederick Hutchinson accused Curry of "accounting gimmickry" and

added, “a much more prudent and honest approach would have been to say we just can't do it. Instead, we get these fiscal shell games” (Ibid.). The board threatened to sue the county for failing to meet MOE, and did so in May.

Hutchinson said the board’s decision to sue was not meant to be divisive. Instead he argued that it was actually meant to be, “a catalyst for people to come together” (Neal 1995). While some council members were sympathetic towards the board others were decidedly less so. Of the school board’s lawsuit, Council Member Walter H. Maloney said, “this comes across to me as a shakedown. What they're doing is playing a political game of chicken” (Ibid.).

The lawsuit would have been the first MOE lawsuit in the state, however the school board and county executive reached an agreement a day before the case was to go to trial and the lawsuit was eventually dropped.²¹ But this was not the end to the bickering. The dispute was reignited in July when Curry opposed the board’s routine request to the council for permission to reduce its risk-management fund payments and apply the money to its operating budget in order to cover administrative expenses. Curry objected arguing that the board had not done enough to streamline its administration as the county government had done. Curry was particularly upset with Superintendent Jerome Clark’s reorganization of his administration (Frazier 1995a). While Clark eliminated 67 administrative positions, the people in those positions were merely reassigned to school-level positions. The expenses for those positions were just transferred from one budget category to another.

Once again both sides were able to reach a compromise, but the school board’s actions left many county officials feeling as though the board was not doing its part to

ease the county's financial burden. "It was a very difficult budget time, but we now have a lean, mean county government. . . . [School board members] have not made the kinds of cuts we have made," noted council Chairman Anne MacKinnon (Ibid.). For their part, board members were suspicious that Curry's objection was part of a larger attempt to exert more control over board spending.

Although this matter was settled, both sides agreed that the friction caused by the school finance process would invariably lead to more disputes as both council and board members agreed that the process breeds contempt (Ibid.). According to a county task force that examined education funding, "Structural limitations [of the education budget process] have led to an increasingly contentious and acrimonious relationship between the levels of elected officials charged with funding the school system and those charged with the responsibility of managing the system's day-to-day affairs" (Prince George's County Task Force on Education Funding 1996). Council members argued that education has had to face the budget axe less frequently or deeply than other areas of the budget. Board members argued having a quality public school system is vital to the county's overall well-being and as such it should be given the highest priority. The school board accuses the council of not supporting education by not providing more funds while the council accuses the board of asking for too much without any regard for the county's fiscal constraints. The most binding constraint is TRIM.

TRIM has significantly constrained county budgets. A 1996 *Washington Post* analysis of county and school budgets for the previous 18 years showed that in inflation-adjusted dollars, the county made do with less in property tax revenue than it did in 1978 (Montgomery 1996). As a result of TRIM, the county has been on a budget roller coaster

ride. While budgets naturally rise and fall with the movement of the economy, TRIM severely hinders the county's ability to blunt the impact of a sharp economic downturns. This led County Council Chairman, Stephen J. Del Giudice in 1996 to say of the county's budget roller coaster ride, "we took a dive in the early '80s, climbed back up the hill in the late '80s, and now we're crashing down the hill again" (Ibid.). Further, because TRIM keeps Prince George's budget lean, any budgetary decreases necessitate cuts that slice deeper into critical functions than they might otherwise.

It did not take long after its passage for the county and PGCPs to feel the effects of TRIM. In the first fiscal year (FY) TRIM went into effect, FY1980, the school board was forced to cut 550 positions, eliminate junior high school sports and increase class sizes to cover a \$10 million budget cut (Meszoly 1979). Similarly dramatic cuts occurred in 1982 as the school board had to cover a \$30 million shortfall (Wynter and Vesey 1982). The school board voted to lay off up to 900 employees, almost ten percent of the school staff. The layoffs included 507 teachers. The recession of the early 1990s led to more cuts in education. In addition to hiring freezes and cuts that affected every area of the school system, school employees, including teachers were furloughed for three days in 1991 (Leff 1991b). The furloughs were in addition to the cancelling of cost of living pay raises for teachers.

Opponents of TRIM complain that the lean budgets it creates make it impossible for the county to keep pace with its wealthier neighbors in providing a top level education. Table 3-5 shows per-pupil spending for Prince George's and neighboring counties. Prince George's ranked 8th among Maryland's 24 school districts in 1992. Its spending of \$5,637 per student was slightly below the state average of \$5,823. By 2002,

Prince George’s had fallen to 16th place and its spending of \$7,699 was considerably lower than the state average of \$8,351. In contrast, Montgomery County’s spending has consistently kept the system in first place throughout the ten year period.

Table 3-6: Per Pupil Spending for Prince George’s County and Neighboring Counties

Year	Prince George’s	rank	Mont.	rank	Howard	rank	Charles	rank	Anne Arundel	rank	State Average
1992	\$5,637	8	\$7,377	1	\$6,481	2	\$5,448	10	\$5,713	6	\$5,823
1993	5,897	7	7,544	1	6,457	2	5,627	10	5,984	6	5,978
1994	6,018	8	7,539	1	6,571	2	5,831	10	6,144	6	6,106
1995	6,272	7	7,697	1	6,793	2	5,983	11	6,452	4	6,337
1996	6,276	8	7,887	1	6,987	2	5,969	15	6,455	5	6,446
1997	6,370	10	8,035	1	6,988	2	6,158	14	6,463	7	6,584
1998	6,585	10	8,287	1	7,190	4	6,271	14	6,629	9	6,821
1999	6,853	9	8,574	1	7,434	4	6,423	19	6,812	10	7,125
2000	7,116	10	8,888	1	7,880	5	6,749	18	7,191	9	7,467
2001	7,313	15	9,488	1	8,432	6	7,023	21	7,782	9	7,971
2002	7,699	16	9,876	1	8,977	6	7,363	21	8,104	9	8,351

Note: Rank is rank among 24 Maryland school districts from highest to lowest spending.

Source: Maryland State Department of Education. The Fact Book 1991-1992—2001-2002.

The school board and other school officials say this gap in funding explains why county schools do not perform as well as its neighbors. They lay most of the blame for the gap at the feet of county government officials. A 1996 task force report stated, “the Board of Education contends inadequate support from the county government is the reason for much of this per pupil funding gap” (Prince George’s County Task Force on Education Funding 1996, 7). In 2001, school board Chairman Kenneth Johnson said with continued inadequate school funding, “we’ll be settling for the same old thing, every year complaining about not having enough textbooks, money to pay teachers and administrators adequately, curriculum advancement, closing the gap” (Meyer 2001).

School officials point to the fact that between 1980 and 2002, PGCP’s budget has been fully funded only once. Table 3-7 lists the requested and approved operating

budget amounts for PGCPS. 1987 was the only year for which the board’s budget could be considered to be fully funded. Only seven times in 23 years has the approved budget been less than \$10 million short of what was requested. Conversely, the approved budget has been more than \$20 million short of what was requested nine times.

Table 3-7: PGCPS Operating Budget Requested & Approved 1980-2002

FY	Requested	Approved	Difference	FY	Requested	Approved	Difference
1980	288	278	10	1992	603.3	574.7	28.6
1981	290.3	281.1	9.2	1993	599	595.4	3.6
1982	309.8	308.7	1.1	1994	666	640.8	25.2
1983	337.4	306.3	31.1	1995	702.6	683	19.6
1984	316	312.1	3.9	1996	730.2	704.4	25.8
1985	340	331	9	1997	757	736.3	20.7
1986	362.7	349	13.7	1998	798	780.4	17.6
1987	389.3	389	0.3	1999	858	844.9	13.1
1988	440	425	15	2000	928	884	44
1989	478.4	461	17.4	2001	1.0 billion	942.1	57.9
1990	553.6	507.6	46	2002	1.1 billion	1 billion	100
1991	554.9	552.8	2.1				

Note: Amounts are in millions.

Sources: Prince George’s County Public Schools. 2002 Approved Budget; Washington Post

TRIM opponents argue that while people talk about school improvement, they are not willing to provide the funding necessary to improve the schools. As evidence, they point to the 1996 attempt to repeal TRIM. The voters not only rejected the repeal attempt but placed further restrictions on the county’s ability to raise any taxes.²² The voters did this even though the county needed funding to support a plan that would have ended nearly thirty years of busing, something a majority of people in the county wanted.

For their part TRIM supporters argue that the problem with school performance is less about funding and more about school system leadership, or the lack thereof. The

problem is school system leadership not using the money it does have wisely. TRIM supporters argue against additional funding believing it will only be mismanaged like the funds the system already receives. So they argue, why give PGcps more money to throw down the drain. Judy Robinson, an original leader of the TRIM movement, said of the school board, “If they would spend as much energy on [their] internal problems as attacking TRIM, then we might really have acquired a world-class school system” (Ibid.).

Community activist (and future school board member) Donna Hathaway Beck expressed the sentiment of many TRIM supporters when she said; “TRIM was built and reaffirmed on a foundation of mistrust. That mistrust continues, perhaps it has even worsened. Does the public school system need more money? Undoubtedly yes. Do we trust those in leadership roles to effectively administer additional funds? Probably not” (Tate and Krughoff 2003). The passage of TRIM was a manifestation of people’s lack of trust in the ability of public officials to govern efficiently. Yet the financial constraints on PGcps’s budget created by TRIM have made it more difficult for school officials to govern effectively which in turn has led to even greater mistrust of school officials.

Education Politics in a Nutshell

In 1993, the Prince George’s County Government Operations Review Commission (Turner Commission), an initiative of the county Chamber of Commerce, was established to review the administration of both the county government and school system.²³ The independent panel had 27 members none of whom were elected officials or government employees. Initially the commission set out to “audit” the system and look for opportunities to increase performance and efficiency. However, once the commission began its examination, it became clear that school governance was a major

concern and the scope of the commission was expanded (Abramowitz 1993b). The Turner Commission's report, "Navigating the 90s: Charting a Course for Prince George's County" did little to encourage trust in the school board (Prince George's County Government Operations Review Commission 1993).

The Turner Commission identified four problems related to school governance. First, it noted an "alarming degree of tension and mistrust between the Board and the Council and Executive" (Ibid.,18). The commission went further writing, "The Commission was disturbed by the widespread perception among citizens that our leaders are squabbling politically, rather than debating the priorities and requirements of the county. There is a sense in the community that too much energy is spent in political positioning and not enough on cooperating for success" (Ibid., 19). The commission alleged the conflicts stemmed from the governance structure in which the county council is responsible for funding the schools but has no say over how that money is spent, and must face the anger of dissatisfied citizens nevertheless.

Second, the Commission argued that because county officials (save the executive) represent districts and not the county at-large, they tended to be parochial; narrowly focused on their district instead of the county as a whole. The implication was that officials were likely to be more inclined to do what is beneficial for their own district regardless of how such action impacted the county as a whole. Officials may become beholden to a small group of constituents instead of focusing on the good of the entire county. Additionally, the commission stated there was a perception in the county that the political aspirations of school board members influenced their behavior. These aspirations made them less willing to take controversial positions and more concerned

about their own reputations than the welfare of children. Further, these political aspirations put board members in direct conflict with council members (potential campaign opponents) thus heightening tensions even more.

The third governance issue the Turner Commission cited was the tendency of the school board to micromanage the superintendent. According to the commission, the board's focus on day-to-day matters prevented it from focusing on long-term policies. The tendency of the school board to micromanage made the board an obstacle to change rather than a catalyst for it. This micromanaging created the fourth problem; a lack of strong school system leadership.

In the commission's view, the school board's micromanaging discouraged strong candidates from applying for the superintendent's job. Further, the board would tend to hire an individual they thought they could control rather than someone with strong views of her or his own. The commission also found that layers of bureaucracy made the job of principals more difficult. This was problematic as they determined the key to successful schools in the system to be "a strong principal who has been able to take charge of the school" (Ibid., 22).

To solve these problems, the Turner Commission made what even it described as a radical recommendation: strip the school board of most of its power (Ibid., 23). That power would be given to the county executive, with county council approval. The county executive would control the budget and hire the superintendent who would report directly to the county executive like other department heads. The board would become an advisory body becoming an "inspector general" for public education in the county. Basically the commission was advocating what amounted to a "mayoral takeover" of the

school system. The justification of mayoral control of school systems rests on the premise that it will, centralize accountability, broaden the constituency concerned with education, and reduce the extent of school board micro-management (Meier 2004).

The recommendation to place the schools under county executive control drew immediate allegations that the commission was doing the bidding of County Executive Parris Glendening who was running for governor (Abramowitz and Leff 1993). The Turner Commission's nonpartisan claim was not helped by Glendening calling for the superintendent's ouster just days before the report's release. Opponents claimed that putting the blame for poor school performance on the school board absolved the county executive of any responsibility and allowed him to grab more power. Board members also complained that giving control of schools to the executive would "politicize" education. "It puts the person who's in charge of running the school system under the control of someone whose motives can clearly be political," said Board of Education member Marcy C. Canavan (Woellert 1993).

Again school board members argued the greatest obstacle to improved school performance was inadequate funding. For its part, the commission did not claim that PGCPs was overfunded. In fact the Turner Commission wrote about PGCPs funding, "further across-the-board cuts will reach into muscle and bone, seriously damaging the health of county government and school system operations" (Prince George's County Government Operations Review Commission 1993, 2). However the commission also made it clear that increased funding would not solve what ails PGCPs. The system's primary problem is one of governance not finance.

Some in the county applauded the commission's emphasis on accountability. However, they worried the proposals would get caught up in election year politics (Woellert 1993). Turf battles between various politicians made the likelihood of enacting any significant changes remote. Glendening had several enemies in the state legislature and they would not be inclined to give him more power by giving him control of the school system. Additionally, several legislators were educators and not inclined to change the existing structure. Finally, the perceived undemocratic nature of the proposal by some in the community precluded adoption of the proposals (Keary 1994a).

Given the events of 2002, it is obvious the Turner Commission's recommendations were not followed. Unfortunately, as we shall see in the next chapter, all four of the governance problems identified by the commission in 1993 still existed in 2002. And the radical recommendation of the Turner Commission would be surpassed by the even more drastic move of dissolving the school board.

What stands out most after surveying the years leading up to 2002 is the serious lack of trust that percolates throughout Prince George's County. The county's long struggle with desegregation led to a lack of trust between the races. Thirty years after it had begun, Prince George's was still dealing with the issue. While much of the initial racial animosity had subsided well before 2002, the residue from those events still lingered in the environment. Desegregation also fermented distrust between middle class and working class African Americans in the county by laying bare the class divisions within the black community. Working class blacks who stood the most to gain were generally much more supportive of desegregation. On the other hand, many middle class

blacks who saw little to gain from desegregation actively opposed it. Ironically, the struggle was for naught. The county's changing racial demographics made desegregation a moot point as PGCPs student population had become overwhelmingly African American by 2002. Even more, the desired educational improvements failed to materialize as PGCPs continued to perform poorly on state assessments.

The subpar performance of PGCPs led to even more mistrust of the school board. Year after year of dismal test results encouraged residents along with state and local officials to question the school board's governance. For a community that prides itself as an affluent, majority-black middle class community, PGCPs was a continuing source of embarrassment; and many residents put the blame squarely on the backs of school leadership. For their part, school officials bemoaned the difficulty of having to educate poor and minority students. They also pointed to TRIM and the underfunded budgets it created.

Among other motivations, TRIM was born out of a mistrust of government. Not trusting the ability of officials to be fiscally conservative, the voters put a cap on the amount of money they could spend. Although TRIM has at times led to some very dire consequences, it has endured because of the continued mistrust. But in a vicious cycle, TRIM's constraints have helped intensify the mistrust between the school board and other elected county officials. A budget process that split budgetary authority between the board, county council, and county executive had friction built into it. As budgets tightened, as they often have under TRIM, the building friction often led to sparks of acrimony.

Mistrust, division and acrimony are not words likely to be used to describe a political environment in which an educational system is performing well. These are the types of words likely to be used to describe an environment in which a school system is underperforming. In such an atmosphere it would seem easy to challenge the legitimacy of the governing regime because considerable criticism of regime leaders is likely to exist. And indeed, that criticism might be strong enough to disrupt the governing regime (Baumgartner and Jones 1993). However, regime challenge is only one step in the process of regime change (Orr and Stoker 1994).

Another step in the process requires the building of coalitions capable of supporting the establishment of a new regime. The same environment that makes toppling the existing regime less difficult makes coalition building more difficult. Successful coalitions need agreement, trust and unity and are not likely to do well in an environment in which acrimony, mistrust and division reign (Chong 1991).

It is evident that any potential advocates of regime change in Prince George's County faced a daunting challenge. Despite years of criticism and disappointment, the school cartel managed to maintain its control of county education. The cartel survived largely because the mistrust and division within the county served as powerful obstacles to reform. For education reform to take hold in Prince George's, the county's culture of mistrust and division needed to be overcome. It would appear that without some kind of dramatic event capable of upsetting the political environment, things were not likely to change. In 2002 a dramatic event with the potential to change the political landscape occurred: the elected school board was dissolved by the state legislature. How this event came about is the subject of the next chapter.

Endnotes

¹ Montgomery County Public Schools had 136,895 students in 2002.

² Prince George's and Baltimore City were not the only majority minority systems in the state however. Montgomery County's system was also majority minority with whites being 46.1% of the student population. African American students were 21.1% of the population.

³ There were minor fights and confrontations between students at some schools but there was not the violence people feared (McCombs and Mitchell 1973).

⁴ By the start of the new school year in September 1973, two junior high schools and nine elementary schools had again reached a student population that was more than the court mandated 50% black (Landers 1973). All nine of the schools lay inside the Capital Beltway and near the District of Columbia.

⁵ Many schools in this section of the county were allowed to remain predominantly white because the distance required for kids to travel to integrate the schools was longer than the distance allowed by the court (Feinberg 1979).

⁶ The plan affected 75 of the system's 145 elementary schools and allowed over 3700 elementary students to attend neighborhood schools (Shapiro 1980). About 70 percent of the students affected by the new busing patterns were black. Interestingly, only 16,000 of the almost 80,000 students riding buses to school every day were bused for desegregation purposes. Most rode buses out of necessity.

⁷ Of the 29, three were high schools, three were middle schools, and the remaining 23 were elementary schools. The large number of elementary schools is indicative of the large number of blacks moving into the county. Two elementary schools were less than 10 percent black (Wynter 1983).

⁸ Other directives of the MOU included the continual review of magnets for desegregation effectiveness, the development of a back-up busing plan to be implemented if magnets do not sufficiently integrate schools, and the establishment of a citizen advisory committee. Additionally, TAG magnet schools were to have a student population that is 50% African American. Of the various magnet programs, TAG magnets were the most academically rigorous. Also, the plaintiffs agreed not to challenge the attendance areas of Milliken II schools. The final component of the plan required PGCPs to study the current busing program and make recommendations on how to eliminate unnecessary busing and reduce ride times and distances.

⁹ Six of the magnets were to be TAG magnets and the other six were workplace magnets which provided before and after-school day care. All of the Milliken II schools were elementary schools and would receive additional funding for and staffing. The schools would also have reduced class sizes (Vobejda 1985b).

¹⁰ Columbia Park was one of only eight public schools in the Washington metropolitan area to win the award which is given annually to outstanding schools throughout the country. In 1988, 287 schools won recognition (Feinberg 1988).

¹¹ All unattributed quotations are from interviews conducted by the author. Respondents were promised anonymity in return for their participation.

¹² This section provides an overview of state testing and school performance. In 2003 Maryland's testing program was changed. A more detail examination of that program is presented in Chapter 6.

¹³ Students in grades 3, 5, and 8 were tested in reading, mathematics, science, social studies, writing, and language arts. To comply with the federal act, No Child Left Behind, the MSPAP was replaced with the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) in 2002. The MSA tests children in reading, mathematics, and science. Also, all grades 3 through 8 are tested.

¹⁴ By 2002 no system had met the proficiency goal in all areas.

¹⁵ See Table 3-6 for per pupil spending comparison.

¹⁶ Title 1 is the federal government's largest education program. It provides supplemental funds to school districts to assist eligible public and private schools with the highest student concentration of poverty.

¹⁷ See Chapter 2 for a history of TRIM.

¹⁸ This is true for all 24 school systems in Maryland and all of the systems throughout the Washington metropolitan region.

¹⁹ By only counting funding that comes from unrestricted county funds (funds generated by the county itself), school officials claim that schools are around 46% of the county's budget. For their part the county council and county executive include all county funding (including revenue coming to the county from outside sources) in their calculations and as a result claim schools receive about 60% of the county's budget.

²⁰ Unless otherwise stated, discussions of budgets will refer to operating budgets.

²¹ The agreement called for the county to drop its demand that the board pay \$15 million to the rainy day fund. In return, the board of education would transfer \$4 million to \$6 million in savings achieved in 1995 to the school budget for fiscal year 1996 (Pierre 1995).

²² The voters endorsed a new measure that requires that any future local tax increase be approved by voters.

²³ The commission got its nickname from the name of its chairman, former CIA director, Admiral Stansfield Turner.

Chapter 4

Political Upheaval: Removal of the Elected School Board

This project began with the premise that improving African American academic performance and successfully closing the achievement gap is a community issue that must be solved by the community as a whole. What is needed is an activation of a community's civic capacity in order to build a performance regime that has improving academic achievement and closing the achievement gap as its primary agenda. This project argues that a reason why Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) was not more successful in improving African American academic performance and closing the achievement gap is because the county's educational arena had been dominated by a regime that did not have academic performance as its agenda. The controlling regime, or school cartel, focused on "bread and butter" issues meant to protect the members of the regime and not academic achievement. I posit that a key to eliminating the gap is replacing the existing employment regime with a performance regime that has improving academic achievement as its agenda. Thus regime change is necessary to close the gap.

Regime change is posited as a three stage process that involves dismantling the current regime, building a coalition in support of a new regime, and institutionalizing that new regime (Orr and Stoker 1994). Challenging the existing regime is not an easy proposition however. It dominates the education arena, and through its control of the decision-making process can deflect and defuse dissatisfaction (Rich 1996, 9). But regimes are not impenetrable, permanent structures. At times they become vulnerable to

challenge. In order to successfully challenge and dismantle the regime, opponents must take advantages of opportunities that bring into question the legitimacy of the regime's dominance. A focusing event provides such a window of opportunity.

Focusing events are sudden extraordinary events like crises, disasters, or scandals that shock the system and focus attention on a problem that needs addressing (Kingdon, 1984; Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Birkland, 1998). Focusing events by their very nature often lead to a reexamination of the existing regime. Moreover they frequently lead to a questioning of the regime's authority. I argue that the dissolution of the elected school board in 2002 was a focusing event that presented a window of opportunity for education reformers. This chapter examines how that window was opened.

On April 8, 2002, the Maryland General Assembly dissolved the Prince George's County Board of Education. The legislation passed 45 to 0 in the Senate and 85 to 44 in the House.¹ It is the only time the Assembly has voted to dissolve an elected school board. The path to that April vote was long and convoluted. Once again, the word that would aptly describe the events leading to that day is the same word that aptly describes the county: complex. Attempts in the General Assembly to alter the composition of the elected school board began more than four years earlier. However, calls to reform the school board stretch back to 1993 when the Turner Commission recommended reducing the powers of the elected school board.² Even so, it is unlikely the board would have been dissolved had it not been for a confluence of significant events. This chapter examines the series of events that led to the fateful vote.

The most publicly disconcerting of those events was the school board's feud with the system's superintendent. It is the feud and the scandal it created that provided the

legislature with the needed justification for the dissolution of the school board. But while the feud served as the public justification for dissolving the board, the legislature acted for less visible reasons.

This chapter begins with a presentation of a timeline of events in the feud between the school board and Superintendent Iris Metts that precipitated the dissolution of the school board. It begins with Superintendent Iris Metts's hiring in 1999 and ends with the Assembly's vote to dissolve the school board in 2002. The timeline is meant to do two things. First it will give the reader a better understanding of the relationship between the school board and superintendent, important members of the school cartel. Second, it will give the reader an indication of the complexity of the education arena in which the relationship existed. The rest of the chapter examines the story behind the story. That is, the events and issues that all but made the school board's dissolution inevitable. What will become evident is that the feud was only the final and most prominent event in a series of events ending in the denouement of the board's dissolution.

Timeline of Significant Events in the School Board-Superintendent Feud

In 1999, Prince George's County had a ten member board consisting of nine district elected members and one student member.³ Each elected member resided in the district he or she represented. The elected board members included five African American members; Marilyn Bland, James Henderson, Kenneth Johnson, Bernard Phifer, and Board Chairman Alvin Thornton.⁴ The board had four white members, Robert Callahan, Angela Como, Doyle Niemann, and Catherine Smith.

A New Superintendent is Hired

On June 17, 1999, Delaware Secretary of Education Iris Metts became PGCPSS' second African American and first female superintendent. Metts's selection was not unanimous with the board split 6 to 3 (Nakamura 1999c). Members Callahan, Como, Johnson, Niemann, Smith, and Thornton voted for Metts while members Bland, Henderson, and Phifer voted for Jacqueline Brown, a Howard County school administrator.

Those voting for Brown preferred someone who had knowledge of the county and as a result could more easily navigate the county's political waters. Brown lived in Prince George's and had ties to Prince George's County Executive Wayne Curry. In contrast, those voting for Metts preferred someone with no ties to the county. In their view, being an outsider would allow Metts to implement needed changes without having to worry about upsetting political alliances. They also believed her appointment might appease state officials who had been critical of the board.

The board members who did not vote for Metts pledged to give her their full support nonetheless. Bland said, "I'm confident that if that person receives support, the person will be successful. We as a board must be supportive, and I'm willing to do that. I'm ready for a number one school system" (Nakamura 1999c). At the announcement of her hiring, the board trumpeted Metts's political skills and ability to work with multiple constituents. Board member Callahan said of Metts, "One of her best attributes is her ability to garner the support of various stakeholders. She has the ability to deal with a legislative body, having worked for the governor and with the legislature. She has the

ability to negotiate through the political process without being swayed” (Nakamura 1999d).

A sign of potential problems to come in the board-superintendent relationship appeared at the first school board meeting Metts attended. She turned heads by taking a seat alongside school board members. In the past, superintendents sat facing the board not with it. Some board members were not comfortable with Metts sitting with the board, and asked Metts to move. Wanting to be seen as an equal, Metts declined to move. This gesture offended some board members who reminded her that she was an employee. The board voted on where Metts could sit and allowed her to sit beside them as an expression of solidarity. The first seeds of the feud to follow were sown.

Metts took her position as a change agent to heart and began to make changes almost immediately.⁵ Less than two months into the job, she made several staffing changes. Metts directed the administration to stop hiring uncertified teachers. She also cut about 150 central office positions and reassigned a number of veteran principals. Her actions drew an immediate negative response from the Association of Supervisory and Administrative School Personnel (ASASP), the principals’ union. The union argued that Metts’s actions were arbitrary and done without first talking to principals. It also considered the transfer of some administrators to schools a demotion. The relationship between Metts and ASASP soured, quickly became contentious, and remained that way throughout Metts’s tenure. A board member speaking about the relationship between Metts and the Executive Director of ASASP, Doris Reed, said “Doris and Iris were at loggerheads from the beginning.”⁶

In early 2000 another sign of tension between the board and superintendent surfaced. As part of her push to improve academic performance, Metts proposed making all kindergarten classes throughout the county full-day. Her plan received accolades from the State Superintendent Nancy Grasmick. When the board wavered on its commitment to the plan, Metts reportedly snapped at the board and told them to get out of her way (Nakamura 2000b). Of the incident, then Board Chairman Henderson is quoted as saying, “Dr. Metts needs to know she works for us, not the other way around” (Ibid.).

In August 2000, Metts angered middle-class parents when she proposed redistributing state grant money to needier schools. Metts wanted to take \$4 million from 90 middle class schools and transfer the funds to 93 schools with less affluent populations (Reeves 2000). Many of the schools to be stripped of the funds were located in Bowie and Laurel, cities in the northern parts of the county that contained sizeable white populations. Schools receiving the money generally lay inside the Beltway and had large majority African American student populations.

Protesting the plan at the school board’s August meeting, parents from the affected schools blasted Metts for taking from middle class communities to aid the county’s less privileged students (Ibid.). Parents also complained about the timing of the cuts coming so close to the beginning of the school year. On the other side, supporters of the schools receiving the funds praised Metts for correcting what they called gross “inequity” in Prince George’s schools. For its part, the board complained that it had not been adequately informed about the plan before it was proposed. Board member Callahan blamed Metts for the public outcry over her proposals. “Metts has made a lot of

major administrative decisions within her authority but has made them with very little notice to the board and community, and that's eliciting public outcry, right or wrong," he said (Nakamura 2000a). The board had complained during Metts's performance review in July that she did not communicate with the board well. Despite the complaint however, the board gave Metts a raise and a bonus.

In August, the board and Metts also became involved in a tug-o-war over staff bonuses. The board learned from media reports that Metts had given bonuses to her four top deputies (E. Lee 2000a). The board complained that Metts needed its permission to award the bonuses and demanded that Metts force the deputies to return them. The deputies threatened to quit if they were forced to return the bonuses. A stalemate ensued, leaving a resolution for a later date. Coincidentally or not, all four deputies, like Metts, were outsiders from Delaware. Some system insiders derisively referred to them as the "Delaware gang."

The County's Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP) scores were released in November 2000. MSPAP was the cornerstone of the state's assessment program, Maryland School Performance Program (MSPP), begun in 1991. This program was designed to be more rigorous and to set higher standards than the state's previous testing program. Instead of focusing on minimal competencies, MSPP focused on proficiency. PGCPS had consistently ranked near the bottom in district comparisons.

The county's 2000 scores were flat; this showed no improvement from the previous year.⁷ On January 31, 2001, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) placed four PGCPS schools on the state watch list containing consistently

underperforming schools.⁸ It also removed one school. A total of 15 Prince George's County schools were now on the list. The only system with more schools on the list of 102 schools was Baltimore city which had 85 schools on the list.⁹ At the time board members blamed inadequate funding for the lackluster performance (Reeves and Nakamura 2001).

Meanwhile the tug-of-war between the board and Metts over the bonuses continued. In March 2001, the board voted to sue the deputies for the return of the bonuses even though a lawsuit might cost more than the \$45,000 in bonuses (Nakamura 2001b). The test of wills over the bonuses exploded in June when the board gave the deputies an ultimatum; return the money or resign. Metts, who had the support of County Executive Wayne Curry and most state legislators, offered to forgo her own bonuses to pay for those of her deputies but the board refused her offer. She also threatened to resign if her deputies left. The issue was resolved when the board allowed the deputies to keep the money in return for Metts taking the blame for the problem and moving her seat to face the board at board meetings (Nakamura 2001d).

After the skirmish over the bonuses, State Superintendent Nancy Grasmick sent the board a letter warning them that if the board and Metts did not make a better effort to get along, she might withhold funds from the school system (Nakamura 2001e). Supporters of the board objected to Grasmick's threat, and some including Maryland Senator Paul Pinsky (D-Prince George's), County Council members Issac Gourdine (D) and Thomas Hendershot (D), and former school board chairman Alvin Thornton, wrote letters to Grasmick. Copies of all of the letters managed to find their way into the *Washington Post* (Letters 2001).

Pinsky put the blame squarely on Metts in writing, “Mistakes have been made by the school administration in its implementation of certain policies. If looking to place blame on an identifiable entity, you would probably be better served to look at direct line supervision within the administration.” Gourdine, also a Metts critic accused state leaders of “board bashing” and “constantly making [a] public meal of the children of Prince George's.” He added, “None of our elected officials have ever mentioned the fact that our schools have been constantly and egregiously under-funded compared to schools around the region.” Hendershot also focused on school funding when writing, “For the State Superintendent of Schools to threaten funding for the School System with the state's second largest low-income student population is unconscionable.” For his part Thornton complained about the way the board was being treated compared to other agencies. “Compare and contrast the way management accountability in education is handled in the county to the way it is applied to public safety and public health administration. The former is too often undisciplined and personality based, and the latter is carefully designed and managed journalistically to minimize information flow and negative impact,” Thornton wrote (Ibid.).

Ten days after Grasmick's letter was sent, the school board held a retreat at which time Metts was to receive her annual review (Nakamura 2001f). The board voted on a motion to fire Metts but the motion fell one vote short. In lieu of firing her, the board gave Metts a negative review and denied her a bonus. The review was leaked to the media. Metts was infuriated the private review was made public. The next day the board apologized for the release despite some board members objecting to making a public apology (Ibid.). Privately, some members believed Metts may have leaked the review

herself in an attempt to embarrass the board and garner more sympathy for herself. Metts decided to appeal the board's bonus denial to the Maryland State Board of Education in August. It would be months before the case was to be heard. Meanwhile, the General Assembly increased its attention on PGCPS and the school board.

Restructuring Gains Momentum in the General Assembly

On November 7, 2001 Maryland House Appropriations Committee Chairman Howard Rawlings (D-Baltimore) held a status hearing on PGCPS. Rawlings, a Baltimore delegate, had been a long-time critic of the Prince George's County school board. He was also one of the first to advocate board restructuring. Ostensibly, the hearing was held to receive an update on PGCPS's progress in addressing the finding of a 1998 system performance audit.¹⁰ A similar hearing held in February was so contentious that the Prince George's House delegation voted to reconstitute the board immediately afterward. The county's Senate delegation nixed the proposal however. According to the leader of the Prince George's House delegation, Delegate Rushern Baker III (D), the upcoming hearing would set the tone for what came next. "What comes out of this meeting could either say to the delegation that it's [reconstitution] not necessary, the school board is on the right track. Or, it could also be a meeting in which people will come out and say we're in trouble, we should do something," said Baker (Trejos 2001a).

Like Rawlings, Baker had been an outspoken critic of the school board. At the time, his children were enrolled in the county's public schools, and as a parent he saw firsthand some of the problems affecting PGCPS. Baker considered the quality of the county's schools the most important issue facing the county and made improving the

school system one of his highest priorities. Both Rawlings and Baker usually sided with Metts.

The hearing was much less contentious than the earlier hearing. However, going into the hearing the outlook was not so optimistic. Earlier in the day, Board Chairman Kenneth Johnson sent a memo to Metts forbidding her from attending a morning meeting with county delegates. The memo also directed Metts not to say why she would not attend the meeting. The memo outraged Rawlings who grilled the board about it (Trejos and Reeves 2001). Although school officials tried to show the school system had improved, some board members believed the hearing was a set-up; an opportunity for the state legislators to gather more fuel for their attempt to restructure the board (Ibid.).

The board members may have been right. Less than two weeks later, no less than eight House bills restructuring the county school board were unveiled at a public hearing (Trejos 2001b). Some bills called for an all appointed board. Some called for a mixture of elected and appointed board members. Some kept the elected board but changed election districts or changed board procedures. One bill would have put the board's configuration up for referendum.

While momentum in to change the board increased in the House, the Senate remained less desirous of change. Of the eight county Senators, three were former educators and another was an ally of board Chairman Johnson.¹¹ They were reluctant to take the drastic step of restructuring the board. One interviewed Senator said he hoped the problems with the board would be resolved without their intervention.

In late November 2001, the school board and Metts held a retreat meant to repair their strained relationship. They agreed to work together to improve system performance,

but the good will did not last long. On December 15, the school board ordered an audit of Metts's use of grant money. Metts had used grant money earmarked for English language classes and reducing class size to cover a textbook shortage. The board also made it known that it was upset with Metts because she has not publicly opposed ongoing efforts in the General Assembly to restructure the school board. Members questioned Metts's loyalty to the board as well as her stated desire to improve her relationship with the board (Trejos 2001c).

The Endgame

Late January 2002, the board prohibited Metts from signing any contract above \$5,000. The action was taken after Metts signed ten-year lease agreements with five county churches to use their buildings for Head Start classes. The board was upset that Metts did not get their approval before hand. Metts claimed she informed the board of her plans and took the position that she did not have to wait for a board vote to sign a contract. "You have no knowledge of the number of contracts that we need to expedite. You will literally bring the system to a halt," Metts warned (Trejos 2002a). Board member Angela Como who voted for the restriction said, "If we can do nothing else, we must demand accountability" (Ibid.). Board member Doyle Niemann who voted against the measure said, "It's paranoia run rampant. This is micromanaging of the worst kind" (Ibid.). Delegate Rawlings said of the boards' action, "It is the worst example in state history of micromanaging by a school board. It's going to disrupt the ability of the superintendent to carry out her job. I think it's the most irresponsible decision ever made by this board" (Ibid.).

Two days later on January 28, the 2002 MSPAP scores were released. The county's composite score dropped to 28.3% from 31% in 2001 (Maryland State Department of Education 2002).¹² The state average dropped from 45.3% to 43.7%. It should be noted that test scores dropped in most districts in the state. Scores dropped by more than ten points in 120 schools across the state. The 120 schools was more than three times the number of schools that had experienced large drops the previous year (Aizenman and Schutle 2002). The drops across the state were so precipitous that several jurisdictions challenged the validity of the results (Trejos 2002b). Despite the widespread concern about the tests, board members blamed Metts for the decline. Chairman Johnson said, "I think the data speaks for itself. I don't believe enough focus has been put on improving the academic performance of the school system. I want to see what her plan is to correct the problem" (Ibid.).

MSDE also added five more county schools to the state's takeover watch list. The total number of county schools on the list was now 20. Again Johnson put the blame squarely on Metts saying the poor performance was a result of Metts not doing her job properly (Reeves 2002a). Ironically, Johnson also said that the chronic underfunding of PGCPs was not to blame for the decline. Never mind that insufficient funding had been the school board's standard response when it was confronted on the school system's poor performance. The board again contemplated firing Metts. This time there appeared to be six votes in favor of firing her. Told of this, Metts offered to resign.

On February 2, Chairman Johnson and Metts met to negotiate a contract buyout, but the meeting ended without an agreement. Later that day in a 6 to 3 vote, the board fired Metts. Members Kenneth Johnson, Angela Como, James Henderson, Robert

Callahan, Felicia Lasley, and Marilyn Bland voted for the firing. Members Doyle Niemann, Catherine Smith, and Bernard Phifer voted against it. The *Washington Post* reported that the board was negotiating with Jaqueline Brown, the Howard County school administrator who had finished second to Metts in 1999 (Trejos 2002c). The next day, the three dissenting board members sought and received a 10-day court injunction blocking Metts's dismissal. The judge subsequently ruled that Metts must be given 45 days notice before being dismissed. At the same time, Metts, citing a lack of due process, appealed her firing to the state Board of Education.

Metts's firing galvanized state legislators. County Delegate Rushern Baker and Senator Pinsky both introduced emergency legislation to create a crisis management panel that would oversee the school board and approve its decisions. The panel would exist until a new board was created in the fall. The county delegation in the House voted 15 to 3 in favor of the measure. A vote of county senators was delayed. Some senators were still hesitant to act while others wanted to focus on a more permanent change. In the meantime, the earlier proposals for a more permanent restructuring of the county's education leadership were making their way through the Assembly.

In a February 11th ruling that stunned everyone, the State Board unanimously ruled that according to state law no superintendent can be fired without first getting the permission of the state superintendent. The law had not been applied before because boards unhappy with a superintendent usually negotiated a buyout rather than fire them. Although Grasmick gave no indication of what her decision would be if a request was made, she had been a consistent supporter of Metts. The school board considered appealing the State Board's ruling to Maryland's Circuit Court.

On February 14, the House of Delegates voted 94 to 29 in favor of legislation stripping power from the county school board and creating an emergency management panel. Of the 21 Prince George's delegates voting on the measure, 17 voted in favor of it and 4 voted against it.¹³ Momentum to pass emergency legislation again stalled in the Senate as the sense of urgency faded after the state board's ruling. The Senate preferred to focus on the long-term restructuring proposals. However by the middle of March, it still had not voted on a restructuring proposal. The Assembly had until April 8, the last day of the current legislative session, to pass any legislation.

Exasperated with the slow pace of the Senate, Delegate Rawlings threatened to deny millions in state aid to the county unless the Senate voted on the board proposal. And on March 20, the Appropriations Committee voted to withhold \$34 million from the county. Baker, a member of the committee, said the House needed to send the Senate a message. "It's time to do something or get the hell out of the way," he said (Schwartzman 2002c).

On March 23, the Prince George's school board approved four of the five Head Start leases that it had chided Metts for signing in January.¹⁴ On March 25, the full House passed another bill linking state aid for the county with board restructuring. This House plan called for five of the nine board members to be elected in November and the remaining four to be appointed by County Executive Curry, with Governor Parris Glendening's approval (Mosk and Aizenman 2002). The bill also called for a 2006 referendum that would allow the county to return to an all-elected board. Despite complaints of being blackmailed, the county's Senate delegation, in a 7 to 1 vote, agreed on its own restructuring proposal.¹⁵

The Senate version was more radical than the House's. It called for the current board to be replaced on June 1 with an interim, all-appointed board with members chosen jointly by Curry and Glendening. The measure also replaced the superintendent with a chief executive officer (CEO). The new board would choose an interim CEO and begin a search for a permanent one (Metts would be eligible for both positions). In 2006, the interim board would be replaced by an elected board. All of the new board members would be elected by the entire county although five of the nine would have to live in specific districts within the county. The move to at-large elections was meant to eliminate the perceived parochialism and pandering of the current board (Montgomery and Reeves 2002). The Senate's version also increased the amount of state aid the county received from \$34 to \$43million.

On April 8, both the House and Senate approved the Senate bill. After the votes, Delegate Baker who has long advocated restructuring said of the vote, "It's a new day in Prince George's County. This is going to bring great change" (Schwartzman and Trejos 2002). The next day the search for nine new Prince George's County school board members began.

The Story Behind the Story: External and Internal Pressures on the Education Regime

A number of factors contributed to the disruption of the school cartel. The dissolution of the school board may have been the focusing event that opened a window for change. However, that window probably would not have opened had the regime not been under considerable pressure already. The regime was under increasing stress from

both external and internal forces. On their own, each may not have had sufficient strength to bring about change. However, together these pressures combined to create a groundswell that swept the board away. A discussion of these pressures follows.

Increased State Control: The Link between Funding, Accountability, and Education Reform in Maryland

The report, *A Nation at Risk* (U.S. Commission on Excellence in Education 1983) focused public attention on the connection between educational performance and the United State's economic performance. The quality of America's educational system was seen as a threat to America's economic superiority. Since the report's release waves of reforms have swept across the nation.

The excellence movement was the first wave of education reform to develop after the report's release (Fuhrman 2003). The movement focused on raising standards for students and teachers, increasing graduation requirements, enhancing student assessments and strengthening teacher certification requirements. Many of the reforms in this wave came from state-level efforts. Thus the first wave was seen as "top down" reform. In reaction to state level reform, the second wave of reform, the restructuring movement, focused on "bottom up" reform efforts. Reforms in this wave focused on in-school efforts such as longer class times, increased planning time for teachers, and in-school governance changes. Site-based management grew out of this wave. The third and current wave of education reform attempts to integrate the first two waves. The standards movement focuses on delineating specific content and performance standards for students and schools through state-level programs. Educational quality and accountability have become the buzzwords of this third wave of reform. Efforts have manifested themselves

most in the widespread use of statewide assessment programs.

Maryland has been an active participant in state level involvement in education reform efforts. The state has had a statewide testing program since 1971 when the General Assembly passed a school accountability law designed to improve education by making state and local officials responsible for meeting their own educational goals (Barnes 1972). In 1991 Maryland began a new school performance program: the Maryland School Performance Program (MSPP). Instead of focusing on minimal competencies, MSPP focused on performance and proficiency. The program was lauded for its emphasis on rigor and excellence (Haigh 1996). However, after several years of implementation it became clear that raising standards alone would not bring about the statewide transformations the state sought.

State Superintendent Nancy Grasmick made it clear that addressing the funding disparity between school districts within the state was vital to continuing the progress of the reforms the state had begun. Without addressing the funding issue, standards would not be met because districts would be able to resist increased accountability for meeting them. “How can you hold us accountable when we don’t have enough to meet the standard,” would be the response of districts not meeting the higher state standards according to Grasmick (Interview with Nancy Grasmick 1994). For the State Superintendent increased funding and increased accountability were linked. This was also the position of Governor Glendening. He was particularly concerned about the funding disparities between wealthy and poor districts and pledged additional funding for education saying, “Education should not be a lottery that depends on where you were born” (Hill 1994a).

Glendening formed a task force to study funding disparities between Maryland's school districts in 1997. The goals of the Task Force on Education Funding Equity, Accountability, and Partnerships were to, "determine if inequities or gaps exist in funding programs earmarked for Maryland students who are believed to be 'at risk' of failing in school, look at current accountability systems to provide assurances to the General Assembly and the public that school systems and school leaders are held accountable for meeting appropriate educational and fiscal standards, and see if the State can better leverage the money it currently spends and make use of all available public and private resources" (Task Force on Education Funding Equity, Accountability, and Partnerships 1998). Although the task force examined education funding throughout the state, special attention was paid to Prince George's County because of its efforts to end court-ordered busing.

Settlement of the desegregation suit would require increased state funding. The Task Force was asked to examine the settlement proposal and possibly make recommendations for state action. County officials hoped that the Task Force would recommend the state endorse the settlement thus increasing the likelihood of securing the increased funding. Unfortunately for settlement supporters, the Task Force declined to recommend the State accept the settlement in its current form.

It was clear the Task Force had concerns about PGCPs governance. It concluded that, "funding and accountability issues cannot be separated, and that any new funding commitments to Prince George's County should be accompanied by appropriate accountability measures consistent with the State's constitutional obligation to provide a 'thorough and efficient' education for every school-age child in the State" (Ibid., 67).

The Task Force recommended a performance audit of PGCPS. It further recommended the appointment of a “management oversight panel” (MOP) of county residents to monitor the progress of the audit and implementation of its recommendations. The panel was to give periodic progress reports to the General Assembly, county government, and the board of education. From the Task Force’s report, it was clear that any additional state funding for PGCPS would be tied to additional accountability measures. It was also clear that the state was willing to use its power to force compliance by county education authorities.

Paying the Price to End Court-Ordered Busing

In July 1996, the school board asked the U.S. District Court to lift the desegregation order that had been in place for 24 years. As a condition of lifting the order, the board wanted Judge Peter Messitte to force the county and the State of Maryland to provide the funds needed to build and enhance neighborhood schools so continued busing would be unnecessary. Judge Messitte ordered a full-scale review of the school system’s desegregation efforts instead. The order surprised and worried the board and the NAACP, the other litigant in the case. Both feared the judge would lift the court order without requiring the county or state to fund the board’s neighborhood schools plan. The plan called for the building or renovation of 13 schools over six years. It also called for PGCPS to strengthening efforts to reduce the achievement gap. The judge’s decision forced the lawsuit’s parties to work out a settlement. According to School Board Chairman Kenneth Johnson, “The horse was out of the barn. It put us in the position where we had to do something” (Montgomery and Neal 1996).

In March 1998, the school board, County Executive Curry, and the NAACP reached agreement on a settlement of the desegregation suit. The settlement came after Governor Parris Glendening agreed to have the state pay for a greater share of school construction.¹⁶ The state's assistance was crucial to getting the settlement. Two years earlier the plan was sidetracked by the county's failure to pass a referendum repealing TRIM, the 1978 referendum that capped county property taxes. Not only did voters refuse to repeal TRIM, they voted instead to strengthen the restriction by requiring any rise in county taxes to be subject to voter approval. The outcome of the vote made it apparent that the extra money necessary to build the new schools was not going to come from the county. The money would have to come from the state.

Despite the governor's commitment, getting all of the needed funding for the settlement was not assured. Any additional commitment of state resources to Prince George's would have to be approved by Maryland's General Assembly. Getting that approval was in no way guaranteed. According to interviewed legislators, there was a general sentiment in the Assembly against assisting the county because of TRIM. Legislators questioned why they should pay for Prince George's projects when county residents were unwilling to do so? There also was resistance to giving money to a system many considered mismanaged. A county delegate said, "We had to go before our colleagues in the General Assembly and ask for money for our system. There were all of the headlines all the time about all of the stuff that was going wrong. The kids weren't doing well, and there was all this infighting. We had to intervene."

Recognizing the possibility that a court might force the state to provide the funding, a number of legislators insisted on strings being attached to any state funds for

the county. Delegate Howard Rawlings (D-Baltimore) said, “I’m not supporting an extra dime for Prince George’s County schools without significant accountability proposals in place” (Editorial 1997). Rawlings added, the “legislature is not going to allocate significant sums of money to address the well-documented problems of the Prince George’s County school system without a high degree of accountability” (Spinner 1997). As chairman of the House Appropriation Committee, Rawlings had the power to make good on his declarations. Rawlings was not alone in his position. House Speaker Casper Taylor (D-Allegany) said, “I’ve indicated to them that to the extent Prince George’s County can demonstrate more efficiency, more accountability, the more support they would receive in the legislature. That’s a fundamental statement” (Ibid., 1997).

Because the school board was desperate for state funding, the legislature was able to force the school board to agree to accept the recommendations of the Commission and submit to increased oversight. That oversight came in the form of the Management Oversight Panel (MOP).

The Performance Audit and MOP

MGT of America, Inc was selected in January 1998 to conduct a system-wide performance review of PGCPS. MGT released its final report in July. The performance audit found multiple problems with PGCPS’s management and governance. Auditors made over 300 recommendations for improvement which they estimated would net PGCPS almost \$125 million in savings (MGT of America, Inc. 1998). Auditors found absent or loose internal controls over school property and funds, and school staff improperly trained to handle accounts. Auditors also found many departments lacking in

focus and recommended the reorganization of several as well as the elimination of unnecessary staff. Upgrades to PGCPs's technology systems were encouraged. The auditors also found that administrative staff at schools were not being assigned based on any specified allocation formula or identified need. Further, school administrators were not being held accountable for implementing the superintendent's school reorganization plan which the auditors commended.¹⁷

The school board and Superintendent Jerome Clark appeared to be receptive to the audit's findings, at least publicly. Clark said, "I think on the whole they did a good job of holding up a mirror to the school system. We want to make sure that we don't see ourselves as victims and hunker down like we are being prosecuted. These are legitimate recommendations, and we're going to aggressively address them. I might not agree with all of the recommendations, but I think we need to address them" (Frazier 1998b).

School board Chairman Alvin Thornton said "I think it's a good departure point for the board to pressure itself and its various constituencies to move. All and all, as audits go, they are initially painful and will present things that on first blush appear to be problematic but on further examination really are things that can be addressed" (Ibid.).

Privately however, board members disputed the audit's assumptions and findings. Board members also complained that, "anytime people wanted to say something good or bad about the system, they'll latch on to one of the key words from the Management Oversight Panel or the audit. The MOP was a particular source of irritation for board members who saw the panel as a personal attack on the board. Members believed the audit was "rigged" and was "orchestrated" by board opponents. One board member noted that the MOP only lasted as long as the elected board. "People would say, 'we

can't do without the [MOP]'. The day after the school board was disbanded; the Management Oversight Panel was disbanded. There was no longer any more need for the school system to be overseen by the [MOP] since there was no more elected school board for them to harass." Proponents of the MOP counter that the panel was necessary to insure changes were made because the elected school board was not inclined to make the changes on its own.

A year after the MOP was appointed its relationship with the school administration was quite strained. Because the panel had no enforcement powers it was marginalized by school officials according to the panel's head, Artis Hampshire-Cowan (Nakamura 2001a). She said school leaders had been slow to provide them with information and frequently ignored their advice. She also complained in the panel's first report to the General Assembly in January 1999 that PGCPs did not seem to be taking the audit recommendations seriously. For example, Hampshire-Cowan cited the audit's recommendation that PGCPs could save \$17.6 million by cutting 344 staff positions. Not only did Clark not cut those positions (he only cut 31 positions) he added 128 new positions (Nakamura and Pierre 1999).

Delegate Rawlings blasted the school board. He said, "While they give the rhetoric of being concerned and the rhetoric of commitment . . . we find the bureaucracy, the old way of doing business. In the absence of leadership, I will certainly act as a responsible budget committee chairman to protect the public's investment" (Pierre and Nakamura 1999). Just days after the MOP's report Rawlings began drafting legislation designed to transfer power to an appointed board and executive team. The superintendent would be replaced by a CEO who would manage the day-to-day operations.

Rawlings' proposal to restructure PGCPs provoked responses from most county officials that ranged from the strong opposition of the county council and school board to the more subdued response of state lawmakers. At the time many county officials were united in their opposition to any attempt to abolish the elected board even though they agreed changes had to be made. County Council Chairman M.H. Jim Estepp said, "Subjecting ourselves to appropriate scrutiny by the General Assembly is part of what you have to do when you get state money, but [the bill] sounds like overkill. I'm absolutely against anything that takes away the authority of the elected school board" (Pierre and Argetsinger 1999). Delegate Barbara Frush said, "I think allowing anyone to take over our school system is not a good avenue to pursue. I think we are all very concerned. The family of Prince George's really truly knows how best to take care of itself. We are under the gun. It is indeed something that we need to take care. We need to take care of it in-house" (Ibid.).

In response to demands that he stay out of Prince George's business, Rawlings said, "I'm elected by the Baltimore voters, but I have a statewide responsibility. I'm also an African American in a position to make an impact on a county with the largest black student population in the state" (Reeves 2002b). Rawlings said he did not want Prince George's to become another Baltimore. "It's déjà vu all over again. I heard the same rhetoric in Baltimore. I heard the same defensiveness. I heard the same resistance on the part of their legislators" (Pierre 1999). Indeed, Rawlings proposal for Prince George's was almost identical to the one he proposed for Baltimore a few years earlier.

The Baltimore Settlement as Template

In 1994, the American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland filed a class-action lawsuit against the State of Maryland. In 1995, the city of Baltimore filed its own suit against the state. Both lawsuits contended the state had not done enough to provide the children of Baltimore city with the “adequate” education they had a right to under Maryland’s Constitution.¹⁸

Legislators from the rest of the state countered that Baltimore’s problems were more the result of poor management than low funding. Notable critics included some Prince George’s County legislators. Prince George’s County Delegate Timothy F. Maloney said in words eerily similar to those that would be said about PGCPS in 2002, “It is pernicious to suggest the problem of the school system in Baltimore is a lack of money. The real issues involve standards, leadership and management, not money” (Babington and Tapscott 1994).

Instead of risking the outcome of a court case, the state tried to negotiate a settlement with Baltimore. Governor Glendening made it clear that he would not agree to additional funding for Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS) without increased academic accountability and management reform (Babington 1996). After months of negotiation Baltimore and the state reached an agreement on a potential settlement.

The agreement called for the existing school board and superintendent to be removed and replaced with a board jointly appointed by the mayor and the governor and a new CEO appointed by the new board (Orr 1999). Further, the mayor would have to relinquish control of school personnel and procurement decisions. That power would rest fully in the new board. The school system also had to develop a “master plan to improve

academic achievement,” and develop an evaluation system that would report progress on reform. In return for these power concessions, Baltimore would receive an additional \$254 million in state aid over five years.

The Baltimore settlement worried legislators from other jurisdictions. Governor Parris Glendening campaigned on a pledge to increase state spending on education by trimming spending in other areas. The fear that the extra funds for Baltimore would come from funding for other jurisdictions led officials from several counties, including Prince George’s and Montgomery counties to initially oppose the plan. In exchange for support of the plan, Prince George’s and Montgomery legislators wanted additional funding directed to other districts throughout the state with the two counties receiving the largest portions. Delegate James C. Rosapepe (D-Prince George's), vice chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee said flatly, “Our position is really very simple: We’re not going to vote for the Baltimore City deal unless we get the same thing for Prince George's County children” (Neal 1997).

After intense negotiations, a bill containing the Baltimore plan and additional funding for other districts—though not as much as Montgomery and Prince George’s had wanted—narrowly passed the House. A few days later it passed in the Senate and on April 10, 1997 the settlement became law. Despite securing additional funding, most Montgomery County legislators voted against the plan and no Prince George’s legislators supported the settlement plan.

Interestingly, some on Prince George’s school board saw what Baltimore had done as a template for the county. Having seen that Baltimore’s lawsuit was effective in getting the city additional funding, they assumed the county now had more leverage. If

the state did not agree to give the county the extra funding needed to settle the desegregation lawsuit, the county would sue the state for it. Of course, the Baltimore settlement also served as a template for the state. If Prince George's was to get more money from the state, it would have to submit to the same sort of accountability measures imposed on Baltimore.

The Role of Delegate Howard Rawlings

The Baltimore settlement probably would not have occurred without the input of Delegate Rawlings. A former math professor who had long had an intense focus on education and improving its quality, Rawlings demanded that those responsible for the education of children be held responsible for providing those children with a quality education. As chairman of a powerful House Appropriations Committee, Rawlings had the power to support his convictions. Time and time again, he used the power of his position to force through legislation designed to elicit more accountability from Baltimore City Public Schools officials (Orr 1999). It was Rawlings who was responsible for the requirement that Baltimore craft a master plan to improve student performance and put in place a system to evaluate progress executing the plan. These actions made the settlement more acceptable to fellow legislators. Rawlings also used the power of his chairmanship to secure enough funding to make the settlement acceptable to Baltimore officials.

Critics of Rawlings called him a bully who abused his authority. Rawlings saw himself as an advocate for children, particularly African American children. When the *Baltimore Sun* named Rawlings one of its Marylander's of the year, it said, "He has never wavered in his belief that whatever problems poverty or an intransigent bureaucracy may

impose on them, city children can learn and succeed” (Marylanders of the Year 1997). The award was given to Rawlings after he had pushed through legislation to restructure Baltimore’ school board despite opposition from constituents. Speaking shortly after Rawlings’ death in 2003, Maryland House Speaker Michael Busch said of him, “He was the guy that came out of public housing and treasured his education opportunities ... He believed the key to success for minorities and for working-class people was to gain the education to succeed in the work force and to participate in all the rich benefits of being part of the American dream” (Stuckey 2003). Rawlings applied that philosophy to Baltimore—and to Prince George’s County.

Rawlings first turned his attention to the performance of Prince George’s schools in 1997. In June he sent a letter notifying Superintendent Clark that he intended to hold a hearing on the performance of schools in Baltimore and Prince George’s. Rawlings wrote, “Low test scores and declines in performance in a large number of schools, as well as special education and staffing issues, all give warning of developing challenges in the school system” (Abramowitz and Frazier 1997). County officials believed the letter amounted to political gamesmanship on Rawlings’ part. They viewed Rawlings’ involvement in Prince George’s education as retribution for the county delegation’s opposition to increased funding for Baltimore. School board member Doyle Niemann said of Rawlings’ effort, “He’s trying to humiliate and embarrass the county and impose his will over everybody in the state. This is all about power; it’s not about the children. It’s not about what’s really happening in the schools” (Pierre and Argetsinger 1999).

Others thought Rawlings interest was genuine. When asked why Rawlings was so involved in Prince George’s education, one interview respondent said Rawlings, “saw

great potential in Prince George's unlike Baltimore that had deep systemic problems.”

Rawlings himself said of the county, “It's outrageous for this county, given the education pool and talent, to have a second-class public school system. I don't see how they tolerate it” (Reeves 2002b). Rawlings clearly was unable to tolerate it. It was clear that as long as Delegate Rawlings was around, PGCPSS was going to have to submit to state oversight. Rawlings was going to continue to apply pressure to the regime.

The School Cartel's Response to Attacks

Despite their opposition to his involvement, the school board had to take Rawlings' threat seriously. The school board responded to Rawlings by letting it be known that the board would not renew Superintendent Clark's contract when it expired in July 1999. Further they indicated that Clark would be replaced with someone from outside the system. So the board members who voted for Metts were voting for the most “outside” of the outsiders. The board hoped these actions would be enough to assuage Rawlings and other state officials.

MOP chair Hampshire-Cowan was unmoved by the board's action. She maintained Clark was being made the scapegoat for the board's inability to solve a much bigger problem. She said, “It's a little troublesome to me to make Jerome Clark the problem and thus the solution. A number of issues need to be addressed. . . . You can get the best superintendent in the world, and if the community is not concerned and the school board is not acting properly as a board, there will be continuing problems” (Pierre 1999). Rawlings was also skeptical of the board's decision. “When there are problems, school boards inevitably will dump the superintendent to cover their ineptness, and therefore hope people believe they have solved the problem. I have never given the

impression that the problem with Prince George's schools was Jerome Clark. The problems are deep, embedded and can only be solved by major restructuring of the system” (Nakamura 1999a). Clark’s response was to announce his retirement at the end of his contract.

The board’s action should have been expected because this is what school cartels do. When criticism is directed at it, the board will try to deflect the criticism by placing blame on the superintendent. Wilbur Rich writes, “Termination is routine if, in the judgment of the cartel, change, or the appearance of change, is needed. The cartel’s expectations of a superintendent are different from those of the public. They evaluate the superintendent according to their own internal needs. If their unity is jeopardized, then the superintendent is expendable” (Rich 1996, 7).

Another predictable response of regimes under attack is to argue that those questioning it are unqualified to judge it. Board member Angela Como said of the MOP, “A school system is a very complex entity. You can't just sit on a panel and look at a budget and make decisions about whether a magnet program should be continued or cut. People who are throwing stones do not know enough about the system” (Nakamura 1999b). Some board members also questioned the motives of the MOP. They cited Hampshire-Cowan’s close ties to County Executive Wayne Curry who had a tense relationship with the school board because of the budget. He had typically given the system less than requested, and had frequently criticized the board’s management of its budget.

The board agreed money was the issue but not the board’s handling of the system’s finances. Instead board members argued accusations of mismanagement were

excuses used by politicians in an attempt to get control of construction money. “The educational system became more of a football in a battle for resources because it was one of the few places in Prince George’s, especially in the late 1980s and 1990s, where there were discretionary resources that could be fought over. The large state and federal money that was coming in to settle the desegregation became a political football and people fought over it.”

So when Metts was hired as superintendent in 1999, the regime was already under pressure from the state. The disruption of the regime was already beginning as state officials sought to limit the regime’s authority. Underneath those external pressures, there were internal pressures that were also weakening the regime.

A Succession of Weak Superintendents

Dr. Metts joined an educational system that was in a state of turbulent transition. She replaced Jerome Clark who had been appointed superintendent in 1995. Clark was Deputy Superintendent under Superintendent Edward Felegy whom he replaced after serving only four years. Felegy had the misfortune of being in office when Maryland overhauled its testing program in 1992. The test results exposed the poor performance of PGCPs and accountability for the failure was placed on Felegy. Sensing he had lost the support of the community, Felegy announced his plans to retire at the conclusion of his contract.

Felegy was not helped by the fact that he was a white leader of a majority African American county with an even more predominately African American student population. Members of the African American population in the county wanted a black superintendent. In the early 1990s county blacks were beginning to flex their political

muscles and aiming to fill powerful positions in the county.¹⁹ It was clear that the next superintendent would be African American. Interestingly enough, according to a member of the board that chose Felegy, the county would have had a black superintendent in 1991 had the three African Americans on the board agreed to support Clark over Felegy. However, their inability to work together cost Clark the superintendency.

A career PGCPS employee, Clark was the consummate insider with strong ties throughout the administration. Nevertheless, Clark's tenure was troubled. In 1996, Clark was hit with a double punch, a larger than expected enrollment coupled with a higher than usual number of teachers leaving the system. As a result, PGCPS had to hire almost 1,500 teachers for the 1996-97 school year. A tall order for any system, the task was even more difficult for Prince George's because it had to compete with surrounding jurisdictions able to pay higher salaries. For example, the average teacher salary in Montgomery County was \$48,290 while it was \$41,396 in Prince George's (Maryland State Department of Education 1997). Montgomery also had higher maximum salaries than Prince George's.²⁰ As a result, the school system had to hire a number of provisionally certified teachers. For the school year, PGCPS had 900 provisionally licensed teachers representing 13% of the teaching staff. In comparison, 1.5% of Montgomery County's teachers were uncertified and 17% of Baltimore's teachers were uncertified (Lipton 1998). The high number of provisionally certified teachers in Prince George's added to a perception of declining educational quality.

In 1998, Maryland's State Department of Education (MSDE) declared nine Prince George's County "reconstitution eligible", meaning they were in danger of state takeover

if they did not make immediate improvements. Only Baltimore had more schools on the list: 79.²¹ The school board's response was to blame Clark. For his part, Clark tried to get ahead of the state and decided to "reconstitute" the six schools himself. He produced a plan to reorganize the staff at the schools and revamp the curriculum. Unfortunately, implementation of the plan was rushed and haphazard. The schools fared no better after the changes than before as a result (Ibid.).

In addition to these issues, there was a sense that Clark was not a strong leader because of his inability to control his administration. One respondent said of Clark's tenure as superintendent, "Clark was a nice guy. He came up through the system. He just couldn't say no to factions. Clark would say something, he would give a command and his deputy would countermand it, and what the deputy said would stand." The deputy was able to get away with doing this because, "people knew who to go to. It was like kids going to mommy and daddy. If mom said no and dad said yes, you know who to ask for." This made members of the board feel that Clark was ineffectual as a superintendent. Because of the problems Clark had with the administrators, board members looked for a superintendent capable of saying no to people. But administrators used to getting their way were not likely to back down without a fight.

An Entrenched Bureaucracy Will Not Acquiesce

Although Metts did not realize it at the time, she was walking into a poisoned environment. Before Superintendent Clark retired, he made a number of late-term appointments. The school board, wanting to give Metts as much hiring latitude as possible rescinded the appointments. The board's action angered many administrators. Administrators were further angered when the board selected Metts over their objections.

According to an interviewed union official, ASASP had opposed Metts's hiring because it had been told by Delaware unions that Metts was anti-union.

Administrators were also defensive after their portrayal in the performance audit. For example the performance audit found that 25 of the 70 positions in the overstuffed Division of Personnel were administrative positions. Further supervisors made up 36% of all administrators in the Division. Auditors noted of the Division's administrators, "several have been placed here because they've been ineffective in other administrative positions, especially at the school level" (MGT of America, Inc. 1998, vi).

Metts, wanting to show state officials she was serious about system accountability, made staffing one of her first priorities. Her decision to fire and/or reassign some administrators all but guaranteed a poor relationship with administrators and their union, ASASP.

Her relationship with administrators was not helped by the fact that most of her top deputies were from outside the system. They all came with Metts from Delaware. Some board members thought Metts needed to bring in outsiders. Asked about bringing in people from Delaware, board member Como responded, 'I think that's a terrific idea. She really needs an outside team that she can depend on. She's not going to get a straight story from people in the system" (Nakamura 1999e). Nonetheless, Metts's reliance on outsiders was seen by some system insiders as a commentary on the existing administration's quality and effectiveness. They saw the outsiders as a testament to Metts's lack of faith in the people presently in the system. That these deputies were white further emphasized for some how little Metts thought of the black administrators in the system. Metts's relationship with the ASASP was so confrontational that the union

hired former superintendent Clark as a consultant to help the union analyze Metts's personnel decisions and provide strategy on how to negotiate a new contract.

Metts's management style also alienated people. Some called her autocratic. While Metts garnered accolades from state and county officials, other constituencies were less complimentary. Some parents and administrators accused her of not seeking their input or making them a part of the process. Even Metts's supporters conceded that she did not have the best communication skills. However, Metts supporters claimed that many of those who claimed to be unhappy with Metts's style were really unhappy about the fact that she was changing what they had become accustomed to or had benefited from. For her part, Metts said, 'It's frightening to me that people say I am not listening to their concerns. I am. But no superintendent comes from the outside that would not plan dramatic changes. There will be those people who say they don't feel appreciated or valued. That is not true. We'll get through the growing pains' (Bhatti 2000a). One observer said of Metts, "There were a lot of internal issues. Dr. Metts was appointed by the board. She came from Delaware. She was a controversial figure. She had a lot of ideas but she didn't do a lot of the community work that needed to be done to build support for those ideas. She tried to do things top-down. They were maybe good ideas but they weren't sold to the community. So there was a lot of resistance to her ideas. Then there got to be, because it was controversial, people started drawing lines in the sand."

Metts represented a clear challenge to the status quo as far as administrators were concerned; a status quo in which administrators operated with impunity. The entrenched interests were under assault, but they were not going down without a fight. A respondent

described Metts's relationship with the ASASP as a "death match" and claimed union heads made it their mission to get rid of Metts.

Administrators are powerful members of the employment regime. Long after boards have changed or superintendents have left, administrators remain. They hold the institutional memory of the school system and the regime. Making enemies of them would make an already difficult job exhausting. However, dislodging those entrenched interests was necessary if the school system was going to produce the level of accountability demanded by the state. So once again Metts was put in a difficult position. She could either please state legislators or please administrators. She could not do both, and her relationship with administrators suffered as a result.

The School Board-Superintendent Relationship Becomes Problematic Quickly

In many school systems there is often at least occasional tension between the board and superintendent. For large urban school systems that are often struggling, a tense relationship is the norm (Rich 1996; Portz, Stein and Jones 1999; Mountford 2004). Each side feels pressure to show demonstrable improvements in a system confronted with a host of problems. Prince George's County was no different. That Metts and the board had a relationship headed on a downward trajectory is not surprising given the nature of the board-superintendent relationship. What is surprising about this relationship is just how bad it was and how quickly it got that way.

The dispute over where Metts could sit was a proxy for a larger dispute over the position of the superintendent vis-a vis the board. Metts saw herself as an equal. Members of the board clearly saw her as a subordinate. The same can be said of the dispute over the bonuses. The dispute was not about the money. The \$45,000 cost was a

mere drop-in-the-bucket in a nearly \$1billion school budget. Both sides acknowledged that the dispute was not about the money. For the board the dispute was about establishing a clear chain of command. Chairman Johnson said, “This has never been about the bonuses. This is about authority” (Nakamura 2001c). It was also about the board having second thoughts about its hiring of Metts.

The reality is there was tension between the school board and Metts even before Metts was officially hired. Board members felt pushed into hiring Metts by state legislators who demanded change. A board member said, “Purportedly, it is a board’s function to select the superintendent. She [Metts] was a slam dunk to be selected prior to us even realizing it. The politicians of the county had already pre-selected her.” There was no way Iris Metts was not going to be superintendent. It was preordained.” When the board chose Metts, it was trying to hire someone whom state legislators would approve. Those voting for Metts wanted to choose an outsider in order to prove they were serious about improving system performance. “I think they wanted someone to come in here and really take the reins to move forward with the school system, and they gave Dr. Metts carte blanche,” said Douglas J.J. Peters, a member of a state panel overseeing the district. “And then they decided, wait a second, we gotta get some of it back” (Trejos and Labbe 2002). Although some on the board believed they had to appease legislators, they were unhappy doing so. In some ways the dispute with Metts was the board’s way of pushing back against the state.

For some school board members, the dispute was simply a clash of personalities. A number of respondents suggested that sexism was also involved. Metts being a woman was a problem for some of the men on the school board. Metts’s being a black woman

was apparently a problem for some of the black men on the board. They did not like her challenging their authority. Although some interviewed board members deny that, other members talked about board members losing perspective in regards to Metts.

Board member Doyle Niemann (who later became a House Delegate) wrote in a letter to the *Washington Post*, “It's unfortunate that the situation has come to this point; it didn't have to. And it's even more unfortunate that as it plays out, all the parties are being forced by their own psychological logic into increasingly polarized positions” (Niemann 2001). He added, “The most disturbing part of this current situation is that most of my colleagues concede that the likely outcome of this controversy will be changes in the structure of the board -- and yet they continue to insist on pursuing a course of action that has no chance of success (Ibid.)” As one interview respondent said, the board put the nails in its own coffin.” Another respondent said, “We had a school system that did not want to change. It absolutely did not want to change. [The board] basically asserted itself as, ‘we are an elected school body. We are autonomous from the General Assembly and we don’t have to answer to you because we answer to the people.’ In retaliation for the increased state scrutiny, the school board started picking a fight with Dr. Metts. We gave the board an opportunity to self-regulate. The board refused.” The dispute with Metts was not the first time members of the board have acted against the board’s own self-interest.

The School Board Seals Its Fate

A campaign to overturn TRIM was launched in 1996. The campaign was led by business and civic leaders and supported by County Executive Curry, the County Council, and the Board of Education. Nevertheless, fighting between the board and the

county council and executive over the school budget caused some members on the board to threaten to not support the overturning of TRIM. The threat was made despite the fact that the school board had been especially vocal in its opposition to TRIM and had repeatedly faulted TRIM for the inability to provide the quality of education demanded by the state and others.

Board Chairman Marcy Canavan proposed a resolution announcing the board would not support the overturning of TRIM. She did this because she alleged the school system was being used by the county to get TRIM repealed but the county was not guaranteeing the school system would get its share of the extra revenue repealing TRIM would generate (Frazier and Neal 1996). Others felt the real reason for Canavan's action was her anger at the council and executive for denying the board's request to transfer funds within its budget. Board member Frederick C. Hutchinson said of Canavan's efforts, "I think it's crazy. Just because you're mad at the county executive and the county council, you can't take your eyes off the prize (Ibid.)."

Another example of the kind of disconnect that seemed to exist between the school board and other county actors occurred when the Prince George's County Chamber of Commerce gave Clark an Excellence in Education Award in early February 1998. Just a few days later someone leaked to the media that the majority of the school board had given Clark an average or below average rating on his job evaluation (Brown 1998). Clark received the lowest scores on his evaluation in the areas of communication and public relations and in management and operation of the school system (Ibid.). Although the board apologized to Clark for the leak, the timing of the evaluation's leak was rather suspicious. Adding to suspicion was the fact that the confidential evaluation

was leaked to the media before it was formally presented to Clark.²² One might surmise that some on the board were trying to use the media to deliberately undermine Clark.

The school board's use of the media in this way was not a onetime occurrence. Auditors noted their concerns over board members leaking to the press (MGT of America, Inc. 1998, v.). They even cited the leaking of information from closed meetings the auditors had with the school board during the audit. Several times during Metts's tenure, board members leaked confidential information to the media. In interviews, some board members admitted as much. They believed that since the board was a public body, the public should know what it was doing especially since the board was holding numerous closed meetings at the time.

Some board members were convinced that Metts was leaking information to the media in an attempt to make the board look bad. One board member so convinced Metts was leaking information recounted (in an interview) how the member set up a sting to catch Metts leaking information. The member sent Metts a memo that had supposedly been carbon copied (cc) to all of the other board members, but unbeknown to Metts, the board member kept all of the copies. The member had the memo hand carried to Metts by school board staff. The next day the memo's contents were in the newspaper. Metts complained to the board member about the board releasing the memo. The board member countered "the board couldn't have sent it because I have all of the carbon copies. The rest of the board doesn't even know about the memo." Both Metts and board members admit there was a complete lack of trust between them.

At times members of the school board used the media to sabotage Metts. For example, Metts's plan to redistribute school funds was undermined by board member

Angela Como. Before Metts could announce the change, Como released the plans to her constituents (Nakamura 2000b). Como represented one of the districts likely to experience most of the cuts. The resulting outrage was predictable, and more than 200 people attended a school board meeting to protest the possible changes (Reeves 2000). In the wake of the protests, Metts was forced to restore some of the budget cuts. Metts said, “It's hard to give [parents and officials] information after the fact, hard to give a full explanation when information comes out in a fragmented, incomplete way” (Ibid.). She added that the infighting within the board made her job more difficult.

Board Chairman James Henderson wrote Como a letter denouncing her actions. Henderson wrote, “Your actions have compromised the ability of the superintendent to effectuate change . . . and have undermined the structural integrity of this Board of Education. This I consider to be self-serving and thoughtless” (Nakamura 2000a)! Como responded that as an elected official she had an obligation to inform her constituents. She also chided Henderson on his sending memos to board members. “Your memos are becoming a bad habit! It is not your place to lecture me or any other board member,” Como wrote (Ibid.). For his part, Henderson said the memos were part of his attempt to rein in board members. He had sent an earlier memo to Robert Callahan whose criticism of other board member’s handling of their expense accounts led to an audit and another mini scandal.

In 2000, the school board was rocked by a scandal when board member Callahan complained about another member’s misuse of her expense account. The member, Marilyn Bland had used her account to print a newsletter for her political campaign. As a result of the complaint, the board ordered an audit of members’ expense accounts. The

audit uncovered a number of questionable expenditures (Frazier 2000b). Member Catherine Smith charged \$3,300 to her account for customized furniture. Kenneth Johnson spent \$62 on liquor for a board holiday party. Chairman Henderson overspent his \$9,800 expense account by \$1,802 dollars. The most egregious charges were those of member Bland who charged her account \$2,112 for a two-week trip to Florida. With additional charges, Bland's account ran \$4,000 over budget. When Bland was accused of misusing her account, she reportedly accused some board members of being racist for attacking black board members (Nakamura 2000c). Como, who is white, responded there was "a lot of animosity" between board members. She said, "I feel I'm treated very rudely by other members. They've told me to be quiet. It's not professional. There are board members who want to interpret other board members' words. It's insulting" (Nakamura 2000a). Interestingly enough this contretemps occurred just a month after the board had attended a retreat designed to foster better cooperation within the board and with Metts. It seems the board just could not help itself.

Delegate Rawlings alerted the board to be prepared to discuss the expense account audit at an upcoming hearing that had previously been scheduled. A day before the hearing, the board held a news conference announcing members were relinquishing their board credit cards. The gesture did not quell the criticism. At the hearing, State Superintendent Nancy Grasmick joined the chorus of those critical of the board. Grasmick described the board as "highly polarized", and that polarization "distracts from what's important to serving Prince George's County" (Nakamura 2000d). Auditors had made the same observation in 1998. They wrote, "The board is functioning as a group of individuals rather than as a cohesive corporate body" (MGT of America, Inc. 1998, v.).

Auditors also noted a lack of trust among board members and between the board and the superintendent.

Other school board actions have done little to engender trust. In 1996 there was a small tempest over board members leaving the board to take PGCPs positions. Between August and November, three board members left for the school system. In August, Alvin Thornton resigned from the board after it hired him as a consultant on the county's desegregation efforts. The hire was made when the school board thought the county had a plan that would end court-ordered desegregation. However, when voters rejected a referendum to repeal TRIM and provide some of the funding necessary to implement the plan, Thornton reclaimed his seat on the school board.²³

In November, Mary Canavan gave up her seat to become an assistant in PGCPs's Office of Student Appeals. The same month Superintendent Clark hired board member Frederick Hutchinson as an administrator. Members of the county council were not pleased with the hirings saying they gave the appearance of people cashing in on contacts made while on the board especially since it was the board that hired Clark (Frazier 1996b). County Council member Isaac Gourdine (D) said of the board's actions, "the question is how are the citizens going to look at it? . . . I'm tired of people playing politics with our kids. I think it's terrible, and it's so blatant" (Ibid.). The county council voted unanimously to ask the State Ethics Commission to review the hirings. While what the members did was not deemed unethical, the board did agree to strengthen its ethics guidelines. The resignations reinforced perceptions that members put their own self-interest ahead of that of the board.

According to people interviewed, it seemed that members of the school board were in denial about or did not fully comprehend the magnitude of people's disaffection with them. Donna Beck a longtime parent activist who sits on the current school board said of the school board in 2000, "We have enough of a problem with the perception of our schools, but now the perception of the leadership of the schools is even worse. I look at the board as entertainment. They all seem to have different agendas. Their meetings, quite frankly, have very little to do with children" (Nakamura 2000c). The opinion of Timothy Maloney, Co-Chairman of the Task Force on Education, Funding Equity, Accountability and Partnerships is representative of those of many county officials. He said, "The legislature recognizes Prince George's County has major school construction needs, but it also recognizes the county has major needs for management reform as well. I don't think the Board of Education has come to grips with the need for real substantive change" (Pan 1998). It is probably also fair to say the board did not seem to understand how much the environment within which they operated had changed. Prince George's Delegate James Hubbard said of county efforts to get more money from Annapolis, "The progress we've been able to make in Annapolis to bring back additional money is in jeopardy with stuff like this. It's hard to talk about your needs when people look at the actions of the school board as lacking credibility and common sense. Their actions overall tend to make people like myself reconsider elected school boards" (Nakamura 2000c).

To some it seemed the school board could not help itself. Even some interviewed members of the board recognized the board's behavior was going to be its undoing. One member said, "People who were basically very smart, descent, hard-working sort of folks

lost perspective on reality for a variety of reasons. They pushed themselves into a confrontational mentality that led them to act irrationally. They would even know they did that. We had discussions back in the back where I remember saying ‘if you do this, they are going to abolish the board’ and they would say, ‘we don’t care’. Well when people have lost their self-preservation instincts they’ve lost reason. They’ve lost their perspective on reality.” An interviewed delegate said of the board’s fate, “There were some people on the school board who didn’t believe we would do it. We told them at that time, ‘this cannot continue’. They didn’t believe we would actually do it and they were shocked.”

By the time the General Assembly convened in January 2002, the days of the elected school board were numbered. The question was not if the board would be restructured but how the new board would be restructured. In the end, the dissolution of the elected school seemed to signal the end of a long running county drama; a drama that was a public embarrassment for many county residents.

The Assembly’s action came after a feud that began almost from the beginning of Superintendent Metts’s tenure. To a casual observer it appeared that the school board’s feud with Superintendent Metts was the motivation for the Assembly’s action. However, as discussed above this take is not entirely accurate. The feud was not the primary catalyst for state action. An interviewed delegate with thorough knowledge of the situation offered, “If the problem was just the firing, they would not have gotten rid of board.”

What most motivated state legislators was the county's desperate need for state funding to end court-ordered busing. County officials rightly believed that the county would have a difficult time getting the money it needed to end the desegregation lawsuit that had hung over the county's head for decades. They feared that legislators from other jurisdictions throughout the state would not vote to provide additional funding to the county if the county delegation did not take some sort of action to address the school system's accountability issues. For years PGCPS had not operated as expected. Repeated fiscal management issues caused many state legislators to doubt the ability of school leadership to effectively manage any additional funding. Further the county's repeated poor performance on state assessments led legislators like Delegate Rawlings to question school leadership's commitment to academic achievement. It was clear to county officials that something had to be done about school system leadership.

The changes made to Baltimore's school system leadership through the 1997 settlement served as a preview of what might be expected in Prince George's County. In some respects the dissolution of the school board was perhaps inevitable given what happened to Baltimore. That said the Assembly might not have reached agreement on what to do had the board not acted the way it did. Time after time the board would engage in behaviors sure to strengthen the position of those most critical of it. In the end the board was so dysfunctional that even those inclined to support the board had come to the realization that the board needed radical reform. Even some board members have, after the fact, admitted that dissolving the board was probably necessary. They expressed the same sentiments as the legislators who voted to oust them; there was no other choice.

In the words of one interview respondent, “the board gave those who wanted to get rid of the board, the excuse to do so.”

With the elimination of the elected board, the core of the existing employment regime was dismantled. If ever there was a time when the regime would be vulnerable to the challenge of educational reformers then this was it. But were opponents of the regime able to take advantage of this unique opportunity? Were reformers ready to form a new regime?

Destabilizing the current regime is just the first step in the regime change process. In order to supplant the old regime, reformers will need to use the given opportunity to activate the county’s civic capacity to mobilize people and build the coalitions necessary to create a new performance regime. As discussed in Chapter 1, this is not an easy task. In many ways dismantling the old regime is the easier part of the process. Building and maintaining a broad-based coalition long enough to establish a new regime is the role of leadership. Does such leadership exist in Prince George’s County? If it does, were they able to create a new performance regime? These are the questions to be answered in the next chapter.

Endnotes

¹ Seven of eight county senators voted for the bill. One abstained. In the House seven of twenty-one delegates voted against the bill.

² The Turner Commission was tasked to review the administration of both the county government and school system. A discussion of the commission's primary findings on school governance can be found in Chapter 3.

³ Student members on the board have very limited rights and cannot vote on budget, collective bargaining, disciplinary, or personnel matters. For this reason, discussion of the board will be limited to the nine district elected members.

⁴ Alvin Thornton would leave the board in December to head a state commission. He was replaced by Felicia Lasley who was appointed by County Executive Wayne Curry.

⁵ Metts's first day as superintendent was July 6, 1999.

⁶ Unattributed quotations are from interviews conducted by the author. Respondents were given anonymity in exchange for their participation.

⁷ In 2000, 31% of PGCPs students scored a satisfactory on the test; the same as in 1999. The state average was 45.3%, up from 43.8% the previous year.

⁸ The watch list is a list of schools in danger of being subject to state action due to repeated poor MSPAP performance. State action can range from the implementation of new programs and the reassignment of staff to the takeover of school control.

⁹ Baltimore County and Anne Arundel each had one school on the list.

¹⁰ The audit will be discussed in more detail below.

¹¹ The former educators were Senators Ulysses Currie, Gloria Lawlah, and Paul Pinsky. Senator Nathaniel Exum was Johnson's ally. The Assembly chambers usually follows the lead of the local delegation on local matters.

¹² The composite score is the combined averaged score of all assessments for all grades.

¹³ The four were Joanne C. Benson, Carolyn J.B. Howard, Obie Patterson, and David M. Valderrama.

¹⁴ A vote of the fifth lease was delayed because of concerns over a criminal conviction of the pastor of the church.

¹⁵ Senator Nathaniel Exum was the lone dissenter.

¹⁶ Under the arrangement, the state would pay 60% of school construction costs. Normally, the county would have to pay 60% of the costs.

¹⁷ The plan was the “Communities Committed to Children Concept”. It sorted schools into groups clustered around each of the county’s 20 high schools. The goal of the plan was to promote greater site-based management.

¹⁸ For a more detailed account of events in Baltimore see Marion Orr’s, *Black Social Capital: The Politics of School Reform in Baltimore 1986-1998* (1999).

¹⁹ The county’s first African American county executive, Wayne Curry, was elected in 1994.

²⁰ The maximum salary in Montgomery was \$61,931. It was \$58,066 in Prince George’s.

²¹ Only two other schools were on the list; one school each from Anne Arundel and Somerset counties.

²² The superintendent had been told about the results but had not been formally presented with them.

²³ Thornton could do this because his name was not taken off the ballot after he resigned and he was reelected.

Chapter 5

Education Politics in Prince George's County after Dissolution Part 1: 2002-2006

This moment offers an opportunity for a public school system the health of which is essential to the health of the county; it offers also risks of continued instability.

--Editorial, *Washington Post*, April 10, 2002

This project argues that the regime in charge of Prince George's County education before 2002 did not have academic improvement as its primary goal. Instead, self-preservation and the protection of its members was the regime's most important objective. Because of this orientation, the existing school cartel would be incapable of taking the actions necessary to improve performance. A new performance regime would need to be created in order for there to be substantive closing of the academic achievement gap between white and minority students in Prince George's County.

I contend the dissolution of the school board served as a focusing event (Kingdon 1984; Birkland 1998, 2004). A focusing event has the ability to open a window of opportunity through which the existing regime can be challenged, disrupted, altered and/or destroyed. The dissolution of the school board by the Maryland General Assembly disrupted the school cartel and provided an opportunity to replace the old employment regime with a new performance regime.

The last chapter discussed how and why the window opened. The question to be asked now is did dissolving the school board create enough disruption within the education cartel as to significantly alter the regime and/or its goals? Using the structure set out by Orr and Stoker (1994), regime disruption is only the first stage in a three stage

regime change process. A redefining of the scope and purpose of the new regime is the second stage. This second stage involves building a coalition in support of a new regime. This stage is then followed by the third and final stage in which the new regime is institutionalized. Only after all three stages have occurred are we able to say that a new regime has supplanted the old regime.

A potential indicator of regime change would be the observance in a change in the interactions among regime members. Also, I have argued that a new performance regime would require a broad-base of support. Evidence of a move towards a new performance regime might be found in an expansion of regime members. We should also see the emergence of change agents capable of sparking coalition building. Finally in stage three of the regime change process, there should be evidence of new regime's agenda holding sway over the education arena. One measurement of the success of the reformers would be to observe an increase in civic capacity, or at the very least see some sense of coalition building occurring. To get this information we must examine what happened to the regime after the General Assembly's vote.

Because of the significant amount of change occurring after April 2002, Chapter 5 has been divided into two parts. Part 1 covers events from 2002 to 2006. Part 2 covers events from 2006 to 2009. The first section of Part 1 provides a chronology of events occurring after the school board's dissolution. Presenting a chronology illustrates the amount of change in county education and the complexity of challenges confronting PGCPs. The second section more closely examines particular components of that change and discusses how they influenced the environment in which a new regime would have emerged.

Public Reaction to Maryland's General Assembly's Action

The decision to oust the elected school board was both extraordinary and controversial. Some county legislators, particularly those who were or had been educators, were reluctant to directly involve the legislature in the governance of county education. Prince George's Delegate Obie Patterson said of the legislature's action, "This bill infringes on the duties and responsibilities of an elected body" (Hyslop and Honawar 2002). Moreover, some also believed it was unfair to blame the school board for the school system's failures. Failures they contended were caused primarily by inadequate funding. Other county lawmakers opposed the measure because they did not like being pressured to make changes by those outside of the county. The earliest proponent and driving force behind the movement to dissolve the school board was House Delegate Howard "Pete" Rawlings from Baltimore. Nathaniel Exum, a county senator and ally of school board chairman Kenneth Johnson, said of Rawlings, "Who is he? Pete does not determine what happens in Prince George's County. We are sophisticated enough to make our own determinations" (Schwartzman 2002a).

This last accusation was the strongest objection to the board's removal expressed by both opposing state legislators and members of the public. By replacing the elected board with an appointed board, the Assembly revoked the public's ability to vote on their school board members; an ability Prince Georgians have had since 1973.¹ After thirty years of having an elected school board, returning to an appointed board seemed like a step backwards to many people. It is not surprising that in this majority African American county, revocation of voting privileges sparked some consternation. Disenfranchisement is a sensitive subject for any democracy. It remains a particularly

sensitive matter for many minorities in America given the country's racial history. A black respondent said, "I will never be in approval of, in a majority minority environment, taking away the right to vote. Never. Ever. I don't care how dysfunctional it is....I will never ever agree with taking away the right to vote for something—ever."² Opponents of the dissolution argued the legislature should be expanding voting rights not narrowing them.

Proponents of the board's dissolution countered that the measure would not result in a significant loss of voting rights because residents had voted for the officials appointing the new school board. However, this provided little leverage because term limits forced the two people appointing the board, County Executive Wayne Curry and Governor Parris Glendening, from office in 2002. Proponents of the measure also argued that the appointed board would only exist for four years after which it would be replaced by an elected board. So any diminishment of voting rights was temporary and necessary in the minds of some state officials in order to get the school system back on the right track.

Another concern about the appointed board focused more on the board's ability to be truly representative of the people. As an elected body, the old school board's constituents were the people electing them. Dissolution opponents made the argument that as an appointed body the new school board's constituents would be the legislators who put them in office. As a result, school board membership would become another form of political patronage. Opponents also argued that members of the elected board represented nine single-member districts which allowed all segments of the county to be represented by someone who focused attention on the specific concerns of the

constituents in each district. Because the appointed board did not represent districts, members would no longer be working for the individual communities in the diverse county. Supporters of the appointed board countered this criticism by arguing that the school board had become parochial precisely because each member focused solely on the narrow interests of his or her small group of supporters instead of the broader interests of the system as a whole. This parochialism was seen as a major source of much of the bickering and disagreements between board members.

Eliminating the parochialism and focusing attention back on the larger picture of school improvement was part of the motivation for dissolving the board. A member of the board admitted that, “at some point a majority of the board lost perspective on what they were doing and let their own little personal agendas, and there were a variety of agendas at work or were problems, take control and there wasn’t enough of a countervailing force.” A state delegate said of the old elected board, “In my opinion that structure [nine members from nine districts] was part of the dysfunction because you would have people who represented 1/9 of the county and they didn’t seem to take responsibility for the entire county, for the overall education of everybody, all the children of the county. They were just focused on their own districts. Then they would form alliances and gang up on each other. You create a real parochialism and I think it damaged the education opportunities for kids across the whole county.”

Some members of the ousted board emphasized the perceived racial nature of the action. In an attempt to save itself, board members argued that the Assembly’s action was an attempt to diminish black political power. Recall that one of the ways the school cartel in Prince George’s maintained control was its ability to play on the political power

concerns of county African Americans. The cartel had positioned itself as a symbol of increasing black political power. Those racial pleas had some resonance because some black residents were suspicious of the motives of some proponents of the dissolution.

One African American respondent was very blunt about what he saw as racial motivations for the turmoil surrounding the school system and the school board, “There is a group of folks who sit on the sidelines who really are not concerned and really don’t care about education or anything in Prince George’s County. There’s a group who just looks day in-day out, night in-night out to bash the County. Part of it is racism. There is a group of whites who were here when the Prince George’s County was majority white and when they were the county executive and the police chief and the fire chief and the school superintendent--Prince George’s County was different. They ran things. They had the power base. There are some people that can’t accept that the demographics have changed.” When asked about the fact that the board restructuring effort was being led by a black county delegate, Rushern Baker, another respondent argued that Baker was seen as a front for the white politicians really in control. The respondent added that creating an appointed board was the only way for whites to regain control of the school system and the millions of construction dollars coming the system’s way as the result of the desegregation settlement.

Some appointed board opponents suggested that the dissolution of the school board would not have happened in a majority white county. The reality is that the only Maryland counties to have new appointed boards imposed on them are the state’s two majority African American jurisdictions; Baltimore city and Prince George’s County.³ And this fact was not lost on some county residents as well as some respondents. “It was

all political. Quite frankly I don't think they [the General Assembly] would have done it anywhere but in Prince George's County, except for maybe Baltimore city. Why they felt compelled to take away *our* right to vote for the board had to be strictly politics. You were saying to the citizens of Prince George's County, 'you don't have enough sense to elect the right people'."

Although people clearly had concerns about the loss of voting rights and representation and concerns about the perception that a majority black county was being treated differently than other jurisdictions, residents also believed something had to be done about the school board. For many, the board had become a public embarrassment. And by the time the board was dissolved most people were resigned to the Assembly's action. In a Prince George's County voter poll conducted by the *Washington Post* in August 2002, 62% of respondents felt dissolving the elected board was a good idea (*Washington Post* 2002).⁴ Even so, there were a couple of small protest rallies against the bill's passage in Annapolis.

A group calling itself Citizens for an Elected Board tried to generate support for a petition to put the measure creating an appointed board to a referendum. However the group only had until May 31 (about two months) to acquire enough signatures (8,000) to get the board's June appointment delayed for 60 days while it collected the 24,000 signatures needed to get the measure placed on the ballot. If the group was successful, the new law would be placed on hold until the November elections. Unfortunately for Citizens for an Elected Board, there was little public sentiment for the referendum and the group was unable to get the required signatures (Krughoff 2002a). The law stood, and it is against this backdrop that a new school board came into office.

The Appointed Board Takes Over

Immediately after the elected board was voted out, a search for the new board began. The legislation creating the new board required it to include at least three educators, two people with business or management experience, one parent with a child in PGCPs, and one person with significant special education experience. For such an undemocratic board, there were 196 applicants for a position that paid \$18,000 a year. Applicants included former PGCPs superintendent Edward Felegy, current board member Bernard Phifer and four members of the Management Oversight Panel (MOP).⁵ Applicants for the appointed board were vetted by State Superintendent Nancy Grasmick and the Maryland State Board of Education who created a final list of 23 from which Curry and Glendening chose the nine members.

The appointed board was comprised of five African Americans, one Latino, and two white members. The chairwoman was Beatrice Tignor, an educator, former state senator and MOP member. The vice-chairman was Howard Stone, lobbyist for the County and Curry's former chief of staff. Also on the board were John Bailer, a retired manager and long-time education activist; Abby Crowley, a professor and special education expert; Charlene Dukes, vice president for student services at Prince George's Community College; Robert Duncan, former chief administrative officer and budget director for Prince George's County; Judy Mickens-Murray, head of the Prince George's County Council of PTAs (PGCCPTA); Jose Morales, manager and Latino activist; and Dean Sirjue, associate dean for administration, Howard University School of Business and MOP member.

Most people agreed that the board was comprised of a good mix of people with strong education ties and people with strong business and managerial connections. Indeed several respondents commented approvingly on the level of expertise among board members. While there was general praise for the qualifications of individual board members, there was criticism of the board as a whole (Abadjian 2002c). Supporters of the old board's nine, single-district structure pointed to the lack of representation for inner Beltway communities as a significant failing of the new board. None of the nine board members lived inside the Beltway.⁶ Moreover, seven of the nine members lived in the Bowie-Mitchellville area, the wealthiest region of the county. In response to the criticism, U.S. Rep. Albert R. Wynn (D-Md.) defended the board saying, "They're not appointed to represent a particular geographic area. They're appointed to represent the whole school system" (Trejos 2002d).

The Beltway serves not only as a literal divide through the county but also as a symbolic dividing line as well. In many ways, the outer-inner Beltway split represents a divide between middle class and working class, elites and non-elites, and the haves and the have-nots. The class divide within the County has been a recurring theme in county politics. Inner Beltway communities, which tend to be the older, poorer communities in the county, often claim they are short-changed by public officials who in the past focused their attention on the growing, wealthier communities outside the beltway. For some, the appointed board was another example of that bias because they feared the outer Beltway communities would be favored over the inner Beltway communities that did not have an advocate at the table. While in the past it was white elites who controlled policy, today middle class blacks shape public policy in the county. Sylvester Vaughns, the lead

plaintiff in the county's desegregation lawsuit, expressed concern that the racism blacks experienced in 1972 has been replaced by elitism on the part of county leaders (Abadjian 2002b). So while race was the dividing line of the past, in 2002 the dividing line was class.

With this undercurrent of race and class running through the county, the new board was faced with two important challenges. First it would have to assure people that everyone would have an equal voice at the table. Second, the board would have to prove to the entire county that it was not going to behave as the last board did. It needed to establish that it could effectively run the school system. It was clear that the board would have to work diligently to earn the trust of the community. In addition to needing to overcome suspicions of it specifically, the appointed board also had to confront a more general lack of trust in PGCPS created by the dysfunction of the old elected board, consistently poor test scores, and poor financial management. Suffice it to say, when the board took office on June 1, 2002 more than a few people were skeptical of it and its ability to govern.

The appointed board was well aware of these concerns. Its members maintained that they were appointed to represent the county as a whole and not for any particular community. Moreover, the board saw restoring people's faith in the ability of the system to function effectively and bringing stability to the system as its most important mission. Howard Stone said of the public, "They don't know us. The only way we can instill confidence is to include people and let them be part of the process" (Abadjian 2002c). To this end, the board took steps to try to gain the trust of residents. Board members were diligent about responding to constituent inquiries and concerns. As one member put

it, “you may not agree with the decision, but you cannot say we did not listen to your concerns.” Also, board members said it was important to speak with one voice. A board decision had to be seen as a decision of the entire board. While members might and did disagree on issues, once a matter was decided it was supported by everyone on the board. Further, board members made an effort not to publicly contradict each other. More than one board member stated the desire to maintain a high level of professionalism; something many people believed was missing from the previous board.

During its first year in office, the board was even given some credit for restoring dignity and professionalism to the system. Doyle Neimann, House Delegate and member of the ousted school board said of the new board, “They’ve done a much better job of keeping their focus on the real issues of student performance, student achievement and overall school board policies, not personality and power and pettiness” (Trejos 2003h). Even some of the Board’s detractors praised how the board conducted itself. A vocal critic said of the appointed board, “at least you could go to them if there was an issue, and they would at least respond to you, would get involved, and try to resolve something.”

Despite the good reviews, a Prince George’s Business-Education Alliance (PGBEA) survey conducted a year after the appointed board took office found that almost 75% of those surveyed either thought the new board was no better than the old board or had no opinion (Alliance 2003). Clearly it was going to take time to change long held opinions of the school board and system.

Perhaps part of the explanation why those polled believed there was no change was that it takes time to see the impact of changes at the top filter down to observable changes in the classroom. It is also possible that people were just not paying attention to

what was happening with the school system. The survey report did not differentiate between those who had an opinion and those who did not. So it is quite possible that a large portion of that 75% included people who had no opinion either way. Of course, for anyone wanting to form a coalition on behalf of education reform, continued indifference after all of the upheaval is almost as problematic as outright opposition.

One of the ways focusing events lead to agenda change is by getting those previously inattentive to become attentive (Kingdon 1984, Birkland 1998). As more people pay attention to a particular issue, the possibility for a change in issue definition increases as change agents attempt to reframe the issue (Baumgartner and Jones 1993). A change in definition can lead to a mobilization for or against the controlling policy regime. Successful advocates of regime change take advantage of the changes in issue definition to mobilize people against the governing regime. If people remain indifferent to the focusing event or the changes in issue definition, then mobilization becomes difficult if not impossible. Thus in 2003, assuming the accuracy of the poll, the prospects for a new reform regime were less than ideal.

Restoring the community's trust was not the board's only challenge. Other large issues confronted PGCPs and the new school board. Several of them related to the end of court-ordered desegregation. As part of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that settled the desegregation lawsuit, Prince George's had to build new schools so that children previously bused outside their neighborhood could attend schools within their neighborhoods. Fulfilling this goal required the building of 13 new schools, nine of which were to open in the fall of 2003. The openings in turn necessitated the redrawing of school boundaries.

Another part of the settlement required PGCPS to overhaul its magnet program. The MOU called for magnets to be restructured and expanded so that they could continue to be used to voluntarily integrate schools. Magnets draw their student populations from across the district. In this way the magnet concept works against the emphasis on neighborhood schools because magnet populations may or may not include children from the neighborhood where the magnet is located. It was up to school officials to find a way to balance the competing goals of returning children to their neighborhood schools and increasing access to magnet programs. Underlying these competing issues were the system's ever present budget concerns.

Though these issues loomed large, the most immediate issue the board faced was the selection of a chief executive officer (CEO) to run the system. The law creating the appointed board required the superintendent to be replaced with a CEO. To that end, selecting a CEO was the first decision the new board made. After meeting on the same day it was sworn in, the new school board unanimously voted to extend Superintendent Metts's contract for one year.⁷

Retaining Metts was controversial. As expected, supporters of the old elected school board were unhappy that Metts was retained because they thought she was responsible for the turmoil. Others thought that the system should have made a clean break with the past strife and replaced Metts along with the board. Supporters of Metts argued she had not been given a fair opportunity to show her effectiveness as superintendent because of all of the meddling of the last school board. Retaining Metts would give the board and the county at large the time to properly evaluate her. Board

members allow that some state legislators expected that Metts be replaced immediately. The question was who would replace her?

The Board's retention of Metts was not necessarily an endorsement of her. Instead it represented a desire to maintain some continuity which was very important to the new board. In its statement to the press upon extending Metts's contract, the board said it extended the contract to "continue the stability and the reform agenda set for the school system" (Abadjian 2002a). Metts's retention was an acknowledgement that with only two months before the beginning of the school year, the board did not have enough time to conduct a thorough search for a new permanent CEO and have that person in place for the start of the school year in August. Instead of rushing a decision, the board opted to wait. Metts would serve as an interim CEO while the board searched for a permanent CEO. Metts would be eligible to apply for the permanent position.

The School Board--Superintendent Relationship: New Cast, Same Story

CEO Metts and the new board began the new school year full of hope and promise. It did not take long however, for the realities of a troubled school system to make their way to the forefront. It also did not take long for the relationship between the school board and Metts to become strained. In the end the appointed board had some of the same complaints of Metts as the old elected board.

In October 2002, Metts advised the board that the administration had overspent its fiscal year (FY) 2002 budget by at least \$7.5 million and possibly as much as \$11 million.⁸ The board had expected the deficit to be \$2 or 3 million. Metts appeared to blame school principals when she said the deficit was the result of principals hiring additional per diem teachers (Trejos 2002e). Angered principals and teachers countered

that principals cannot hire staff without administration approval. A month later, the budget deficit had grown to \$13.6 million. Moreover Metts warned of a possible \$4 million deficit for FY 2003 if spending was not curtailed.

The board became increasingly frustrated with the increasing deficits and with Metts. Part of the frustration stemmed from the fact that while the board was not alerted to the full extent of the problem until the fall, Metts and her deputies had known about the potential problem almost a year earlier. Metts offered that in anticipation of the overrun, she had made cuts in the budget to diminish the deficit. She also blamed the system's outdated computer system for making it difficult to make accurate budget predictions. At least one board member was skeptical of Metts's defense. Member Robert Duncan responded, "We can't accept that unless we have a new financial system in place we can't appropriately manage the finances. Whether it's here or not, the absence of it is not an acceptable excuse as far as the board and system is [sic] concerned" (Trejos 2002e). Having served in 1969 as supervisor of accounting with the Board of Education, Duncan was particularly well versed in the schools' budget. But he was not alone in his knowledge of budgets because the new board possessed several members who had substantial managerial and budgetary experience. After pointed questioning by board members about the budget deficit, Metts was quoted as saying, "This is a learning experience for us... a level of understanding [by board members] that we are not used to" (Staff Reports 2002). On the depth of questioning, a board member said, "It's not the first question you ask, not the second, but it's the third and fourth questions. Anybody can answer the first or second question. If they can't answer the third and fourth

questions, then you've got a problem." Metts and her administration appeared unprepared to handle the level of scrutiny coming from members of the new board.

To get a more accurate picture of the system's budget needs and priorities, the board asked Metts to tie her proposed FY 2004 budget to the system's Master Plan. The Master Plan was part of the desegregation MOU and was supposed to serve as the system's blueprint for improving student performance. Having Metts tie her budget to the Master Plan was an attempt by the board to know exactly where the money was being spent and what impact budget cuts would have on specific programs and items. It was also a way for the board to increase administration accountability. Giving a hint of the growing tensions between the board and the administration, Duncan said of having Metts tie the budget, "What it allows is [for] the board to look at what the master plan costs and then fund certain aspects of it. But what I think the administration is worried about is the fact it will then hold them accountable for implementing those changes" (Krughoff 2002c).

When Metts presented her proposed FY 2004 budget to the board in January 2003, her budget was \$1.3 billion. This represented a 23% increase over the previous year's budget. It also called for a 42% increase in county funding (Interview with Iris Metts 2003). Board members were surprised by the size of the budget and some were angry that Metts would propose a budget she knew would not come anywhere close to being fully funded. In addition to the usual tight county funding, state funding was in danger of being reduced since Maryland was in the midst of a recession. Metts said she was doing as the board directed by asking for the amount it would cost to fully implement all of the initiatives in the Master Plan. Members of the board had assumed that Metts,

realizing a large budget increase was impossible, would set priorities and select the most important programs to fund and not ask for everything.

In addition to being concerned about Metts's financial management, the board was becoming increasingly frustrated with the flow of information coming to it. Chairwoman Tignor complained, "We have been having a real problem with the administration in terms of getting the information we need in a timely manner. The last board was not crazy. They were on target with a lot of their issue on how the school system was being run" (Krughoff 2002d). Members of the old elected board repeatedly complained that Metts would provide them with pertinent information only a short time before the board was to discuss or act on a subject. Board member Dean Sirjue said, "Sometimes we don't get [information] until a few days before that decision needs to be made. In Dr. Metts's defense, the information may not be ready, but that has been a bit of a problem" (Trejos 2003a). Members also complained about the depth of the information they received. Board members were frustrated by Metts's habit of submitting proposals as trial balloons to gauge public sentiment or submitting plans before working out the details. Board members complained that the incomplete plans created unnecessary confusion and controversy.

For example, Metts submitted a plan to restructure the system's magnet programs. The restructuring was required as part of the MOU and a new magnet proposal was to be approved by the school board by December 31, 2002. Metts submitted her plan to the board on October 15, 2002. Two weeks later she withdrew the proposal after parents, the Prince George's County Chapter of the NAACP and board members complained about the plan's lack of specificity. In an acknowledgement of the plan's deficiency, Metts said

when withdrawing the plan, “It became very apparent that we could not supply all the supporting data in a timely manner for the board to make its decision” (Trejos 2002f). The withdrawal of the proposal required the system to ask the judge overseeing the desegregation case to extend the restructuring deadline. Metts asked that the restructuring be delayed to the fall of 2004. Chairwoman Tignor supported the delay saying, “I think it's better to wait to do the right things than it is to throw something together and have to change it later” (Ibid.).

All of these frustrations combined with concerns about Metts’s ability to manage the budget led some on the board to publicly question her abilities as superintendent. Board member Robert Duncan complained after an audit report was delayed several times, “We've been given too many assurances that ended up not materializing. It's about competence in getting things done” (Trejos 2003a). Board members began turning away from Metts. The relationship between Metts and the school board was quickly deteriorating.

At the same time, the national search for a permanent CEO was accelerating. Metts, eligible to apply for the new position, did so in December. Chairwoman Tignor made it clear however that Metts would not have an advantage over other applicants. When asked in a November interview with the *Washington Post* if there was a favorite in the running for CEO, Tignor said there were no favorites and that if Metts applied for the job, her application would be accepted like everyone else’s (Interview with Beatrice Tignor 2002). Before the board was to begin interviewing CEO finalists in February, Metts withdrew her application and removed her name from consideration. Publicly she stated she believed that her vying for the position would be controversial and potentially

divisive because so many in the county opposed her (Interview with Iris Metts 2003). Also Metts said she had become worn down by all of the past controversy and was not willing to continue fighting. Metts said she thought it would be best for everyone if she left PGCPs. Interviews with board members made it clear however that Metts was unlikely to become the permanent CEO. Moreover, board members say she had been told as much privately. “We can’t stop you from applying, and you may be the best person, but Dr. Metts, my suggestion is go out while you are on top.” Reportedly, seven of the nine board members were unwilling to vote for Metts (Bhatti and Honawar 2003).

In her analysis of her time at PGCPs, Metts blamed most of her troubled tenure on political forces that did not want to change. At the end Metts admitted she was probably doomed from the beginning when she challenged veteran administrators at the beginning of her tenure. She believed that act cost her support from some elected state officials. “I was a bit naive coming in. . . . You just made enemies from the minute you walked in the door,” Metts said (Trejos and Levine, 2003).

Part of Metts’s problem was that she found it difficult to respond to all of the competing constituencies within the county. Metts had to answer to board members, state legislators, parent activists, county officials and union leaders, all of whom had their own agendas. She complained that she had too many bosses to answer to, and satisfying one group often meant alienating another. Metts also complained of a lack of shared vision and inconsistency in the direction people wanted schools to go (Interview with Iris Metts 2003). In a county as large and diverse as Prince George’s County, it is difficult if not impossible to please everyone. Metts talked about how the county’s school system was particularly difficult to change. She said, “People accuse me of changing too quickly

and then in the end they were saying, "Well you didn't change enough. The problem to me is that it will take longer than just four years to change things here and the other problem is by the end of the four years, you've made a lot of enemies. It's so easy to pick up enemies in Prince George's County . . . because you always will have critics. There's no leeway for failure" (Ibid.).

Metts was brought in as an outsider because county and state officials believed that an outsider was needed to make the changes necessary to improve educational performance. Officials thought that an outsider, not beholden to any particular constituency could alter the school cartel and transform the school system. However, the politics surrounding education in the county proved stronger than the outsider. From Metts's point of view, she was in a no-win situation. She said, "An insider who is not strong can't survive. An outsider who is too strong can't survive" (Trejos and Levine, 2003).

Some in the County saw Metts's explanations as an attempt to deflect blame from herself and her administration. Some argued that while Metts was a good educator, she was a less than stellar manager. Metts's critics also claimed she was unprepared to run PGCPs. Metts was Delaware's secretary of education before coming to Prince George's. Her detractors argued setting policy for a small state like Delaware provided little experience for running a large urban school district like PGCPs.⁹ Still other critics claimed Metts problems stemmed from the fact that she acted as though she were still secretary of education. As secretary, Metts could issue policy mandates to local level officials and expect them to be followed without question. As secretary she had the final

word. Critics argued Metts continued to see herself as a state secretary and as a result acted like an autocrat.

It is possible that Metts's problems were symptomatic of a larger issue. Today's superintendents are being asked to do things they have not had to do in the past. They don't just manage an organization. They must also be a lobbyist for the system in the community. Superintendents now have to be politicians. This is particularly true in Prince George's. *Washington Post* education columnist Karin Chenoweth summed up the crux of Metts's problems in Prince George's saying of Metts,

She was flummoxed by the need to articulate and generate support for the common goals and aspirations of the school system, lead the community to think independently about how to support those goals and aspirations, and convince the community that she had a clear grasp on what needed to be done to reach those goals. Above all, she failed to convince the county's political leadership and citizenry that it has an obligation to schools that rises above all its many other obligations (Chenoweth 2003).

Metts's primary failure was a failure to realize that she had to be a salesperson and politician as well as an administrator and an educator. In the end, being a good educator was not enough for Metts to be able to keep her job.

Metts's departure provided an opportunity for PGCPSS and the County to start anew. The system would have both a new board and a new CEO. Now that all of the participants in the feud between the elected school board and superintendent were gone, the system could focus on the business of educating children.

A New Beginning: Enter the CEO

There were 27 applications for the CEO position. Nine people were interviewed and three finalists were selected. They were Andre J. Hornsby, former Yonkers, New

York superintendent; John J. “Jack” Keegan Jr., Sioux Falls, South Dakota superintendent; and Barbara Moore Pulliam, St. Louis Park, Minnesota superintendent. Although each finalist had been an administrator in a large system none of the systems they led had over 30,000 students.¹⁰ This fact made the public a bit skeptical of the candidates and their ability to improve PGCPS (Bhatti 2003). Recall some people thought a reason for Metts’s troubled tenure was her inexperience in running a large urban school district. Prince George’s County Council of PTAs President Howard Tutman spoke for many when he suggested, “the ideal candidate would be someone who has come from a large system, who has effectively dealt with budget constraints and improving student achievement, especially minority achievement” (Trejos 2003c).

Beyond the odds that the “ideal candidate” actually existed, finding her or him would be difficult for PGCPS. The county was competing with several other school systems searching for a new leader in the midst of a nationwide shortage of superintendent candidates (Groff 2003). A July 2003 survey of urban and large district superintendents found that many of them acknowledged the job was becoming undoable (Fuller et al. 2003). This view was strongest among leaders of the largest school districts. According to Paul Houston, executive director of the American Association of School Administrators, "There is no shortage of people with the paper credentials. ... There is a shortage of people who want the job. It has clearly become unattractive” (Bhatti 2003). What is more, the turmoil surrounding PGCPS may have been an additional deterrent for many.

Board Chairwoman Tignor said the board had reached out to large system administrators across the country but none were interested in the job. She said of those

contacted, “Many of the people we talked with said the political arena in the county is not one they wanted to enter” (Krughoff 2003a). A *Washington Post* editorial painted the enormity of the job facing the new CEO. According to the *Post*, “the scope of administrative, political and public demands in Prince George's -- as well as lingering tensions from extraordinarily turbulent years -- requires a sophisticated blend of artful diplomacy and educational expertise” (Editorial 2003). Moreover, the new CEO must be able to “juggle conflicting political and community pressures” (Ibid.). This was a very tall order; an order few if any could fill. Some in the county sensed that their expectations might be too high. Ray Badders, a parent of four children in PGCPSS worried, “Maybe we're trying to hire somebody for an impossible job where you've got the state pulling in one direction, the county pulling in another direction, and parents pulling. Whoever the superintendent is is going to be pulled in all these different directions” (Trejos 2003c).

Of the three finalists, the unions endorsed Pulliam. They were opposed to Hornsby and Keegan because both had fought with labor unions as superintendent. The three unions representing teachers, principals, and support personnel sent a joint letter to the school board documenting their position. On Hornsby and Keegan, the union presidents wrote, “The mere fact that these candidates were presented as finalist[s] sends a very powerful and negative message to the employees and the citizens of Prince George's County” (Trejos 2003d). From the letter, it is clear that if either were chosen, Hornsby or Keegan would likely face considerable resistance from the unions.

The unions as representatives of the system's staff are often powerful members of any education regime. The institutional memory of the school system and the regime

resides within the administrators, teachers, and support staff who remain long after superintendents leave. Alienating system employees can make a leader's job difficult if not impossible as Superintendent Metts discovered. That said there is one group that holds more power than the unions: the school board. Because ultimate authority rests with the board, it has the power to dominate the education arena and regime.

It is inconceivable that the county's old elected board so tightly allied with the unions would have even made a candidate like Hornsby or Keegan a finalist let alone chosen him to be chief. The appointed board however had no such alliances. So despite the concerns and objections of the unions and others, the school board, in an 8-to-1 vote, selected Andre Hornsby to be the next CEO. The lone dissenter was Judy Mickens-Murray. She did not feel that Hornsby would be enough of a collaborator. Mickens-Murray explained, "I felt that Prince George's County's constituents are too volatile from the emotional experience of the last few years, and I thought that we needed someone who was a healer and a collaborative spirit to help us move to another level" (Trejos 2003e).

During the vetting process, Hornsby was described by some in Yonkers as stubborn and not inclined to seek input. The president of the Yonkers PTA said Hornsby needed to talk with parents and not at them (Brenner 1998). The former president of the Yonkers' NAACP chapter said of the group dealings with Hornsby, "He had just walked in a month ago and barely knew where to find the bathroom when he was telling us what to do" (Ibid.). The head of Yonkers teachers union said of Hornsby, "He operates as if he was chosen king" (Fitzgerald 1999). "His favorite expression was, 'It is my way or the

highway” (Honawar 2003). From the assessment of those in Yonkers, Hornsby clearly was not the healer Mickens-Murray sought.

So why did the board choose Hornsby despite knowing about his contentious past and despite knowing the unions opposed him? Board members voting for Hornsby said they chose him because he had a proven track record of improving minority achievement. Of Hornsby, member Dean Sirjue said, “The major issue is that we need someone who can find the underlying problems of student performance and focus on that. Everything else will fall in line” (Trejos and Labbe 2003). Robert Duncan added, “We're on the verge of being the least-functional school system in the state of Maryland. We've got to find a way to make dramatic improvements now” (Ibid.).

Board members had an almost single-minded focus on improving student performance. The eight board members who voted for Hornsby were willing to overlook his personality because he had raised academic achievement in Yonkers. In its press release announcing Hornsby's hiring, the board emphasized this point. According to the announcement, “Hornsby is recognized for significant accomplishments in the area of improving minority student performance on standardized tests, as well as for integrating technology into curriculum to improve student achievement” (Prince George's County Board of Education 2003). Even those who fought with Hornsby in Yonkers acknowledged that he made smart educationally sound decisions (Trejos and Labbe 2003). There seemed to be an assumption within the Board that improving PGCPS academically would override other issues and lead to increased trust in the system.

It was also that assumption that allowed Board members to discount the unions' views. Of the unions' opposition to Hornsby, Sirjue said, “We certainly wanted to work

with the unions. But we can't focus on what's best for the unions. We have to focus on what's best for the children” (Trejos 2003f). Tignor said, “We realize that he has been a controversial person. You have to realize that the unions have a special interest. Our interests are what is best for the children and that is what we based our decision on” (Krughoff 2003a). It was clear that in a dispute between Hornsby and the unions the Board would back Hornsby.

For his part, Hornsby spoke of a willingness to collaborate with others saying, “I think it will take a full commitment on behalf of all stakeholders in being able to cooperate and collaborate in helping children in Prince George's County demonstrate what they are able to do. Our greatest challenge is to identify the gaps that exist in their learning and fill those gaps” (Trejos 2003e). Yet Hornsby also implied a willingness to go it alone when he felt it necessary saying, “Sometimes, you have to make unpopular decisions. You have to be willing sometimes to bite the bullet because you know, long term, it's going to be in the best interest of the system” (Ibid.). Board member, Abby L.W. Crowley, thought that lessons learned from Hornsby’s past experiences would make him a more effective leader in Prince George’s. She said, “He's had some experiences that taught him about bringing a community together. I'm more worried about [bringing in] people who have not had those challenges and experiences. I don't want them learning here” (Trejos 2003f). From interviews with board members, they believed the positives of his educational expertise would outweigh the negatives of Hornsby’s personality.

Hornsby’s tenure as CEO began June 2003. He faced a number of large problems. In addition to improving academic achievement, Hornsby had to contend with

other problems leftover from the Metts administration. He faced a growing budget deficit. The system's magnet programs were still in need of overhaul, and school boundaries still needed more redrawing.

Balancing the Budget

Hornsby spent a sizeable part of his first year evaluating the system and tackling the budget deficit. In July 2003 the school board learned that not only was the 2002 deficit larger than the board was initially led to believe, but there was also a significant deficit for FY 2003. The combined deficit for FYs 2002 and 2003 was ultimately \$23.7 million (Trejos 2004b). The board believed it had been duped about the budget by Metts. They were led to believe that Metts had a handle on the budget.

Unlike Metts, Hornsby was able to get a handle on the budget and was able to eliminate the deficit by 2004. In a meeting called by state legislators, Hornsby said he eliminated the deficit by leaving vacant positions unfilled, delaying purchases, and reducing cost-of-living raises for teachers, among other actions (Hornsby 2004a). Hornsby's handling of the budget deficit demonstrated a take charge approach to his job. Hornsby showed he was not afraid to take bold (or some might say drastic) action. The question was would Hornsby take a similar approach with regards to the other large issues confronting him? A more important question was whether such an approach would be good or bad for PGCPS?

Restructuring the Administration

One of Hornsby's first administrative actions was to remove nine principals ten days before the start of the school year in August 2003. Of the demotions, Hornsby said

that after reviewing the schools test data and historical records he made the change, “because I believe that those schools need a different sense of direction and leadership” (Trejos 2003g). Four of the nine were principals at schools that had been on the state’s reconstitution eligible list for four consecutive years. After four years on the list schools must restructure. One method of restructuring includes changing staff.

The nine principals were demoted to vice principal. Needless to say the principals union reacted negatively to the demotions. In fact, the executive director of the union, Doris Reed, warned the demotions could impact ongoing contract negotiations (Krughoff 2003b). The following year another five principals were demoted. With retirements, promotions, and resignations, Hornsby had personally selected 80 of the system’s 197 principals in a little more than a year (Trejos 2004c).

In September 2003, Hornsby announced plans to restructure the entire administration. According to Hornsby, the system had gotten too top heavy and he wanted to put the focus of the administration back on teaching and learning. Hornsby wanted to put more emphasis on regional offices as a means of getting more resources to schools and getting more accountability from the people overseeing them. He also returned teachers working in the central office back to the classroom. “I put them [teachers in administrative positions] back in schools. In large urban districts, when you pull teachers out of classrooms and you use those teachers to do jobs that are non-instructional, to me you're not being honest with yourself. These are certified people that we put back out there in the schools. I mean, there is no reason in having those people in centralized positions. They should be teaching children every day,” Hornsby said (A. Lee 2004c).

Not surprisingly, Hornsby's relationship with the administrators' union was almost as bad as Metts's relationship had been. While the union liked the increased accountability placed on regional administrators, it was unhappy with Hornsby's movement of other administrators as well as his selection process for filling positions. Though the union complained, the changes were made with little uproar from the community. What made the reaction different from the reaction Metts received was Hornsby having the backing of the school board. The board made it clear that it was going to stand behind Hornsby's decision. Chairwoman Tignor said in support of Hornsby's administrative moves, "We're assuming this is going to be a good thing. We brought [Hornsby] here with a mission to improve academic success" (A. Lee 2004b). Hornsby's dealing with the administration was a clear indication that things had changed and the power of some members of the old education regime had been diminished.

Magnet Programs

Hornsby addressed the delayed overhaul of the system's magnet programs. For six years PGCPs wrangled with the issue. Parents of children in magnet programs complained that the magnets' effectiveness was diminished by overcrowding. At the same time, other parents resisted efforts to expand magnets arguing they would force their children from neighborhood schools. Superintendent Metts had created a number of plans to reorganize magnets but either withdrew them after opposition from parents or the NAACP¹¹ or had them rejected by the school board for lack of specificity.

Complicating efforts to expand magnets was the system's plan to return children to their neighborhood schools. Most of the system's magnets were located in the southern portion of the county while the greatest number of students lived in the northern

portion. Thus expanding magnet access would require children to be bused to the existing magnets in the southern section of the county. Alternatively, magnets would have to be moved or created in the northern portion of the county. Some parents worried that the expansion of magnets would lead to resources being pulled from existing southern area magnets and transferred to the new northern area magnets. If this were not enough, the new federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law required that the parents of children in low-performing schools be given the option to transfer their children to another school. In 2002, PGCPSS had 20 schools designated as “needs improvement” which qualified students in those schools for transfers (Maryland State Department of Education 2002). So any magnet restructuring would have to account for possible transfers.

Expanding access to magnet programs may not have been the best option however. An internal evaluation of the programs showed that many of the magnets were not improving academic achievement (Division of Accountability 2004). Reading and math state assessment scores for elementary children in magnet programs were generally no better than those of children attending non-magnet programs. At the middle and high school levels, only some of the magnet programs produced higher test scores than non-magnet schools.

After less than a year on the job, Hornsby was able to push through a complete revamping of the system’s magnets and to eliminate most of them (Hornsby 2004b). Hornsby preferred beefing up the core curriculum at all schools over maintaining magnets. He said, “You shouldn't have to go to a math and technology magnet in

elementary school to get a solid math program. At this point, the school system is good at doing magnets but not at focusing on a core curriculum” (Krughoff 2003d).

Why was Hornsby able to do what Metts was not? Hornsby had the benefit of study showing the ineffectiveness of many magnet programs (Division of Accountability 2004). The report helped to counter supporter’s claims about the quality of the magnets. Also, Hornsby emphasized the magnet programs’ costs. This approach resonated with school board members faced with a \$23 million deficit. Further, unlike Metts, Hornsby had the full backing of the school board. So despite complaints about the changes from parents, the board backed Hornsby

This board, not beholden to any particular constituency, found it easier to reach consensus. A board member said, “I did not have to come back and speak to a particular constituency. I did not have to worry that the people in my neighborhood or district were going to be upset with me. We could fight for all, at that time 133,000 children.” Because they weren’t representing a specific constituency it became easier for members to tackle thorny issues that bedeviled prior boards. Another reason given by board members to explain their ability to reach consensus was what some members described as the professional nature of the board. That is, the board consisted of a group of professionals with a broad range and balanced set of skills and expertise. The board members trusted the expertise of the others on the board, and they were willing to give considerably weight to the recommendations of the members with the most expertise on a particular subject. “Each one of us had a qualification that we could respect from one another.” This is in contrast to the old elected board on which some members clearly did not respect fellow members.

School Attendance Boundaries

Addressing school attendance boundary issues was a reoccurring theme during the first half of the 2000s. While some boundary changes were necessitated by the new magnet plan, most of the changes were necessitated by the return of children to neighborhood schools. As part of the MOU, the county was obligated to build 13 schools to compensate for the significant number of schools—many inside the Beltway—closed due to court-ordered busing. Further, because of the failure to build new schools or redraw attendance boundaries to accommodate a growing student population, overcrowding had become a significant problem at several of the system's schools. The county offered to build an additional 13 schools to alleviate the overcrowding and accommodate a predicted increase in enrollment resulting from the baby boom echo.¹² Between 2003 and 2006 eight schools were opened. These eight were in addition to the twelve opened between 1999 and 2002.

Changing school boundaries is often one of the most conflict-ridden things any school board does because boundary changes are so disruptive; to children, families, schools, and communities. Almost every board member interviewed identified drawing attendance boundaries as the most troublesome decision they made. School board meetings that normally draw small crowds overflow when boundary issues top the agenda. Boundary debates are often heated and can be quite personal. Parents frequently buy homes with the quality of their children's prospective schools in mind, and efforts to take their children out of those schools are sure to be met with resistance. This is the case in Prince George's where the academic quality of schools is perceived to be uneven.

While PGCPS has schools that have won national awards for academic achievement, it also has a large number of schools on the Maryland State Department of Education's (MSDE) list of schools that have failed to meet state benchmarks.¹³ Parents rail against attempts to send their children to schools they consider to be of lesser quality than their children's current schools. As board member Mickens-Murray said at a board meeting, "One of the reasons we have a room full of people when we start to discuss boundaries is because there is a perception that 'My child is going to go to a mediocre school and you are taking them out of a quality school'" (Prince George's County Board of Education 2004). Many of the most overcrowded schools in the system were also PGCPS's better performing schools. Though the parents from those schools complained about the overcrowding, they opposed plans that would remove their children from those schools.

In 2000 and 2002, Superintendent Metts and the old elected school board approved boundary changes that affected 73 schools and over 11,000 students (Honawar 2002). The appointed board first considered boundary changes to return children to neighborhood schools in the Fall of 2002 while Metts was superintendent. The board rejected Metts's plan for not being sufficiently detailed. A year after Hornsby pushed through a plan to revamp PGCPS's magnet programs; he got board approval for a plan redrawing attendance boundaries. The changes would allow for 97% of all students to attend their neighborhood school.¹⁴

Academics

Of course, CEO Hornsby's primary mission was to raise the level of academic performance among PGCPS's students. During his tenure Hornsby made a number of

significant changes designed to improve achievement. Hornsby said of the system, “This system has allowed itself to only have a few schools that have the rigor that is necessary for children to demonstrate that they have the ability to be competitive in today's society. We can't continue to operate that way” (Trejos 2004c). For him the number one issue was literacy. In his first year as CEO, Hornsby implemented a Balanced Reading program that uses instruction and assessment to improve reading. During his second year, Hornsby changed the system’s curriculum. He complained that the system’s voluntary curriculum led to wide differences in what was being taught to students. He wanted instruction to be uniform so that no matter what school a child attended, she would be exposed to the same knowledge. To this end Hornsby created a core curriculum and aligned it with MSDE’s Voluntary State Curriculum and Content Standards (grades K-10). Interviewed school-level employees said the alignment brought much needed rigor to the system’s curriculum. Hornsby also built on the initiative started by Metts and expanded pre-kindergarten.

School employees credited Hornsby with introducing the use of technology and data to provide a diagnostic approach to improving student progress. The changes were not made without complaint however. Some parents complained that the changes were being made too quickly, and they were not adequately informed of changes. Some teachers complained that they were being asked to do too much too quickly. Nonetheless the changes were made. The changes seem to be successful as the number of schools meeting adequate yearly progress (AYP)¹⁵ on state assessments increased while Hornsby was CEO (Maryland State Department of Education 2005).

In their appraisal of Hornsby several interview respondents, even some of his critics, acknowledged Hornsby knew education and how to improve achievement. One former principal relayed the story of how Hornsby came to her school and told her that he could identify her top five teachers. He then visited the school's various classrooms. Hornsby not only identified the top five teachers, he correctly identified the school's best teacher. Others said that Hornsby had a good grasp on what was needed to improve performance and he had a clear vision of what needed to be done. Those same people however complained about how he executed his vision.

The CEO's Management Style Creates Tension

Interview respondents spoke of grumbling about Hornsby's management style from the beginning. PGCPS employees complained that he was dictatorial. County officials and parents complained that their views were not being considered and they were having little input in decisions being made. A county council member said after meeting Hornsby, "He came into a forum put on by the educational advisory committee and he pretty much talked at everyone and didn't seem to listen. It was like he had all of the answers and didn't want to hear anything from anyone. That seemed very strange to me. It didn't seem to be the approach that you want." A teacher said that Hornsby's message to teachers was, "I made the decision, this is how it's going to be, and if you all don't agree with it then you don't have to work in the school system." The teacher added, "He doesn't have a collaborative approach" (Trejos 2004c). Even those who were supportive of Hornsby acknowledged he could have done a better job of involving others in the decision making process. Doyle Niemann, a member of the former elected board, current state delegate and Hornsby supporter, worried about Hornsby's leadership style

and ability to get others behind him. Niemann said, "There's a time and place for decisive action and command style. If you're going to win in the long run and make gains, you have to create more of a sense of unity, more of a sense of team and enlist others in his vision. And I don't really see that he's done that" (Ibid.). Many thought Hornsby was arrogant. One community activist said, "arrogant was hardly the word. That was a mild word for what he was in person."

Hornsby of course did not see himself as arrogant. Asked about being considered arrogant, Hornsby responded, "I think there's a difference in competence and arrogance. Arrogance means I don't recognize what's going on around me. But when you're competent and confident, you do what you need to do to get the job done. I do recognize everything that's going on around me. I'm not an arrogant person. But I am a focused individual, and I do understand what we need to do to move this school system forward" (Ibid.). A few respondents believed Hornsby was not likely to serve more than one term because he had alienated too many people. An example of the alienation was Hornsby's relationship with the county council.

In 2003, CEO Metts informed the board that because of the "baby boom echo" the high school population was estimated to increase by an additional 6,000 students by 2006. To handle the increase, Hornsby and the school board wanted to build additions to six existing high schools. The county council, which must request the funds for the project, preferred to build a new high school in the northern portion of the county (Bowie) and perhaps a second in the southern portion of the county (Upper Marlboro). The Council agreed to an expansion of one high school but opposed expansions at the other five schools.

At a June 2004 council meeting to discuss the system's capital budget request, Hornsby abruptly left with his deputies in the middle of the meeting. Hornsby's leaving came after the Council had formally rejected his plan for the high school additions and had decided instead to create a task force to study the matter. Hornsby claimed he had a plane to catch. Some believed Hornsby left because he might have felt disrespected by the Council because some members had been inattentive during his presentation to the council. Regardless, the Council did not take kindly to Hornsby's departure and said so in a letter to both Hornsby and board chair Tignor. The letter, which managed to make its way into the newspapers, described Hornsby's behavior as demonstrating, "great disrespect for the elected legislative body of Prince George's County, and was, at best, unprofessional" (Swinson and Tate 2004). The Council also demanded Hornsby apologize for his actions. Hornsby refused saying, "I think there's no apology necessary" (Wiggins and Trejos 2004).

Council members explained their increased scrutiny of the school system's budget as a sign of its maturity. Council Chairman Tony Knotts told school officials that the council was no longer willing to rubber stamp proposed budgets.¹⁶ He said, "A year ago a budget was placed before us, and being less mature in this process, we pretty much said 'OK, you're the expert. You know what's right. But we'll see next year.' This is next year. We are more mature in the budgetary process and we looked at it very closely" (Tate 2004a). It is interesting to note that the two council members to vote against the council rejection of the system's capital budget were, Marilyn Bland and Thomas Hendershot. Both Bland and Hendershot are former school board members. Hendershot thought the council was getting too involved in school business. "I think we need to be

cautious about . . . instructing those who deal with something day in and day out. We don't tell engineers how to run NASA. We ought not be telling a superintendent how to run schools," Hendershot said during the meeting (Wiggins and Trejos 2004).

In August, Hornsby's administration refused to provide enrollment information that included identifying information on students to the consulting firm working with the task force. A lawyer for the school system contended that giving the consulting firm the information would be a breach of student privacy (A. Lee 2004e). The school system also said that because the firm was not hired by the school system it was not entitled to the same information as school employees. The school system did provide some enrollment information to the consultant. Hornsby said, "I would like to reiterate the fact that we provided hard copy data as well as electronic data that would adequately meet the needs of the consultant to the task force in order to provide you with decisions that are necessary to determine what space is necessary" (A. Lee 2004f). For its part the consulting firm complained about a lack of cooperation from the school system (A. Lee 2004d).

Not content to let the council's decision be the last word, Hornsby held a series of public forums in September touting his rejected expansion plan and asking parents to lobby the council in support of it. The forums were held at the five high schools Hornsby and the school board wanted to expand. On September 13, the County Council and its task force held their own forum to promote their position. Finally in November, Hornsby and the County Council, with the assistance of County Executive Johnson, reached a compromise. They agreed to build two new high schools and expand three existing schools.

Although this dispute ended with compromise, it further illustrated for some Hornsby's stubbornness and arrogance. Donna Hathaway Beck (then member of the school system's Parent and Community Advisory Board (PCAB) and now current school board member) said of Hornsby a year into his tenure, "I don't think he'll make four years. I think he showed in Yonkers, N.Y., that he does not respect the elected authority. The honeymoon is over. Everyone kept their hands off him for a year" (A. Lee 2004a). She added she expected the public to change the way it dealt with Hornsby. Several respondents contended that as good as he was as an educator, Hornsby's arrogance was going to be his undoing. They were right. An interviewed school administrator said that had Hornsby not gotten himself into legal trouble he would have been forced out by his opponents who were numerous. "His reputation was going down because of his attitude. [Eventually] he would have been forced out."

The Hornsby Scandal

In September 2004, Baltimore's largest newspaper, the *Baltimore Sun*, ran a series of articles on the growth of the education technology business as a result of the NCLB.¹⁷ The series reported that school systems desperate to comply with NCLB standards and avoid its sanctions have often turned to the purchase of education software to improve performance (MacGillis 2004a). The federal government provides some funding for under performing schools to purchase such technology. With close to a billion dollars at stake, some technology vendors have included perks for education officials in their sales pitches to have school districts purchase their products. A follow-up article on the series revealed that a June 2003 trip Hornsby took to South Africa as the outgoing president of the National Alliance of Black School Educators was paid for by Plato Learning, an

education technology vendor (MacGillis 2004b). The school system has done business with Plato in the past and had purchased Plato products since Hornsby became CEO. Hornsby had told the board about the trip but did not say the trip was paid for by Plato.

An October 14th *Baltimore Sun* article revealed that Hornsby, 51 was living with a 26 year old saleswoman, Sienna Owens, who worked for LeapFrog's education division, SchoolHouse (MacGillis 2004c). Hornsby had approved the purchase of \$1.3 million worth of products from LeapFrog in June 2004.¹⁸ Owens was not the saleswoman for the transaction. While the article made no direct allegation of wrongdoing it suggested a possible conflict of interest. At the time, school system officials were required to fill out ethics disclosure forms annually. Hornsby had not disclosed his relationship with Owens on his January 2004 form. According to ethics rules however, he did not have to because at the time of the disclosure Owens was not working for LeapFrog or for a company doing business with PGCPs. Hornsby also stated he had not received gifts of more than \$25 from companies doing business with PGCPs. However he did disclose that in his previous position as National Alliance president he had had relationships with companies doing business with the system.

Response to the article was immediate. School board Chairwoman Tignor asked the board's ethics panel to investigate the matter. Leapfrog also opened its own investigation. State Senator Paul Pinsky (D-Prince George's) and Delegate James Hubbard (D-Prince George's) said they would seek to introduce legislation that would require stricter ethics rules for school officials with authority to approve contracts. Pinsky said, "It's the public's money and we all want to have total confidence it's being spent the best possible way without any kind of conflict of interest" (Trejos 2004d).

Hornsby responded to the revelations by saying, “Everything I do is in the best interests of this county, and everything is where it should have been – aboveboard” (Ibid.). On the 18th, the Maryland state prosecutor's office also opened an inquiry into Hornsby’s trip.

It is interesting to note that one interview respondent questioned how the *Baltimore Sun* knew about Hornsby’s relationship with Owens when it does not normally report on Prince George’s County. An interviewed employee suggested that someone from the county went to the newspaper with the information. In the respondent’s mind, some people were out to get Hornsby. Another interviewed employee said that Hornsby’s arrogance had so alienated people that “when he got into trouble, people were more than happy to let him hang in the wind.”

Late October it was learned that the school system had hired a construction management company that employed one of Hornsby’s former top deputies in Yonkers (Trejos 2004e). In January 2004, school officials hired Facility Planners Group Inc. to manage a project to add air conditioning units to 51 schools over two years. The company was introduced to the system through C. James Grosso who was an administrator in the Yonkers school system for 30 years, including the time Hornsby was superintendent from 1998 to 2003.

In the wake of the new allegations, Senator Ulysses Currie (D-Prince George's), chairman of the Budget and Taxation Committee and Delegate Hubbard called for a state legislative audit of PGCPS vendor contracts. In early November the *Baltimore Sun* reported that both the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Maryland U.S. attorney’s office had opened investigations into the LeapFrog purchase (MacGillis 2004d).¹⁹ Of the potential conflicts of interest and the questioning of his ethics, Hornsby

said, “Nobody can influence me. I'm not influenceable. If I decide to do something, it is the best decision for the children in this county” (Trejos and Rich 2004). He described the suggestions of wrong doing as “character assassination” by a “cast of characters” (Ibid.).

In early December, the school system’s ethics panel issued a three page report that found Hornsby had not violated any system policies. The board satisfied with the report’s findings wanted to move forward. Others questioned the thoroughness of the two month investigation because the panel never questioned Hornsby or his girlfriend. County Council member Thomas E. Dernoga said, “I think when you have that type of inquiry it would be useful to interview the person who has the most information” (Trejos 2004f). A few weeks later LeapFrog’s SchoolHouse president resigned in the wake of an internal review of the company’s transactions with the county. Owens also left the company. In response to the resignation and departure, the board hired an independent auditor, Huron Consulting Group, to examine Hornsby’s purchases, including the LeapFrog purchase.

Also in December the *Washington Post* reported that the school system had a three year contract with a consulting firm owned by the husband of a former Hornsby deputy from Yonkers (Trejos 2004g). In response to that revelation, the school board increased its oversight of Hornsby’s ability to sign contracts.²⁰ Meanwhile the state and federal investigations continued.

The questions surrounding Hornsby again brought turmoil to a system that seemed to be recovering from the tumult of the last administration. Once again the focus was not on student achievement but instead on the behavior of adults. Hornsby’s

behavior was damaging not only for him but for the school board as well. There was considerable criticism of the board's handling of the allegations.

Initially the school board was very supportive of Hornsby. On October 19th, five days after the *Baltimore Sun* article on LeapFrog, Chairwoman Tignor wrote a letter to county political leaders that tried to explain Hornsby's behavior and gave the impression that Hornsby had done nothing wrong (*Washington Post* 2004). In the letter, Tignor acknowledged that Hornsby had told the board about the trip. She also wrote that because Hornsby was not related to the woman with whom he was living, he was not required to disclose his relationship. Seeming to downplay the matter Tignor wrote, "In light of the fact that most of these are allegations and not formal charges, we need to stay focused on the business of raising test scores" (A. Lee 2004h).

As more revelations occurred, the board was reluctant to criticize Hornsby. Some members even questioned the FBI's investigation. Howard Stone said, "I didn't think the allegations merited all of this" (Rich 2004, and Wiggins). Board member Sirjue said he was concerned the investigation "is politically motivated and some politicians in the county might have a personal agenda in going after Dr. Hornsby and [are] looking for every little incident to blow it up" (Rich and Wiggins 2004). That comment may have been a reference to Delegate Hubbard who had been especially critical of Hornsby and the school board. There were suggestions in a *Washington Post* article that there might have been a personal reason for Hubbard's harsh criticism (Trejos 2005). His wife, Susan Hubbard was a senior administrator in the system and had been caught up in the system's reorganization of district offices. Hubbard denied that his criticisms were personally motivated saying, "I've been told it's my responsibility to stay on top of this.

I've taken my responsibility seriously and don't let anything get in my way" (Ibid.).

Meanwhile, board critics questioned the board's continued support of Hornsby. When the board refused to place Hornsby on administrative leave after LeapFrog's investigation led to Owens departure Senator Pinsky said, "I find it disheartening that the company involved in this deal has taken it more seriously than the county's Board of Education. They're trying to protect their company, their reputation and their shareholders, and it's incumbent that the Board of Education protect its stakeholders" (MacGillis 2004e).

What made the board particularly susceptible to criticism was the fact that ethics questions about Hornsby had been raised when he was superintendent in Yonkers, New York. Months after Hornsby was fired, the city's inspector general opened an investigation into vendor gifts Hornsby had accepted while superintendent (MacGillis 2004d). Although critical of Hornsby, the inspector general did not recommend Hornsby be criminally charged. Board critics believed that the investigation was a giant red flag that should have led the board to reconsider hiring Hornsby. As a result of the scandal, the board was accused of either not thoroughly vetting Hornsby before he was hired or choosing to ignore past allegations.

In mid-April 2005, the FBI made a surprise visit to PGCCPS headquarters. Agents interviewed staff and seized records. About a week later, PGCCPTA gave Hornsby a vote of no confidence. President Howard Tutman said the organization was displeased with the lack of input they had with Hornsby. "Parents don't feel they're involved. They don't feel that their opinions or what they say are being strongly considered," Tutman said (Anderson 2005b). Tutman maintained the vote was being considered before the FBI visit but the timing of the vote was not missed.

On May 27, a little over a week before the school's independent audit report was released, Hornsby resigned. The school board agreed to give Hornsby the \$125,000 severance package negotiated in his contract. The board said it did so in order to preclude a court fight. Once the audit report was made public however, many people were critical of the board's deal with Hornsby.

The report revealed that Hornsby may have financially benefited from the LeapFrog transaction. He may have received part of his girlfriend's commission (Anderson 2005e). Also, the probe found that a company with ties to a former Hornsby deputy was awarded a contract with the school system even though it had missed the deadlines for bids on the contract. The audit also found evidence that Hornsby was still operating an educational consulting firm, Quality Schools Consulting Inc., he founded in 2000 even though he told the board that he had ended his consulting work before becoming CEO. With the report's findings, some of Hornsby's critics alleged there was more than ample cause to fire Hornsby without paying him anything, and they were angry that he was able to walk away with more of the system's money. Doris Reed, executive director of the Association of Supervisory and Administrative Personnel (ASASP), the system's school administrators union, said of the deal, "Why would you not wait for the audit report to come out? Because they could have fired him for cause, and they wouldn't have had to pay him anything at all" (Cho 2005).

The audit report lent credence to complaints that the school's ethics panel's investigation was insufficient. The audit report was 36 pages long compared to the ethics panel's three pages. While the ethics panel did not talk to Hornsby, the audit investigators spoke to Hornsby twice and numerous other people both inside and outside

of the school system. It also reviewed documents and e-mails. The thoroughness of the audit reinforced the perception that the school board had mishandled the scandal. Board members seemed surprised by the extent of Hornsby's wrong doings. Board member Stone said of the report, "We're glad we got to the bottom of this. I was greatly surprised at Dr. Hornsby's actions. He was dubious and he deceived us" (Ibid.). A *Washington Post* editorial summed up the mood of many in the county; "What's increasingly clear in this sordid mess is that Mr. Hornsby played fast and loose with the truth, with ethics and with the integrity of Maryland's second-largest school system. What's less clear is how the school board could have been so oblivious to it all" (Editorial 2005). Delegate Hubbard was harsher in his critique. He said, "They kept their heads in the sand. This represents a failure of the performance of the board" (Leonard 2005b).

In August of 2006, Hornsby was indicted by a federal grand jury on charges of mail and wire fraud, witness and evidence tampering, and obstruction of justice. He was convicted in 2008 and is serving a six year prison sentence.

The Hornsby scandal was another sad reminder of the problems facing the school system. Education activist Donna Hathaway Beck speaking for many in the county said, "It's just another bad mark for us in Annapolis because we're already the dysfunctionals down here. We just came off four years with [former CEO] Iris Metts and now here we go again. It just gives the other delegates the opportunity to say, 'oh brother, not again.' When are we going to get it right? Once again we're focused on adult agendas and misactions rather than moving the system forward" (A. Lee 2004h). Because it hired him, the school board had to take some of the blame for the Hornsby scandal. His past history suggested that Hornsby's tenure was likely to be controversial. At best, Hornsby

was brusque and perhaps arrogant. At worst, he was ethically challenged and perhaps corrupt. In hindsight, Tignor allowed that the board may have been too preoccupied with hiring someone capable of raising test scores to give enough weight to rumors about Hornsby's ethical behavior. "I certainly was focused on moving academics. Looking back, we certainly... could have given more consideration to the comments people made," she said (Leonard 2006e). The scandal and the board's handling of it provided an opening for those who had opposed an appointed board to attack not only the board's credibility but also the wisdom of having an appointed board at all. A middle school parent complained about the board's handling of the matter, "They are an appointed board and they have no accountability to anyone" (Leonard 2005a).

The scandal also hurt the chances of increasing civic capacity and creating a new reform-minded regime. The restructuring of school leadership was supposed to be a remedy for the perceived ineffectiveness that had existed before 2002. Replacing ineffectiveness with corruption was not most people's idea of an upgrade. For many, particularly for those looking at the school system from the outside, one problem was replaced with another. This said the Hornsby scandal was not the only impediment to creating a new performance regime. There were other issues both inside and outside the regime that affected efforts to build a successful reform coalition. These issues are the subject of the rest of this chapter.

The Loss of State Level Reform Advocates

Only months after legislation was passed to dissolve the elected school board, the reform movement was dealt an immediate and consequential blow by the loss of reform advocates in the General Assembly. In 2002, Delegate Rushern Baker (D-Prince

George's) decided to give up his House seat in order to run for county executive. Baker was one of the county's leading advocates for educational reform. For years he pushed the school system and the county to improve performance. He was the first of the county delegation to call for reform of the system's leadership structure and was one of the strongest supporters of board dissolution. During the campaign, Baker even wore a T-shirt with a green apple on it to emphasize his focus on education.

A key to forming a broad-based coalition for education reform is developing a common vision of how education in the county should look in the future. Having a strong advocate in a prominent leadership position to espouse that vision and facilitate efforts to bring people together would be enormously advantageous. Baker was primed to be that advocate. Had Baker succeeded in becoming county executive, education would have topped his agenda. Unfortunately for reform efforts, Baker lost his election bid for county executive and came in fourth in a field of five. With Baker's loss, Prince George's was left without a powerful county voice for educational reform.²¹

Perhaps the biggest blow to reform efforts at the state level was the death of Delegate Howard Rawlings (D-Baltimore) who died in November 2003. As chairman of the House Appropriation Committee, Rawlings had enormous power and he was willing to use that power to improve the quality of education for children, particularly poor and minority children. Not only was Rawlings instrumental in the board's restructuring, he was also instrumental in getting the Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act passed in 2002.²² The act significantly increased the amount of state education funding given to local jurisdictions. Over a five-year period, state education funding was increased so that an additional \$1.3 billion would be added to the state's contribution to local districts.

A powerful advocate for education reform in Prince George's was lost when Rawlings died. There is little doubt that had he lived, Rawlings would have continued to closely monitor PGCPD and continued to push for improvements. An interviewed educator argued that Rawlings would have been strong enough to insure attention remained focused on education reform by making sure an outside agency reviewed the school system and held it accountable for its results. Also, Rawlings had the power to force all of the political entities in the county to come together. This power was necessary because historically there has not been much consensus or willingness to come together on the part of elected officials. "He was going to force changes."

With the power of Rawlings and the resources he could bring to the table behind them, challengers to the employment regime would have had a significant advantage. Coupled with a Baker administration that had education as its primary focus, there is little doubt that education awareness would have increased (the prospects for substantive education reform would have grown enormously). No one can say how events would have occurred had Baker and Rawlings remained in office. However, it is probably safe to say that the loss of these state-level advocates certainly made reform attempts more difficult than they might have been.

At the same time political changes were occurring at the state-level, political changes were occurring at the county-level.

County Politics

Complicating coalition building efforts and regime change in the education arena was the regime change occurring in the county's political arena. 2002 was a year in which a whole new cadre of political leaders came to power. Because of term limits,

County Executive Wayne Curry and five members of the county council were prohibited from running again. As a result, the County elected a new county executive and five first-time council members. The level of inexperience was increased by the fact that two of the remaining four incumbent council members had served less than a year in office.²³ Also there was going to be a new state's attorney because the current one, Jack Johnson, was elected the new county executive. Additionally, the county's chief of police retired in February and it was unclear whether the acting chief would be retained by the new county executive. As a result of all of these changes, almost all of the county's high profile officials, including the school board, were relatively inexperienced and unknown to many voters.

The 2002 elections also reinforced the ascendancy of African Americans to the top of the political power structure when Prince George's voted in its second black county executive. For the first time a majority of the county council members were African American as well.²⁴ This rise was decades in the making as the county's demographics shifted from majority white to majority black. With African American ascendancy came the white political establishment's final demise.

The power of the old establishment began to unravel in the 1980s as middle class African Americans coming to the county began to challenge the political status quo. As a result the white-led political establishment that groomed and imposed order on candidates, and kept the County's tendency towards factionalism in check lost power as blacks demanded a larger political role. The election of Wayne Curry as the county's first African American county executive began a period of transition from white controlled politics to black controlled politics. However the dismantling of the white-

led regime was not followed by the development of a new dominate black-led organization. Instead what developed was a political void in which several groups jockeyed for supremacy and candidates operated as independent political entrepreneurs. Delegate Hubbard said of the transition, “for the last eight years, we've been playing ‘Who's the top dog?’” (Kurtz 2002).

The election of Johnson in 2002 sounded the final death knell for the old regime. Michael E. Arrington's, a Johnson adviser, comments about the balance of power said as much. He said, “Until this election, there has been a fluid connection between all the administrations. For the first time, you have a disconnect between the new administration and the political operatives who have been around for 30 years” (Schwartzman 2003). What was not clear was whether Johnson would become a strong enough political figure around which a dominate organization could be built. Tensions between the county executive and county council did not help matters.

Johnson tried to consolidate governing power in the executive's office once he took office. Almost immediately after taking office, Johnson lobbied to have the state legislature strip the county council of having a say on the appointment of members to two important boards.²⁵ Not surprisingly he was rebuffed by the county council, and though Johnson's efforts to bypass the council failed some resentment remained. In response to Johnson's actions, the council became more assertive in its dealings with the county executive. The tug-of-war for power escalated each year with a coalition of six council members working as a block against Johnson. Nicknamed “the gang of six,”²⁶ the group was able to thwart Johnson's move for political supremacy.

In 2004, Johnson and the council sparred again, this time over a bailout of Dimensions, Inc. the non-profit organization running the county's public hospitals, including Prince George's Hospital Center, the county's largest public hospital, and provider of most of the county's indigent care. After years of mounting deficits, Dimensions was facing bankruptcy in 2003. Initially the executive and council stood united in the effort to save the hospital system. However after months of at times testy negotiations with state officials for a bailout, the council balked at an agreement reached between Johnson and Governor Robert Ehrlich in February 2004. The council was upset at being left out of the final negotiations. It also objected to not having a representative sit on the state-county oversight committee that would oversee the hospital system's finances. One day before a state imposed April 16 deadline for accepting the bailout plan, Johnson and the council reached a deal that would add a council representative to the oversight committee. Despite the compromise, the ongoing tensions between the executive and the council did little to create the collaborative atmosphere conducive to coalition building.

Further, a public that historically has been skeptical of its political leaders had no less reason to be skeptical of the new county leadership. After the hospital deal was brokered, a member of Dimensions board accused Johnson of withholding funds from the company until it hired a Johnson associate (Tate 2004b). After a five month probe, Johnson was cleared of the charges by the state prosecutor. The county executive was not alone in being under investigation. According to newspaper reports, rumors spread in November 2004 that the FBI was investigating the relationship between county council members and county developers (Rich and Wiggins 2004).²⁷ The investigation (the

details of which were unknown) came in the midst of an ongoing struggle between the council and Johnson over residential development in the county.

The council wanted to slow the pace of development while Johnson supported developers eager to build. The tensions escalated to the point that a proposal (backed by developers) to add at-large members to the county council, and thus weaken the influence of the “gang of six”, was placed on the 2004 ballot.²⁸ The measure was soundly defeated, but not without increasing the animosity between the executive and council.

The machinations between the executive and council gave education reformers little hope that the county political leadership would be able to come together to motivate county residents to do what was necessary to improve the county’s school system.

The Interplay between Race and Class

As seen in the changes in the county’s political class, race is a central topic in any discussion of Prince George’s County. A county cannot shift from majority white to majority black without race playing a prominent role in the county’s history. The question is what role did race play in 2002 and what role does it continue to play? While it is somewhat difficult to answer that question, race no longer is the divisive issue it had been in the past. Whites are no longer fleeing the county in an attempt to avoid having to send their children to integrated schools. Blacks are no longer the victims of a majority white police force that harassed them on a regular basis. The demographic numbers have necessitated a change in how race operates in Prince George’s.

But how does race operate in the county? Depending on whom you talk to and on which subject you are talking, race is or is not a problem. If a 2002 election poll is any indication, race is not the hot button it used to be. The majority of voters sampled

answered that race relations in the county were good (*Washington Post* 2002). Voters were asked how well they thought blacks and whites in Prince George's got along. 86% of voters thought the races got along well while only 10% thought they did not get along well. In an indication of voters' willingness to select non-African American leaders, only 34% of voters thought it was important that the next county executive be African American. Conversely, 63% said it was not important with 42% of them saying it was not important at all. That said, the only way for the white candidate in the county executive race, James Estep, to win was for black voters to split the vote amongst the four African American candidates in the race. However, four years later, when county voters were given a choice for United States Senator, they chose the white Democrat from Baltimore over the African American Republican from Prince George's.²⁹ So, does race matter in Prince George's?

Most interview respondents agree that the county's racial history and the strife associated with it fed into residents' distrust of county institutions. As discussed in Chapter 3, court-ordered busing and the school system's handling of it generated distrust from all sides. As a result there was a lack of confidence in the county's political institution generally. In terms of education, this translated into a lack of trust in the school board and superintendent. Thus the actions of the school board or the superintendent were often viewed with skepticism by at least some in the county. Some respondents contend that some of the racial distrust born of past actions is still present and impacts county politics. They argue the distrust manifests itself as a lack of confidence in the willingness or ability of officials to do the right thing, or do what needs to be done.

There is a general consensus that the local media have contributed to the distrust within the County. Respondents complain that any negative event happening in the county is sure to make the news while more positive things go unnoticed. Some attribute the media's behavior to institutional racism. "This is a majority black county with a majority black leadership, and in general folks don't like to see that type of success. So because of that any small negative that occurs is magnified." The *Washington Post* receives particular derision. One said of the newspaper, "we were red meat for the *Post* reporters." People argue that all of the negative articles about the County and PGCPs give people the impression that things are much worse than they actually are.

Interestingly, when interviewed many respondents did not mention race unless specifically asked about it. So while race is an issue, it is not so prominent an issue that everyone feels compelled to talk about it. Now some of that may be a result of the fact that race in America is still a delicate subject. Some of it may be a result of the fact that having tipped to being a solidly majority-minority county, the old black-white discussions no longer seem as relevant. One respondent said of the impact of race on education politics, "Is race a factor yes, but it is not a dominating factor." Perhaps a better explanation lies in a quote of a former Maryland Governor Timothy F. Maloney. In 1990 he said, "Race is the background music in Prince George's" (Milloy 2006). Maloney said this during a time when the county was undergoing rapid demographic change, but in many ways it still holds true.

Race in Prince George's is like the constant music one hears in a department store. Everyone knows it's there but most of the time everyone ignores it. It almost becomes unheard white noise in the background. Occasionally however, a song will be

played that catches one's ear and the music is noticed. What was once in the background comes to the forefront, and the emotionally charged nature of race becomes evident.

Some of the difficulty of race in the County comes from the interplay of race with class. Some issues that are seen as racial issues are actually class issues. For example the Beltway divide discussed earlier is as much if not more a class issue than it is a race issue. Also as discussed above, in addition to conflicts between white and African Americans, there are conflicts within the African American community. Those conflicts are class conflicts because the interests of middle class and working class blacks diverge. "If the county is 2/3 black, it's only logical that the tensions are not just between the black structure and the white structure but there are tensions within the black community and structure too. Class issues and all of those things begin to play out. I've seen that directly, with black business groups that will oppose things that seem to go against the interests of the black community. But their interest is in the black business community." One of the times when race and class have a tendency to jump to the forefront in the education arena is when school attendance boundaries are changed. It is during these times that the difficulties associated with the County's diversity become most visible.

School boundary changes are always contentious wherever they take place (Creighton and Hamlin 1995). PGCP's history of school boundary change efforts have added to the contentious nature of the process. For years majority white school boards attempted to redraw boundaries as a way of circumventing court-ordered busing. Though unsuccessful in its attempts, the boards' behavior had led some African Americans to be suspicious of school boards' motives with respect to school boundaries. Meanwhile whites in the county, who had been spared the brunt of busing, worried about what would

happen to their children after court-ordered desegregation ended. As a result, most everyone came to the table suspicious of everyone else.

Interestingly, the county's goal to return children to neighborhood schools had the potential to exaggerate those differences and divisions that exist within the county. In the past the push toward neighborhood schools was promoted by white residents and school board members as a means of first preventing integration and second curtailing busing. So for a number of black residents "neighborhood schools" became code for segregation or resegregation. So during the 1970s and early 1980s, racial overtones shadowed the debate over neighborhood schools. As the county and the school system populations grew more African American, the racial overtones that once colored the debate have been replaced by issues of class. Instead of white parents objecting to their children attending school with black children, today middle class African American parents object to their children attending schools with working class African American children (Anderson 2005c). Alvin Thornton, a former chairman of the Prince George's school board summed up the problem of returning children to their neighborhood school when he said, "The school boundaries will begin to reflect the enclaves of differences -- social class differences -- in the county. Children who have less will be consigned to schools and communities that have less" (Ibid.).

An example of this can be seen in attempts to solve the overcrowding at Bowie High School. In 2002 many of PGCPS's high schools were overcrowded. Bowie was one of those schools. It was 600 students over capacity. At the same time DuVal High School was under capacity. Bowie High School's SAT scores made it the second best performing high school in the County while DuVal ranked eleventh.³⁰ The student

population at Bowie was almost evenly split between blacks and whites, while DuVal's population was almost entirely black. CEO Metts proposed sending about 240 Bowie students to DuVal. The objection of Bowie parents was vocal and immediate. A Bowie parent said, "My children are never going to DuVal. I didn't move here so my children could go to DuVal. If I wanted to my children to go to DuVal, I would have moved to DuVal's district" (Genz 2002).

Although the 2002 proposal was tabled, in part due to the objections of Bowie parents, it was brought up again in 2004. This time the objection of Bowie parents was even more personal. One said of the DuVal, "You have a different caliber of parenting, a different attitude among the student body, and that's what we're concerned about" (Trejos 2004a). One black interview respondent complained about Bowie; "They want everything to happen in Bowie. They don't want to intermingle like Bowie is an enclave unto itself. It is not. They don't want to go to school out of Bowie. We don't want anybody coming in to Bowie. 'We want all of our schools in our community to be just for us.' They didn't want to be a part of the larger system." For years Bowie was able to get away with this attitude because PGCPSS was desperately trying to hold on to the white students who lived in Bowie. However, many outside of Bowie resented the preferential treatment the city received; treatment it received because it was majority white. So race has played a divisive role in boundary issues.

As the county has become majority African American, class has begun to supplant race as the magnet for discord. Another county high school, Flowers High School was over capacity. Flowers sits in Lake Arbor, an upper middle class town. A plan called for about 490 Lake Arbor students to be sent to Largo High School. Largo is

a working class community. Flowers parents objected to the move. One said, “I want my child to be in an environment where she can excel, pass her exams and go on to college” (Anderson 2005h). Another added, “If it is not broke, why fix it? Our blood, sweat and tears are in this community. This is my village” (Ibid.). The middle class black parents of Lake Arbor expressed no interest in having their children attend school with working class students in Largo. An interview respondent said of class-based objections to boundary changes, “Parents from communities like Woodmore and Mitchellville [upper middle class communities] people don’t want the children from Kent Village, Capital Heights [working class neighborhoods] to go to school with their children. Discrimination is now according to class.” Now in addition to race, class plays a divisive role in school boundary and enrollment issues.

Nearly continuous boundary changes beginning before the new board took over made developing a new collaborative relationship between school system and parents extremely difficult if not impossible. Boundary changes encourage parents to focus on the narrow interests of their own children rather than on the broader interests of all children. Proposed boundary changes further encourage school personnel to act to protect their school and or job. Countering this natural impulse requires concerted effort to refocus attention on the school system as a whole so that people concentrate on larger goals. Changing behaviors requires changing the way in which parents and the larger community interact with the school system, and changing opinions about the appropriate place of PGCPS within the community.

Community involvement efforts can alter perceptions of the role of the entire community in improving education in the county. Between 2002 and 2004 a number of

attempts to shape and improve community involvement in PGCPS surfaced. These efforts came from both inside and outside PGCPS with varying levels of success.

Community Involvement

Key to changing the community's relationship with its schools is changing the relationship of parents with the school system. State lawmakers seemed to understand this because parent involvement component was added to the bill dissolving the elected school board. Included in the legislation creating the new governance structure was a directive to create a Parent and Community Advisory Board (PCAB) (Prince George's County Delegation 2002). Both the school board and the CEO were to consult with the advisory board and, "ensure parental involvement in the development and implementation of the education policies and procedures in the Prince George's County public school system" (Prince George's County Delegation 2002, 4-406). The board was to have 13 members selected by the CEO. A majority of the members had to be parents of PGCPS students.³¹ The PCAB was to hold monthly meetings and quarterly meetings with the CEO.

Delegate Hubbard accused the PCAB of being a rubber stamp for Hornsby (A. Lee 2004i). The NAACP's representative Clark Estep who resigned after six months on the panel lamented that the board was not advising as intended. He said, "The CEO wasn't willing to make changes to carry out mandates, so I chose to no longer be a part of PCAB because I found that it was really a dysfunctional organization. The group was not following the Legislature's intent, but merely listening to reports from the CEO and not advising the CEO. We were more a listening group and reacting to what was being said" (Ibid.). Accusing the board of being ineffective, Delegate Hubbard submitted legislation

to restructure the PCAB (Prince George's County Delegation 2005a). He said, "The Parent Community Advisory Board has been dysfunctional since it was originally organized" (A. Lee 2004i). He also accused some members of never attending meetings.

The House bill would reduce PCAB membership to 12 and would allow for the removal of members with three unexcused absences in a year. The County's Senate and House delegations, county executive, and county council would each appoint a representative. The remaining members would represent a number of organizations and would be appointed by the county executive with council approval.³² PCAB member, Faith Pounds, objected to the efforts to change the board's composition arguing that the changes would make the board too political. "Does the 'P' in PCAB stand for politician instead of parent? It is my understanding that the intention of HB-94[9], which established the PCAB, was to ensure that the opinions of everyday people, especially parents, are brought to the table in planning and policy making for the Prince George's County School System until we return to an elected school board. It is my opinion [Hubbard's proposal] does absolutely nothing to serve our children and is entirely politically motivated," Pounds said in an e-mail to *The Gazette*, a weekly county newspaper (A. Lee 2004i). While the bill passed the House, it died in the Senate and the PCAB remained as originally created.

That the PCAB was seen as ineffective was not a surprise given CEO Hornsby's attitude toward parent and community involvement. Several interview respondents complained that Hornsby was not particularly interested in meaningful parent and community involvement. "Hornsby talked at them and not with them." Superintendent Hornsby claimed that he encouraged parent involvement. Yet when asked about

complaints about a lack of parent involvement, Hornsby reportedly said, “The expectation that parents would participate in [leadership] committees at schools was not reinforced until I got here. . . . Involvement is very different than decision-making. . . . Involvement clearly delineates participation, and opportunities for participation, and I have provided more opportunities than any of my predecessors in recent history for significant involvement” (Anderson 2005d).

Additionally Hornsby seemed to have a narrow view of parental involvement. He believed that parents should be focused on the individual school or schools their child or children attend. Hornsby said, “I make broad, global, far-reaching decisions that are implemented over time. If parents are truly going to be involved in their child's education, they should be involved in the school where the child is” (Ibid.). Hornsby also said, “I think parent involvement, from my perspective, should occur directly at the school site. I think that that's where our children are. Parents don't have children that work in the central office. The most meaningful parent involvement is where your child goes to school. Anything outside of that becomes parent advocacy. That's not involvement” (A. Lee 2004d). It is clear that for Hornsby involvement and decision-making are two different things. It is also clear from the interviews that while many people may be involved in the process, Hornsby was going to be the one to make decisions.

Hornsby's position seems to be in line with the traditional view of parental involvement which sees parents as an assistant or cheerleader. This view in which the role of the parent is minimized works against broad-based reform efforts that require the active participation of a number of stakeholders. In order to sustain such efforts

participants must believe that their participation is meaningful and necessary. Being relegated to the sidelines in the role of cheerleader does not fit that requirement. On the other hand this narrow parental role works very well for the maintenance of a school cartel.

A traditional avenue for parental involvement has been the PTA. However, the county's PTA organization, PGCCPTA, was enduring its own troubles.

A persistent problem for PGCCPTA was low participation. Judy Mickens-Murray was head of PGCCPTA when she was appointed to the school board. She said one of her most difficult problems was getting individual PTAs to get involved in issues that did not affect their individual school (Krughoff 2002b). A number of respondents commented on the spotty PTA participation throughout the school system. A school-level president estimated that about 25% of parents are actively involved in PTAs throughout the County. The lack of robust participation in the rank and file allowed clichés to develop among the leadership as people vied for power.

In September 2005 internal conflicts erupted into dueling meetings. While PGCCPTA President Darren Brown was meeting with school officials to discuss ways to increase parent involvement, First Vice President Walter Searcy and other PTA officers were meeting to discuss removing Brown from office.³³ There were complaints about Brown's dictatorial style, and Searcy complained about Brown's frequent use of the personal pronoun, all the time. "It's 'me,' about 'me.' 'I'm the president'," Searcy complained (Anderson 2005f). There were also concerns about Brown's performance as Charles H. Flowers High School PTA president. Brown had arranged for the procurement of the Flowers' school uniforms through a company that was owned by his

brother. Because of several glitches in the process, the uniforms did not arrive until several weeks into the school year. While no one publically blamed Brown for the problems, Searcy and other insinuated that he had done something wrong (Anderson 2005g). Removal of Brown would require a vote of the executive board. The earliest the board would meet was November. In November, the PTA's executive board fell two votes short of the two-thirds majority (6 of 12) needed to oust Brown (Metro In Brief 2005). Searcy and another member of the executive board quit in protest.

The dispute among the PTA leadership began about a month after it was revealed that the Maryland PTA (MDPTA) had delayed Brown and other PTA officials from taking office because the local organization had failed to file financial audits for the previous two years. It also failed to purchase bonding insurance for school level PTAs (Leonard 2005d). The new leaders, elected in May were not seated until August.

2005 was not the first year that poor recordkeeping or management had gotten the county PTA in trouble with the state organization. The PGCCPTA had been briefly disbanded in 2000 by the MDPTA. Members of PGCCPTA executive board accused then president, Minerva Sanders, of financial mismanagement and failing to comply with organizational by-laws. While there were violations, what seems to have driven the board members' actions was dissatisfaction with Sanders' leadership. Wanda Blackburn, a regional vice president for the organization said, "The county council of PTAs has been crippled by Miss Sanders and her personal agenda. I feel we need leadership with integrity and honesty" (E. Lee 2000b).

After ten months of investigation MDPTA ordered PGCCPTA to accept Sanders resignation or remove her from office. The group demanded the county hold new

elections for county officers after the August elections were invalidated. The group also had to establish leadership training for officers. A MDPTA official had to be present at all county meetings for six months. And most damning, all financial records had to be turned over to the state group and the state would manage the county's financial accounts and approve all expenditures (Bhatti 2000b). If the county refused to abide by the state's demands, its charter would be revoked. Sanders, running against incumbent Marilyn Bland for a seat on the Board of Education, called the accusations politically motivated and refused to resign.

There appeared to have been a considerable amount of dissention within the organizations leadership with some supporting Sanders, and others like Blackburn opposing her (Ita 2000). After the county PTA failed to oust Sanders, MDPTA revoked the group's charter in October. As a result the county lost representation at the state and national level. School-level PTAs were allowed to continue operating although they did so without a coordinating body. In April 2001 MDPTA began the process of forming a new county organization. In July, PGCCPTA's charter was restored and new officers installed.

With all of the repeated problems with PGCCPTA's leadership, it is no wonder that the organization had a difficult time getting school PTAs to focus on county issues. More importantly, all of the strife within PGCCPTA most certainly weakened the organization's ability to be an effective spokesman for the interests of parents.

For its part, the appointed school board was very cognizant of the need to improve the community's interaction with the school system. Beyond trying to be more accessible to the community, the board was proactive in developing some new initiatives by taking

advantage of its business connections. Many of those initiatives were aimed at increasing business involvement.

In 2004, the school board established the Excellence in Education Foundation. The nonprofit foundation was the brainchild of board member Sirjue, and its mission was to raise private donations for PGCPS. Although the board and CEO Hornsby would oversee the foundation, it would be run by others. This was not the county's first attempt at establishing an education foundation. An earlier foundation, Prince George's Education Foundation, operated from 1997 until 2002 when fundraising difficulties led to its shuttering. The first project for the new foundation was the Libraries Inside the Classroom Initiative. As its name indicates, the initiative's goal was to provide a set of library books in every classroom. In support of the initiative, the foundation sponsored 5k races, "Race for Education," annually from 2004 to 2006. During the same period the foundation also held an annual golf tournament.

In another effort to strengthen school system ties with businesses, the school board formed the Business Partnership Committee and made it one of the board's standing committees. One of the things the committee did was revive the Partners in Education program in 2003. The program matches schools in need of donations with businesses with time, money, goods, and/or services to donate. The program originally begun in 1999 had become defunct because of budget constraints and the feud between the school board and superintendent.

Hornsby also tried to build better partnerships with the business sector. He started the Principal for a Day program in 2004. The program, similar to others in the country, allows business executives and other community leaders to serve as principals in the

county's elementary schools for one day. The program is designed to connect the community to schools by giving leaders insight into success and challenges facing principals on a daily basis. The exercise has become an annual event with more than 100 business and community leaders taking part each year.

Perhaps the initiative that most signaled a possible change in how education was viewed throughout the county was the formation of a new business and education partnership. Observing the 2002 debate over schools, County Councilman (and former school board member) Thomas R. Hendershot and David R. Merkwowitz, the CEO of Strategic Communications, a private public affairs firm, were convinced that business should play a role in the debate. They surveyed businesses in the county to gauge support for more business involvement. They then convened a breakfast attended by about 20 of the county's business leaders to discuss the potential for forming some sort of business alliance in support of education. The meeting was also attended by Superintendent Metts who gave the endeavor her strong endorsement. The informal group also conducted a public opinion survey of county residents and held public discussions to determine how an organization could be most effective.

The result was the Prince George's Business Education Alliance (PGBEA), a nonprofit research and policy analysis organization. Formed in 2004, the organization had three goals: secure the financial resources needed to provide a world-class education for all Prince George's County students; improve perceptions of the county's public schools and colleges; and build confidence in the county's educational institutions on the part of elected and appointed officials and the general public (Prince George's Business Education Alliance n.d.). PGBEA had a membership that includes 31 businesses, 11

affiliate organizations, and the heads of PGCCPS and Prince George's Community College. Businesses were asked to make annual contributions ranging from \$250 to \$10,000 to the nonprofit organization. In addition to issuing reports and press releases on education funding, PGBEA members lobbied the Maryland General Assembly for increased funding for Prince George's education.

In December 2004, PGBEA held the Prince George's Business-Education Summit to bring together county business and education leaders, academic experts, public officials, community activists, and other invited guests for a daylong meeting. According to PGBEA Executive Director Merkowitz, the goal of the summit was to foster consensus on the agenda that will strengthen education in Prince George's County (Staff Writers 2004). One result of the Summit was a distributed report that summarized the major issues discussed at the summit and discussed ways in which the community as a whole and the business community in particular could work to improve county education (Prince George's Business Education Alliance 2004).

This broad-based business coalition formed around the goal of improving public education represented a significant change in the interaction between PGCCPS and the business community in the county. The alliance represented a new approach to education and was the strongest indication that a new reform oriented regime might be forming. A fly in the ointment however, was the fact that CEO Hornsby kept his distance from the Alliance. Hornsby neither tried to encourage or inhibit the group's activities. The Alliance did its thing and Hornsby did his. A businessman working with the alliance bemoaned the fact that by not working with the Alliance, Hornsby missed an opportunity

to get direct feedback from the business community. Unfortunately, given his described personality, Hornsby's behavior was not surprising.

As discussed above, the 2002 elections provided an opportunity for government attention to be focused on education reform. The outgoing county executive, Wayne Curry, had made increasing economic development the highest priority of his administration. The new executive, Jack Johnson, had an opportunity to put action behind the campaign promises to make education a priority. Bringing people together would not be easy. With everyone jockeying for position in the new political regime, the chances of competing factions coming together to form a broad-based education coalition were slim. Moreover, with so many new players, it would take time to find a common voice or direction if it was even possible to do so.

While Johnson as county executive would be a logical choice to lead the effort to articulate a new educational vision he was not necessarily in a position to fill that role. According to Ronald Walters, a political science professor at the University of Maryland and long time county observer, "You have a weak county executive who's coming in without a strong majority base. They have to put together a base once they get elected. In terms of governing, you're wasting a lot of time" (Schwartzman 2002b). Add to this the antagonism between Johnson and the county council and the prospects for bold efforts appeared bleak. Nevertheless, Johnson seemed to defy the doubts with his first foray into education.

Johnson held an education summit titled Communities United for Education on September 13, 2003. The focus of the summit was parent and family empowerment for excellence in education. Over 600 educators, public officials, and parents attended.

Attendees participated in panels where they made suggestions to increase parental and community involvement. The summit was to be followed by nine mini forums focused on subsets within the community. However, at the initial summit, Johnson announced the formation of the Visionary Panel for Excellence in Education Across the Life Span. The panel was to work to implement a “womb to tomb” concept of education. The expansion of the panel’s focus beyond K-12 education lessened the potential impact of the initiative on reforming K-12 education.

A while later, Johnson’s education efforts were absorbed into his Livable Communities Initiative. The Livable Communities Initiative is “an exciting Strategic Plan that will guide, support and assist the government, residents and businesses in the creation and implementation of principles that will result in a healthy, safe, litter free environment and promote more livable communities in Prince George's County, one community at a time” (Prince George’s County Government 2010). The original focus of the initiative was the beautification of the county’s roads and communities. Its focus was expanded to include various issues that impact and improve the quality-of-life for county residents. The hallmark of the initiative is the reliance on an agenda of small scale projects designed to improve the quality of life for county residents. The most prominent of Johnson’s education efforts was his 2004 “Cool Schools” initiative that had the goal of air conditioning in all PGCPS schools by the 2005-2006 school year (Johnson Administration 2004).

The decision by Johnson to place his education initiative inside the larger initiative prevented the enthusiasm of the summit from being leveraged into a sustained effort to address critical issues. After this initial burst of activity, there appears to have

been only limited attention focused on education by the county executive beyond the required budget issues. Part of the explanation may lie in the fact that Johnson did not appear to have a vision of how he wanted to approach education. Asked about his expectations for the first summit, Johnson said, “What is going to come out of the summit, I don't know. What we might be looking at is a targeted campaign toward parents in the form of letters to be mailed home or even a task force to look further into the issue” (Krughoff 2003c). According to a high ranking educator no concrete products resulted from the summits. Clearly the catalyst for building a broad coalition for education reform was not going to come from the county executive.

Summary

During the four year period covering the tenures of CEOs Metts and Hornsby there appeared to be some concerted efforts to change the focus of the education regime. The school board did try to gain the public's confidence. However, the positive feelings engendered by the board were by the ambivalence many felt toward it due to its perceived undemocratic nature.

From the interviews it is clear that the county was split on the appointed board. While some thought they brought stability to the system and a needed level of professionalism others found the board unresponsive to community wishes. This split in opinion weakened the ability of the board to be the focal point of a new reform movement. Perhaps more importantly, the appointed board was not inclined to serve as a magnet around which a coalition could develop. It saw itself more in the mold of a corporate board of directors rather than a team of managers. They believed that once they had selected a CEO their job was to step back and let him lead the system. The

board was willing to operate more in the background and allow the superintendent to become the focal point of any new regime if there was going to be one. “They let the superintendent run it. They were not hands on.”

The prospects of forming a successful new regime were slim while Metts was still superintendent. She was too much of a lightning rod for some. Supporters of the old board blamed her for the board’s removal and were not willing to work with her. Others saw her as a holdover from a volatile period best forgotten. Even some of Metts’s supporters were ambivalent about her remaining with the system. In the end, as the relationship between Metts and the new board deteriorated, there was too much animosity to make a coalition work.

The hiring of a new superintendent seemed to provide an opportunity for a fresh start. However, in hindsight, the board’s selection of Hornsby probably killed any real chance to form a broad-based coalition. There was significant opposition to Hornsby’s hiring on the part of school system’s unions. They would have been unlikely to join a new coalition led by the superintendent. There was also a more general apprehension about Hornsby within the general community. Nevertheless, most people in the county were willing to give Hornsby a chance. However, Hornsby’s brusque management style and unwillingness or inability to act in a collaborative manner thwarted possible leanings towards forming a new broad-based coalition focused on educational improvement.

It could be argued that given the reasons why the board chose him, the prospects for a broad based coalition were nonexistent while Hornsby was CEO. The board chose Hornsby because of his blunt, take charge attitude had raised academic achievement elsewhere. The board seemed to think that an aggressive, no excuses approach to the

school system was what was needed to improve performance. While Hornsby's approach may have been what the system needed, it was not what a reform movement needed. Moreover, Hornsby's arrogance precluded him from building the kinds of community relationships necessary to sustain a reform regime. Ultimately, the LeapFrog scandal brought an end to attempts to rally around a new initiative during the Hornsby term.

Between 2002 and 2005, all of the turmoil and turnover in leadership both within and outside PGCPS precluded the formation of a new regime. Hornsby's 2005 departure provided the appointed board with another opportunity to select a superintendent capable of engendering support rather than opposition from the community. Would the environment improve with the next superintendent, or would the instability that seemed to characterize PGCPS continue? That question is answered next in Part 2 of this chapter.

Endnotes

¹ Prior to 1973, the school board was appointed by Maryland's governor. The move to an elected board was a reaction to court-ordered desegregation (Chapter 3).

² Unattributed quotations are from interviews conducted by the author. Respondents were given anonymity in exchange for their participation.

³ Baltimore city schools are governed by a board appointed by the mayor. However, under the 1998 settlement, the mayor was forced to give up sole control of the appointment process. Additionally, the sitting board at the time was replaced.

⁴ Only 24% responded it was a bad idea and 14% had no opinion or no response. The question asked was, "Do you think it was generally a good idea or generally a bad idea to replace the existing board with a newly appointed one?"

⁵ The four members were Beatrice Tignor, Dean Sirjue, Darlene W. Powell and Diana H. Walton.

⁶ Beltway is the local name given to Interstate 495. The Interstate circles the District of Columbia and bisects Prince George's County. Communities inside the Beltway tend to be poorer than communities outside the Beltway (Chapter 2).

⁷ Metts's term would run from June 1st to June 30th.

⁸ Fiscal years for PGCPs run from July 1 to June 30.

⁹ For the 2002-2003 school year, the entire state of Delaware had a public school enrollment of 116,288 students (An additional 28, 142 students were enrolled in private schools). PGCPs's enrollment was 135,439. Blacks were 31.4% of the student population in Delaware. Blacks were 77.7% of the student population in PGCPs.

¹⁰ Yonkers had 26,000 students; Sioux Falls had 19,700; and St. Louis Park had 4,200 (Trejos 2003a).

¹¹ As plaintiff in the desegregation suit, any new magnet plan had to meet with NAACP or perhaps face possible challenge in court.

¹² Because of declining enrollments only 24 of the 26 schools were built by 2009

¹³ Between 1987 and 2006, PGCPs had 11 National Blue Ribbon Schools and an additional 5 state Blue Ribbon Schools (PGCPs website). Conversely, for the 2004-2005 school year, PGCPs had 73 schools on MSDE's schools in improvement list (2004 Maryland Report Card).

¹⁴ The actual number of students attending neighborhood schools was 80%. The other 20% were either in special education programs or attended schools with magnet or specialty programs not available at their neighborhood school.

¹⁵ AYP is the gain that schools, school systems, and states must make each year in the proportion of students achieving proficiency in reading and math. To make AYP, schools and school systems must meet annual goals in reading and mathematics, graduation (high school) or attendance (elementary and middle school), and test participation.

¹⁶ As a matter of fact, the school system's budget was not the only one singled out for closer scrutiny by the council. Other departments such as police, fire and corrections were also more closely scrutinized.

¹⁷ The series was called "Poor Schools, Rich Targets" and ran September 19-21, 2004.

¹⁸ PGCPs had done business with LeapFrog since 2002.

¹⁹ Both were involved because the purchase was made with federal Title I funds.

²⁰ The board created a committee to review no-bid contracts of \$25,000 and directed the schools' internal auditor to review all contracts of \$100,000 or more.

²¹ Baker, a lawyer, decided not to return to practicing law after his defeat. Instead he became executive director of a nonprofit group that recruits and trains teachers to teach in minority communities.

²² The act is more commonly referred to as the "Thornton Act" in honor of Alvin Thornton, the chairman of the commission that developed the plan.

²³ The two members replaced council members who died in office.

²⁴ Five of nine council members were African American.

²⁵ The boards are the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. These bi-county (Montgomery County and Prince George's) boards have taxing authority and are extremely influential in zoning, planning and development issues.

²⁶ The six were Tony Knotts, Samuel H. Dean, Douglas J.J. Peters, Thomas E. Dernoga, Camille Exum and David Harrington.

²⁷ The FBI refused to confirm or deny the existence of an investigation. No charges were ever filed against any council members.

²⁸ The measure would have made it possible for councilmember Thomas Hendershot to remain on the council. Term limits forced him from office in 2006.

²⁹ Congressman Benjamin Cardin defeated Maryland's Lieutenant Governor Michael Steele. Cardin received 75% of the vote while Steele received 24% (Elections 2006).

³⁰ DuVal's average SAT score was 832 (Genz 2002). Bowie's was 948.

³¹ Five members were to be selected from a list of candidates submitted by PGCCPTA. Two were to come from a list submitted by the Committee of 100 [The Committee of 100 was the community group formed to monitor court-ordered desegregation and magnet programs]. Another three were to be appointed from a list submitted by Title I liaisons working in the school system. The final three were to come from a list of nominees submitted by other parent and community groups in the county.

³² Those members would include the following representatives: two from the PGCCPTA, one from Prince George's Talented and Gifted, one from the Prince George's Chapter of the NAACP, one from the Prince George's County Chamber of Commerce, one from The Arc of Prince George's County, one representative from Prince George's County Municipal Association, and one Title I parent. The Arc is a grassroots organization concerned about the welfare of people with developmental disabilities and their families. Prince George's Talented and Gifted is a county organization that advocates for PGCPs's talented and gifted programs.

³³ The meeting was monitored by Maryland PTA officials who refused to take sides in the dispute.

Chapter 5

Education Politics in Prince George's County after Dissolution Part 2: 2006-2010

Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) CEO Andre Hornsby's May 2005 resignation created another transition point for the school system. The school board appointed Chief of Human Resources, Howard Burnett as interim CEO. Burnett who was to retire in the fall referred to himself as a caretaker. Initially Burnett agreed to serve until the beginning of the new school year, about three months. However, his tenure was extended while the school board conducted a national search for a permanent leader. During that eleven month period, the school system was, according to one respondent, "on auto-pilot" another said the system was "in a holding pattern." Even so, a respondent offered that the year with Burnett at the helm allowed the system to recover from all of the turmoil occurring under the watch of both CEOs Metts and Hornsby. PGCPS employees referred to the year as "the year of healing." The year gave PGCPS, the county and potential advocates for reform a chance to regroup and consider next steps. The first step was the selection of a new superintendent.

There was some discussion as to whether the appointed board should be selecting a new CEO. The board was scheduled to leave office at the end of 2006. Should the board choose a new superintendent when the board doing the hiring would be gone just a few months after the CEO had been selected? Should not the new school board have the opportunity to choose the CEO of its choice? Delegate James Hubbard, a frequent critic of the appointed board, thought the CEO selection should be left for the new board. "I was one of the first people out of the gate to say this school board should not be allowed

to make the decision on a permanent CEO” (Leonard 2005c). Citizens for an Elected Board also wanted the board to wait. Others wanted the board to move forward. Delegate Justin Ross who was in favor of the appointed board selecting the new CEO said, “There's no guarantee that the elected board will pick anyone better and in the meantime we'll have wasted a year to 18 months where we could've had some continuity” (Ibid.). Some thought was given to hiring an interim CEO for a year and giving the new board the opportunity to select a person of their choosing. However, this option could possibly lead to PGCPs having entirely new leadership in 2007. To avoid that, some thought was given to signing the new CEO a two-year contract. The two years would allow the system to maintain some continuity because the CEO would be in place for a year after the new board took office. Then the elected board would be able to hire a CEO of its choosing. Some board members favored offering a two-year contract while others favored a full four-year contract. In the end, the appointed board opted to hire a permanent CEO and sign him or her to a full, four-year contract.

The board began its search for a new CEO by hiring a firm to conduct a national search for potential applicants. The new CEO would come from outside of PGCPs. A senior administrator offered that the board thought the system needed to be headed by someone from outside of PGCPs.

Enter the New CEO, Again

The search for a new CEO reached its final stages in early 2006, and there appeared to be more interest in the position than when Hornsby was hired in 2002. This time the county received 66 applications almost triple the 25 it received in 2003 (Anderson 2006b). In February the school board named three finalists. Two of the

candidates had connections to New York City's school system, the largest in the country. They were Marcia V. Lyles, a community superintendent in Brooklyn, and W.L. "Tony" Sawyer, Superintendent of the Topeka Public Schools. Before moving to Kansas, Sawyer had been a New York City community superintendent overseeing Manhattan high schools. The third candidate, John E. Deasy, was superintendent of the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District. Lyles and Sawyer were African American, Deasy was white.

As with the selection of Hornsby in 2003, all of the candidates met with various county stakeholders; parents and community activists, union leaders, top school administrators, and state and county elected officials. This time the school board and the community sought to select a CEO who was much more of a collaborator than Hornsby and also unlike Hornsby, above reproach. The board wanted someone who could handle both academics and politics. Board member Dean Sirjue said the new CEO should be able to get parents and community leaders to "embrace education and make education a priority in the county (Ibid.). But Sirjue also warned people about their desire to get the perfect candidate. He cautioned, "If anyone believes there's one knight in shining armor who can come in and 'fix' this school system overnight, they're in for a rude awakening" (Ibid.).

On March 2, the board voted unanimously to hire Deasy. Unlike the board's last choice of Hornsby, this board's choice had the support of all the various stakeholder constituencies. People were effusive in their support of Deasy. Carol Kilby, Prince George's County Educators' Association (PGCEA) president said, "Deasy has a lot of energy. He's going to be very, very positive. Unions were 100 percent behind him"

(Anderson 2006c). County Council Chairman Thomas Dernoga said, "It's the best move they've made in the four years they've been here" (Anderson 2006d). And in a reference to Hornsby's strained relationship with the council, David Merkwitz of the PGBEA said, "This is not a guy who's ever going to walk out of a [county] council meeting. They're going to have to kick him out" (Ibid.). In what was music to the ears of a county wanting stability, Deasy declared he was here for the long haul. He was quoted as saying, "I think it will take a minimum of eight to 10 years [to radically improve student achievement and turn around low performing schools]. By that time I'll be about 55, so I want to make my prime work in a place where it's needed the most" (Leonard 2006b).

Interestingly, Deasy's age made some people in PGCPS a little anxious. They were concerned that Deasy might not stay with the system for long because of his age. Because Deasy was so young, 45, PGCPS could not possibly be his last stop it was thought. An interviewed administrator who had worked with Deasy in the past was repeatedly asked by system employees if Deasy was likely to stay with PGCPS. The administrator thought people did not appear to be asking because they wanted to know how long they would have to bide their time until Deasy left. Instead they appeared to be seeking reassurance that the system would be stabilized. As discussed previously, bringing stability to PGCPS was one of the motivating factors behind the dissolution of the school board in 2002. But as earlier chapters have shown, stability had proven rather elusive.

Personality and style wise, Deasy was nearly the polar opposite of Hornsby. In a clear reference to Hornsby, a school official was quoted as saying, "Deasy is very smart. But it's not important to him to show that he's the smartest guy in the room. It's not going

to be management by intimidation. It's going to be collegial and collaborative” (Anderson 2006d). Deasy seemed to understand that to have long term success in the county a superintendent must know that successfully navigating the county’s political waters was *almost* as important as raising achievement. He said his first priority would be, “reaching out to all of the constituent stakeholders. Building personal relationships and a community team for the work that lies ahead” (Ibid.).

Of course the giant elephant in the room was race. Deasy was the first white superintendent to lead the system since Edward Felegy retired in 1995. Some questioned whether the board would hire a white person. A respondent who attended Deasy’s constituent interview overheard an African American attendee say, “Clearly he’s the best of the three candidates. Too bad they won’t hire him because he’s white.”¹ The respondent hoped the fact that the board did hire Deasy was a sign of growing maturity of the county’s politics, that the first qualification for the job was not race. Some in the county believed that race should not be the sole motivator for everything that happens in the majority African American county. This view was expressed by Valerie Lewis Robinson, executive director of Prince George’s County Educators Association; she said race might be an issue for some people but that the county should look to more important issues. “I’d like to think we are smarter than that, as a county. [The race question] irritates me, to be honest; it says we’re more concerned about the wrong things. We need to be focused on who is best for the system... and who has the proven track record. [Race] cannot play a role. It can’t” (Leonard 2006a).

Some, however, felt a little unease about not being able to find a black person for the job. For example, Vice Chairman Howard Stone reportedly told *Washington Post* columnist Courtland Milloy,

Let me tell you, this was an agonizing decision for me. We've had three black school superintendents who didn't work out, and I sure didn't want to leave black people and especially black students with the impression that a black can't lead. Did I want to turn this system over to a white man? Not if I'd had my druthers. But after looking at all of the candidates, this was the best guy to lead the system, raise the test scores and get our kids the best education possible. (Milloy 2006)

Milloy wrote that the choice of Deasy was a choice between black pride and pragmatism and pragmatism won. According to Milloy, the county's black middle class does not, “want to talk publicly about the embarrassing spectacle of black school leaders getting caught up in catfights and scandals. Now, with a white man in charge, they won't have to. And low-income blacks, who have long felt abandoned by their more affluent neighbors, get to root for a Great White Hope” (Milloy 2006). While Milloy's assessment seems a bit harsh, there is some truth in it. The county's black middle class has tended to downplay the significance of race and the negative impact it can have on county politics and social interactions. They prefer to focus on the positive aspects of race such as the county executive's frequent mentions of Prince George's being the nation's wealthiest majority-minority county.

For his part, Deasy did not shy away from the issue of race and discussed it directly. “Everybody is talking about it,” Deasy said. “It's absolutely critical. I understand its implications very powerfully. My mission is for all of the system's children to learn and achieve at high levels” (Leonard 2006a). As further evidence that Deasy understood the significance and sensitivities of race, he called a quality education “a fundamental civil right...that means you get to get in, but you also get to acquire the

same high levels of education as the child sitting next to you” (Leonard 2006c). On closing the achievement gap, Deasy said, “It’s not about race; it’s an opportunity issue, adding, “I think it’s apart from race. If you handle it as a team with the community, then there’s unlimited potential for kids” (Leonard 2006a). If there was unease within the community in regards to his race, Deasy said he did not feel it.

Deasy officially became CEO of PGCPS on May 1, 2006, and he hit the ground running. Moving quickly was part of his plan to create a sense of urgency in order to get people moving to address the system’s persistently under-performing schools. “We have a number of chronically low-performing schools that are going to require immediate attention and action,” Deasy said (Anderson 2006c). Deasy also wanted to create a sense of urgency in order to create a new culture of accountability. Perhaps the most important motivation for urgency was the threat of possible state action. For three consecutive years the system as a whole had failed to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) on state assessments.² Although the county’s scores improved in each of the three previous years, they did not improve enough to reach the AYP threshold. This failure meant PGCPS was eligible to be placed on the state’s “corrective action” list. Schools and systems on the list are potentially subject to a number of sanctions ranging from the replacement of staff to state takeover. Deasy wanted to be proactive and take steps to improve student and school performance before the state acted.

In keeping with his building a sense of urgency, Deasy wanted to have a plan developed before the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year. On August 24, 2006, Deasy unveiled his plan for improving academic achievement and raising classroom rigor; *Children Come First* (CCF) (Deasy 2006). CCF was a comprehensive plan with

eight inter-related components.³ A cornerstone of the plan was the Intensive Support and Intervention Schools program (ISIS) which directs extra resources and personnel to schools on the state's watch list (Malen et al. 2007). There were 84 schools in the program. Depending on the degree of need, schools in the initiative would receive tailored support that would include extra professional development for teachers; supplemental reading and math materials; math, reading, social studies and science coaches; a data analysis and testing coordinator; a pupil personnel worker; and other specialized assistance.

Other initiatives included expanding the number of Advanced Placement (AP) courses offered in the county's high schools.⁴ Deasy wanted schools to offer at least eight courses. He would also expand the International Baccalaureate (IB) program.⁵ Both initiatives were designed to increase academic rigor at the high school level. As part of his parent engagement initiative, Deasy proposed putting parent liaisons in schools. The goal of the parent liaison is to “engage every parent in their child's educational process; thereby, increasing parental involvement and ultimately improving student academic achievement and performance” (Prince George's County Board of Education 2008e). Parent liaisons were located in each school and would serve as a direct link between parents and their children's schools.

Generally, PGCPs employees were receptive to Deasy's call for quick action. According to a senior administrator, “for the most part, people were willing to listen. People really wanted to move forward and shed the label of second lowest performing system.” Deasy's sense of urgency created buy-in from many PGCPs employees, but it also created some skepticism. The skepticism was increased by the speed in which CCF

was developed. The plan was developed in less than three months over the summer and was the creation of Deasy and his executive team. Some employees questioned Deasy's appeal that improving PGCPs was everyone's responsibility when so few people had input or involvement in the development of the plan. They were responsible for making the plan work but had no say in the formation of the plan. Doubts notwithstanding, others were highly receptive of the plan. However, they had doubts that the system could move as quickly as Deasy wanted. Nevertheless, respondents indicated people wanted the system and consequently, CCF to succeed and were willing to give the plan a chance. In October 2006, the Maryland State Board of Education did place the entire school system under "corrective action" for failing to make AYP.⁶

The designation exposed the system to possible sanctions. However, State Superintendent Nancy Grasmick recommended the State Board not impose any sanctions on PGCPs because she liked Deasy's CCF plan and thought he had a good strategy for improving the system's performance (Hernandez and De Vise 2006). Thus Deasy received an early vote of confidence from state officials.

2006: The Elected Board Returns

The transitions happening in 2006 presented an opportunity to restart the drive for a new education coalition. Not only did PGCPs get a new superintendent in 2006; it also got a new school board. By law, the appointed board's four year term was to end December 2006, and the board was to be replaced by a new elected school board. At the beginning of the year however it was still unclear if and how a new board would be elected because people were having second thoughts about the transition plan.

The original election plan developed in 2002 was somewhat convoluted (Prince George's County Delegation 2002). It called for all nine board members to be elected by the entire county. Four of the nine would be at-large members. The other five would have to reside in one of five newly created districts. Although the five would represent specific districts, they would be voted on by the entire county. This original configuration was the result of a compromise that seemed to satisfy few.

Groups opposed to the original legislation had been working since its passage to have the elected school board reinstated. A black respondent working to return to nine member districts said, "For African Americans and all that we have been through to get the right to vote; killed and maimed and brutalized and assassinated, we just could not stand for them to take away that right to vote."

Members of the county delegation who had been opposed to the creation of the appointed board wanted a return to the nine member district format in place when the old board was dissolved. They felt that having nine districts would provide better representation. They were also concerned that the high costs of a county-wide campaign would prohibit potential candidates from running and that the costs of having to run at-large campaigns would lead prospective candidates to turn to powerful interests in the county for financial support and to become beholden to those interests. On the other hand, those fearful of a return of the parochialism that pervaded the last elected board preferred a hybrid board with both appointed and elected members. The appointed members would act as a buffer against the sway of narrow interests. Having a hybrid board would have allowed some of the current board members to remain on the new board thus providing some much needed continuity.

On February 11, Delegate Doyle L. Niemann (D-Prince George's) introduced a proposal to have a board comprised of six district elected members and three at-large members (Prince George's County Delegation 2005c). The same day Delegate Rosetta C. Parker (D-Prince George's) introduced her own proposal to have the board composed of members from nine single member districts (Prince George's County Delegation 2005b). Another amendment proposed by Delegate Anne Healey (D-Prince George's) to add two at-large members to the board was defeated. While Niemann's bill stalled in the House, Parker's bill passed the House unanimously on March 25. The bill moved to the Senate where passage was much less likely.

The county's eight Senators were less inclined to return to a nine district board. Senator John A. Giannetti Jr. (R-Anne Arundel & Prince George's) said that in his discussions with other senators, "There is some interest in keeping the stability of the appointed board" (Anderson 2005a). During a March 30th meeting, the county's Senate delegation postponed action on the House bill and scheduled a hearing on the bill for April 6th. At that same meeting County Executive Johnson expressed support for the House bill. PGCEA and the NAACP chapter also supported the bill. Nevertheless, the Senate failed to take action on the bill and it died with the end of the legislative session.⁷

Another attempt to change the school board was tried during the General Assembly's 2006 Legislative Session. Writing of the need for elections to his fellow senators, Senator Paul Pinsky (D-Prince George's) declared, "I believe it is an important step and one that is expected--and supported--by an overwhelming majority of Prince George's County citizens" (Anderson 2006a). This time there was little doubt that

elections would take place. The only question remaining was the composition of the board.

Each house of the delegation introduced bills changing the board's election process. The House delegation submitted a proposal to return to nine single-member district elections (Committee on Ways and Means 2006). It passed in a 139 to 1 vote on March 2. On March 16, Senators Gloria Lawlah (D-Prince George's) and Nathaniel Exum (D-Prince George's) proposed a plan that called for nine district elections. However the Senators' plan allowed for two of the current appointed members to serve an additional two years and thus create an eleven member board (Committee on Education and Environment Affairs 2006).

While the delegations were trying to work out a compromise, the appointed board approved a resolution calling for the extension of three or four of its members' terms. The appointed board wanted to provide some continuity to the system as it gained a new superintendent. They maintained having appointed members remain on the board would be a way of guaranteeing the continued professionalism of the current board.

The suggestion to extend the term of the appointed board did not gain much traction in the county however. Support for the creation of an appointed board in 2002 came because the existing school board had become a public embarrassment. State legislators from other jurisdictions made it clear that the county would not receive the additional money it sought without changing the board. Once the old board was removed and the money received, there was little sentiment among county legislators for the continuance of an appointed board that was never intended to be permanent.

A lawmaker who voted for the appointed board said, “I would have loved to see some members on the appointed board stay. The deal that we made with the people was that we would deal with the emergency situation, the crisis, and the crisis was gone. At that point, once the crisis left then the will of the people should prevail.” Further, the perceived undemocratic nature of the appointed board still resonated among many in the county. Moreover, the trend in Maryland was moving away from appointed boards. By 2006, 18 of Maryland’s 24 school boards were elected. Five counties had moved to elected boards since 2000. Finally, lingering irritation from the board’s mishandling of the Hornsby scandal made it all but certain the board’s term would not be extended.

Late on April 10, 2006, the last day of the Session, the Senate in a 35 to 1 vote passed the Lawlah-Exum bill. The House had about three hours to reconcile the two bills before adjournment. Since it was unable to do so, the original law remained as written. In 2006 nine new school board members, four at-large members and five members representing new districts would be elected in countywide elections.

Forty-six people ran for a seat on the new board (Anderson 2006f). Candidates included appointed board members Howard Stone and Judy Mickens-Murray as well as the chairman of the old elected board, Kenneth Johnson. The candidates were reduced to 18—two candidates for each seat—in the September 12th primary. Stone and Johnson advanced to the November 7 general election. Even though she lost in the primary, Mickens-Murray decided to run in the general election as a write-in candidate. All three lost. They were no doubt hurt by the fact that they were or had been school board members. But what most hurt them was their failure to obtain the endorsement of the county’s Democratic Party.

School board elections in Prince George's are nonpartisan. Usually the most influential endorsements came from the PGCEA and the PGCCPTA. Typically, school board candidates have little name recognition. As a result, union endorsement gives candidates a significant advantage in school board races. By an eleven to one margin, voters in a Prince George's Business-Education Alliance (PGBEA) survey said that a PGCEA endorsement would positively impact their vote (Potomac Incorporated 2003). This time however, the power of the union was challenged. The county's Democratic Party created a slate of endorsed candidates.⁸ The Party slate was enormously beneficial for the endorsed board candidates.

2006 was a major election year for the state of Maryland. The governor and all state legislators, almost all county elected officials, all Congressional Representatives, and one United States Senator were on the ballot. With so many contested offices, unknown school board candidates were apt to get lost in the sea of candidates. Without slate backing, school board candidates would likely have difficulty raising funds. The slate gave candidates access to Party resources. Former county council member Peter Shapiro said, "Slates are going to be the single largest determining factor in the [school board] election. You certainly have to favor the person with the most political connections" (Leonard 2006d). David Merkowitz, executive director of the PGBEA asked elected leaders to "put aside narrow political considerations and choose candidates for their slates who possess the qualifications and character traits needed to ensure the new board meets the hopes of county citizens and acts with integrity and purpose" (Merkowitz 2006). One candidate supported by the Party, Donna Hathaway-Beck said the endorsement, "had given us a big push forward, clearly, with the sample ballots"

(Hernandez and Helderman 2006). As many of the board candidates were unknown to most people, the slates served as a convenient “cheat sheets” for voters. Beck acknowledged the influence of the Party saying, “This was not a race that was just an election; it was a combination of being elected and being anointed” (Ibid.).

The idea that people were “anointed” by Party leaders was problematic for some who complained that the Party’s involvement made what was supposed to be a nonpartisan election partisan. Moreover, some board candidates argued that the involvement of state legislators took the decision out of the hands of voters. Board candidate Robin Barnes Shell said that because of the slates, senators “are deciding who will be elected to the Prince George's County Board of Education, not the voters. In essence, you have lost your voice and your vote” (Hernandez 2006a). A business person who ran for the board was surprised to discover the influence of state legislators. “I had no idea about the stuff that would go on behind the scenes. I had no idea that I needed to connect with this delegate, this senator to be on this person’s ticket. That that made a difference in knowing whether or not I’d win election versus my qualifications for being school board member.”

All but one of the candidates endorsed by the Party won election. The lone exception was in the District 4 election when Linda Thomas narrowly defeated Steven Morris. Thomas had complained about the Party’s involvement and claimed after she won that her victory, "spoke volumes to the fact that the senators don't control everything. . . . I think I'm the one person who doesn't have allegiance to anybody but her people" (Hernandez 2006d). In addition to Thomas, the newly elected board members included the four at-large members: Donna Hathaway Beck, Verjeana Jacobs, Nathaniel

Thomas, and Ron Watson. The five district members were Rosalind Johnson, District 1, Heather Iliff, District 2, Patricia Fletcher, District 3, and Owen Johnson Jr., District 5.

The return to an elected school board made some people nervous because it conjured up memories of the old elected board with its infighting and feuding with the superintendent. “Everybody and their brother was trying to help make sure that didn’t happen.” Concerned about past events, the new board came into office on December 4, determined not to have a repeat of the troubles of the last elected board. Rosalind Johnson said, “We know the failures of the past. We absolutely will not tolerate a fractious board” (Hernandez 2006c). Nathaniel Thomas added, “We made a commitment that we don’t want to have a lot of unnecessary drama and conflict. I think most of the people that got elected; they really just want to serve on the school board and not look at the politics of the next elections” (Ibid.).

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) held several training sessions with the board. The first was held two weeks after the board’s first official meeting in December. The board and superintendent Deasy held a two-day MABE led retreat that was meant to give board members an opportunity to “lay the foundation for a productive working relationship” (Prince George’s County Board of Education 2006c). Highly desirous of a model from which to govern, the board developed an operating framework that included the formation of a committee system and the reorganization of the board office. The board even developed its own mission statement: “The Prince George’s County Board of Education will advance the achievement of its diverse student body through community engagement, sound policy governance, accountability, and fiscal responsibility” (Prince George’s County Board of Education 2007a). The board

also received a grant from the Broad Foundation in May 2007 that allowed the board to participate in the Foundation's *Reform Governance in Action for Urban School Boards* program. The two-year program provides comprehensive training to school board-superintendent teams in order to improve system governance.⁹ Aware, that it was being watched by children, the board made a concerted effort to model behavior that showed children how to agree and disagree.

Board-Superintendent Relations

Superintendent Deasy was a little apprehensive about the change in school board. "The natural disruption of a new set of leaders is one of the worries I have," Deasy said. "Will the expectations change midstream from the new board" (Anderson 2006f).¹⁰ Nonetheless, the new elected board and the superintendent strove to present a united front publicly. At the board's first meeting, member Iliff spoke on behalf of the entire board saying,

As the newly elected Board of Education of Prince George's County, we are very committed to the rapid progress of all schools in Prince George's County. We acknowledge that our Superintendent was hired by the appointed Board with no overlapping members with the current Board. As the newly elected Board, we would like to publicly show our support for and confidence in Dr. Deasy's continued leadership in our education system. While we plan to exercise all due oversight and expect full accountability, we look forward to working with Dr. Deasy in a spirit of partnership for the benefit of all students in Prince George's County (Prince George's County Board of Education 2006b)

Like the appointed board, the new elected board gave, according to Deasy, "lots of appropriate rein to run the system under the policies constructed as opposed to micromanaging." Because Deasy's proposals had allowed PGCPs to avoid corrective action, the board to allowed Deasy a significant amount of latitude. Also, according to a

new board member, “The board had its marching orders when it came in. You have to think about the dynamics of a newly elected board. All nine people are brand new. You had a superintendent who was there before us, and you pretty much had senators and other elected people giving us our marching orders; don’t piss-off the superintendent.”

Another important reason why the board and superintendent seemed to work well together is they agreed on the importance of equity. Board Chair Jacobs said, “When we took our oath of office in December of 2006, we vowed to provide an equitable education for all students of Prince George’s County – not just a chosen few” (Prince George’s County Board of Education 2009h). Broad Foundation training helped the board to develop a core set of beliefs. At the center was a focus on equity by the board. A new board member pledged, “We are committed to equity as a board, and we define equity as meaning that those with the least get the most without disadvantaging others.” For his part, Deasy said he confronted the issue of class by, “from the beginning indicating that decisions were going to be made on the limelight of equity and not of equality. Equality is the distribution of resources equally to all. Equity is the distribution of resources *unequally*; those who have the least get the most.” So although Deasy was not their choice, it appeared as though the new board and Deasy shared a common vision for PGCPs.

In the elected board’s first review of him, Deasy’s performance was rated as excellent. In the July 7, 2007 evaluation, Deasy was given a rating of 4.46 on a 5-point scale (Prince George’s County Board of Education 2007b). The school board said of Deasy, “He has demonstrated a powerful sincerity and commitment to student achievement and equity. He has clearly articulated the school system’s core beliefs and

has effectively communicated his vision both internally and externally” (Ibid.). In a nod to Deasy’s ability to attract significant grant money to the system, the board added, “Dr. Deasy has raised confidence in Prince George’s County Public Schools, leading to increased resources from federal, state and county governments as well as from private sources” (Ibid.). Raising confidence in PGCPS was crucial to gaining greater community attention and support.

While generally satisfied with the job Deasy had done, the board did see room for improvement. The board wanted more long-term budgeting. It also wanted Deasy and the entire PGCPS system to place increased attention on "cultural sensitivity to ably serve our diverse students and community" (Ibid.). The board added, “The Board observed that the superintendent can improve his approach to managing change to be more inclusive and accepting of feedback to enable changes to be more deep rooted and long-lasting” (Ibid.). Some took this critique to be an allusion to the speed with which Deasy had implemented changes. There was some concern within PGCPS and the county that the changes Deasy was making were occurring so rapidly that people did not have time to digest them. For his part Deasy took the suggestion in stride saying in an interview, “It also could mean to listen more to people's feedback, as opposed to moving as quickly forward as I have been” (Hernandez 2007b). Deasy was also described by some as sometimes being less of a collaborator and more of a General Patton (Ibid.). Deasy seemed aware of this potential problem. He noted, “I feel like I didn't have time this year, given our status in corrective action. That's not a defense as much as an explanation of our speed. Now that those initiatives have been laid down, I can afford to modify that style” (Ibid.).

The board's evaluation also seemed to hint at some tension between itself and Deasy. The evaluation noted, "The Board would like to see improvements in the superintendent's communication with the Board itself and a better understanding of the role of board members within the community" (Prince George's County Board of Education 2007b). The critique of Deasy might have been indicative of a shift on the part of the board to be more assertive in presenting ideas and expressing its views. School board chairman, Owen Johnson Jr. was quoted as saying, "We have to sit around and talk about [issues] and find common ground [between Superintendent John E. Deasy and board members], and I think we are doing a better job of that" (Carter 2007a). Johnson saw the change as part of the normal maturation of the school board.

The critique of Deasy might also have been a reaction to criticism that the board has been too deferential to Deasy. Walter Searcy, PTA president at Charles Herbert Flowers High School and a 2006 at-large school board candidate reportedly said of the board's relationship with Deasy, "Stop being so submissive to his agenda. Don't be so quick to embrace all of Deasy's offerings. They need to start really looking at the flip side of [Deasy's policies]" (Ibid.). In interviews, a couple of respondents echoed those sentiments and complained of the board being a rubber stamp for Deasy. "The superintendent works for the board, not the other way around." Yet others were quite comfortable with Deasy's leadership. One particular person pleased with Deasy's efforts and his relationship with the board was State Superintendent Nancy Grasmick. Comparing the current relationship to past board-superintendent relationships, Grasmick said, "We've had this continuing issue [in Prince George's County] about the board going in one direction and the CEO going in another direction. In this case, they seem to be

working in tandem. People are getting one message now, and that's important because people want to know there is an agreed-upon direction" (Ibid.). It should be noted that both the board and Deasy denied anything other than the normal tensions in any school board-superintendent relationship. All-in-all, the school board seemed pleased with the job Deasy had done so far.

The Board Faces a Controversy

In June 2007, board member Nathaniel Thomas was forced to resign after being indicted. Thomas was accused of having a relationship with a student while he was a teacher at Forestville Military Academy in 2005.¹¹ The allegations came to light after it was learned that Thomas had attended the National School Board Association's Annual Conference in San Francisco with the board's 18 year old student member without the consent of the student's parents. To fill Thomas's vacant seat, County Executive Jack Johnson appointed Amber Waller to serve the remainder of Thomas's term. Waller had run for the District 2 seat in 2006 and lost to Heather Iliff in the general election.

Unlike the Hornsby scandal, this scandal did not appear to reflect badly on the board itself in part because the board took immediate steps to remove Thomas from any contact with the schools. The board also began the process of having Thomas removed from office once the allegations became known. Recall, part of the dissatisfaction with the appointed board stemmed from its perceived failure to adequately respond to the allegations against Hornsby. With the last board's experience in mind, the current board believed it needed to be proactive in handling the Thomas matter.

Money Issues Again Impact PGCPs

Superintendent Deasy warned of potential budget cuts for Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 in his annual State of the System report to the board and community in October 2007 (Hernandez 2007c). These potential budget cuts were the result of a looming \$1.5 billion shortfall in the FY2009 Maryland state budget (Maryland Budget & Tax Policy Institute 2007).¹² The deficit was caused by a structural budget problem in which the state spent more than it collected in revenues. The two identified primary culprits for the “structural deficit” were a 1997 state income tax cut that decreased revenues by over \$700 million a year, and the Bridge to Excellence education program that mandated increased state education funding (Wagner 2007). The program, which was passed without a long-term funding strategy, had been underfunded from the beginning and had cost the state about \$1.4 billion a year by 2007. The housing fueled economic boom of 2004-2006 and fund transfers had allowed the state to avoid the consequences of the structural deficit (Ibid.). However with an economic downturn caused by the collapsing housing market, the state was no longer in a position to balance its budget, as mandated by law. In fact the state was only able to balance its FY2008 budget by draining \$1 billion from the state’s “rainy day” reserve fund. At the end of FY2008 only \$68 million was left in the fund (Maryland Budget & Tax Policy Institute 2007). As a result, the FY2009 budget could not be balanced without significant budget cuts and/or increased taxes.

The state of Maryland was not alone in its financial difficulties of course. Local jurisdictions throughout the Washington region were confronting the prospect of budget deficits because of decreased state funding and declining property tax revenues (Helderman 2008). Montgomery County faced a \$401 million shortfall of its FY2009

county budget. Meanwhile Prince George's County faced a \$100 million budget deficit for FY2009. This deficit was in addition to a \$60 million deficit for FY2008. Because of TRIM, the voter imposed property tax cap, and a law requiring voter approval of new taxes, the only viable way for the county to balance its budget was through spending cuts because voters were unlikely to approve tax increases.

It was in this environment that Deasy presented his proposed FY2009 in January 2008. The \$1.67 billion budget represented a \$13.5 million increase over FY2008's budget. The increase was a far cry from the increase of more than \$200 million the previous year (Prince George's County Public Schools 2008). The increase was the minimum necessary to maintain current programs. The budget excluded Deasy's plan to expand the IB program. Also gone was the signature part of his CCF Plan: the establishment of pre-K through 8th grade schools. Implementing the first phase of the plan would have cost of \$35 million. Cuts were made to staffing as 300 vacant positions were left unfilled. Deasy also proposed eliminating 40 parent liaison positions. Additionally, there would be no teacher raises.

After receiving an additional \$10 million in funds from the state and finding surplus money from the FY 2008 budget, the school board approved a \$1.68 billion budget in February 2008 (Hernandez and Helderman 2008). With the increase in funds, the parent liaison positions were saved. \$14 million was also put in reserve for union contract negotiations.

The fiscal environment was a far cry from one Deasy enjoyed when he first came to PGCPs in 2006. The FY 2007 operating budget went into effect on July 1, 2006—two months after Deasy became superintendent. The FY 2007 budget was the system's first

fully funded budget since 1987.¹³ The sizable budget allowed Deasy to immediately begin implementing his CCF initiatives. These initiatives were not cheap. CCF was projected to cost approximately \$25 million the first year of implementation. The costs would rise as initiatives were implemented and expanded. For FY 2008, the cost of CCF would be \$43.2 million (Prince George's County Board of Education 2006b). As discussed above, the economic downturn and resultant budget cuts posed a serious threat to the system's ability to continue Deasy's initiatives.

State Legislators Make Their Presence Felt

The budget problems created by the recession were at the center of controversies involving the intervention of state politicians. The first involved the school board's decision to lease two buildings for a new headquarters. The second concerned the school board's construction priorities in its Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget.

Move School Headquarters at Your Own Peril

The school board wanted to move its headquarters to two office buildings in the Washington Plaza complex in Upper Marlboro. The current headquarters is housed in the Sasscer Administration Building also in Upper Marlboro. Sasscer is a converted former middle school originally built in 1949. The building has not been renovated in over 20 years and has long been in need of updating.¹⁴ Of Sasscer, board member Pat Fletcher said, "The citizens of Prince George's County deserve better than to come into a rat-infested, roach-infested services building" (Hernandez 2008a). Because of the small size of the building, administrative offices are scattered throughout the county. The board contended the new buildings would lead to more efficiency because it would

consolidate 15 departments and five locations. Consolidating offices would also alleviate the need for parents to travel to multiple offices on behalf of their children.

At an April 10, 2008 meeting, the Board of Education voted unanimously to amend its FY2008-2013 CIP Budget request to include \$36 million in funding for a lease on the new headquarters complex.¹⁵ In May, the county council approved the amendment. On June 26, the board prepared to vote on the headquarters lease. Board members supporting the lease claimed it would eventually save the system over \$2 million a year (Prince George's County Board of Education 2008g). It would take two to six years to start seeing the savings however.

Just before the board was to vote on the lease, Superintendent Deasy asked that the proposal be postponed. The request represented a reversal for Deasy as he had originally supported the lease. In fact, members said it was Deasy's idea to move the headquarters and he was the one to find the complex. Members claimed Deasy had actively pushed the plan until he had a meeting with County Executive Johnson just hours before the board meeting. Johnson had not endorsed the Council's funding approval; his spokesman said Johnson did not believe the financial climate was right for a move (Helderman and Hernandez 2008b). Some board members felt blindsided by Deasy's position switch just before the vote and were angered by it. Despite Deasy's objections, the board voted 6-4 to enter a ten-year lease for the new headquarters. Members Patricia Fletcher, Heather Iliff, R. Owen Johnson, Rosalind Johnson, Ron L. Watson, and Verjeana Jacobs voted for the lease agreement. Members Donna Hathaway Beck, Linda Thomas, Amber Waller, and student member Haywood Perry voted against it.

The lease drew immediate criticism from people who complained that spending money on a new headquarters at a time when the county was raising taxes to stem a \$48 million budget shortfall was ill advised (Ibid.).¹⁶ “You want to spend \$11 million of my taxpayer dollars so you can keep up with the Joneses?” Bob Ross, president of the Surrattsville High School PTSA encouraged the board to reconsider its decision. He said, “It wasn't a well thought-out plan ... They saw the economy and the way it was going. They just ignored it; they really did” (King 2008d). The criticism grew stronger as the scope of the county's budget crisis grew and PGCPs faced a significant budget cut. Opponents of the lease argued that now was not the time to spend money on a nice new building when classroom programs were likely to be cut. “This was not the time to buy a building when it was more important to pay the teachers to be in the classroom.” For its part, the board felt misunderstood. Board member Heather Iliff who supported the lease nevertheless warned her fellow board members that their decision to sign a lease for the new headquarters would be problematic. She said the decision would turn the board into “a political punching bag” (Hernandez 2008e).

State Senators C. Anthony Muse, chairman of the county's Senate delegation and Douglas J. J. Peters, vice chair asked the board to reconsider their lease vote (Valentine 2008a). The lawmakers questioned the board on the wisdom of spending money on a new headquarters at a time when the state was facing a serious budget deficit and was likely to reduce education and construction funding to counties. They also argued it would be more difficult to stave off more state budget cuts when they could not give an adequate defense for spending \$36 million on a new lease. Muse and Peters were also

unhappy that construction projects they championed for their districts were not supported in the board's latest CIP budget.

In November 2008, County Executive Johnson proposed reducing the PGCPs's FY2010-2015 CIP request from \$137.5 million to \$88.5 million. Johnson justified the reduction by saying, "This administration would like to present a state request that is sensitive to the current economic climate. Therefore, we have carefully identified our highest priorities so that the state can focus its attention on those projects we consider the most critical" (Valentine 2008b). Reducing the request probably made sense because the highest amount the county had received from the state since 2005 was the \$52 million it received for FY2008. With the State facing a significant budget shortage, it was unlikely the county would receive anything close to that amount for FY2010. Senator Muse said he did not know about the cuts until he was contacted by *The Gazette*, a local weekly newspaper. He complained that, "all of us have to be kept in the loop, because this affects all of us" (Ibid.). Muse along with Peters considered proposing legislation that would require the county's capital budget be approved by the House and Senate chairmen of the county's state delegation. Currently state legislators are not directly involved in choosing which projects to fund.

State funding for school construction operates under Maryland's Public School Construction Program. The program requires each school district to submit both an annual and five-year capital budget request. The budget first must be approved by local fiscal authorities before submission. In Prince George's, the county council and county executive are the fiscal authorities. After approval, each county's budget is submitted to the Interagency Committee on State School Construction (IAC). The IAC evaluates the

budget requests and recommends which projects to fund and what amounts to allocate each of the 24 local jurisdictions.¹⁷ The IAC's recommendations are then given to the State Board of Public Works which makes the ultimate funding decisions though the Board usually follows the IAC's recommendations. The Governor and General Assembly determine the amount of funds available to the Board during the annual legislative session.

Under the Muse-Peters proposal, the budget would have to be approved by state legislators before it is sent to the IAC. Peters claimed that the proposed legislation would ensure that everyone was on the same page and state legislators would know exactly which projects to push for funding (Valentine 2008c). Muse argued that constituents hold them responsible when projects get delayed. He said, "To be totally out of the loop on the decision-making process and to still be held accountable doesn't seem to be the fair thing to do" (Ibid.). Critics of the senators claimed their actions were a not so thinly veiled attempt to gain control of school construction money. Muse and Peters were unhappy because construction projects they supported had been lowered in priority. The proposal died in the House.

In December, the school board and the county council met with state elected officials to discuss legislative priorities for the upcoming General Assembly session. The meeting quickly turned into a cross-examination of the school board as legislators questioned the board's spending decisions. Legislators questioned the wisdom of spending money on a new headquarters during the economic downturn. Also, legislators were skeptical of the board's cost estimates for the ten-year lease with most guessing they were too low. In addition to the \$36 million for the lease, moving would require \$8

million in one-time relocation costs. Delegate Barbara Frush summed up the legislators' opinions about the move; "It may be a good idea, but not today, not this week, not this month, not this year. It's just very bad timing. It will be problematic. Everybody's [other jurisdictions] going to have their hand out. And they'll have their hand out for better reasons than a new building" (Hernandez 2008e). Board members insisted that the move would save money. Board chair Jacobs said, "What Washington Plaza provides for us is a cost savings for us to consolidate needs" (Valentine 2008d).

Legislators again complained that they had been out of the loop on the deal. "As an elected official, nobody ever explained this to me. I have not received any information about it. You have not communicated that to the people on Main Street, and you need to do that," said Senator Nathaniel Exum (Ibid.). Board members acknowledged that they could have done a better job of explaining the rationale for the move with the public and elected officials. A board member later admitted,

The board failed to interact with the council and the delegation and that's why there was so much chaos on-- 'We don't know what the board is doing. We don't why they're spending \$36 million when we're going into layoffs on this building' ... If the board had worked collaboratively at every step of the way with the delegation and the council, then if we were all singing from the same page, then that decision would have been different.

Despite the warning from legislators, the school board moved forward and began the process of moving into Washington Plaza.

While the controversy over the headquarters was continuing, legislators became concerned about another funding issue in the board's CIP request. Legislators questioned the board's funding priorities in light of the results of a facilities study.

School Construction: Who Gets a Slice of the Pie?

In September 2007 the school board hired Parsons 3D/International (3D/I) to conduct a condition assessment on 184 of the system's facilities, 168 of which were schools.¹⁸ In a report presented to the board in May 2008, 3D/I determined 25 facilities to be in good condition, 150 to be in fair condition, and 9 to be in such poor condition that they should be replaced (3D/International 2008). Of the nine buildings in the worst shape, eight were schools: Morningside, Clinton Grove, Avalon, Samuel Chase, Middleton Valley, Henry G. Ferguson and Tulip Grove elementary schools. The other was an annex building at Suitland High School. 3D/I estimated the cost to fix all of PGPCS's buildings would be \$2.1 billion. It would cost \$700 million to maintain them at their current condition for the next ten years.

In its FY2010-FY2015 CIP Budget request sent to the county council in August, the school board did not include any of the eight schools as a top funding priority (Prince George's County Board of Education 2008c). In fact none of the eight schools ranked in the top ten on the board's priority project list (Deasy 2008). Highest on the list was Clinton Elementary at fifteen. Morningside was next at 51. School board chairman Jacobs said the schools listed as high priority had been chosen by previous boards. Jacobs said, "This board was very clear that [school construction] items that were already in the pipeline -- that have already been approved -- that we would honor those" (Hernandez 2008f). Jacobs also implicated the county executive and county council by saying they ultimately approve and submit the final budget request to the state. She said, "Once it leaves us, it's subject to all kinds of changes" (King 2008b). Although the council did make changes to the CIP it did not change the position of the nine schools.

County officials also justified the low position of the schools on the list by saying the county needed time to work out the details of the omitted construction projects before requesting funding for them. Additionally, PGCPs's uneven enrollment complicated the matter because the consolidation of schools might eliminate the need for new buildings. Council Vice Chairman Thomas E. Dernoga (D) wrote as much in a letter he sent to concerned parents. "Before one can rationally decide where to expend funds, one has to determine whether an evening out of enrollment and consolidation of students can result in closing certain older schools instead of expending renovation funds" (Valentine 2008e).

The school board's funding request drew the ire of Maryland Senate President Thomas V. "Mike" Miller (D-Calvert & Prince George's) whose district includes part of southern Prince George's County. The district includes Accokeek where Henry G. Ferguson Elementary, one of the eight schools in need of replacement, is located. Miller wrote a letter to the IAC asking it to reject the county's budget request. In a December 11, 2008 letter to the IAC, Miller wrote, "It is indeed incredible that the county would propose having children sitting in schools they know must be torn down while they request state funds for new schools not even justified by state enrollment criteria" (Ibid.). Miller accused the board and the council of catering to the wishes of affluent communities. Two schools in Bowie, one of the wealthiest areas in the county, were higher on the priority list than Ferguson and most of the other nine schools. "State funds are too limited and our economic times are too desperate to subject the great needs and safety of our children to political pandering by local officials," Miller wrote (King

2008b). In his letter, Miller also criticized the board's spending \$36 million to move its headquarters.

As president of the Senate, Miller is very powerful. He is arguably the most powerful person in the General Assembly. In the words of one respondent, "If Mike doesn't want it to happen, it doesn't happen." Because of Miller's clout, it came as no surprise when the IAC wrote a letter to Prince George's officials suggesting the county revise its CIP request. The IAC wrote, "The deficiencies in schools identified in the Parsons 3D/I project raise serious concerns about the health and safety of their occupants. For this reason, the IAC is inviting Prince George's County to supplement its CIP request with additional projects identified in the Parsons 3D/I report" (King 2008c). The Committee gave the county until February 1, 2009 to submit a revised request though the county was not required to do so. The IAC made it clear however it was in the best interest of the county to submit a revised request. It wrote, "While the IAC has historically deferred to local jurisdictions in setting funding priorities, the State has an obligation to insure that its significant investment in public school construction is directed toward those students who have the most significant needs. In fact, the IAC will not recommend funding or planning approval for projects that do not meet the State criteria, even if they are prioritized by the local board and government" (Hernandez, Wiggins and Helderman 2008).

Miller had been alerted to the issue by Ferguson's parents and PTA. "The board of education is pretty mad at us. But we tried to warn them. Now the state is giving them another chance to do their job," said Ray Lacy, president of the PTA at Henry Ferguson Elementary (King 2008c). What was good for Accokeek was potentially bad for Bowie.

Two of the new schools high on the priority list, Fairwood Elementary and a second Bowie High School lay in city. Bowie Mayor G. Frederick Robinson said, “If they add a bunch of new projects to the list, the effect of Bowie's standing would be put in question again. Losing this would be unacceptable to us. We've worked our way to the top of the list, twice, as a matter of fact, only to be kicked off twice” (Ibid.). The city had been trying to get a second high school for five years. Senator Peters who represents Bowie had been an advocate for the Bowie schools and indicated he would lobby to have the schools kept on the priority list. He also took issue with Miller saying, “I think this could have been better resolved by putting all the stakeholders in a room, rather than going through this letter-writing process,” which he claimed had been disruptive to the budget process (Ibid.). As is frequently the case in Prince George’s where funding is rather limited, school construction and boundary changes often pit the interests of one neighborhood against the interests of another.

On January 22, 2009, the school board decided to add Avalon, Henry G. Ferguson, Samuel Chase, Clinton Grove, and Tulip Grove elementary schools to its FY2010-2015 CIP Budget supplemental request (Prince George’s County Board of Education 2009a). It did not delete any projects from the list or reprioritize projects on the list. As a result, the additions increased the CIP budget request by \$12 million to a total of \$100 million. The board’s failure to reprioritize irritated some council members who expressed their displeasure in a January 29th meeting to approve the CIP request. Councilwoman Camille A. Exum complained about the size of the board’s request, “You're placing us in a bad dilemma. I want the record to be clear. You know full well it's not going to happen” (Valentine 2009a). There was absolutely no chance the State

would fund the board's budget at a level anywhere close to the requested amount. Before the budget crisis worsened, the State gave the county \$41 million for FY2009. Council members also complained that the board's failure to prioritize placed on them the unpopular task of deciding which schools get built. Despite the complaints, the council approved the request without making changes to it.¹⁹ In June, the State Board of Public Works allotted \$28 million to the county for school construction (Interagency Committee on School Construction 2009).

The dispute revived old arguments with the school board complaining of a lack of support from state and county officials accusing the board of mismanaging the school system. Worst yet, it hinted at more trouble down the road because everyone would be forced to confront a deepening budget crisis.

Round Two in the School Headquarters Fight: Score One for State Legislators

The conflict over the school board's headquarters lease flared up once again in 2009. By February the county's budget deficit had grown to \$132 million. PGCPSS faced a \$100 million deficit of its own. As a result the board approved an operating budget for FY2010 that eliminated 800 jobs and cost of living raises, cut programs, and eliminated 144 parent liaisons (Prince George's County Board of Education 2009i). In February, The board learned that the cost of the lease did not include an additional \$8 million in one-time costs (Hernandez 2009b). PGCEA, citing agitation in the community, wrote it could not support the move (Ibid.). State delegates again wanted the board to reconsider its decision but the board refused and maintained its position that the lease would save money over the long run.

In April, the state Senate, led by county senators, proposed a measure as part of the state budget that would provide PGCPS with an additional \$36 million for FY2010 only if the board canceled the headquarters lease. Senate President Miller said, “We’re giving them an incentive to get out of that agreement. We need that money to build schools, not office buildings” (Tallman and King 2009a). Some board members were infuriated by the Senate’s action. Board member Rosalind Johnson accused the state of usurping the board’s authority. She said, “Home rule in Prince George’s County, electing their own members of the board, it cuts it. It says, ‘You can elect somebody, but we’ll neuter them’” (Helderman and Hernandez 2009). Of Mike Miller she added, “He is a person. He’s not God.” Board member Pat Fletcher complained, “I wouldn’t go down there and tell them how to do their job. I wouldn’t” (Ibid.).

The Senate gave the board another incentive by attaching an amendment to a House bill that would make board members eligible for the school system’s health plan (Committee of Ways and Means 2009). At the time, board members were considered part-time employees and were not eligible for the system’s health benefits. Board members, who make \$18,000 a year, complained that not including the benefits narrowed the pool of people willing to serve on the school board. They argued the job is actually a full-time job that makes it difficult to hold other employment, and private insurance is too expensive for most people except retirees and the independently wealthy.

The Senate then attached an amendment that specifically forbids the use of any county or state funds for the Washington Plaza lease and purchase of the new headquarters. If the amended measure passed the House, the lease deal would essentially be scuttled because almost all of the system’s money comes from the county or state and

what little comes from other sources cannot be used for the lease. Board Chairwoman Jacobs criticized the Senate's action saying, "I have reached out to legislators, including the president of the Senate. And so to do it this way I think sends the wrong message, and just reinforces that they're not here to work with [the school board], they're here to say, 'Let me tell you what to do'" (Tallman and King 2009b). Both Houses unanimously approved the measure with the Senate's amendment (Committee on Ways and Means 2009).

One respondent summed up the sentiment of the state legislators thusly, "We told you not to do it, and you basically said 'screw you' to all of us. So we're giving you the 'screw you' back." Another suggested that had the school board done a better job of informing people of their intentions before moving ahead with the lease, the board might not have gotten so much push back from legislators and the public. The board also seemed defiant to some observers. One incredulous resident stated,

Everyone warned them not to do it, and they did it anyway. They wasted \$11 million on a building that they should never have entered into contract...Other jurisdictions in the metropolitan area, they all want a new headquarters and that might have been nice, but this was not the year to do that...They could not deal with anybody challenging them on that.

One respondent's impression of the board's action was not one of defiance so much as it was a defense of its position. "That board, young and rather inexperienced, [was] wedged between a county government that holds a lot of the purse strings and a delegation that plays a pretty activist role in setting policy. I really actually think this was a blow for the board's rightful place." As it was, to the public it seemed as though the school board was more interested in its own comfort than it was interested in the achievement of students.

On May 18, 2009, the Prince George's County Board of Education held an emergency meeting to discuss terminating the lease. During discussion of the settlement, board members asked why they were being treated as they were by the state legislature. They pointed to Frederick County in comparison. Frederick County school officials planned to spend \$16.7 million (over 25 years) to move into a new central office. State officials did not oppose that move even though the system owned its current buildings and the system faced a \$15 million budget deficit. Board member Fletcher called the state's action "discrimination against the Prince George's County Public School System" (Prince George's County Board of Education 2009i). Board member Watson directed his anger at legislators and Miller in particular. He said,

This board has also tried to work with our Legislators. We have had no opportunity to speak with our Senate President. He met with the county council and the board was not invited but the Montgomery Board of Education was invited when a similar meeting was convened. The board conducted a Legislative Meeting but unfortunately the Senate President did not show. (Ibid.)

Watson also added, "I find it disheartening that there are two sets of rules." Board member Rosalind Johnson called the legislature's action "blackmail."

Despite their misgivings, the board voted to enter into a settlement to terminate the lease. The vote was 5-2 with Members Beck, Iliff, Thomas, Waller and Watson voting for the measure and Fletcher and Rosalind Johnson voting against it. Jacobs abstained; R. Owen Jonson was not present for the vote. The settlement cost the board \$4.8 million. Added to the \$6.8 already spent on the building, the total cost paid by the board for the terminated lease was \$11 million. Jacobs said of the matter, "I long for the day when we can all sit down and talk about what's best for Prince George's County Public Schools and the children instead of having a conversation in public" (Ibid.).

Watson said in a meeting with *The Gazette's* editorial board, "Unfortunately, things turn political very quick in Prince George's County, and unfortunately some folks for their own personal reasons prefer to frame things differently than what is actually the case" (King 2009b).

The controversy over the headquarters and the school construction request illustrated the complicated relationship between the school board and state officials. State Senator Peters said the divisions between the board and lawmakers are not helpful. He added, "Everyone in this room campaigned on education. There's nothing worse than when you ask us for 'X', and we come back with 'X minus 1' and then you say, 'The state let us down.' We're fighting our guts out for you" (Valentine 2008d). Board members responded by saying they needed to better communicate with lawmakers. Watson said, "This shows that we all need to sit down together more often" (Ibid.).

The episodes with state legislators also demonstrate the unusually high level of involvement state legislators have on county education beyond the standard appropriations. One school official said of state legislators, they were "consistently and persistently involved in education." Respondents gave a couple of different reasons for the involvement. First, several of the county's state legislators have or had ties to PGCPS or other public education organizations. For example, State Senator Paul Pinsky is a former president of the PGCEA. Senator Uylsses Currie is also a retired PGCPS educator. Delegates Joanne Benson and James Proctor Jr. are retired PGCPS educators as is former delegate Rosetta Parker. Delegate Carolyn Howard is a current PGCPS administrator. Delegate Doyle Niemann served on the elected school board dissolved in 2002. Former senator Gloria Lawlah was an educator with District of Columbia Public

Schools. Also, Senator James Hubbard's wife used to be a senior PGCPS administrator. These educational ties to public education give legislators a heightened interest in PGCPS. "Many came up through the education system so it's a backyard issue."

Second, respondents said there has been a history of state legislators being involved in education dating back to 1973. Angered by the school board's failure to prevent court-ordered busing, legislators converted the Governor appointed school board into an elected body (Krause 1974). Legislators have been actively involved in local education issues ever since. Further the county's poor reputation for governance at both the school system and county level has allowed people to turn to state legislators to solve their problems. As one respondent put it, "The County doesn't have a much better reputation for how it does its business than the school system does. This has opened up the space over time for the delegates to be pretty hands-on if they want to be."

A third explanation is money. PGCPSS is the largest employer and purchaser in the entire county. "There's a huge economic engine around that as well." Many people want to have a hand in the running of that engine. "This is the bank. This is the employment agency. This is the contract agency. That's what it is. That's what it was." Also, in the late 1990s early 2000s the county and PGCPSS were inundated with school construction money as a result of the desegregation settlement. Politicians eager to show their constituents some results wanted to direct school funds. Some critics of the legislators' involvement complained that they are beholden to developers. Some board members complained that legislators did not object to the new headquarters building because of its cost. They objected to it because the developers they were connected to objected to the deal with a rival developer. Whether this is true is not known, but the fact

that county politicians going back to the machine days of the 1940s and 1950s have had a close relationship with county developers lends weight to the allegations.

Whatever the reason, legislators continue to play an active role in county education decisions.

The System Endures More Change at the Top

Controversy again came to PGCPs on September 11, 2008 when the *Washington Post* reported on questions about the PhD Superintendent Deasy received from the University of Louisville in 2004 (Hernandez 2008b). During an investigation of a University Dean, a question arose about whether Deasy had been given any special exception to University rules because of the small number of credits he earned in residency at the University.²⁰ Deasy earned nine credits at Louisville and 77 credits at other institutions. Typically, students earn 18 credits in residence at the University although there is no requirement to do so. The University announced the convening of a panel to investigate the propriety of Deasy's degree. Deasy was quoted as saying of the matter, "If the university made errors in the awarding of the degree, I do hope they rescind it. My responsibility is to do everything I was advised and told to do. If I was advised wrong and given wrong information, the university needs to take responsibility for that. I certainly would not want anything unearned" (Ibid.). The school board's reaction to the news was to publicly support Deasy and wait for the outcome of the investigation.

Despite backing from the board, on September 30, Deasy announced he was leaving PGCPs in February to become the deputy director of education for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Deasy's announcement was a shock to many in the county,

and came less than three years into his tenure. When he first came to Prince George's, Deasy had said that it would take four years to see solid results and eight years to get the system where it ought to be. Some wondered whether the tempest over his PhD was the reason for Deasy's departure.²¹ Many thought there had to be more to his leaving.

A number of respondents speculated Deasy was leaving to avoid the hassles of dealing with a shrinking budget. "He looked around and saw that the economy was starting to go in the tank and the fiscal authorities weren't going to be able to provide the kind of money that was going to be necessary for him to build the kind of reputation that he wanted to build. He got a good offer from Gates and he jumped at it." Some respondents commented on the fact that Deasy was a graduate of the Broad Foundation's Superintendent Academy.²² According to respondents, Broad graduates have a reputation for being "spend happy". "Broad superintendents are very expensive. They're great if you're in the good times. What do we do when we don't have [the money]?" Deasy had already seen two signature programs in his CCF plan delayed due to a lack of funding, and further cutbacks loomed. "I thought that Deasy was going to be short-term because I knew we were going to be in lean years. I never ever thought he would stay when he had to cut his precious programs."

More cynical respondents believe that it was never Deasy's intention to stay with the system for four years. They believe he came to the system to burnish his resume so that he could land a job like the one at the Gates Foundation. "Dr. Deasy clearly wanted a national spotlight. Dr. Deasy clearly needed Prince George's County to get that. Dr. Deasy got what Dr. Deasy wanted." They argued Deasy needed the "street cred" of having run a large, urban school system before he could work for a foundation that has

improving urban education as a priority. For its part, the Foundation said it had recruited Deasy and had been watching him for some time.

It is possible that Deasy left because of increased tensions between himself and the board. After Deasy's resignation was announced the *Washington Post's* education columnist, Jay Mathews, wrote of tensions between Deasy and the school board (Mathews 2008). Some respondents did find it interesting that the school board did not ask Deasy to stay, and that suggested to them there may have been some friction. A high ranking administrator said the board's relationship with Deasy was forever changed after the headquarters vote in June. From interviews, it does appear there was some lingering irritation over the handling of the headquarters lease. Board members however downplayed the tensions characterizing them as the type of things that normally occur in any board-superintendent relationship.

That said some members did talk about the superintendent's relationship with other elected officials, and were irritated that officials would go to Deasy with their concerns and not to the board. "What was occurring because he thought he could do whatever he wanted to do and was very engaged in the political landscape of the county, county folks were going to him to get things done. Then he would come and tell the board when it should work the other way around. Elected officials should communicate with other elected officials." This last statement is particularly telling. Board members were very concerned about the position of the school board relative to other elected politicians. They wanted to establish their political authority while county officials, especially state legislators, wanted to maintain their influence over the system. Deasy was caught in the middle.

When the school board announced Deasy's departure, it also designated his deputy superintendent, William Hite Jr., to become interim superintendent once Deasy left. Hite would serve until a permanent superintendent was selected. The quick announcement was seen as a reflection of the board's desire to maintain stability while it decided its next course of action.

Hite came to PGCPS shortly after Deasy in 2006. In a newspaper article, Hite, an African American, was described as Deasy's double because they shared a focus on equity (Hernandez 2008c). Hite said, "Regardless of a child's Zip code, a child's home, that child should have the same opportunities as we provide to children from a more privileged background. It is not an effective system if you have 20 AP courses in one school and zero in another" (Ibid.). Like Deasy, Hite attended the Broad Foundation's Superintendent Academy. That said, Hite is described as being more deliberative than Deasy. Further, Hite had never been a superintendent before. Hite made it clear that PGCPS would continue in the same direction under his tenure. "Everything that has touched all of our schools comes through my office right now. Because I'm not Dr. Deasy, it does not mean our beliefs and our vision about what should incur changes. The work will not change. The focus does not change" (Ibid.).

Near the end of October, the school board announced that Deasy would be leaving PGCPS at the end of November instead of in February. Board Chair Jacobs said, "The Board of Education is pleased that Dr. Hite will ensure the day-to-day operations of our schools and the work of improving student achievement continues at a rapid pace and without interruption, while we lay out a plan to find a new superintendent" (Prince

George's County Board of Education 2008f). Hite officially became interim superintendent on December 1st.

In January 2009, the school board held a series of forums seeking community input on the qualifications needed for the next superintendent. The board said of feedback from the forums,

A consistent message from the public and employees was that continuity is needed in the superintendent's office, and that the progress that has been made should continue. Consistently, community members and employees said they wanted a superintendent who is committed to Prince George's County and to serving our community for an extended period, not someone who will leave after a short time. (Prince George's County Board of Education 2009b)

Undoubtedly many in the county had grown weary of the turnover PGCPS had experienced over the last decade.

From the comments of education leaders, it was evident Hite was a frontrunner to become superintendent permanently. "He already has been through the vetting process. He already has a working relationship with the board, which is key, and he understands the core principles. We have a guy that's already in place that knows where we need to streamline, and the board can keep working seamlessly. It will be a seamless transition," declared Bob Ross, president of the Surrattsville High School PTSA (King 2008a).

Superintendent Hite was the first person the board interviewed. Board member Rosalind Johnson supported Hite, "I think he's in an excellent position because he was here, and he worked through the entire tenure of Dr. Deasy. I think that gives him great advantage. He knows how to work with this board. He knows what all our foibles are" (Hernandez 2009c). Other members of the board echoed that sentiment. Member Watson said of Hite, "If he meets the criteria and has a long-range plan, as far as I'm concerned, the search process is over" (Ibid.). Indeed it was over.

On April 3, 2009 the board announced it had made Hite the permanent superintendent. In its announcement, the board said that, “the feedback from the community during public meetings on the topic underscored the immediate need for strong, stable, knowledgeable, and trustworthy leadership” (Prince George’s County Board of Education 2009f). Chair Jacobs added, “During his tenure as Interim Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Hite has demonstrated that he meets or exceeds all the requirements the community has said they want in a superintendent. He knows our schools, understands our challenges, and has demonstrated his commitment to the children, parents, and community members of Prince George’s County” (Ibid.).

The school board believed that because he was Deasy’s deputy, Hite would keep the system moving in the same direction. Hite said one of the things that attracted him to PGCPs was Deasy’s vision. He also added that he planned to stay longer than previous superintendents. He said, “I quite frankly think that has been part of the problem in Prince George's County, because you've had this revolving door of leadership” (Hernandez and Wiggins 2009). Mindful of the tensions between the board and Deasy, Hite said it was important for the school board and him to speak with one voice. “If in fact I’m trying to lobby individuals on behalf of a school system that doesn’t include the board’s position or they’re trying to lobby individuals on behalf of the board that doesn’t include the administration, then we’re into those friction points that I think have doomed other administrations and boards in the past,” Hite said (King 2009b).

Hite’s appointment seemed to be positively received by the public. Doris Reed, executive director of the Prince George's Association of School Administrators and Supervisory Personnel and a frequent critic of past superintendents, said Hite “has

experience with the system now, and, quite frankly, we've been bringing people from the outside and that hasn't worked. I don't feel real confident that if we went out and looked for someone else they could do a better job than him" (Hernandez and Birnbaum 2009). A county official affirmed, "Everybody I've met has a very positive impression of Dr. Hite. I think the school board has confidence in him as well." Another offered, "I don't know if he will be as visionary but I don't know if he needs to be. Maybe it's just about staying the course just like the school board. Maybe we can be quiet and effective for the next five or ten years."

There was a small amount of concern about the short amount of time Hite had spent with PGCPS. One state official said choosing Hite was appropriate but cautioned that Hite "has been with PGCPS only for a short time, just like Deasy before him. Hite brings stability, but it is stability compared to what." June White Dillard, president of the county chapter of the NAACP was concerned about Hite's lack of experience as a full superintendent. "We really would have preferred someone that came with more experience, she said. "But I certainly think we need to have somebody that will commit themselves to being here long term. He does have familiarity with the system, even though he hasn't been here very long" (Ibid.). Overall, people seemed cautiously optimistic about Hite. If there was any serious apprehension, it was not so much about Hite and his abilities as it was about the economic environment in which Hite would have to lead.

Can You Spare a Dime? There is a Hole in the Budget

Hite became head of PGCPS in an environment vastly different from the one Deasy entered. While Deasy had the luxury of working with a fully funded budget, Hite

has had to contend with substantial budget cuts. Of the difference, board member Beck said, “Deasy came to us with an enormous fund balance. Hite does not have that advantage. Hite will oversee what could be, most likely will be, dramatic cuts in the operating budget. You can’t underestimate the anticipated effect of tenures marked by different fiscal starting points” (Hernandez 2008d). Hite had to confront the difference head on as his first task as superintendent was completing his FY 2010 operating budget proposal. With the America’s economy in full slide in 2008, there was little doubt that PGCPS’s budget would be cut. The state of Maryland was facing a \$2 billion budget shortfall in its FY2010 (Maryland Department of Budget and Management 2009). Prince George’s County was facing a \$113 million shortfall of its own (Prince George’s County Office of Management and Budget 2009).

It was under these conditions that Hite offered a proposed FY2010 operating budget of \$1.68 billion (Hite 2008). This budget represented a \$40.4 million *reduction* from the approved FY2009 budget that resulted in 884 positions being either cut or left unfilled. The reduction did not include eliminating any teachers, but it did include the elimination of 140 of 229 parent liaisons. The plan also called for increasing class size.

In January, PGCPS learned that it was losing \$35.2 million more in state aid (De Vise and Helderman 2009). This loss forced the board to make additional cuts to the FY2010 budget (Hite 2009b). Hite recommended furloughing employees up to twelve days and cutting an additional 119 jobs. On February 27, the school board approved a \$1.64 billion budget. Thanks to an April infusion of \$41 million in federal stimulus funds, PGCPS was able to avoid furloughs and class size increase. It looked as though the system was finally catching a break.

PGCPS's good fortune would be short lived. When school officials reconciled the FY2010 budget in June, they discovered a \$5.6 million budget shortage (Hite 2009a). The shortfall was caused by higher than expected employment costs. The board also had to face another unexpected cost. In order to help solve its own budget deficit, the county government decided to charge PGCPS \$11.8 million for services the county had previously provided without charge. As a result, the schools' budget was \$17.4 million short. Reluctantly, the board decided to take money from the system's \$21 million rainy day fund. On June 25, the school board in a 6 to 2 vote approved a \$1.7 billion operating budget (Prince George's County Board of Education 2009k).²³ Additional federal stimulus money and additional budget adjustments allowed the board to increase the budget beyond the initial \$1.64 billion approved in February.

The split in the vote highlights the difficulty of the board's decision. Typically, budgets are approved unanimously once all of the details have been sorted out. To balance the budget, the board had to reduce expenditures by \$120.2 million. The reductions required significant cuts in personnel and programs. The reductions also represented a serious threat to the system's ability to continue the progress it had been making. Board member Fletcher who voted against the budget protested, "I think our legislators and those who fund us are doing a great disservice to our children simply because we have to cut vital staff that have [helped us] accomplish what we have done" (Ibid.). Some would argue a particular disservice was the county's plan not to provide the required minimum education funding increase.

Maintenance of Effort

Since 1985, Maryland has required county governments to “appropriate per pupil operating budget funds to the local school system in an amount not less than the per pupil amount provided in the prior year [adjusted for enrollment]” (Office of Policy Analysis 2009). This requirement amounts to a “maintenance of effort” (MOE) on the part of local governments.²⁴ The MOE is designed to guarantee local jurisdictions continue to fund education at a consistent level and not use state funds to offset reductions in local funding. Jurisdictions failing to meet their MOE requirement must have increases in state educational funding withheld. In 1996, the MOE statute was amended to allow the State Board of Education to grant county requests for a temporary or partial waiver from the MOE requirement. A waiver may be granted if the State Board determines that a “county’s fiscal condition significantly impedes the county’s ability to fund the maintenance of effort requirement” (Ibid.). Since the waiver option was added it had not been request--until 2009.

In the spring of 2009, eight counties requested a waiver from the MOE requirement for FY 2010.²⁵ All but three counties withdrew their requests before the required hearing. The three remaining counties were Wicomico, Montgomery, and Prince George’s counties. All three counties asked for a partial MOE waiver. Wicomico asked for a 3.94% reduction of \$2 million, and Montgomery asked for a 5.2% reduction of \$79.5 million. Prince George’s asked for a 4.39% reduction of \$23.6 million.

County Executive Johnson included the waiver in the county’s FY 2010 operating budget he submitted to the county council in March. In his budget cover letter, Johnson wrote, “In these extraordinary times, we simply do not have the resources to provide

funding at the same per pupil amount as in the past” (Prince George’s County Office of Management and Budget 2009). Johnson added that although the schools’ budget was being reduced by 3.5%, it was less than the average 6.6% reduction for all other county agencies. On March 30, the county council voted 7 to 1 to seek the waiver. Ingrid Turner, the dissenting vote said, “Education is the foundation for the future of our children. We have made tremendous strides in the county regarding education, and we need to continue with them” (Wiggins and Hernandez 2009).

School officials were not pleased with the request. They understood the financial strain the county was under. However, they were concerned about the impact further cuts would have on the school system. Board member Thomas said, “My fear is that we still may not have enough to take care of the basic needs of our schools. I want to make sure everything is taken care of” (King 2009a). Added board member Rosalind A. Johnson, “I realize you have to be creative; you have to spend effectively. But there is a level you cannot go below without actually seeing major changes in the delivery of public education” (Ibid.). Council members supporting the waiver request had hoped the school board would be a little more understanding given the county’s fiscal difficulties. One offered, “This year we asked them for a little leniency and that didn’t go over too well.” Another council member added, “The perspective of a lot of people on the county side was, ‘well we’ve been funding you at higher than the MOE level for many years; above and beyond what is required. The one year when we can’t make that, when it’s a tough year...It’s disingenuous to be critical of not meeting MOE’.”

In arguing for the waiver, Johnson said at the April 27 State Board hearing, “In a crisis like this, all of us must share the burden” (Ibid.). He added that the county had

been funding the schools' budget above the required MOE amount. Table 5-1 shows the MOE required amounts and the actual appropriated MOE amounts from FY2003 to FY2010. Every year since FY 2003, the county has funded PGCPs above the required amount. Moreover, in FY2009, the county's funding was 2.68% more than what was required.

Table 5-1 Prince George's County Maintenance of Effort 2003-2010

Fiscal Year	Required MOE	Actual Appropriations	% Over Required MOE
2003	\$462,773,872	\$469,546,900	1.46
2004	\$474,320,292	\$474,594,900	0.06
2005	\$483,131,106	\$489,062,965	1.23
2006	\$489,273,450	\$508,736,503	3.98
2007	\$500,798,181	\$538,549,000	7.54
2008	\$530,369,694	\$537,772,000	1.4
2009	\$528,294,981	\$542,479,236	2.68
2010	\$609,503,900	\$609,503,900	0

Sources: Maryland State Department of Education. The Fact Book 2002-2003 through 2008-2009; Prince George's County Public Schools FY2010 Approved Operating Budget.

In response, Superintendent Hite maintained granting the waiver would have “a devastating impact on the children of our county” (King 2009c). Both Hite and Johnson suggested the other use their respective contingency reserve funds to cover the \$23.6 million. PGCPs had a reserve fund of \$21 million while the county had a reserve fund of \$129 million and an operating reserve of \$51.6 million (Maryland State Board of Education 2009). Johnson had resisted using surplus funds for fear that doing so would lower the county's bond rating. After the hearing board Chair Jacobs responded, “We understand everyone's got to endure some of the pain. We really do believe we've endured our share” (King 2009c).

On May 15, the State Board of Education denied Prince George's waiver request. It denied the requests from Montgomery and Wicomico counties as well. In denying the waiver request the State Board wrote, "In our view, the fiscal issues the county presented do not include the significant, extraordinary circumstances we deem necessary to waive MOE" (Maryland State Board of Education 2009). The State Board noted that the county had not been hurt by the recession more than other counties who managed to meet MOE.

Hite hailed the decision saying, "We're excited that the state board considered the work that we're attempting to do with our young people and factored the number of schools in school improvement and considered that in the request" (Valentine and King 2009). Johnson responded to the waiver denial by proposing to charge PGCPs \$23.6 million for services previously provided for free. Those services included paying for crossing guards and staffing law enforcement officers at county schools, and servicing the system's school construction debt. "In light of the county's fiscal situation, it has been necessary to evaluate many of the services we provide at no cost to support the board," said Jonathan Seeman, director of the county's Department of Management and Budget (Ibid.). The county council objected to charging PGCPs for the full bill. In a compromise with the county executive, the council voted to charge half of the bill; \$11.8 million.

Looking towards the future, board member Rosalind Jonson said of the county's fiscal problems,

The public needs to be acutely tuned in to, in real language "dooms day". Here we are. What does this mean for your child? What does it mean for your school? What does it mean for the future of Prince George's County Public Schools? I think to throw out millions and millions of dollars clearly the public understands that, but most importantly they want to know what will I not see in 2009-2010 that I saw this year, and we need to engage the public to work and fight with us to

come with some ideas and strategies how we can all get through these difficult times. We need to show the public where every dollar is going, and its importance. It is amazing what many out there believe is not essential; public education is not just the classroom, it is what supports that classroom and the work, and I believe it is very important that we talk about every element of our school district and the money it takes to support it, and what you will not have if you do not have any money. (Prince George's County Board of Education 2009j)

With continued budget shortages it will be increasingly difficult to maintain current initiatives and continue the steady progress the system has made over the last few years. Northwestern High School teacher Jeanne Mignon spoke for many when she complained, "There's a point where the public cannot continue to criticize education and keep expecting us to cut back and back and back". She added, the county cannot "keep eliminating resources that make the job doable and expect to get the same results" (King 2009d).

One strategy that was used in 2009 to offset some of the budget shortfall was the consolidation of schools.

School Consolidations

In June 2008, the school administration presented the school board with its strategy to increase access to Enrichment & Specialty Programs (ESP). These programs were formerly the magnet programs that were so popular they had waiting lists in the hundreds. As discussed in Part 1, the most effective magnet programs were retained after the system was declared unitary. Because they continue to be so popular with parents, school board members wanted to expand access to those children (primarily African American) denied access while the programs were magnets. The administration's strategy was to create five new ESP schools of choice. It would do this by "repurposing neighborhood schools that are under-enrolled and converting them into county-wide

schools of choice” (Deasy, Hite and Mitchell 2008). In order to expand the programs, boundaries would have to be changed.

In September, the board directed the school administration to conduct a comprehensive review of the attendance areas and school boundaries of all PGCPS schools. Some schools were under-enrolled because the district’s student population was declining. As Table 5-2 shows, enrollment in PGCPS has been declining since 2003.

Table 5-2: PGCPS Student Enrollment

School Year	Enrollment
2003	137,285
2004	136,095
2005	133,325
2006	131,014
2007	129,752
2008	127,977
2009	127,039

Source: Maryland State Department of Education. The Fact Book 2002-2003 thru 2008-2009

The enrollment had dropped from 137,285 in 2003 to 129,977 in 2008. As a result some schools operated under capacity. Despite the overall decline in enrollment however, some schools were overcrowded because of population growth in some segments of the county, the return to neighborhood schools, and previous boundary decisions. Redrawing boundaries would address both problems. The school board directed the administration to specifically evaluate “those boundaries to determine whether they are as equitable as practicable and as financially efficient as they can be, in light of (a) historical inequities; (b) overutilization of each facility; and (c) underutilization of each facility” (Prince George’s County Board of Education 2008d).

The administration also was directed to develop a plan for redrawing boundaries and report back to the board by January 2009.

The thought of redrawing boundaries made some board members anxious. They were well aware of the potentially explosive nature of altering boundaries. At the board's September 16 meeting, member Iliff was concerned about whether the timing was right for changing boundaries given the disruptive nature of the process (Ibid.). Member Jacobs understood the concerns but argued that the problem would only get worse if the board continued to avoid it. Member Fletcher declared, "Every last one of us sitting here knows what we need to do. We can drag this out until election [sic] because our term will run out and it probably won't get completed then. I feel in my heart this needs to be done if we are really sincere when we talk about equity in our school system" (Ibid.).

The administration presented the review's findings to the board on January 8, 2009. As expected, the review showed that the system's enrollment was not equally distributed throughout the district. While some schools were under capacity, others were over capacity. The review found that much of the system's underutilization occurred in central and lower county communities lying inside the Beltway, while much of the overcrowding occurred outside the Beltway.²⁶ The system had 18 schools above 120% of capacity while 60 schools were at less than 80% capacity (Hite and Mitchell 2009). For example, Gaywood Elementary School in Seabrook (outside the Beltway) was at 153.01% of capacity while Benjamin D. Foulois Elementary School in Suitland (inside Beltway) was at 38.71% of capacity (Office of Pupil Accounting and Boundaries n.d.). If left unchecked, the system would have 37 schools above 120% capacity and 67 schools at less than 80% capacity. The review also revealed that the system had 9,800 empty seats.

The administration recommended creating more efficient school boundaries. The use of new boundaries coupled with the building of new schools where necessary would allow the system to alleviate much of the overcrowding. At the same time new boundaries would allow the administration to establish new ESPs in central and southern county schools that were currently being underutilized. The administration recommended that the multi-year process be done in four stages. The first phase would address the boundaries of central and southern county elementary and middle schools inside the Beltway. The second phase would address boundaries in elementary and middle schools lying west and southwest of the Beltway. The third phase would focus on elementary and middle schools in the northeast quadrant of the county. Finally, the fourth phase would change high school boundaries throughout the county.²⁷

The boundary discussion was taking place right in the middle of the Great Recession. As discussed above, the state of Maryland and Prince George's County were facing significant budget deficits. PGCPS was facing a \$70 million deficit of its own. This economic reality was the backdrop in which the administration presented its recommended boundary changes to the school board on January 22, 2009. Included was the recommendation that 12 schools be consolidated.²⁸ The administration defined consolidation as the incorporation of an existing school's attendance area into a nearby school or schools with available capacity, emptying the targeted school facility (Prince George's County Public Schools 2009). Eleven of the targeted schools sat inside the Beltway, and eight of them lay south of Maryland Route 214 (Central Avenue), which bisects the county from north to south. In addition to the 12 consolidated schools, six schools would be converted into five schools with kindergarten to 8th grade (K-8) student

populations.²⁹ One school, Benjamin D. Foulois Elementary would become a southern county replication of the Creative & Performing Arts K-8 ESP at Thomas G. Pullen School which sits in the northern section of the county. The entire school would be dedicated to the choice program. In total, 70 schools would either change boundaries, change programs, or close. The changes would save the system almost \$12 million in FY 2010 and more than \$161 million over ten years (Ibid.).

Board members were prepared to get resistance from parents. Board Chair Jacobs said of the proposal, “Yeah, it's controversial. Let's face it; some people do not want their kids to go to school in certain areas” (Valentine 2008d). Board member Watson said to a group of parents, “These are tough, tough conversations. We realize that citizens move into these neighborhoods to go to a particular school” (Hernandez and Wiggins 2009). To reduce some of the resistance and get public input on the proposal, the board scheduled a series of hearings. In all, the board held eight hearings on the consolidation and boundary changes with hundreds of people attending. Not surprisingly, many of the people attending hearings were opposed to the plans; none more so than the people at Glenarden Woods Elementary School.

As part of the proposed boundary changes, Glenarden Woods' Talented-and-Gifted (TAG) program would be moved to Robert R. Gray Elementary School. TAG parents objected to the change. A meeting at the school included an hour-and-a-half of speeches; most of them made by TAG parents opposed to the plan. Parent Robert Braddock, in tears said, “You are destroying the ties that bind this community. You're playing with people's lives. You're playing with our kids' lives” (Hernandez 2009a). The passionate opposition of Glenarden Woods parents led to the school board removing

Judge Sylvania W. Woods Elementary School from the consolidation list and replacing it with Dodge Park Elementary School. The TAG program would remain at Glenarden. Board member Rosalind Johnson said community engagement was responsible for the change (King and McGill 2009).

Opposition was similarly strong at Oakcrest Elementary School. People there were surprised that a school that was near capacity and had met adequate yearly progress (AYP) on state assessments would be scheduled for closure. Dozens of Oakcrest parents attending a hearing on the proposal questioned the administration's reasoning. Among the critics was state Delegate Joanne C. Benson who told the parents, "We are in Annapolis fighting like you wouldn't believe to bring money back to Prince George's County. I cannot tell you all in words how disappointed I am that someone would have the audacity to close Oakcrest Elementary. I speak for the senator -- Senator [Nathaniel] Exum -- I speak for the [County] Council, I speak for the House of Delegates -- we are not going to take this sitting down" (Hernandez 2009a). To no one's surprise, Oakcrest was removed from the consolidation list.

Strong opposition to the boundary proposal also came from parents at Thomas Pullen performing arts school. Pullen's students, who gain admission either through lottery or audition, come from across the county. According to a school official there were on average 2000 applications for about 70 spots. Thus, the need for a second performing arts school was great. The boundary proposal called for Pullen to be duplicated at Benjamin D. Foulois. As a result, some of the students at Pullen would be transferred to Foulois because it would be closer to their homes. Kindergarten through 5th students and the younger siblings of 6th and 7th graders would be transferred to Foulois

while current 6th and 7th graders would remain at Pullen.³⁰ There would be no grandfathering in the implementation. Pullen parents objected to the move arguing that it would tear families and the school community apart. The parents also felt blindsided by the move and prepared to fight it. Natalie Hope, Pullen's PTA vice president, said “I believe that if the parents keep going and pushing to the Board [of Education] then we can get it changed” (McGill 2009). A PGCPS administrator conceded that Pullen parents had been blindsided by the lack of grandfathering.

At a March 7th board meeting, member Iliff responded to the opposition of Pullen parents by saying,

We as a school system are an enormous school system where we are asking everyone to change and I would just ask the families at Thomas Pullen who have been frustrated and worried by this process to try and think about how we all need to pull together for change in our school system and sometimes change involves, if you've been fortunate that you turnaround and lend a hand to bring someone up to be more fortunate with you and I think that the fortunate parents of Pullen will be equally fortunate at Foulis. (Prince George's County Board of Education 2009d)

The efforts of Pullen parents ultimately proved unsuccessful; the transfer plan remained in the final proposal.

After two months of debate, the school board voted unanimously on March 26 to consolidate eight schools, create five K-8 schools, and make Foulis an arts ESP school.³¹ Board vice Chair Watson said of the changes, “The reason for the consolidations was never about cost. It was about capacity, it was about access and it was about programs” (Hernandez 2009d). It is true that the review of boundaries began as part of an effort to increase access to specialty programs. However, with the deepening of the recession, the cost savings resulting from the changes became just as important as the academic benefits.

On April 21, 2009, the school board approved final Phase I boundary changes for 67 elementary and middle schools. The vote was not unanimous. Member Thomas whose district was most affected by the changes voted against it arguing that the plan was not an “A” plan (Prince George’s County Board of Education 2009g). She wanted more time to improve it. She was also concerned about the south county being treated fairly. In the past, residents in the southern section of the county have felt put upon. This feeling has been particularly strong among south county residents living inside the Beltway. Before being forced to integrate in the 1970s, school officials tended to neglect the majority black schools in this area. And during desegregation, this same area bore the brunt of court-ordered busing because it had the highest concentration of African Americans. Once children were bused out of the neighborhood, schools were closed and no new school built for decades.

Since the end of busing some residents living in the southern portion of the county have often felt neglected by county officials who have catered to the fast growing, affluent neighborhoods in the central and northern sections of the county. Some saw the boundary change proposal as another example of the south county being short changed; they wondered why the boundaries were being changed for them and not others in the county (Garner 2009). Suspicion of the school system’s motives caused some parents to question the explanation that their area was chosen first because it was the area with the greatest number of empty seats.

Board members addressed the past inequities before they voted. Board member Rosalind Johnson said,

Because the Prince George's County Public School System was not diligent about keeping a watchful eye on our school boundaries in past 30 years, December 4, 2006, [the day the board took office] we inherited many long delayed issues. Because of that work and the work that this Superintendent and staff have done, many inequities of the past are finally being wiped away. (Prince George's County Board of Education 2009g)

Member Fletcher added,

There is heartburn everywhere but there are decisions that we have to make because of the injustice that was done years ago when they drew the boundaries so we have to fix that. No other Board, included the appointed Board prior to us would deal with it simply because of the heartburn. We have to do it fairly and with compassion and I think we did both. It didn't satisfy everybody and we will never satisfy everyone but we did it as fairly as we could. (Ibid.)

She stated further:

Many talk about change but are unwilling to undertake the critical retooling required, and that includes many elected officials. We need to have the will power to do what is required to move the schools system forward. It is not about politics and votes. It is about doing what is required and what has been neglected for so long because people are more concerned about things being quiet than to create the positive change that causes a little noise. Although it is uncomfortable at times, it must be done. (Ibid.)

Finally board chair Jacobs pleaded with the public: "These decisions are hard. I know you are upset and angry but inequity is staring you in the face. I am asking you to turn your head to inequity and open your eyes to the opportunity that is available to this county" (Ibid.).

The statements by board members were an acknowledgment of the fractious nature of boundary changes. Every interviewed board member cited boundary changes as one of the most contentious or conflicted topics they had to face. Unfortunately, these boundary changes were the beginning of the process for the board not the end. The board still had to review the boundaries of the system's remaining elementary and middle

schools. This process was set to begin fall 2009. The high school review was pushed back to late 2010.

The magnitude of the current boundary review is similar to the massive rezoning that took place at the end of court-ordered desegregation when children were returned to neighborhood schools. However, these boundary changes were even more dramatic in that it they were occurring within a much shorter timeframe. The earlier rezoning took place over a series of years as new schools were built. This time, the boundaries for nearly all 208 of PGCPs's schools were to be changed within three years.

It is debatable whether undergoing such massive change quickly or slowly is better. Is it less disruptive to have massive change occur in one brief outburst or have a gradual, more constant change occur over a longer period? Both methods are disruptive; there is no getting around that. Indeed the level of disruption is a large part of the reason why boundary changes are almost universally controversial (Birnbaum 2008; Creighton and Hamlin 1995).

The Phase I changes highlighted the differences in parental power. Some parents were able to influence the process while others were not. It is clear that public reaction played a role in determining the final list of schools closed. Judge Sylvania Woods and Oakcrest elementary were taken off the consolidation list after hundreds of parents protested. Clearly vocal and active parents can have significant influence over educational issues. Unfortunately, the pattern in Prince George's has been for the most advantaged parents to use that power to maintain that advantage. A county leader charged, "We have allowed in this county the ability for some to carve out their own "private" public schools and these private public schools have been carved out at the

detriment of others.” Power has been used to pursue the narrow interests of individual families as opposed to the wider interests of the county as a whole.

With additional boundary changes to come, more conflict between parents is likely and probably inevitable. The continuation of issues that tend to drive people apart will certainly do little to encourage the creation of a performance regime that needs its members to focus on the well-being of all children and work on behalf of the system as a whole. Other developments involving parental and community involvement have dimmed the prospects for the formation of a performance regime.

Community Involvement Prospects Dim

An organization that might have been helpful in directing parents to look at the bigger picture both when it came to the boundary changes and education in general would have been the PGCCPTA. Unfortunately, the county organization was not active in 2008. The organization had its charter revoked by the Maryland PTA (MDPTA) in 2007 for the second time.

The charter was first revoked in October 2000 after a MDPTA investigation found financial irregularities and bylaws violations in officer elections.³² While the county organization was dissolved, the school level PTAs were allowed to continue. However they did so without a unifying advocacy voice or the resources the county organization provided. The county PTA was reinstated in July 2001 with Judy Mickens-Murray as president. After Mickens-Murray left the organization in 2002 to serve on the appointed school board some of the old problems returned.

In August 2005 the election of new county leaders was held up briefly by the MDPTA because the organization had not submitted audits for the previous two years

(Leonard 2005d). That issue was resolved and new president Darren Brown took office. However about two months later, the PTA was holding dueling meeting because some members contemplated ousting Brown. Ultimately, no action was taken against Brown at the time.

After continuing financial and bylaws irregularities, MD PTA voted to strip PGCCPTA of its charter once again in June 2007 (Hernandez 2007a).³³ The revocation came after several attempts to resolve the issue. It also came just two weeks after new leadership had been elected.³⁴ This time PGCCPTA was required to wait two years before it would be eligible to have its charter reinstated. Once again school PTAs were left without the organizational structure and advocacy voice of a county-level organization. The disbandment “broke-down a lot of the communication that was going on among parents,” according to a PTA leader.

It is worth noting that the response to the revocation was markedly different from the response to the 2000 charter revocation. Back then, the revocation was seen by residents as one of many black-eyes for the county’s educational system coming as it did in the wake of the school board’s credit card scandal.³⁵ Neither parents nor county elites mobilized in support of the organization. Such was not the case in 2007. As evidence that the education arena had changed, several county political leaders came to the defense of PGCCPTA. All of the county’s 23 state House delegates sent a letter to MDPTA asking that the charter be reinstated as soon as possible (Carter 2007b). The county Chamber of Commerce sent a letter as well. Even State Superintendent Nancy Grasmick suggested the county and state PTAs work out their differences so that the charter could be reinstated before the two year point (Carter 2007c). It would appear that people’s

attitudes towards county education had improved since 2000. Nevertheless, MDPTA was unmoved by the show of support and the revocation stood. [PGCCPTA's charter was recently reinstated and the organization is in the process of rebuilding.]

In addition to losing the advocacy of PGCCPTA, parents also lost the advocacy provided by the Parent and Community Advisory Board (PCAB) whose 2006 demise was planned. A creation of the Maryland General Assembly bill (HB949) dissolving the old elected board, the PCAB ended when the appointed board's tenure ended. Whether the loss of the PCAB was significant is subject to debate in part because some questioned the board's effectiveness (A. Lee 2004i). That said, a parent activist described the impact of the loss of the PCAB and PGCCPTA,

There's no advisory council, PCAB, any longer. There's no County Council of PTA any longer. Now parents aren't getting information. They know what's going on at the individual school, but they don't know what's going on in the whole school system; where they can collectively come up with ideas on how to improve the whole school system or make their suggestions." Not having the Council has been a "Big disadvantage. The Council would meet and discuss issues. The superintendent was a part of that. You had a seat at the table. There is no voice [without the Council].

In 2006, Superintendent Deasy created a new advisory council, establishing the Superintendent's Community Advisory Council in 2006. Originally, Deasy was to meet with the Council six times a year, but he only met with the group four times. In 2008, the council was discontinued. Again parents were left without a unifying voice.

Other school system efforts designed to expand the scope of community involvement have also floundered since their initial development. Most notably, initiatives established by members of the appointed school board withered once the board's term ended. The annual Race for Education, a 5K walk/run to raise funds for

classroom library books had its third and last run in 2006. The Excellence in Education Foundation stopped operating in 2007 after failing to raise enough funds to sustain it. These initiatives suffered from being too connected to the individual members who championed them. Once the board members left office, their initiatives lost momentum and were unable to be sustained.

As mentioned above, the number of Parent Liaisons who served as Deasy's primary parent involvement initiative was significantly reduced by budget cuts. The number of liaisons dropped from 229 in school year 2008 to 87 in school year 2010. Since PGCPS's Office of Family and Community Outreach found itself repeatedly understaffed. As a result, the office has not engaged in much outreach. The office's efforts have been focused on providing schools with technical assistance and advice on improving parent and community involvement at the school level rather than at the district level. A comprehensive community involvement strategy is not in place.

One positive school system effort to increase parental involvement was the First Annual Dual Language Summit held on October 6, 2007. The summit was jointly sponsored by the Prince George's County Board of Education and the Mid-Atlantic Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. The idea for the summit grew out of a May lunch between Jorge Ribas of the Chamber and board member Rosalind Johnson who taught Spanish and French in the county for 35 years. The summit's goal was to stress the importance of parental involvement and to open doors to a growing Latino population that has at times felt reluctant to engage with school officials and even worse unwelcomed. More than 1,000 parents signed up to participate in the summit. Jorge Ribas exhorted, "It's a beautiful day in Prince George's County, where we're telling the

world education is important” (Parker 2007)! Although the summit was quite successful, there was a sour note afterward. The school system had to pay \$75,574 to cover the costs of the summit when verbal pledges of financial support fell through.

Other community involvement efforts begun outside of PGCPS have failed to reach the level of impact their initial burst of optimism suggested. For example, County Executive Jack Johnson’s initial education initiative, the Communities United for Education Summit in September 2003 held the promise of a more active and engaged county leadership. The summit drew over 600 participants. However, the momentum gained from the summit was lost when the initiative was absorbed into Johnson’s Livable Communities Initiative. Education appears to have taken a backseat though despite the occasional one day events sponsored or supported by county government. Some of the failure of the county government to play a more assertive role in education may stem from how the county executive see’s his role in education.

In a 2006 interview with the *Washington Post*, Johnson was asked about the county executive’s role in education. He answered, “My main role, or elected role, is to do whatever I can to make certain we have adequate resources. That really starts at creating the kind of community that generates sufficient revenue” (County Executive Candidates Take on Education 2006). Indeed much of Johnson’s attention has been focused on economic development issues. That the county executive focuses on development is certainly not unusual. Development is a priority for many if not most urban mayors and county leaders. That said, time and time again, county residents and political leaders have stressed the importance of a high performing school system on the ability of the county to attract new development. A county business executive argue, “If

you don't have a good education system, you are not going to attract any business because no one is going to move their company here if their employees can't put their kids in good schools. Or if they don't have a pool of educated people that they can pull from to be employees."

A persistent criticism of Johnson's tenure as county executive has been its hands-off posture towards governing. As a respondent said, "I don't think this county executive has played a large role, and I think it is just his hands-off approach." Beyond providing increased funding for PGCPS, Johnson has not been actively involved in educational reform issues. An education activist speaking about the county executive's efforts, "Johnson was supportive, but I don't know if I have seen demonstrative leadership except in his providing funding." Johnson has certainly not used his office as a bully pulpit for education.

Perhaps the most disappointing development on the community involvement front has been the wilting of PGBEA. This promising coalition of business advocates for education found itself a victim of the Great Recession. Many of the businesses in the coalition no longer had the wherewithal to continue paying dues. As businesses struggled for their own survival, they paid less attention to educational issues. A Chamber member offered, "Of about 900 chamber members 800 are small businesses. The small businesses don't have time to come to the school. They have to make payroll." A member of PGBEA said that the county's business organizations have returned their focus back to finance and development issues. As a result the PGBEA went dormant in 2007. The Alliance's leaders hope that once the economy recovers, the organization can be revived.

The low level of parent and community involvement was bemoaned by almost every interview respondent. “Parental involvement is, I don’t know what the word is because weak is not strong enough a word.” Ask for an explanation for the low level of involvement, a number of respondents sympathetic to parents pointed to the fact that parents’ work inhibits involvement. Both parents are working, or a single parent is working more than one job. All may work long hours and have long commutes diminishing time available for involvement. The middle class status of many African Americans in the county is tenuous. Studies have shown that for many African Americans both parents must work in order to maintain that middle class status. A resident described the position of many middle class blacks in the county, “We’re supposed to be the most affluent minority majority county in the country. That means people have to work. Even though people are at home at 7:30, their brain needs rest. Those big houses in Bowie and Mitchellville and all these places; somebody’s got to afford those. And sometimes the PTA meeting gets pushed to the back burner.”

Though the county has a large number of black, middle class, two parent households, it also has a sizeable number working class and a significant number of single female headed households. Single parents have less time for parent involvement activities. “Prince George’s county is extremely high in the number of single mom households. To ask that mom to do what two parent households do regularly is a tall task. Parent involvement gets pushed way down the priority list,” said a parent activist. A few respondents did offer that the level of involvement varies from school to school. At schools with specialty programs, involvement tends to be greater than average. Involvement is higher in more affluent sections of the county.

Some respondents put the blame for poor involvement squarely on the school system. They argue the school system has not made it easy for parents to be involved. “Parents don’t feel welcome in the schools. Yes they say there is an open door policy; but, how are they treated when they show up to ask questions? How are they treated when they try to get involved in the instruction of the student?” A principal offered, “Sometimes schools just don’t want parent involvement. Sometimes certain principals are bad with parents. Often times we’re not doing the right things at schools and we don’t want sunshine. We say we want parents involved but we do so many things to thwart that effort.” Some respondents argued that principals are too busy to focus on parent involvement. Another principal rejected this and claimed the argument that principals are too busy is a very weak argument, “because how are you so busy with a component that is so critical for you achieving success. No matter what we do...we’re not going to maximize the success of our students and tap into their true potential; we cannot sustain student achievement without parent involvement.”

Other respondents put the blame on parents. They take parents to task for the lack of involvement even when efforts are made to make involvement convenient for them. A NAACP member related an example of the difficulty the organization had getting parents to attend a meetings arranged for parents. When the state was considering requiring students to take High School Assessments (HSAs) ³⁶several years ago, the NAACP got actively involved in informing the community about what would be required of students and how they would be impacted. The NAACP setup 2 meetings, one each in the northern and southern halves of the county, for 7th grade parents to discuss what was at stake. People do not attend. “If we had 5 or 6 parents show up in either place they were

lucky.” Two years ago the NAACP held more meetings on the HSAs for parents.³⁷ This time they said “if parents won’t come to a meeting, we will go to the parents.” They got in touch with a couple of apartment complexes and used community rooms for meetings with parents. They got school system personnel to attend, and “we talked to ourselves.” They sat around asking each other, “What do we need to do to get the parents to be concerned about what is happening with their kids?”

The low level of parent involvement is mirrored by the low level of community involvement. Business involvement is not much better than parent involvement. Respondents cite pockets of increased levels of involvement at individual schools. In fact the majority of business efforts are targeted towards individual schools with which particular businesses may have an ongoing relationship. A respondent spoke of repeated efforts by Delegate Gerron Levi to create a concept that would link businesses, churches and schools to work together on after-school activities. “It didn’t fly. Nobody would support it.” Asked why the respondent pointed to funding issues as the reason given for the failure. “People want ownership of their funding. People want credit for their individual activities. So when you have that kind of politics going on, it makes it difficult for people to collaborate.”

The less than ideal levels of parent and community involvement illustrate the difficulty in developing a new performance regime in Prince George’s. The county does not have a good track record in sustaining initiatives. Further efforts to mobilize parents would likely be hindered by complacency among parents. As mentioned before the PCAB was criticized for the poor attendance record of some of its members. The school system has had difficulty in expanding PTA membership.

What might be hurting efforts the most is the general level of satisfaction parents seem to have with the system. PGCPs conducted a School Climate Survey (Keane and Sunmonu 2007) to gauge satisfaction with the schools. The results were to be used to develop a comprehensive improvement plan for PGCPs and individual improvement plans for each school in the system. The survey was intended to discover the extent to which schools' major stakeholders: students, parents, and teachers "believe their schools exhibit characteristics associated with school effectiveness" (Ibid., 1).³⁸ Participants were asked a series of questions related to eleven characteristics of effective schools. These included, Effective Instructional Leadership, Positive School Climate, High Expectations, and Parent/Community Involvement.³⁹

A large majority of parent and teacher respondents were satisfied with their school's climate (Ibid., viii). Overwhelmingly, parents (83%) and teachers (84%) held positive perceptions of their schools. Although they were less positive than adults, 71.5% of student respondents felt good about their schools. Interestingly, 77% of parents and 71% of teachers had a positive perception of parent involvement in their schools (Ibid., 42). Both parents (87.9%) and teachers (92.7%) thought parents were encouraged to support the instructional activities of their school (Ibid., 42-43) There were some notable differences in the perceptions of parents and teachers however. While 83.4% of parents believed parents actively participated in school activities, only 56% of teachers felt the same. 76.6% of parents believed they had a voice in school policies (Ibid., 42-43), but only 47.6% of teachers believed parents were active participants. Parents thought they were more actively involved than teachers thought parents were. The survey's authors suggested the differences in perception may be indicative of parents' belief that "they are

doing as much as they can” while teachers believe “the level of parent and community involvement is not as high as they would like it” (Ibid., 46).

In regard to efforts to form a new regime, the climate survey suggests that parents content with their children’s schools may not see the need for significant reform thus making them less likely to join a movement. Even more, these parents might actually feel uneasy about a reform movement that is likely to disrupt the status-quo.

2010: Here We Go Again

As if all of the transformations PGCPS has endured were not enough, more change came to PGCPS in 2010. The entire school board was up for reelection 2010. The new board would have a new configuration because, in 2008, the General Assembly changed the way school board members are to be elected (Prince George’s County Delegation 2008).

In 2006 the school board consisted of four at-large members and five members representing districts.⁴⁰ All nine were voted on by the entire county. In 2010, the board returned to its pre-2002 structure; nine single member districts.⁴¹ Only district residents will vote on candidates not the entire county. In order to avoid a massive turnover every four years and maintain some institutional memory, the four new members who receive the most votes will serve four-year terms. The other five members will serve two-year terms after which they will run for reelection in 2012. The winners in that election will then serve four-year terms. Thus, under this new plan half of the board will be elected every two years.

Supporters of the new plan argue that the district elections will make board members more accountable to their constituents. David L. Cahn, co-chairman of Citizens

for an Elected Board exclaimed, "Obviously, we're delighted that we've finally gotten back to where we should have been all along. The return to nine single-member districts means that the school board will be directly accountable. Each member will be directly accountable to the voters in his or her community" (Helderman and Hernandez 2008a). Opponents of the new plan fear it will lead to a return of the parochialism partly responsible for the dissolution of the school board in 2002. One opponent said,

The previous elected board was nine members from nine districts. In my opinion that structure was part of the dysfunction because you would have people who represented 1/9th of the county and they didn't seem to take responsibility for the entire county; for the overall education of everybody, all the children of the county. They were just focused on their own districts, and then they would form alliances and gang up on each other. You created a real parochialism. I think it damaged the education opportunities for kids across the whole county.

The change to nine single member districts meant that some current board members would not return because some members live in the same district.⁴² Indeed only five of the nine board members chose to run for reelection. They were Donna Hathaway Beck, Pat Fletcher, Verjeana Jacobs, Rosalind Johnson, and Amber Waller. Members Heather Iliff, R. Owen Johnson, and Ronald Watson decided not to run. Member Linda Thomas decided to run for another elected office.⁴³ Beck, Jacobs, Johnson, and Waller won their reelection bids. Fletcher was defeated. The new board took office in December 2010 with five new members.⁴⁴

In addition to the leadership changes experienced by PGCPS, the county itself endured massive leadership change as term-limits swept out a number of elected officials. The terms of County Executive Johnson and five council members ended in 2010. Thus, once again newcomers comprise the majority of Prince George's top leadership. For advocates of a performance regime, the 2010 elections provided them with reason for

hope despite the turnover. Rushern Baker, who had run for county executive in 2002 and 2006, ran again in 2010. Baker was probably the county's leading proponent of education reform. Once again he ran on a platform that put education at the forefront of his agenda. Baker who ran on the platform of "going from good to great" put improving county education in the center of that plan. At the center of his reform plan was a call to improve the quality of instruction in PGCPS classrooms.

As the saying goes, the third time was a charm for Baker; he won the election easily. He had the backing of most of the County's state delegation. He also had the support of the first African American former county executive, Wayne Curry. One negative note was PGCEA's decision to endorse Baker's leading opponent. The endorsement vote was 8 to 1 against Baker. Such a decisive rejection may not bode well for Baker. The union would not say why it voted as it did. The vote might indicate a concern about Baker's attention on instruction. If this is the case, Baker may experience some union pushback on his reform efforts. Only time will tell. What is known is that as has happened several times since the old elected school board was dissolved in 2002, education reform advocates will once again have to begin the process of establishing a new regime.

To this point, this project has focused on the political changes that have occurred with respect to education in Prince George's County. Since 2002, PGCPS has had to navigate around several detours created by repeated leadership changes, and as a result reform efforts that seemed promising have floundered.

A three stage regime change process was laid out in Chapter 1. The first stage is disruption of the current regime. The second is coalition building and mobilization of support for a new regime. The third is the creation and institutionalization of the new regime. The 2002 dissolution of the school board destabilized the old regime. Moreover, the repeated leadership changes have prevented the old school cartel from reasserting itself. However, those same changes have apparently made it difficult to reach the second stage of the regime change process; coalition building. As a result reform efforts appear to be stuck in neutral; neither moving forward or backward.

So what does this mean for the student of PGCPS? At the end of the day, reform is, or should be, about student achievement. Are PGCPS students achieving? How does the current state of affairs contrast with the state of PGCPS when the appointed school board took over in 2002? What has happened to the Black-White achievement gap? The next chapter will try to answer these questions.

Endnotes

¹ Unattributed quotations are from interviews conducted by the author. Respondents were given anonymity in exchange for their participation.

² Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is designed to measure the continuous improvement each year toward the NCLB goal of 100% proficiency in 2014. To make AYP, schools and school systems must meet the annual measurable objective in reading and mathematics for students in the aggregate and for each student subgroup, in graduation rate for high school or attendance in elementary and middle school for students in the aggregate, and meet the testing participation requirement of 95%. Definition from Maryland State Department of Education's "Maryland Report Card website:
<http://www.mdreportcard.org/supporting/definitions.aspx?WDATA=def&inc=ayp>
(accessed January 12, 2011).

³ The components are Enhanced Accountability System, Advanced Placement (AP)/ Strategic Plan, International Baccalaureate (IB) Strategic Plan, Pupil Personnel Workers Plan, Parent and Community Engagement Plan, High School Assessment (HSA) Strategic Plan, Intensive Support and Intervention Schools (ISIS)/ Isis Work Plan, and Library Media Centers Improvement Initiative.

⁴ The Advanced Placement program offers thirty-three college level courses in high school. At the end of the year exams are given in the AP courses. College credit is often given to students who score highly on the exams.

⁵ The International Baccalaureate is a two year high school program. It uses an interdisciplinary approach to learning. Completion of the program leads to an internationally recognized diploma. IB is widely recognized for its academic rigor.

⁶ Baltimore city's school system is the only other system to be designated for corrective action. Other systems have been given the less-serious "school system improvement" status. Those systems are Charles, St. Mary's, Allegany, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent and Somerset counties. Their designations were lifted in 2006.

⁷ The Maryland General Assembly holds a 90 day session at the beginning of each year. In 2005, the session ran from January 12 to April 8.

⁸ Some individual senators also headed slates that included board candidates.

⁹ The program is the result of a partnership between the Broad Foundation and the Center for Reform of School Systems. According to the CRSS website, "The objective is a high-performance board/superintendent team working together in harmony and using efficient and effective processes to develop, approve and implement major reform policies that will directly improve student achievement and narrow the achievement gap" (Center for Reform of School Systems 2010).

¹⁰ CEO Deasy's title reverted back to superintendent with the return of the elected school board.

¹¹ Due to a technicality, the case against Thomas was dismissed in 2007.

¹² Fiscal year 2009 ran from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009.

¹³ The board's FY1987 requested budget of \$389.3 million was approved at \$389 million by the county council essentially making it a fully funded budget.

¹⁴ Sasscer was originally a middle school. It had additions added in 1962, 1967, 1984 and 1999. It was last renovated in 1984 when it was converted to the main administration building.

¹⁵ The lease included an option to buy the two buildings at its conclusion.

¹⁶ On May 21, a day before it approved the FY2009 budget, the county council voted to raise the county's income and recordation taxes.

¹⁷ The 24 jurisdictions include Maryland's 23 counties and the city of Baltimore.

¹⁸ The assessment was limited to buildings older than 15 years.

¹⁹ The vote was 8-1.

²⁰ The person under investigation was Deasy's dissertation chair, Dr. Robert Felner. As dean of the College of Education and Human Development, Felner was being investigated for the alleged misappropriation of a \$694,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education. There was no suggestion that Deasy was involved in any criminal wrongdoing. Felner was later indicted and charged with defrauding the federal government of more than \$2 million. He pled guilty in January 2010.

²¹ After a seven month investigation, the University of Louisville found that Deasy had done nothing wrong and allowed him to keep his degree

²² The Academy is a ten month training program designed to train leaders from a variety of disciplines to become the next generation of urban school system leaders. The program uses a business management approach to leadership.

²³ Members Beck, Iliff, R. Owen Johnson, Waller, Watson, and Jacobs voted for approval. Members Fletcher and Rosalind Johnson voted against approval. Member Thomas abstained. Student member Edward Burroughs was not present.

²⁴ The MOE provides a minimum level of funding. There is nothing that prevents counties from providing funding above the MOE required level. However, the

next years' MOE will be calculated from the actual funding amount regardless of its level above the MOE requirement.

²⁵ The eight counties were Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Frederick, Montgomery, Prince George's, Wicomico, and Worchseter.

²⁶ The exception is the area nicknamed the "Latin Corridor" for the large influx of Latino residents. An elementary school being built in the area will alleviate the overcrowding there.

²⁷ In March 2009, Phase II and III were combined.

²⁸ The twelve schools were G. Gardner Shugart Middle School and the following elementary schools; Concord, District Heights, John Carroll, John E. Howard, Judge Sylvania Woods, Matthew Henson, Middleton Valley, Morningside, Oakcrest, and Owens Road.

²⁹ Henry Ferguson Elementary School and Eugene Burroughs Middle School would be combined into one K-8 school. The schools recommended for conversion were Andrew Jackson Middle School and Bradbury Heights, Samuel Massie, and William Hall elementary schools.

³⁰ At the time PGCCPS had a "tag-a-long" policy that allowed siblings of ESP students to attend the same school regardless of whether or not the sibling was a part of the ESP.

³¹ The eight schools were G. Gardner Shugart Middle School, and Berkshire, John Carroll, John E. Howard, Matthew Henson, Middleton Valley, Morningside and Owens Road elementary schools.

³² For more details on PGCCPTA events prior to 2006 see Chapter 5, Part 1.

³³ It was assumed that the continuing irregularities were the cause of the revocation. MDPTA has never publicly stated the reason for its action. Even PGCCPTA leaders complained that they were not told exactly why the charter was being revoked.

³⁴ Bob Ross, Surrastville High School PTA president and long-time education advocate had been elected PGCCPTA president on May 22. His goal was to repair the county's relationship with MDPTA.

³⁵ See Chapter 4 for a discussion of the scandal.

³⁶ The HSAs are the high school level tests given as part of Maryland's assessment program. The HSAs differ from the assessments given to students in lower grades in that HAS passage is required for graduation.

³⁷ The class of 2009 was the first class required to pass the HSAs in order to graduate. At the time many PGCPS students had not passed the exams. The NAACP wanted to meet with parents to discuss options.

³⁸ The survey included a sample of all 5th, 6th, 8th, 10th and 11th grade students, as well as sample of parents, teachers and paraprofessional educators.

³⁹ The other characteristics are Clear and Focused Mission, Safe and Orderly Environment, Frequent Assessment/Monitoring of Student Achievement, Emphasis on Basic Skills, Maximum Opportunities for Learning, Strong Professional Development, and Teacher Involvement in Decision Making.

⁴⁰ There is also a student member who does not have full voting privileges.

⁴¹ The board will also have a student member.

⁴² Members Beck and Owen Johnson live in the same district as do members Watson and Jacobs.

⁴³ Thomas ran for Clerk of the Court and lost to former school board member and outgoing county council member, Marilyn Bland.

⁴⁴ Joining incumbent members on the board are, Henry Armwood, , Carolyn Boston (who defeated Fletcher), Edward Burroughs (a former student board member), Patricia Eubanks, and Peggy Huggins.

Chapter 6

Back to School: The Impact of Political Change on Academic Achievement

"If we can't close the achievement gap here, then where can it be closed?"
--Heather Iliff, Prince George's County Board of Education

The last chapter showed how much change Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) has undergone since 2002. The system has endured almost constant turnover at the top of its leadership structure. PGCPS has had two school board changes and five superintendents. Such leadership changes can have a detrimental effect on a school system (Hess 1999). New superintendents feeling pressure to produce quick results often feel compelled to change or dismantle existing programs or structures without much regard for the effectiveness of those programs or structures. New school boards may clash with old superintendents not of their choosing as both try to establish the terms of their relationship. Caught in the middle are students, teachers, and system staff who must adjust to each change. One would surmise that such frequent changes would not be good for the school system and attempts to develop a comprehensive strategy to improve achievement.

A central office administrator described the feelings of school staff after all of the change PGCPS has endured thusly, "The boat is sailing along and then it is asked to make a 90 degree turn and then two years later it is asked to make a 180 degree turn the other way and then two years later—and we never really actually know what we are

doing.”¹ Another administrator expressed the frustration of having to change course abruptly when a new superintendent arrives:

Every new superintendent that comes in has their new bright idea. Every one of them has the best way that things are going to work. So here you are learning this curriculum, following this program and all of a sudden two years later here comes somebody else with a whole new idea saying, ‘No no, throw all of that out. We’re going to come over here and do this because this is now the best thing’.

School personnel are not the only ones negatively affected by leadership changes. Parents are also affected. A PGCPS administrator spoke of the impact of all of the changes have affected parents’ relationship with the system. “It keeps parents wondering, ‘where are we going this time’. They get confused with how to navigate the system all over again.” The disbanding of the Prince George’s County Council of Parent Teacher Associations further hampered the ability of parents to effectively interface with the school system.

Yet despite all of the change and churn, Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS) keeps moving. The question is in what direction is PGCPS moving? Is it moving forward or is it moving backwards? What has happened to the achievement gap between African American and white students? This project hypothesizes that the failure to form a new regime should result in a failure to substantially decrease the achievement gap.

This study now turns to an examination of academic performance of PGCPS students. It will begin with a brief look at the state of PGCPS achievement before 2002. It then will turn to an analysis of PGCPS’s academic performance since 2002. In the analysis comparisons between PGCPS and other Maryland school districts will be made. The analysis ends with an examination of the black-white test score gap in PGCPS.

This project acknowledges upfront that test scores do not provide a complete measure of the full impact of education on the lives of children. On the academic level, there are other measures of learning such as grades or teacher evaluations. Beyond academics, schools provide a myriad of potential benefits to children that go well beyond performance on standardized tests. Children learn proper socialization through schools. Children learn their country's values through education. This said one cannot overlook the fact that the primary goal of education is to impart knowledge to children. Even more, public education in America was established to equalize the playing field for all children. To that end, what children learn does matter, and we need to measure what children have learned. Test scores are the most objective and manageable way of doing that.

Academic Achievement in PGCPS Prior to Dissolution

Maryland was one of the earliest states to address the issue of measuring student achievement and holding schools accountable for the results. In 1972, the Maryland legislature enacted a law mandating statewide goal-setting and testing. A testing program using the California Achievement Test was established. Students in grades 3, 5 and 8 were tested annually in the subjects of reading, language, and mathematics. In 1989, the Governor's Commission on School Performance recommended "the establishment of a comprehensive system of public accountability in which each school, each school system and the state are held responsible for student performance" (Governor's Commission on School Performance Commission 1989). The result was the beginning of the Maryland School Performance Program (MSPP) in 1991. A key feature of the new program was the development of a new testing program, the Maryland School Performance

Assessment Program (MSPAP). According to the Commission, the goal of MSPAP was to “identify excellence, uncover problem areas, and point the way toward improvement” (Ibid.).

Like the early state test, MSPAP tests were given in May to students in grades 3, 5 and 8.² Proficiency in the subjects of reading, writing, language usage, mathematics, science, and social studies was tested. This project will examine proficiency scores for reading and math.³ Students were graded on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being the highest score. Students reached a satisfactory level of achievement if they received a 3 or better on their assessment. The state’s goal for each school and the school system was for 70% of students to achieve the satisfactory level. A school district or school would achieve the excellent standard when 70% of its students met the “satisfactory” level and 25% met the “excellent” level.

Achievement standards were deliberately set high. So high in fact that school systems were not expected to meet the standards initially. Accordingly, all of Maryland’s 24 school systems failed to meet any of the tests goals in 1993, the first year the test given. State officials expected that systems would reach proficiency by 1996.⁴ As an incentive to improve test scores, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) used a carrot and stick approach by giving bonuses to schools that make significant progress and threatening failing schools with sanctions. Schools that failed to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) were put on a watch list for potential sanction. To be on the list, schools must be far from the proficiency standard and have shown little or no progress for multiple years. If schools remain on the list for two consecutive years they become eligible for reconstitution, state takeover or other corrective action.

In 1995 when MSDE began to identify schools eligible for state takeover PGCPS did not have any schools on the list. By 1998, nine schools were on the list (Maryland State Department of Education 1998). By 2002 the number had climbed to 20 (Maryland State Department of Education 2002). The only school system with more schools on the list was Baltimore City which had 85 schools on the list.⁵

Another component of the MSPP was the annual publication of test data for school districts and schools. The annual report allowed residents to compare the performance of PGCPS with any and every other school system in Maryland. Because PGCPS students did not perform well on MSPAP, the annual report served as a continual reminder that PGCPS was not meeting expectations. Since the tests began, PGCPS has ranked either next to or second from the bottom and in 2002 only Baltimore City schools fared worse than Prince George's schools (Hill 1994b; Trejos 2002b). Failing to raise MSPAP scores was one of the reasons the elected school board gave for firing Superintendent Iris Metts in 2002.

Table 6-1 shows PGCPS district-level performance on the reading MSPAP from 1993 to 2002. The scores are the percentage of students scoring at the satisfactory level or above. Most of the improvement in proficiency occurred at the grade 5 level. In fact fifth grade white students had the highest proficiency gain improving 15.1 points between 1993 and 2002. In stark contrast, both black and white third grade students' proficiency actually declined. A closer look at Table 6-1 shows that grade 5 scores generally rose until 1999 after which the scores declined. It is unclear what was responsible for the decline. Prince George's was not alone in the decline. Systems across the state also experienced declines (Maryland State Department of Education 2002).

Table 6-1 PGCPS Reading MSPAP 1993-2002

Prince George's	Reading						Satisfactory				pct.	
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	93-02 ²	
Grade 3												Change
Black	n/a ¹	16.2	18.8	20.6	19.9	24.6	25.3	22.9	18.7	13.7		-2.5
White	n/a	35.4	40.5	42.2	40.8	46.7	49.7	42.7	38.8	27.2		-8.2
Gap	n/a	19.2	21.7	21.6	20.9	22.1	24.4	19.8	20.1	13.5		-5.7
Grade 5												
Black	14	17	14.8	18.9	19.3	23.6	23.6	23.8	22.9	23.1		9.1
White	29.7	34.3	32.2	35.5	37.2	45	45.5	47.2	46.7	44.8		15.1
Gap	15.7	17.3	17.4	16.6	17.9	21.4	21.9	23.4	23.8	21.7		6
Grade 8												
Black	11.3	11.2	16.2	13.7	13.9	14.2	14.8	16	15.9	15.1		3.8
White	25.9	25.6	33.6	32.8	32.4	31.4	28.1	25.7	28	25.8		-0.1
Gap	14.6	14.4	17.4	19.1	18.5	17.2	13.3	9.7	12.1	10.7		-3.9

Notes: 1. The Grade 3 reading test was not administered in 1993. 2. For Grade 3 the years are 1994-2002 and 1994-2001. *Source:* Maryland Department of Education ' 2002 Maryland School Performance Report.

Table 6-1 also shows the size of the achievement gap between black and white students between 1993 and 2002. The scores show uneven progress in closing the gap between black and white students. The gap for grade 3 declined from 19.2 points in 1994 to 13.5 points in 2002; a decline of 5.7 percentage points. The gap for grade 8 also dropped although not as much. The gap narrowed from 14.6 in 1993 to 10.7 in 2002; a 3.9 point drop. These positive results were countered by an increase in the gap at the Grade 5 level. The gap among fifth graders expanded from 15.7 points in 1993 to 21.7 points in 2002. It is interesting to note that the achievement levels for both black and

white students in the third and fifth grades are higher than the levels for both groups at the eighth grade level.

Looking at Table 6-1 again, one sees that at no point do any groups come near the 70% achievement goal set by the state. The cohort with the highest proficiency level was grade 3 whites who achieve a 49.7% level in 1999. Interestingly enough, African American students' highest performance also occurred in 1999 when 25.3% of black third graders reached the satisfactory level. At the same time however 1999 was also the year in which the black-white gap among third graders was greatest. The growth in the gap despite achievement gains highlights the problem of trying to close the gap without measures designed specifically to address the gap. Accountability programs that aim to improve academic achievement for all students do seem to increase achievement for all students. However, they do not seem to be able to close the gap *between* students. While all boats rise, they generally rise at the same rate thus maintaining the gap between students (Hanushek and Raymond 2006; J. Lee 2006).

The MSPAP scores in mathematics are even more discouraging than the reading scores. Table 6-2 shows that for every grade level, the gap between African American and white students increased between 1993 and 2002. Once again, the grade 5 gap was the largest with 49.7% of whites performing at the satisfactory level and only 14% of African Americans doing the same, a 35.7 point gap. Worse still at no time does any African American cohort rise to 30% proficiency. In contrast no white cohort fell below 30% proficiency.

Table 6-2 PGCPS Mathematics MSPAP 1993-2002

Prince George's	Mathematics										Satisfactory pct.
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	93-02
Grade 3											Change
Black	10	15.3	22.7	20.7	21.3	23.3	20.9	20.1	16.7	11.8	1.8
White	30.4	35.9	49.4	48.8	51.7	50.8	50.2	53	43	33.1	2.7
Gap	20.4	20.6	26.7	28.1	30.4	27.5	29.3	32.9	26.3	21.3	0.9
Grade 5											
Black	16.9	19	23.8	27.9	26.8	27.8	26.3	22.5	17.5	14	-2.9
White	45.5	49.6	54.4	59.3	57	61.9	58.7	57.4	48	49.7	4.2
Gap	28.6	30.6	30.6	31.4	30.2	34.1	32.4	34.9	30.5	35.7	7.1
Grade 8											
Black	12.2	15.3	22.7	19.3	20.7	21.8	21.9	24.5	19.6	20.1	7.9
White	39.1	46.3	49	50	53.4	54.9	54.9	54.5	52.7	50.7	11.6
Gap	26.9	31	26.3	30.7	32.7	33.1	33	30	33.1	30.6	3.7

Source: Maryland Department of Education · 2002 Maryland School Performance Report.

Considerable controversy surrounded the 2001 MSPAP. That year, most school systems around the state experienced dramatic drops in test scores. A number of schools around the state experienced double digit swings in their scores that were not easily explainable. The outcry over the accuracy of the scores was so great that MSDE delayed public release of the scores while independent evaluators examined the accuracy of the scores. Though the scores were found to be accurate, doubts about the validity of MSPAP persisted. Many people were comforted by the knowledge that 2002 was to be the last year in which MSPAP was to be administered. The 2002 MSPAP was also the last state assessment administered while the old elected school board was still in office.

Academic Achievement in PGCPS after Dissolution

In 2003 Maryland's assessment program was changed in order to comply with the guidelines of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. According to the United States Department of Education, the purpose of NCLB is,

to ensure that all children in the United States receive a high-quality education and to close the achievement gap that exists between children who typically perform well in school and those who do not—many of whom are from minority racial and ethnic groups, have disabilities, live in poverty, or do not have English as their first language. (Office of Communications and Outreach 2006 rev.)

NCLB has four key principles: stronger accountability for results, more freedom for states and districts, education methods grounded in scientific research, and more parental choice. NCLB requires states to set student achievement goals and annually measure student progress on meeting those achievement goals through the use of state-developed tests. The results of those tests and other accountability indicators are published annually in state report cards.

The NCLB guidelines forced the replacement of MSPAP because the test was designed to evaluate schools and districts not students, and did not allow for individual student scores. NCLB requires that states disaggregate data to the student level. MSPAP relied on essays and joint activity projects and the time necessary for grading the tests precluded the state from reporting the data within the timeframe set by NCLB. Lastly, it would be expensive to administer as NCLB requires students in grades 3 through 12 be tested. MSPAP only tested third, fifth, and eighth graders. Thus in 2003, MSPAP was replaced by a new assessment, the Maryland State Assessment (MSA). Administered

each March, the MSAs tests students in mathematics and reading. Students in grades five through eight are also tested in science.

Data Description

The data used for this project are taken from the Maryland State Department of Education's (MSDE) Maryland State Assessment Report Card data set. The information is publicly available for download at <http://www.mdreportcard.org>. State-level, system-level and school-level data are reported. Student-level data is not available.

NCLB requires that the information be disaggregated by specific student populations. These populations include five racial subgroups, (African Americans, Asians, Latinos, Native Americans, and whites), Limited English Proficiency students, students eligible for the federal governments' Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) program, and special education students. Maryland requires all students to be tested although some students may have the test modified to accommodate disabilities. Students' performance on the MSAs is scored as Basic, Proficient, or Advanced. "Basic indicates that a student is not passing standards and that more work is needed to meet grade-level expectations. Proficient indicates that a student is passing standards. Proficient is considered a realistic and rigorous level of achievement. Advanced indicates that a student is performing above standards. Advanced is considered a highly challenging and exemplary level of achievement" (Maryland Department of Education 2009).

NCLB requires that all students be proficient in reading and mathematics by the 2013-2014 school year. Accordingly, each year progressive annual measurable objectives (AMO) are set. If AMO target levels are reached each year, school systems

will achieve the NLCB required 100% proficiency level by the end of school year 2013-2014. AYP is the measure used to track progress. States, school systems, and students are expected to make AYP in the proportions of students achieving proficiency in reading and mathematics. Test scores and at least one other academic indicator are used to calculate AYP.

To make AYP in Maryland, schools and school systems must meet the annual measurable objective in reading and mathematics for students in the aggregate and for each student subgroup, in graduation rate for high school or attendance in elementary and middle school for students in the aggregate, and meet the testing participation requirement of 95%. (Maryland Department of Education 2010).

Methodology

Three different techniques for determining the test score gap are used. First, the gap is expressed as simple point differences in proficiency percentages between African American and white students. This method is often used by schools and school systems. System level AYP and MSA data are used for this analysis. Second, the effect size of the black-white gap is calculated to determine the magnitude of the difference between the scores for blacks and whites. Calculating effect size has a couple of advantages. Effect size is not influenced by the sample size, unlike statistical significance. Further, effect size is a good measure to use when comparing different testing protocols because it is standardized. The effect size specifies the number of standard deviation units separating the scores of black and white students.

I use the modified Cohen's d effect size measure used by Larry Hedges and Amy Nowell (Hedges and Nowell 1998). Instead of using the pooled standard deviation of blacks and whites, they used the standard deviation for all tested students. The resulting equation is:

Cohen's $d = \text{Black Sample Mean} - \text{White sample Mean} / \text{Standard Deviation for All Students}$

Effect sizes of $> |.20|$ are considered to be small or smaller than typical. Effect sizes between $|.20|$ and $|.80|$ are considered to be medium or typical. Effect sizes between $|.80|$ and $|1.00|$ are large or larger than typical. Effect sizes of $\geq |1.00|$ are much larger than typical.

The data used for the effect-size analysis are school-level data. Use of school-level data is necessary to determine sample means. Special education schools, alternative school, night schools, early childhood centers, and charter schools have been eliminated from the sample because I believe they might unduly influence the scores. Special education scores typically are lower than average scores. It is assumed that children incapable of being mainstreamed would likely have the lowest scores. Alternative schools serve students who for behavior or discipline reasons can no longer attend their regularly assigned school. Because these children are likely to struggle educationally, I thought it best to eliminate them. PGCPSS operates three evening high schools. They have been eliminated because most attendees are over 18 or are unable to attend school during normal hours. Charters schools have been eliminated because PGCPSS has very limited control over the instruction in them. The early childhood centers were eliminated because the centers have student populations too young to be tested. An average of 23 schools has been eliminated from each sample as a result of these modifiers. The sample size for African American students averaged 185 schools. The average was 96 schools for white students. A number of schools did not report AYP scores for white students because a school must have at least five test-takers in a subgroup before the results for

that group are counted towards AYP. That so many schools did not report white score suggests PGCPs's small white student population is concentrated in a small number of schools.

The third analytical technique used expresses the achievement gap as the relative progress in reaching 100% proficiency for each racial group. In 2008, MSDE hired an auditing firm to evaluate the effectiveness of its education funding program. For the evaluation, the auditing firm, MGT of America, Inc. developed a formula, the Proficiency Gap Closure, to assess students' performance (MGT of America, Inc. 2008). The Proficiency Gap Closure (PGC) measure was used to illustrate black-white differences in closing the gap between proficiency levels in 2003 and NCLB's 2014 100% proficiency goal.

System-level AYP and grade level MSA data are used for this analysis. Prior to 2004, only third, fifth and eighth grade students were tested. Beginning in 2004 all students in grades 3 through 8 were tested. This change does not present a problem for analyzing MSA data because MSA scores are disaggregated by grade level. This does present a problem for the analysis of AYP data. AYP is a composite of all assessment results for all grade levels in a school. This means that 2010 AYP scores contain the results from students in all grades from grade 3 to grade 12 while the 2003 AYP scores only include the results of students in grades 3, 5 and 8 therefore an accurate comparison of 2003 and 2010 AYP score is not possible. AYP data from 2004 and 2010, and MSA data from 2003 and 2010 are used for this reason.

Calculating PGC allows a comparison of the progress made by PGCPs' black and white students to close the gap between where they were in 2003 and 2004 and where

they hope to be in 2014. The PGC is calculated by dividing the gap closure during the period studied by the proficiency gap that existed at the beginning of the period studied.

The Proficiency Gap Closure equations are:

$$\text{MSA PGC} = (\text{2010 Proficiency\%} - \text{2003 Proficiency\%}) / (\text{100\%} - \text{2003 Proficiency\%})$$

$$\text{AYP PGC} = (\text{2010 Proficiency\%} - \text{2004 Proficiency\%}) / (\text{100\%} - \text{2004 Proficiency\%})$$

Analysis and Findings

My initial examination of the data began with comparisons of 2003 PGCPs data with that of the other 23 school districts in Maryland. This comparison was done to establish a starting point for evaluating the progress, or lack of progress PGCPs may have made since the school board's dissolution. The examination showed that PGCPs continued to perform poorly compared to most of Maryland's other school districts. Once again Prince George's scores bested only those of Baltimore City's.

Table 6-3 shows AYP scores in both reading and mathematics for each of Maryland's school districts. With 44% of schools making AYP in reading and only 32.7% of schools making AYP in mathematics, PGCPs was a long way from reaching the 100% proficiency goal by 2013-2014. That said, no Maryland school district had reached the 100% proficiency level in 2003. Howard County had the highest level of proficiency with 72% proficiency in math and 82% proficiency in reading. A little over half of Maryland's districts were at least halfway towards meeting NCLB's 100% goal in mathematics. School district performance was better in reading with all but three districts being at least halfway to the goal. Not coincidentally, those three districts, Dorchester,

Prince George's and Baltimore City were also three of the four districts with the largest percentage of African American students.

Table 6-3 2003 District Ranking, Math and Reading AYP

Rank	AYP		Proficient pct.	
	District	Math	District	Reading
1	Howard	72.5	Howard	82
2	Montgomery	65.6	Calvert	76.4
3	Carroll	64.1	Carroll	75.4
4	Frederick	62	Harford	73.5
5	Worcester	60.6	Frederick	71.8
6	Washington	59.7	Montgomery	71.2
7	Harford	59.4	Queen Anne's	70
8	Calvert	58.3	Worcester	68.6
9	Cecil	57.4	Washington	68.2
10	Anne Arundel	56.2	Anne Arundel	66
11	Queen Anne's	55.7	Cecil	65.8
12	Saint Mary's	54.4	Saint Mary's	65.3
13	Baltimore	50.1	Baltimore	64.3
14	Garrett	49.8	Caroline	63.7
15	Caroline	48	Kent	63.4
16	Charles	47.5	Charles	62.8
17	Kent	47.2	Garrett	62.7
18	Talbot	46.5	Allegany	61.3
19	Wicomico	45.5	Talbot	60.5
20	Somerset	45.3	Wicomico	59.1
21	Allegany	43.7	Somerset	55.8
22	Dorchester	34.2	Dorchester	49.5
23	Prince George's	32.7	Prince George's	44
24	Baltimore City	26.1	Baltimore City	36.6
	Maryland State	51	Maryland State	61.4

Source: Maryland Department of Education. 2010 Maryland Report Card.

Table 6-4 lists the total 2003 enrollment for each district ranked by the percentage of African American students. Baltimore City and Prince George's were the only two districts in which African Americans comprised more than 50% of the student population. African Americans accounted for 77.7% of PGCPS's enrollment and 88% of Baltimore's. At the other end of the spectrum African Americans were just 2.6% of Carroll County's population and only 0.2% of Garrett County's enrollment.

Table 6-4 2003 District Enrollment by Size and African American pct

Rank	School District	Total	School District	Black	pct.
1	Montgomery	138983	Baltimore City	82775	88
2	Prince George's	135439	Prince George's	105169	77.7
3	Baltimore County	108297	Somerset	1357	45.6
4	Baltimore City	94031	Dorchester	2026	42.1
5	Anne Arundel	74787	Charles	9727	39.2
6	Howard	47197	Wicomico	5207	36.2
7	Harford	40252	Baltimore County	38247	35.3
8	Frederick	38559	Kent	677	25.8
9	Carroll	28430	Worcester	1751	25.5
10	Charles	24794	Talbot	1025	22.8
11	Washington	20102	Montgomery	29775	21.4
12	Calvert	17153	Anne Arundel	15214	20.3
13	Cecil	16203	Caroline	1062	19.2
14	Saint Mary's	16110	Saint Mary's	3037	18.9
15	Wicomico	14395	Howard	8449	17.9
16	Allegany	10128	Calvert	2673	15.6
17	Queen Anne's	7523	Harford	6256	15.5
18	Worcester	6871	Queen Anne's	732	9.7
19	Caroline	5535	Frederick	3655	9.5
20	Garrett	4833	Washington	1783	8.9
21	Dorchester	4817	Cecil	1096	6.8
22	Talbot	4498	Allegany	403	4
23	Somerset	2978	Carroll	734	2.6
24	Kent	2630	Garrett	11	0.2

Source: Maryland Department of Education. The Fact Book 2002-2003

For the purposes of this study the performance gap between black and white students is of most interest. Looking at the reading and mathematics proficiency percentages for all 24 districts (Table 6-5), one sees that PGCPs performance was near the state average. PGCPs had an achievement gap of 28.4% in reading; 4.8% smaller than the state average. Its 39.2% gap in mathematics was 4.9% larger than the state average.

Table 6-5 2003 District Rankings Black-White Gap for AYP Reading & Math

District	Reading				Mathematics			
	Whites	Blacks	Gap	rank	White	Blacks	Gap	rank
Allegany	61.8	48.8	13	23	44.2	32.8	11.4	23
Anne Arundel	71.4	46.4	25	15	61.9	33.9	28	13
Baltimore City	53.2	34.7	18.5	21	41.5	24.2	17.3	22
Baltimore Co	73.2	49.1	24.1	16	60.8	30.2	30.6	10
Calvert	79.9	57.8	22.1	19	63	31.5	31.5	7
Caroline	70.5	41.8	28.7	9	54.2	26.6	27.6	15
Carroll	76.1	49.4	26.7	12	65	36	29	11
Cecil	67	46.6	20.4	20	59.1	36.5	22.6	20
Charles	73.2	47.3	25.9	14	57.2	32.4	24.8	19
Dorchester	64.5	29.2	35.3	3	45.8	18.8	27	17
Frederick	75.2	44	31.2	7	65.3	31.9	33.4	5
Garrett	62.8	na*	na	24	49.8	na	na	24
Harford	77.2	54.4	22.8	18	63.7	36.9	26.8	18
Howard	87.5	63.7	23.8	17	78.3	46.8	31.5	8
Kent	73.8	34	39.8	1	57.2	16.5	40.7	1
Montgomery	85.4	53.2	32.2	6	80	40.8	39.2	2
Prince George's	70.1	41.7	28.4	10	58.2	29.2	29	12
Queen Anne's	72.9	45.6	27.3	11	59.4	22.8	36.6	3
Saint Mary's	70.8	40	30.8	8	59	31.3	27.7	14
Somerset	62.8	47.9	14.9	22	54.1	35.5	18.6	21
Talbot	69.6	33	36.6	2	54.5	20.7	33.8	4
Washington	70.7	44.5	26.2	13	62.3	35.2	27.1	16
Wicomico	71.3	38.1	33.2	5	56.7	25.4	31.3	9
Worcester	78.2	43.4	34.8	4	69.2	37.2	32	6
Maryland State	75.2	43	32.2		64.5	30.2	34.3	

Note: * indicates there are fewer than the five students required for AYP

Source: Maryland Department of Education. 2010 Maryland Report Card.

What is most interesting about Table 6-5 is the position of Montgomery County. Montgomery County's school system is generally regarded as the best Maryland school system in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area and competes with Virginia's Fairfax County school system for the title of best D.C. area school system. If one looks at MCPS's overall AYP scores, MCPS ranked sixth in reading proficiency and second in math proficiency. However, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has the sixth largest reading gap and the second largest math gap among Maryland systems. This suggests that generally favorable overall scores have the capability of masking more problematic issues underneath. With this in mind, this project now turns to an examination of 2010 results. But before doing so a short discussion of what is to be expected is in order.

It is appropriate to reiterate the expectations for PGCPS's performance on the 2010 MSAs and for the size of system's achievement gap. Chapter 5 presented the case that while the old regime had been disrupted, a new performance regime had yet been formed. In fact, in a three stage process of regime change, Prince George's had not moved beyond the first stage; disruption of the old regime. Because reform advocates were unable to form a new performance regime, it is expected that Prince George's position relative to Maryland's other school districts would not have changed. Further one would expect PGCPS to have made no more progress in closing the achievement gap than any other Maryland district.

The data show that by 2010, the position of Prince George's County compared to other school districts had not changed much. Table 6-6 shows the 2010 mathematics and reading AYP scores for all 24 Maryland school districts.

Table 6-6 2010 District Ranking MSA Math and Reading

rank	District	Math	District	Reading
1	Worcester	91.3	Carroll	91.9
2	Howard	90.5	Calvert	91.8
3	Calvert	89.8	Howard	91.8
4	Carroll	89.2	Queen Anne's	90.9
5	Queen Anne's	89.2	Frederick	89.9
6	Frederick	87.2	Worcester	89.6
7	Caroline	87.1	Montgomery	89.4
8	Saint Mary's	87	Anne Arundel	88.2
9	Washington	86.8	Garrett	88
10	Garrett	86.1	Harford	87.8
11	Anne Arundel	85.7	Saint Mary's	87.2
12	Montgomery	84.6	Baltimore County	85.4
13	Harford	84.4	Washington	85.4
14	Talbot	81.7	Caroline	84.5
15	Baltimore County	81	Charles	84.2
16	Cecil	80.7	Allegany	83.9
17	Charles	80.4	Cecil	83.5
18	Allegany	80.1	Talbot	82.7
19	Wicomico	78.1	Kent	82.2
20	Kent	77.6	Somerset	81.8
21	Somerset	77.5	Wicomico	79.2
22	Dorchester	73.5	Dorchester	75.3
23	Prince George's	67.4	Prince George's	75.1
24	Baltimore City	66.1	Baltimore City	70.9
	Maryland State	80.4	Maryland State	84.3

Source: Maryland Department of Education. 2010 Maryland Report Card.

Once again, the counties at the bottom of both lists are the same three at the bottom of the list in 2003 (Table 6-3); Dorchester, Prince George's and Baltimore City. Just looking at Table 6-5 one would conclude that Prince George's is not performing well. Its 67.4% proficiency in mathematics and 75.1% proficiency in reading place the county next to the bottom of the list. However what that observation misses is the fact that these scores represent significant increases for the county. Prince George's math AYP score rose from 32.7% in 2003 to 67.4% in 2010, a 106% increase (see Table 6-3). The county's reading score improved 70.7% rising from 44% in 2003 to 75.1% in 2010.

Before getting too carried away by the improvement, it should be noted that though the increases are noteworthy, they are skewed by the fact that PGCPS's scores were so far below 100 percent. The amount of possible increase in a system's scores decreases as a district approaches 100% proficiency. Other school system's with higher proficiency levels in 2003 had less room for improvement. Further, PGCPS was not the only system to see its scores rise. Every Maryland school district increased its scores.

Some respondents critical of PGCPS argue that given the amount of money the county spends per pupil, the system should perform better than it has. Per pupil spending for PGCPS in 2010 was \$13,246. As Table 6-7 illustrates, PGCPS's expenditures rank it eighth among Maryland's 24 school districts, and the county's per pupil spending is more than \$2,000 less than the highest spending district, Worcester which spent \$15,498 per student in 2010.

Table 6-7 2010 District Per Pupil Expenditures & Wealth per Pupil

Per Pupil Expenditures			Wealth per Pupil		
rank	District	2010	rank	District	2010
1	Worcester	\$15,498	1	Worcester	\$1,237,416
2	Montgomery	\$14,969	2	Talbot	\$961,272
3	Kent	\$14,490	3	Montgomery	\$751,154
4	Baltimore City	\$14,302	4	Kent	\$636,064
5	Somerset	\$14,240	5	Anne Arundel	\$571,232
6	Howard	\$14,166	6	Queen Anne's	\$529,890
7	Allegany	\$13,251	7	Howard	\$509,009
8	Prince George's	\$13,246	8	Baltimore County	\$454,919
9	Dorchester	\$12,564	9	Garrett	\$442,553
10	Baltimore County	\$12,236	10	Frederick	\$393,024
11	Anne Arundel	\$12,178	11	Calvert	\$392,845
12	Garrett	\$12,093	12	Carroll	\$381,712
13	Wicomico	\$12,054	13	Harford	\$369,649
14	Calvert	\$11,789	14	Saint Mary's	\$357,219
15	Charles	\$11,786	15	Dorchester	\$348,786
16	Frederick	\$11,727	16	Charles	\$348,341
17	Carroll	\$11,671	17	Prince George's	\$341,193
18	Harford	\$11,542	18	Cecil	\$334,682
19	Cecil	\$11,395	19	Washington	\$333,898
20	Saint Mary's	\$11,387	20	Somerset	\$287,438
21	Washington	\$11,276	21	Wicomico	\$284,459
22	Queen Anne's	\$11,273	22	Caroline	\$262,215
23	Talbot	\$11,160	23	Baltimore City	\$241,651
24	Caroline	\$11,154	24	Allegany	\$232,669
	Maryland State	\$13,019		Maryland State	\$460,482

Source: Maryland Department of Education. 2010 Maryland Report Card.

PGCPS critics argue that Prince George's level of spending should put its assessment performance higher than 23rd. They ask, "How can the county be eighth in spending and only twenty-third in results?" They argue that a school system that spends as much as PGCPS does should not perform so poorly. However, as was the case with the AYP scores, a cursory examination of expenditures is misleading. It does not put the spending levels into context. Although Prince George's is eighth in spending, it is only seventeenth in wealth per pupil (Table 6-7). So Prince George's spends considerably more on education than its wealth would suggest.

The disparity between the county's wealth and costs indicates that the county receives a significant portion of its funding from sources other than local revenues. For fiscal year (FY) 2010, PGCPS had an operating budget of \$1.67 billion (Prince George's County Board of Education 2009). County revenues of \$614.5 million accounted for 36.6% of the budget, state funds (\$922.7 million) were 54.9% of the budget, and federal funds (\$94.3 million) accounted for 5.6% of the budget.⁶ Much of the outside funding is directed at improving the academic achievement of disadvantaged children.

In contrast to Prince George's County, Montgomery County funds account for 71.3% of MCPS's \$2.2 billion budget in FY2010 (Montgomery County Office of Management and Budget 2009).⁷ Because Montgomery County is considerably wealthier than Prince George's County, it can afford to allocate more resources to MCPS without spending more than half of its total budget on education. In FY 2010, funding for MCPS was 49.2% of the county's total budget. In Prince George's, PGCPS funding was 62.8% of the county's budget (Prince George's County Office of Management and Budget

2009). So while Montgomery County provides more actual dollars for education, Prince George's provides a greater percentage of the dollars it has for education.

Most interviewed educators and school officials expressed criticism of simple comparisons of PGCPS with all of Maryland's other school districts. The respondents maintain that such comparisons do not accurately reflect the differences between the systems. They claim that the differences between the systems are so great as to make most comparisons meaningless. Respondents pointed to the variance in district size as just one example.

Table 6-8 shows the enormous size differences between Maryland's school districts in 2009.⁸ Prince George's school system is over four times larger than sixteen of the state's school districts. A large urban majority minority school system like PGCPS shares little in common with a small rural school system like Kent County Public Schools (KCPS). In fact, two of PGCPS's high schools had larger student populations than KCPS's total student population.⁹ An additional 9 of 22 PGCPS high schools had enrollments over 2,000.

Table 6-8 2009 District Enrollment by Size and African American pct.

rank	District	Enrollment	District	Black	pct
1	Montgomery	141722	Baltimore City	72783	87.8
2	Prince George's	127039	Prince George's	91671	72.2
3	Baltimore County	103324	Charles	14594	54.5
4	Baltimore City	82866	Somerset	1285	44.3
5	Anne Arundel	74776	Baltimore County	41922	40.6
6	Howard	50641	Dorchester	1834	39.6
7	Frederick	40159	Wicomico	5456	37.3
8	Harford	38636	Kent	517	23.7
9	Carroll	27721	Montgomery	32864	23.2
10	Charles	26779	Anne Arundel	17216	23
11	Washington	21902	Worcester	1517	22.8
12	Saint Mary's	17186	Howard	11193	22.1
13	Calvert	17006	Harford	7905	20.5
14	Cecil	16205	Saint Mary's	3502	20.4
15	Wicomico	14619	Talbot	896	19.9
16	Allegany	9152	Caroline	1060	19.1
17	Queen Anne's	7793	Calvert	2890	17
18	Worcester	6659	Washington	3168	14.5
19	Caroline	5551	Frederick	5078	12.6
20	Dorchester	4628	Cecil	1782	11
21	Talbot	4495	Queen Anne's	622	8
22	Garrett	4311	Allegany	537	5.9
23	Somerset	2898	Carroll	1179	4.3
24	Kent	2184	Garrett	25	0.6
	Maryland State	848412		321650	37.9

Source: The Fact Book 2008-2009

PGCPS was one of only three districts to have enrollments larger than 100,000. The work of Valerie Lee and Julia Smith has shown that larger school size negatively affects the academic outcomes of economically disadvantaged and minority students (Lee and Smith 1997). In addition to having a large number of students, Prince George's has the second largest concentration of African American students in the state (Table 6-8). Mark Berends and Roberto Peñaloza found that a higher concentration of African American students in a school corresponds to a widening of the black-white achievement gap (Berends and Peñaloza 2010). Thus PGCPS has twice the load to bear.

Another area where PGCPS vastly differs from most other systems is in the number of students participating in the federal government's free and reduced meals programs (FARMS). FARMS are needs-based programs for children from families below, at, or slightly above the poverty level. FARMS counts are frequently used as an indicator of poverty within school systems. The 2003 and 2010 percentages of FARMS participants for each Maryland school district appear in Table 6-9.

Table 6-9 2003 and 2010 School District FARMS Participation

Rank	District	2003	District	2010
1	Baltimore City	72.9	Baltimore City	80.7
2	Somerset	58.3	Somerset	66.6
3	Allegany	46.3	Dorchester	56.3
4	Prince George's	46.3	Prince George's	55.3
5	Caroline	43.2	Wicomico	53.1
6	Garrett	43.1	Allegany	52.9
7	Wicomico	43	Caroline	52
8	Kent	39.2	Garrett	50.1
9	Dorchester	35.1	Kent	48.7
10	Worcester	32.4	Washington	44.6
11	Washington	29.3	Baltimore County	42.1
12	Baltimore County	29.2	Worcester	40.4
13	Talbot	28.1	Cecil	36.5
14	Montgomery	23.7	Talbot	35.7
15	Saint Mary's	21.9	Montgomery	30.8
16	Charles	20	Saint Mary's	30.5
17	Cecil	17.7	Charles	28.6
18	Harford	17.7	Harford	27.2
19	Anne Arundel	15.8	Anne Arundel	26.7
20	Queen Anne's	15.2	Frederick	22.2
21	Fredrick	12.9	Queen Anne's	21.8
22	Calvert	12.4	Calvert	17.8
23	Carroll	8.4	Howard	16.2
24	Howard	7.6	Carroll	15
	Maryland State	31.2	Maryland State	39.8

Source: Maryland Department of Education. 2010 Maryland Report Card.

Prince George's County has the fourth highest level of FARMS participants in both 2003 and 2010. In 2003 46.3% of PGCPS students qualified for free or reduced meals. Given the toll the Great Recession has had on the county, it is no surprise that the number grew to 55.3% in 2010.¹⁰ Research has consistently shown that poverty has a negative impact on achievement (Jencks and Phillips 1998). Unlike many of the other school districts in Maryland, PGCPS must overcome three obstacles that negatively impact student achievement; large school size, large numbers of minority students, and concentrations of poverty. Keeping these district differences in mind, I examined the test score gap between black and white students in 2010.

There is some progress to report related to the achievement gap. The state has seen a decline in the Black-White performance gap on the MSAs. Table 6-10 shows that Maryland has a statewide gap of 21.3% in mathematics and a gap of 15.6% in reading. These gaps represents a decline of 13% on the mathematics MSAs and 19.2% on the reading MSAs since 2003 (Table 6-5). Thus Maryland as a whole has made some progress towards closing the test score gap.

Earlier the performance of Prince George's and Montgomery Counties was discussed. What was most noticeable were MCPS's large gaps despite high overall achievement scores (Table 6-5). Like the state, MCPS's second highest mathematics gap dropped to fourth highest. Its reading gap dropped from sixth to tenth. PGCPS's gaps also declined, however the county's ranking rose. In 2010, PGCPS mathematics gap of 19.7% was the sixth largest in the state (Table 6-10). Its reading gap was ninth. In 2003, PGCPS ranked twelfth and tenth respectively (Table 6-5). Thus PGCPS actually lost ground relative to the other Maryland school districts.

Table 6-10 2010 District AYP Math and Reading by Race & Black-White Gap

District	Mathematics				Reading			
	Whites	Af Amer	Gap	rank	White	Af Amer	Gap	rank
Allegany	80.4	70.3	10.1	23	84.1	79.6	4.5	23
Anne Arundel	90.1	72.6	17.5	9	91.9	78.6	13.3	13
Baltimore City	79	64.4	14.6	20	80.5	69.8	10.7	19
Baltimore Co	87.6	71.9	15.7	15	89.7	79.9	9.8	21
Calvert	92.4	77.5	14.9	19	93.6	82.9	10.7	20
Caroline	90	74.7	15.3	18	88.3	71.1	17.2	6
Carroll	90	70.4	19.6	7	92.5	81	11.5	17
Cecil	82.7	67.2	15.5	17	84.6	75.7	8.9	22
Charles	89.2	73.4	15.8	14	90.5	79.1	11.4	18
Dorchester	83.1	59.5	23.6	3	84.6	61.9	22.7	1
Frederick	90.2	72	18.2	8	92.3	78.8	13.5	11
Garrett	86.3	92.9	-6.6	24	87.8	100	-12.2	24
Harford	87.8	72.1	15.7	16	90.7	77.2	13.5	12
Howard	94.7	77.8	16.9	11	95.1	83.3	11.8	16
Kent	85	55.5	29.5	1	86.1	70.6	15.5	8
Montgomery	93.7	72	21.7	4	96	81.9	14.1	10
Prince George's	84.6	64.9	19.7	6	88.9	74.2	14.7	9
Queen Anne's	90.7	73.6	17.1	10	92.5	76.6	15.9	7
Saint Mary's	90.3	73.6	16.7	12	90.8	73.1	17.7	5
Somerset	83.1	70.4	12.7	22	88.1	75.2	12.9	14
Talbot	88.2	61.3	26.9	2	88.6	66	22.6	2
Washington	89	74.5	14.5	21	87.2	74.6	12.6	15
Wicomico	86.5	65.2	21.3	5	87.7	66.7	21	3
Worcester	95.2	78.5	16.7	13	94.1	75	19.1	4
Maryland State	89.5	68.2	21.3		91.2	75.6	15.6	

Source: Maryland Department of Education. 2010 Maryland Report Card.

A closer look at the data shows that in Garret County African Americans actually outperformed whites. Blacks outperform whites by 6.6% on mathematic MSAs and by an incredible 12.2% in reading. The word incredible is used knowingly. The numbers are skewed because of the small number of students involved. Out of a total test population of 2,177 for the math MSA and 2,180 for reading MSA, only 14 (for both tests) were African American. Thus results are undoubtedly skewed by the small sample size. The Garret County results are useful however because they results illustrate the need to delve deeper into the test data. The results also highlight a problem several

respondents had with the reporting of MSA results by the local newspaper, the *Washington Post*. Respondents complain that by reporting system-level results without acknowledging differences among the districts, the newspaper unnecessarily exposes PGCPs to unwarranted criticism. The *Washington Post*'s critics claim that if PGCPs were compared to school districts similar to itself, the system's results would be viewed more favorably.

However, when such comparisons are made (comparing PGCPs to other Maryland school districts of similar size and/or population)—comparing apples to apples—Prince George's still does not fare well. Table 6-11 presents the Grades 3, 5 and 8 MSA mathematics scores for Prince George's and selected counties. Montgomery County and Baltimore County districts were chosen because they are nearest to PGCPs in size (Table 6-8). Baltimore City and Charles County were chosen because their student population's demographics are the most similar to PGCPs' population. Howard County and Anne Arundel County were selected because they border Prince George's County.

Table 6-11 2003, 2010 MSA Math Advanced & Proficient pct by Grade

District	Student Subgroup	Grade 3		Grade 5		Grade 8	
		2003	2010	2003	2010	2003	2010
Prince George's	All	49.4	77.5	36.7	71.6	22.1	41.2
Montgomery	All	75.5	88.1	67.8	85.9	57.5	75
Baltimore City	All	41.9	79.5	31.2	74	11.5	38.9
Baltimore County	All	66.2	87.3	52.2	84.2	39.5	66.7
Charles	All	65	83.1	56.7	82.5	36.6	68.7
Howard	All	82.9	90.9	78.9	90.1	62.9	84.5
Anne Arundel	All	73.3	91.2	64.5	88.8	39.1	72.1
Prince George's	Black	47.4	75	33.7	69.4	18.5	38.1
Montgomery	Black	55.8	78.5	43.1	73.8	28.8	57.3
Baltimore City	Black	39.8	78.2	29.8	72.9	9.7	36.4
Baltimore County	Black	49.4	79.8	33.8	76.3	18.3	54.2
Charles	Black	51.9	75.6	38.7	76.8	19.9	59.1
Howard	Black	59.5	78.2	57.9	77.8	31	63.6
Anne Arundel	Black	53.8	81.1	40.8	78.2	15.9	47.8
Prince George's	FARMS	39.9	73.5	27.9	66.7	14	35.1
Montgomery	FARMS	51.8	76.3	40.8	72.6	25.3	52.5
Baltimore City	FARMS	39.1	78.4	28.8	73	9.1	37.1
Baltimore County	FARMS	48	79.5	31.7	75.8	16.2	51.9
Charles	FARMS	42.5	73.2	32.4	72.1	12.2	50.4
Howard	FARMS	54.7	76.2	42.8	70.8	24.8	57.6
Anne Arundel	FARMS	51.1	82.9	62.5	83.3	14.4	50

Source: Maryland Department of Education. 2010 Maryland Report Card

Table 6-11 shows 2003 and 2010 mathematics MSA scores for all students, African American students and FARMS participants. Comparing Prince George's scores to similar districts does little to improve the perceptions about PGCPS's performance. In fact, one might conclude the comparison is even more damaging. In 2003, Baltimore City had the lowest scores in all categories except grade 5 FARMS students. By 2010, PGCPS had the lowest score in six of nine categories. PGCPS's performance at the Grade 5 level is particularly troubling as all student subgroups performed worse than comparable subgroups in any other jurisdiction. Looking at Table 6-11 it is clear that since the Board of Education's dissolution in 2002, PGCPS has not made significant improvement relative to comparative districts. In fact PGCPS has lost ground since the elected school board was dissolved. Given that a new regime has not been established, this result is not totally surprising. Even Baltimore City Public Schools which traditionally ranks at the bottom of most district rankings is outperforming PGCPS

The results in reading are slightly less disappointing, Table 6-12. Again the only school system PGCPS outperforms is Baltimore City's. The overall reading scores in all three grades are higher as well as the grade 3 and 8 scores for blacks. The most disappointing results are found with FARMS students. Grade 3 and 5 FARMS students trail all districts. The numbers are only slightly better than Baltimore at Grade 8. Thus in comparison to other African American and poor students, PGCPS does not perform well.

Table 6-12 2003, 2010 MSA Reading Advanced & Proficient pct by Grade

District	Student Subgroup	Grade 3		Grade 5		Grade 8	
		2003	2010	2003	2010	2003	2010
Prince George's	All	49.4	77.5	46.1	81.1	41.9	66.9
Montgomery	All	75.5	88.1	74.7	93	70.9	88
Baltimore City	All	41.9	79.5	31.2	74	32.8	61.5
Baltimore County	All	66.2	87.3	69.6	90.3	59.9	81.3
Charles	All	65	83.1	64.9	88.4	61.6	80.5
Howard	All	82.9	90.9	84.2	94.8	80.7	90.6
Anne Arundel	All	73.3	91.2	74.2	92.9	65.2	84.6
Prince George's	Black	47.4	75	43.9	80.8	39.3	66.1
Montgomery	Black	55.8	78.5	58.3	87.5	51.1	80.4
Baltimore City	Black	39.8	78.2	42.9	80.8	31	60.2
Baltimore County	Black	49.4	79.8	54.9	86.2	42.6	76.5
Charles	Black	51.9	75.6	50.2	85.6	46.9	74.9
Howard	Black	59.5	78.2	68.2	88.4	61.8	82.1
Anne Arundel	Black	53.8	81.1	54	87.6	43.7	72.7
Prince George's	FARMS	39.9	73.5	35.6	76.9	31.4	60.2
Montgomery	FARMS	51.8	76.3	47.5	84.7	41.3	75.3
Baltimore City	FARMS	39.1	78.4	42	80.1	29.1	60.1
Baltimore County	FARMS	48	79.5	51.2	85	36.9	72.7
Charles	FARMS	42.5	73.2	41.1	82.4	34.3	66.4
Howard	FARMS	54.7	76.2	56.1	86.5	52.2	72.9
Anne Arundel	FARMS	51.1	82.9	51	85.9	37.7	70.7

Source: Maryland Department of Education. 2010 Maryland Report Card.

Despite the disappointing comparisons with other Maryland school districts, PGPCS has made progress (Table 6-11 and 6-12). But while PGPCS has progressed,

other districts in Maryland have also progressed. As a result, PGCPS continues to suffer in district comparison. As long as race is so strongly correlated to test performance, PGCPS will always pale in comparison to most of the other districts in Maryland that do not have as high a concentration of African American students. While it is useful to examine PGCPS in relation to other school districts, it is also important to examine what is happening inside PGCPS. With this in mind I now turn to an analysis of the PGCPS's black-white test-score gap.

PGCPS Black-White Test Score Gap

I began my analysis by examining the test score gap on the math and reading MSAs. I also calculate the Proficiency Gap Closure (PGC) for both PGCPS and the State of Maryland. Table 6-13 reports the mathematics MSA scores for grades 3, 5 and 8. There has been a nearly 11 percentage point decline in the gap at grade 3 and an almost 14 percentage point decline at grade 5. While less than half of grade 3 black students were math proficient in 2003, 75% of were proficient in 2010. Whites moved from 73% proficiency in 2003 to 90% proficiency in 2010. Grade 3 white students seem poised to meet the 2014 NCLB goal of 100% proficiency.

Table 6-13 2003-2010 PGCPS & Md. Math MSA Gap and Proficiency Gap Closure

PGC									PGC	PGC
Grade 3	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	PG	MD
Black	47.4	54.3	63.8	67.8	66.7	70.5	71.9	75	52.5	56.7
White	73.4	77.5	82.2	86.5	89.1	85.8	88.4	90.4	63.9	66.2
Grade 5										
Black	33.7	41.5	49.7	57.7	63.5	67.9	66.6	69.4	53.8	58.9
White	63.6	68	72.4	78	82.5	84.3	85.3	85.5	60.2	70.4
Grade 8										
Black	18.5	24.1	32.6	30.7	35.7	39.8	40.2	38.1	24.0	34.2
White	50.4	53.4	62.6	63.2	66.7	71.7	70.1	69	37.5	56.7
PGCPS & Md. Black-White MSA Gap									Change	
Grade 3									2003-10	
PG gap	26	23.2	18.4	18.7	22.4	15.3	16.5	15.4	-10.6	
Md. gap	31.9	25.9	23.2	22.9	22.5	19.4	16.5	15.8	-16.1	
Grade 5										
PG gap	29.9	26.5	22.7	20.3	19	16.4	18.7	16.1	-13.8	
Md. gap	34.3	30.4	29	24.8	21.6	19.8	18.8	17.6	-16.7	
Grade 8										
PG gap	31.9	29.3	30	32.5	31	31.9	29.9	30.9	-1	
Md. gap	36.2	35.5	36.8	40.4	38.2	37.2	33.8	34.2	-2	

Source: Maryland Department of Education. 2010 Maryland Report Card and author calculations

Unfortunately, Table 6-13 shows that the good news at grade 3 is tempered by the disappointing news at grade 8. The gap has barely moved at this level. The gap that was 31.9% in 2003 dropped only 1 percentage point to 30.9 in 2010. More disturbing than the gap scores are the grade 8 MSA scores for black students. Less than 40% were proficient in 2010. This poor result may be explained by the fact that the middle school

years have been troublesome for many school systems. Also many educational reform efforts are often aimed at the lower grades with the assumption that results are easier to turn around at the elementary school level. Nonetheless, this confirms what a respondent told me. The improvements are being made at the lower grade levels.

If one compares PGCPs's gap scores with Maryland's gap scores one sees that the system has progressed but trails the state. The system is about 6.5 percentage points behind in closing the MSA gap at grade 3 and 2.9 percentage points behind at grade 5. At grade 8, PGCPs is only 1 percentage point behind the state, but neither PGCPs nor the state has had much success improving the performance of grade 8 students on the MSAs.

An examination of the PGC results show differences in the progress PGCPs blacks and whites are making in closing their proficiency gaps. Recall, PGC is a calculation of how much ground students have covered in their quest to reach 100% proficiency. For instance, the PGC for grade 3 blacks is calculated by taking their 27.6 percentage point improvement and dividing it by 100 minus the 47.4% that were proficient in 2004. Thus, to reach the 100 percent proficiency goal by 2014, grade 3 blacks need to close a 52.6 percentage point gap. By 2010 grade 3 blacks have closed 27.6 of those 52.6 percentage points, which equates to a PGC of 52.5%.

The county trails the state in the progress being made in closing the proficiency gap. Table 6-13 compares PGCPs's and Maryland's PGC scores for black and white students. At grades 3 and 5 blacks in PGCPs trail Maryland blacks by 4 to 5 percentage points. PGCPs blacks trail Maryland blacks by 20 points at grade 8. Interestingly, grade 5 and 8 whites have not done as good a job in closing the proficiency gap as blacks have

relative to the state. PGCPS white student's proficiency closure trails Maryland's white students by 10 points at grade 5 and 19 points at grade 8. It is unclear what explains these results.

The reading MSA scores paint a somewhat different picture. This time, grade 3 students have had less success in closing the gap (Table 6-14). The grade 3 gap closed by 8 percentage points while grade 8 gap closed by 12 percentage points. Grade 5 students did the best, producing a 19 percentage point decline. Looking at the data, the progress of blacks students at all levels is notable. From 2003 to 2010, blacks have almost doubled their proficiency score at every grade.

Table 6-14 2003-2010 PGCPs & Md. Reading MSA Gap and Proficiency Gap Closure

PGCPS Reading MSA									PGC	PGC
Grade 3	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	PG	Md.
Black	38.3	53.2	62.2	66.4	68.4	71.4	72.8	72.8	55.9	57.2
White	63.4	75.3	80.6	82.8	87.1	83.5	89.1	89.6	71.6	68.3
Grade 5										
Black	43.9	48.3	57.4	60.4	61.3	76.3	80.9	80.8	65.8	68.1
White	71.4	73.6	76.2	80.8	82.5	88	91.3	88.9	61.2	73.8
Grade 8										
Black	39.3	48.1	48.1	49.9	52.1	56.3	67	66.1	44.2	49.0
White	69.4	70.5	75.4	72.7	77.2	76.4	83.1	84.1	48.0	56.4
PGCPS & Md. Black-White MSA Gap										
Grade 3									2003-10	
PG gap	25.1	22.1	18.4	16.4	18.7	12.1	16.3	16.8	-8.3	
Md. Gap	30.8	24.1	21	19.4	18.7	16.7	15.2	16.3	-14.5	
Grade 5										
PG gap	27.5	25.3	18.8	20.4	21.2	11.7	10.4	8.1	-19.4	
Md. Gap	31.4	28.2	24.9	23.8	22.9	14.7	11.4	11.2	-20.2	
Grade 8										
PG gap	30.1	22.4	27.3	22.8	25.1	20.1	16.1	18	-12.1	
Md. Gap	34.1	27.4	32.3	30.1	29.2	26.4	18.8	19.3	-14.8	

Source: Maryland Department of Education. 2010 Maryland Report Card and author calculations.

The PGC scores overall are a little better than the math PGC scores. The county still trails the state however. Again the worst performance in closing the proficiency gap is by grade 5 whites. Their PGC score of 61.2 is almost 12 points less than the 73.8 PGC for whites throughout the state. PGCPs white students were also best at closing the

proficiency gap. Grade3 white students closed 71.6% of their proficiency gap. This is 3 points better than the performance of Maryland's grade 3 white students.

The last data analyzed are the AYP rates for black and white PGCPs students. As mentioned above, schools are held accountable for meeting AYP. Table 6-15 presents the test score gap in AYP proficiency in both mathematics and reading. As expected, steady progress has been made in closing the black-white test score gap.¹¹ The gap decreased by nearly 7 points in math and 9 points in reading.

Table 6-15 PGCPs AYP Black-White Gap & Effect Size 2004-2010

AYP	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Gap
Math								
Black	34.5	45.5	51.4	56.7	63.1	63.2	64.9	
White	62	71.4	76.6	80.5	84	83.7	84.6	
Gap	27.5	25.9	25.2	23.8	20.9	20.5	19.7	-7.8
Reading								
Black	50.3	55	58	63	71.4	74.5	74.2	
White	74.1	77.6	78.2	83.5	86.4	88.3	88.9	
Gap	23.8	22.6	20.2	20.5	15	13.8	14.7	-9.1
Black-White Difference in Test Score								
Math				Reading				
Effect Size				Effect Size				
2004	-0.93			2004	-1.56			
2005	-0.92			2005	-1.16			
2006	-0.91			2006	-0.78			
2007	-0.76			2007	-1.05			
2008	-0.90			2008	-0.71			
2009	-1.02			2009	-1.05			
2010	-0.82			2010	-0.97			

Source: Maryland Department of Education. 2010 Maryland Report Card and author calculations.

Both black and white students have made progress in increasing the percentage of students proficient in math and reading. Table 6-15 shows that 74.2% of blacks and 88.9% of whites were proficient in reading in 2010. Meanwhile the math proficiency of whites has risen to 84.6% while 64.9% of blacks were proficient in 2010.

A decline in the effect size of the gap confirms the progress being made. The effect sizes are negative because whites outperform blacks. The effect sizes for the test score gap are very large indicating race is still a potent determinant of test performance. Even so there has been a decrease in the magnitude of the effect. Although there is some variation in the effect size between 2004 and 2010, none of the scores subsequent to 2004 are as large as they were in 2004. PGCPS is also making progress closing its proficiency gap. Table 6-16 presents an AYP test score gap and PGC score comparisons for PGCPS and Maryland. It shows that except for white student's math proficiency, PGCPS students seem to be keeping pace with the rest of Maryland's students. The progress in reading proficiency is almost identical. The math proficiency gap closure for PGCPS trails the proficiency gap closure for the state by only two points for whites and four points for blacks.

Table 6-16 PGCPS & Maryland AYP Black-White Gap and PGC 2004-2010

AYP Black-White Gap								
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Change
Math								
PGCPS	27.5	25.9	25.2	23.8	20.9	20.5	19.7	-7.8
Md.	32.2	32.3	30.8	28.5	24.7	22.4	21.3	-10.9
Reading								
PGCPS	23.8	22.6	20.2	20.5	15	13.8	14.7	-9.1
Md.	27.5	26.6	24.9	23.5	18.2	15.7	15.6	-11.9
AYP Proficiency Gap Closure 2004-2010								
	Mathematics				Reading			
	PGCPS		Md.		PGCPS		Md.	
	Black		46.4 48.6		48.1 49.4			
	White		59.5 64.6		57.1 57.5			

Source: Maryland Department of Education. 2010 Maryland Report Card and author calculations.

There is one disconcerting note. The AYP gap for PGCPS is smaller than the state's AYP gap. While this might seem like PGCPS is doing a better job at closing the gap, this is not necessarily the case. While AYP scores for PGCPS' black students tended to be within a point or two of the state's scores, the scores of PGCPS' white students were generally five points lower. This would suggest that PGCPS could do a better job educating all of its students, black and white.

So what conclusions can be made from all of this data? Because a new performance regime was not established, I surmised that the performance of PGCPS on the MSAs would not exceed those of other districts or the state as a whole. The data show that while there has been some improvement in test scores that improvement that

improvement appears to not be any better than the improvements made elsewhere in the state. Thus PGCPS is still struggling to raise the academic achievement and close the achievement gap. This said, given all of the turmoil the system has endured over the last eight years, PGCPS should probably be commended for the progress it has made.

Endnotes

¹ Unattributed quotations are from interviews conducted by the author. Respondents were given anonymity in exchange for their participation.

² Students in grades 2, 4 and 6 took the Comprehensive Test of basic Skills (CTBS).

³ Reading and mathematics were chosen for examination because they were the first two of three subjects tested under NCLB. Science is the other subject tested.

⁴ By 2002 no system had met the goal in all six subject areas.

⁵ Since 1995 only three other school systems have had a school on the list: Anne Arundel, Baltimore County, and Somerset.

⁶ The other 2.9% of the budget came from board sources and surpluses from the previous year.

⁷ 20.5% of MCPS's budget comes from the state. The rest, 8.2%, comes from other sources.

⁸ 2010 enrollment data were not available at the time of the study.

⁹ The two high schools were Eleanor Roosevelt High School with a population of 2,748 and Suitland High School with a population of 2,796.

¹⁰ Since the beginning of the recession, Prince George's County has led Maryland in the number of foreclosures and has one of the highest foreclosure rates in the nation (Robbins 2010).

¹¹ The result is expected because MSA scores account for most of the AYP score.

Chapter 7

Conclusions and Prospects for the Future

Regrettably, no governing consensus exists, with appropriate leadership, which takes account of the complexities facing public education in the county and provides a context for coordinated educational reform. Such a consensus needs to be developed and be broad enough to accommodate the county's diversity and discipline interests and actions that function against the best interests of children.

--Alvin Thornton, former chairman, Prince George's County Board of Education

The comments by Alvin Thornton were in response to a *Washington Post* request of local leaders for advice on improving Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) (Wanted: Ways to Change the System 2002). Thornton's comments were made in 2002 but could have easily been made in 2011. The county that was in need substantial education reform capable of closing the black-white achievement gap in 2002 is still in need in 2011. This chapter will discuss some of the county characteristics and obstacles that have made regime building difficult in Prince George's County.

I have argued that the persistence of the achievement gap in America despite over 50 years of efforts to close it suggests the need for a new way of thinking about the gap and the failed efforts to eliminate it. To be successful, reform efforts need to address both the school and community issues that impact academic achievement. If solving the achievement gap problem necessitates making changes both in school and in communities, then both schools and communities have to be part of the solution. What is required is an activation of a community's civic capacity.

Civic capacity is the extent to which segments of a community come to see themselves as having a stake in an issue in need of community attention, and then act as a

community to address the issue (Stone et al. 2001). The type of education reform needed to close the achievement gap necessitates a high level of civic capacity. That is, it requires a broad, cross-sector coalition in support of the creation of a new, performance regime. A performance regime consists of a broad based coalition brought together to put in place a set of arrangements to promote and support improved academic performance. Educators, parents, business leaders, and elected officials usually are key members of a performance regime.

This project has submitted that PGCPSS was controlled by an employment regime in 2002. An employment regime consists of a small group of insiders that usually includes the school board, school administration staff, superintendent, union leaders, and other activists whose job it is to promote the cartel's interests. The employment regime is focused on securing the position of its members. Members focus on immediate concerns and small-scale reform efforts that tend to maintain the status quo which is the preferred state of employment regimes.

The employment regime in control in 2002 was also concerned about maintaining the political power of African Americans. In the late 1990s and early 2000s the county was nearing the end of a political transition in which the majority African American population began asserting its political power. For some members of the school board that meant fighting to affirm the authority of the school board which had become majority black. Criticisms of and challenges to the school board were interpreted as criticisms of and challenges to African American political control.

In 2002 the regime was under enormous pressure both internally and externally. Internally, the demographic and political transition being experienced by the county was

also being experienced by PGCPS. More African Americans were moving into positions of authority at the same time that the system was coming under increasing scrutiny.

Splits within the board often carried a racial overtone.

Externally, increased accountability standards from the state exposed deficiencies in student performance. The chronic underperformance of PGCPS students on the Maryland School Performance Program assessments drew widespread criticism of PGCPS leadership. The underperformance was happening at the same time that PGCPS was trying to settle a nearly thirty year desegregation lawsuit. Settlement required the building of numerous new schools. Because of Tax Relief in Maryland (TRIM) the taxpayer led property tax cap, the county could not afford to build the schools without substantial state aid. The county's need for state funds provided an opportunity for state legislators to exert more influence over Prince George's education.

State legislators led by Maryland General Assembly House Delegates Howard Rawlings of Baltimore city and Rushern Baker of Prince George's began to impose their will on the board and installed an oversight panel to monitor the school board. Legislators had determined that poor governance was the source of many of PGCPS's ills. Assertions of competency by the school board were not helped by the internal squabbles between board members and the board's ongoing feud with Superintendent Iris Metts. Believing that the school board was beyond hope, the General Assembly dissolved the elected school board and replaced it with an appointed board.

I have proposed that the dissolution of the elected board served as a focusing event that provided an opportunity for the existing employment regime to be successfully challenged and disrupted. It presented an opportunity for the formation of a performance

regime. That said regime change is not an easy process, and disrupting the existing regime which is not effortless may be the least difficult step of the process.

As stated, the first stage of regime change involves the questioning of the controlling regime's legitimacy (Orr and Stoker 1994). Focusing events do this by shocking the system and highlighting a problem or problems that need attention and have not been adequately addressed or prevented by the regime (Kingdon 1984; Birkland 2004). Focusing events tend to demand action and make the status quo unacceptable. For this reason focusing events are potentially quite harmful to the employment regime which thrives on stasis. The rejection by the Assembly of the school board's governance was a direct attack on the regime's legitimacy.

Once the existing regime has been destabilized, regime change enters the second stage; the negotiation phase. This second stage is the stage in which competitors to the existing regime jockey to build support for a new regime and civic capacity is activated. This is the stage in which leaders or elites attempt to reframe the scope of the regime in an attempt to gain the cooperation of actors possessing the resources needed to pursue a new agenda.

The third stage of the regime change process is the stage in which one coalition becomes dominant and takes steps to institutionalize itself as the new controlling regime. In this stage a new agenda is set, and the arrangements needed to secure cooperation and pursue the new agenda are set as well.

My review of events after the school board was dissolved shows that Prince George's County was not able to form a performance regime. In fact, the county was only able to muster a low level of civic capacity on behalf of education reform. An

employment regime, the default education regime continues to control the education arena in Prince George's County for several interrelated reasons. I turn next to a discussion of those reasons.

A County Environment Hostile to Cooperation

Regimes are complex systems of cooperation (Stone, Orr and Imbroscio 1991). A key to sustained cooperation is trust. It is very difficult to form a coalition when no one trusts anyone to act in good faith. The one thing that is sorely lacking in Prince George's County is trust. Residents do not trust their government. Whites and blacks do not trust one another. Poor and working class blacks are suspicious of the motives of middle class blacks. Educators are suspicious of state legislators. With so much mistrust, it is hardly surprising that coalition building is very difficult in Prince George's.

The legacy of race is at the core of a significant amount of the distrust in the county. Nearly thirty years of court-ordered busing has left a legacy of suspicion of motives. The school board's early and repeated attempts to subvert the court's order with the support of the county's elected officials induced African Americans in the county to not trust white officials. The fact that most of the burden for desegregation fell on blacks only added to the animosity.

At the same time desegregation was intensifying divisions between blacks and whites, it was also exposing divisions within the black community. Middle class blacks were far less supportive of busing than poorer blacks in the county. By the late 1990s, middle class blacks were pushing for an end to busing as much as whites had earlier. Middle class blacks preferred a return to neighborhood schools where their children could take full advantage of the resources those middle class neighborhoods possessed. Poor

blacks on the other hand would be returned to schools with few community resources of support. Thus, the interests of middle class blacks and working class and poor blacks divulged. Further, when middle class blacks began to move into the county's political structure, working class blacks felt they were no more likely to have their concerns addressed than they were when whites controlled the political system.

My research confirms Valerie Johnson's earlier research on the county (Johnson 2002). Prince George's has two distinct African American populations. One is middle class and fully incorporated into the county's political, social, and economic structures. The other is working class and poor and like most working class and poor communities still waiting to have its interests become part of the county agenda.

Another source of racial strife for some was TRIM. Some blacks in the county believe that the property tax cap referendum was racially motivated. They claim that whites did not want their money going to services for blacks. Even though there is not much support for this position, it increased the friction between blacks and whites nonetheless.

What does seem to have actually motivated TRIM supporters was a distrust of county officials. The distrust extends back to the machine politics of the 1950s and 1960s when county officials and bankers developed a close relationship mutually beneficial to both at the perceived expense of county taxpayers. A close relationship between elected officials and developers continues to this day. The coziness of the relationship has at times resulted in corrupt activities on the part of county officials. Government corruption of course is bad for building trust. The continued support of TRIM by both whites and blacks despite the strain it puts on county resources speaks to

the continued distrust of county officials. Residents do not trust county officials to effectively use any additional money coming from a repeal of TRIM. Thus county residents' support for TRIM remains high.

Community Disengagement

Almost everyone interviewed lamented the low levels of parent involvement. Many Prince George's parents find it difficult to commit time for school activities. Poor and working class parents often have low levels of involvement in their children's education because the demands of living get in the way. Single mothers have limited time for school activities. Even middle class parents in the county can find themselves stretched for time after long commutes.

The ongoing internal problems with the Prince George's County Council of PTAs (PGCCPTA) also hindered coalition building efforts. Ordinarily, the county-level PTA would be the conduit to channel the disparate efforts of school-level PTAs into a united parental voice. With PGCCPTA's charter revoked, parents lost the advantage of having a single structured and coherent voice. In the legislation dissolving the elected school board, legislators created the Parent and Community Advisory Board to serve as the voice of the community during the appointed board's tenure. However, the Board evolved into more of a sounding board for the superintendent rather than an advocacy voice for the community. Thus parents, key members of a performance regime were without an effective representative to voice their concerns.

In Prince George's County, middle class parents have not been more vocal proponents for education reform for at least two possible reasons. The first is the possibility that middle class parents have removed their children from PGCPs and thus

have no incentive to devote their attention to the system. The increasing number of affluent people leaving the county supports this argument. The second explanation is that middle class parents have found ways to make the system in its current configuration work for them. They have taken advantage of PGCPS's specialty programs to provide their children with the best that PGCPS has to offer. Accordingly, middle class parents have little incentive to change the system. This behavior emphasizes the point that racial identity is not a strong enough force to get middle class black parents to unite with poorer black parents for educational reform. Class is the greater motivator.

The lack of involvement extends beyond parents into the larger community. No respondent mentioned any particular group that played a strong role in education reform efforts. The community received nearly as much criticism as parents for its lack of involvement in education. Business fared only slightly better in people's critique since most business activity is directed at helping individual schools and is decidedly small scale.

Low levels of involvement in education are not that unusual. However, what is unusual about Prince George's County is the low level of attentiveness to county issues in general. Disinterest appears to be the norm for the county. Scandals seem to provoke only tepid response from the public. While residents express displeasure over the poor performance of PGCPS student's on state assessments, this displeasure appears not to have risen to a level of indignation that might motivate people to act.

There seems to be a culture of disengagement in the county, and it seems to run deep within the county. This disengagement may well extend back to the county's plantation and farm days and the laissez faire attitudes of the landed gentry. The machine

politics of the mid-20th century owed its power not only to patronage but also to the indifference of voters. The blacks who moved into the county during the 1970s and 1980s maintained their ties to Washington, D.C., neglecting activities in the county. For reasons that are not exactly clear a high level of indifference remains.

Of course the employment regime thrives on indifference because further efforts to raise civic capacity and form a new performance regime can be killed by indifference. The county's history of disengagement makes the role of leadership in education reform all the more important. This disengagement makes it highly unlikely that efforts to mobilize the community and raise civic capacity will emanate from the grassroots. Therefore, leaders are needed to take on the job of mobilizing for reform. However this type of leadership is another area in which Prince George's County finds itself lacking.

A Shortage of Educational Reform Leaders

Behind low levels of trust and high levels of indifference, the greatest hindrance to coalition building in Prince George's is the scarcity of education reform leaders. Though focusing events can deliver powerful shocks to a regime, they cannot change the regime on their own. There must be actors, reformers, available and ready to exploit the disruption created by the focusing event. In Prince George's County reform agents have not come forward to take advantage of the opportunity the school board's dissolution provided.

Almost immediately, the momentum for reform was hurt by the loss of two of the leading proponents of education reform. The reelection loss of Delegate Rushern Baker (D-Prince George's) and the death of Delegate Howard Rawlings (D-Baltimore) meant a significant loss of the ability to translate state-level pressure on PGCPSS into coherent

county-level action. Both Baker and Rawlings made educational improvement a centerpiece of their campaigns and agenda. Rawlings especially had the power to direct state resources towards reform efforts in the county. Other state legislators, especially those from the county, have been inclined to limit their involvement in education politics to responding to constituent concerns. Other state legislators have yet to articulate a vision for PGCPs the way Baker and Rawlings did.

State legislators also have been at times a hindrance to the formation of a performance regime. On numerous occasions the county's state legislators, on the behalf of their constituents, have become actively involved in PGCPs matters. As a result local stakeholders are often able to appeal to state legislators to have their concerns addressed bypassing the existing employment regime. Being able to have their own particular interests addressed through individual action tends to dissuade people from more collaborative efforts in which their own interests may not be prominent. Moreover, constituents have less motivation to question the regime. Thus the activities of county legislators work against the building of the coalitions needed to build a performance regime.

Outside the school system a natural choice for reform leader is the county executive. As the central figure in county politics, the county executive has a platform from which a new agenda can be offered. Jack Johnson was county executive from 2002 to 2010. Like many political leaders financially constrained governments, economic development was the primary focus of the county executive. Early in his tenure it appeared as though Johnson would focus significant attention on education. He held an education summit early in his administration. However Johnson diminished the potential

impact of the summit by folding his targeted efforts to improve PGCPs into a larger initiative more broadly designed to improve the quality of county life in general. The practical effect of the change was to lower the importance of education within the executive's administration. So what at first appeared to be the initial steps towards building a new education coalition quickly evaporated into a limited endeavor that had a limited impact on reform.

Another natural candidate to lead reform efforts is the superintendent. As the single most prominent education leader, the superintendent has a ready platform from which to build a coalition—if she or he so desired. Superintendent Iris Metts tried to modify the agenda of the old employment regime, but she met considerable resistance from people both inside and outside the regime. Because of the antagonisms generated by her efforts, Metts became too divisive a figure to be able to lead the creation of a broad-based coalition.

The first prospect the county had at a superintendent led coalition was during the tenure of Superintendent Andre Hornsby. Unfortunately for reform advocates, Hornsby was not interested in forming coalitions. The narrowness of the employment regime suited his sensibilities because he was not inclined to favor extensive community input into his decision making. Superintendent John Deasy perhaps provided the county's best chance at a superintendent led reform movement. Deasy was politically savvy enough to realize that the support of key stakeholders would make the programs he implemented more resistant to challenge. This said Deasy's signature initiative was developed with limited input from those beyond his inner circle. Though Deasy appeared more willing to engage parents than Hornsby had been, his interaction with parents declined over time.

Today, because of fallout from the Great Recession the current superintendent, William Hite, has had to spend most of his time trying to keep deep budget cuts from reversing the fragile progress PGCPS has made.

In cities like Chicago, Pittsburgh and Boston, business has served as the driving force for education reform (Portz, Stein and Jones 1999, Shipps 2006). Those cities have entrenched industries whose ties to the city make them more likely participants in reform efforts. Unlike those cities, Prince George's does not have an entrenched industry that is identified with the county. In fact most of the businesses in the county are small and as a result are too focused on their own survival to contribute substantial resources to education efforts.

On the other hand not having a powerful business sector might actually improve the prospects for building a performance regime. As influential elites, business leaders can often shape the nature of the regime agenda. Business tends to gravitate towards market-based solutions that often lead to the development of a more narrow market regime instead of the broad-based performance regime that is needed to close the achievement gap (Shipps 2006). Not having a strong business sector in the Prince George's County helps preclude the replacement of the employment regime with a market regime.

Members of the business community did try to add the weight of the business community to reform efforts in the form of the Prince George's Business Education Alliance. However, the Alliance's initial efforts were not embraced by Superintendent Hornsby and the two entities operated independently of one another. As a result there was little coordination of effort between the business community and the school system

and a significant opportunity to build a powerful new coalition was lost. The recession brought an end to the Alliance's activities.

The Great Recession specifically and the county's economic environment generally are two of a number of loosely connected impediments to regime formation in the county.

More Challenges to Coalition Building and Regime Formation

Earlier TRIM was mentioned as a source of distrust in the county. It is also a negative influence on education reform for another reason. Because it limits county budgets, TRIM makes funding debates even more acrimonious than normal. Limited budgets mean increased competition for resources. Increases in the education budget frequently necessitate cuts in other areas such as infrastructure, economic development or public safety. Advocates of those policy areas are likely to resist reform efforts likely to draw resources away from the policies they support. At times the relationship between education leaders and the county's political leadership has been strained because of limited budgets. Also limited economic resources reduce the amount of material incentives that can be used to secure commitments to a new regime. Increased competition can also stymie cooperation and collaboration and often works against coalition building.

Another issue that has hindered efforts to form a broad-based coalition has been the near constant turnover occurring in school leadership. Almost every two years from 2002 until 2010, the school system has had either a new superintendent or new school board. The constant turnover makes it very difficult to develop the relationships needed to engender trust. Building trust takes time and experience. Just about the time the

community and educators begin to trust one another a leadership changes forces the process to begin anew. Consequently coalition building efforts have to be restarted every time key players change.

Also putting a strain on relationships is the near constant changes in school boundaries. The return to neighborhood schools as part of the desegregation settlement resulted in 24 schools being built within a ten year period between 1999 and 2009. Twelve have been built since 2002. The prospect of a new school has led to competition among communities as they push to have a school built in their neighborhood. In this situation parents are pitted against parents. The consolidations and boundary changes that took place in 2009 did the same.

The consolidations again exposed differences between parents in terms of their ability to have their interests met by the school system. Organized parents of children in specialty program were able to influence the consolidation process to their benefit. Meanwhile less organized poor and working class parents were unable to have a similar influence. Thus boundary changes became one more drag on efforts to reform education in the county.

Implications for Regime Change

So what does all of this mean for educational reform in Prince George's County? What it means is that a county that on its surface would seem to be the exception to the rule pertaining to the difficulty of regime change and education reform is anything but. Achieving substantial education reform has been as difficult in Prince George's County as it has been in any inner city. Thus my findings confirm the findings of others who

have found building civic capacity and regime change difficult (Henig et al. 1999; Stone et al. 2001).

Prince George's County is a county that currently has a low level of civic capacity. Raising civic capacity in a county such as Prince George's that has an aloof public and a culture of disengagement is an extremely difficult undertaking. It calls for skillful and talented leadership capable of breaking through the wall of indifference that has enveloped the county. So far such leadership has yet to emerge.

Despite all of the changes PGCCPS and the county have endured since 2002, education is still controlled by an employment regime. To be clear, it is not the same regime that governed prior to 2002. Today's employment regime exists as a default. The failure to form an alternative regime left the old regime in place. Recall the employment regime is the stasis regime. It exists because the status quo rules the day. And because a coalition in support of education has not been substantially broadened, the status quo endures.

Some Hopeful Signs for the Future

Despite the numerous hindrances to coalition building and regime change a few promising signs suggest change advantageous to substantive education reform might yet be possible.

The importance of race in the Prince George's has declined as the county's African American population has become entrenched in all aspects of the county's political, economic, and social endeavors. Also, racial animosities seem to be fading. Many of the longer-term residents who experienced the worst of desegregation are increasingly less active in education or county politics. Thus, a good amount of the

antagonisms and distrust that once emanated through the county as a result of the county's handling of desegregation appear to be dissipating. In this context, time might be on the county's side. As the county moves further away from the divisive period of demographic transition and forced desegregation there is an opportunity to regain some of the trust that was lost. The county may then be able to stop having the same old conversations of the past and start having new conversations of the future.

A major sign of hope for the prospects of regime change and education reform in the county has to be the 2010 election of Rushern Baker as county executive. Baker has been a long-time promoter of education reform. Improving county education was a prominent theme of his campaign. If Baker uses his office as a bully pulpit to promote education reform, then the county might have a solid chance to put together the coalitions needed to build a regime capable of raising African American academic achievement and closing the achievement gap.

Prospects for Future Study

This project calls for more study. Will the County Executive Rushern Baker be the education advocate he claims to be? Will Baker make education a high priority or will he feel pressure to pursue an economic development agenda like his predecessors? If Baker does attempt to focus county attention on education, how will county residents react? These are all questions that depending on how they are answered could indicate a dramatic change in education politics in the county. The next four to eight years have the potential to be transformative. Extending the study might lead to different results.

It would also be interesting to determine if the results in Prince George's are similar to those in other suburban communities. A comparison with a community like

Georgia's DeKalb County, a majority African American, affluent suburban county, might prove instructive.

Another potential topic for further study is the school system itself. Will PGCPS be able to maintain some stability? Now that the county has come full circle and again has an elected school board whose members represent nine districts, will the board revert back to the ways of the old elected board?

Extending the study of Prince George's County and PGCPS may be needed to determine the full impact of all of the turmoil resulting from and coming after the General Assembly dissolved the school board. This study only examined a small cross-section of time. It is possible that the county is still in the midst of regime change. A longer time period of study might produce more definitive or different results.

Conclusion

I end this project back where it began with a concern about the academic achievement gap in Prince George's County. Most of this dissertation has focused on the behavior of adults. But it should not be forgotten that the people most affected by the behavior of adults are the children who are dependent on them. If we can remember what is at stake for children, then perhaps real progress can be made. I find the words of Sheryll Cashin quite instructive for Prince George's County.

We have to acknowledge there is a black achievement gap and bring our resources and talents to bear to cultivate institutions and a culture where learning is taken seriously, teachers and elders are respected, and parents and the entire community are oriented toward educational achievement. I don't think this can happen in Prince George's County or elsewhere without a full, rather than a partial, embrace by the black middle class of their communities, including the low-income folks in their midst (Cashin 2004, 159).

One can only hope that people of Prince George's County come to see the big picture and realize that no less than the future well-being of its children is at stake. Maybe then the children of Prince George's County can get the quality education they deserve.

Appendix

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE 1:

For Respondents Active in County Education or Politics in 2002 and Today

INTRODUCTION: I'm Cheryl Jones. I am conducting research for my dissertation on education politics in Prince George's County. I am looking at the way the community makes educational decisions and how those decisions affect academic achievement. I am particularly interested in how things have changed since the school board was dissolved in 2002.

May I record the interview? You will not be quoted by name.

As we begin,

1. Can you tell me a little about the kinds of education policies and/or initiatives you and your organization are pursuing?

2. If you or your organization had a new initiative you wanted to recommend to the school system (PGCPS), whose support would it be important to have in order to make it a reality?

2a. IF SCHOOL BOARD IS ANSWER: Is there anyone else beside the school board?

Now I would like to turn to what is happening in county education today

3. In your opinion, what are the major education issues in Prince George's County? [Prompt: What are the major challenges?]

4. Where does education rank as a priority in Prince George's compared to other county issues (like economic development or public safety)? [Follow up: What ranks higher?]

Now I would like to turn to the issue of academic achievement generally and the African American achievement gap in particular. {Explain the gap as racial and class difference in performance on state exams, graduation rates, and other standardized tests, i.e., SAT and AP tests.}

5. How would you describe the county's efforts to improve academic achievement and close the achievement gap?

6. Recognizing that no county can do everything that it would like to do in education, would you say the county is,

A___ Doing everything that can be done,

B___ Doing fairly well,

C___ Neither succeeding nor failing

D___ Falling short of what it could be doing,

F___ Not doing well at all.

7. What would enable Prince George's County to make a better effort toward improving academic achievement and closing the gap?

8. Are there significant obstacles to making that effort? What are they?

9. How have the changes in school leadership affected the county's ability to improve student performance?

Parents occupy an important position in education and can be a potent force.

10. How would you describe the activity level of parents in Prince George's?

11. What kinds of activities are parents involved in?

12. Are some parents more active than others?

13. Have you seen a change in the activity level of parents over time? [**SKIP FOR TIME**]

13a. IF YES: What do you think are the reasons for the changes?

14. Are there things you would like to see parents do, or do more of?

Turning to education politics, sometimes, education decisions are highly visible and generate a lot of conflict. Sometimes, they are handled pretty routinely and out of the public eye.

15. When there is conflict, what is likely to be the source, and who is likely to be involved?

[Prompt: Is it typically groups in the community struggling against school officials or is it more likely to be conflict between groups in the community? Or, is the conflict typically within the school system; board vs. superintendent, factions within the board, or factional divisions within the school administration?]

16. What do you think explains the level of conflict in the county? [**SKIP FOR TIME**]

17. Would you say there is more or less conflict than in the past? Why?

Now I would like to ask you some questions concerning the school board's dissolution in 2002.

18. The decision to dissolve the board came after an escalation of tensions between the school board and Superintendent Metts. In your opinion, what was the source of the tension and why did things escalate as they did? [**SKIP FOR TIME**]

19. Dissolving the school board was a rather extraordinary step, why, do you think, people were willing to take such a step?

20. Did you support or oppose dissolving the board? [Prompt: Why?]

Looking at county education over the last several years,

21. Generally, how would you compare the state of education in Prince George's today to the state of education before the school board was dissolved in 2002?

[Prompt: Are things better or worse? What is the primary reason?]

22. In addition to the school board changes, the county has gone through several superintendents in the last seven years. How has all of this change affected county education? [**SKIP FOR TIME**]

As we wrap up,

23. Is there anything else about education or programs to improve academic achievement in Prince George's County that I should be aware of? Reports? Other studies?

24. Are there other people who would be especially useful for me to talk to? [Prompt: People who were active in education but are no longer active?]

THANK RESPONDENT.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON RESPONDENT:

CHECK: GENDER: Male Female

ETHNICITY/RACE:

Hispanic African--American

White Asian-American

Native American

Other (Specify: _____)

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE 2:

For Respondents Active in County Education or Politics Today but Inactive in 2002

INTRODUCTION: I'm Cheryl Jones. I am conducting research for my dissertation on education politics in Prince George's County. I am looking at the way the community makes educational decisions and how those decisions affect academic achievement. To that end, I am talking to a variety of people actively involved in county education.

May I record the interview? You will not be quoted by name.

As we begin,

1. Can you tell me a little about the kinds of education policies and/or initiatives you and your organization are pursuing?

2. If you or your organization had a new initiative you wanted to recommend to the school system (PGCPS), whose support would it be important to have in order to make it a reality?

2a. IF SCHOOL BOARD OR SCHOOL SYSTEM IS THE ANSWER: Is there anyone else outside of the school system or school board?

Now I would like to turn to what is happening in county education today

3. In your opinion, what are the major education issues in Prince George's County? [Prompt: What are the major challenges?]

4. Where does education rank as a priority in Prince George's compared to other county issues (like economic development or public safety)? [Follow up: What ranks higher?]

Now I would like to turn to the issue of academic achievement generally and the African American achievement gap in particular. {Explain the gap as racial and class difference in performance on state exams, graduation rates, and other standardized tests, i.e., SAT and AP tests.}

5. How would you describe the county's efforts to improve academic achievement and close the achievement gap?

6. Recognizing that no county can do everything that it would like to do in education, would you say the county is,

A___ Doing everything that can be done,

B___ Doing fairly well,

C___ Neither succeeding nor failing

- D___ Falling short of what it could be doing,
F___ Not doing well at all.

7. What would enable Prince George's County to make a better effort toward improving academic achievement and closing the gap?
8. Are there significant obstacles to making that effort? What are they?
9. How have the changes in school leadership affected the county's ability to improve student performance?

Parents occupy an important position in education and can be a potent force.

10. How would you describe the activity level of parents in Prince George's?
11. What kinds of activities are parents involved in?
12. Are some parents more involved than others?
13. Have you seen a change in the activity level of parents over time? **[SKIP FOR TIME]**
- 13a. IF YES: What do you think are the reasons for the changes?
14. Are there things you would like to see parents do, or do more of?

Turning to education politics, sometimes, education decisions are highly visible and generate a lot of conflict. Sometimes, they are handled pretty routinely and out of the public eye.

15. When there is conflict, what is likely to be the source, and who is likely to be involved?

[Prompt: Is it typically groups in the community struggling against school officials or is it more likely to be conflict between groups in the community? Or, is the conflict typically within the school system; board vs. superintendent, factions within the board, or factional divisions within the school administration?]

16. What do you think explains the level of conflict in the county? **[SKIP FOR TIME]**
17. Would you say there is more or less conflict than in the past? Why?

Now I would like to ask you some more questions about your involvement in county education,

18. How long have you been involved in education in Prince George's County?
[PROMPT: Does that include periods in a position(s) other than your current one? IF YES: ask to elaborate]

19. Since you began your involvement, how has education changed in the county?

20. Is the state of education in Prince George's better or worse today than when you started?

20a. What is the primary reason for the change?

21. The county has gone through a number of leadership changes over the last several years with new superintendents and new school boards. How do you think these changes have affected county education? [**SKIP FOR TIME**]

As we wrap up,

22. Is there anything else about education or programs to improve academic achievement in Prince George's County that I should be aware of? Reports? Other studies?

23. Are there other people who would be especially useful for me to talk to? [Prompt: People who were active in education but are no longer active?]

THANK RESPONDENT.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON RESPONDENT:

CHECK: GENDER: Male Female

ETHNICITY/RACE:

Hispanic African--American

White Asian-American

Native American

Other (Specify: _____)

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE 3:

For School Board Members Past and Present

INTRODUCTION: I'm Cheryl Jones. I am conducting research for my dissertation on education politics in Prince George's County. I am looking at the way the community makes educational decisions and how those decisions affect academic achievement. I am particularly interested in what was happening in the county while you were a member of the school board.

May I record the interview? You will not be quoted by name.

During your time on the board,

1. What were the major education issues in Prince George's County?

[Prompt: What were the major challenges?]

2. Where did education rank as a priority in Prince George's compared to other county issues (like economic development or public safety)? [Follow up: What ranked higher?]

Now I would like to talk about a couple of specific topics in education,

In America, a persistent academic achievement gap exists between children of different races and socioeconomic classes. This is a particularly important issue for school systems with large numbers of minority students; systems like PGCPS.

3. How would you describe the county's efforts to improve academic achievement and close the achievement gap while you were on the board?
4. What would have enabled Prince George's County to make a better effort toward improving academic achievement and closing the gap?
5. Were there significant obstacles to making that effort? What were they?

Some people argue that a way to improve achievement is to get parents more involved in their children's education. Whether that involvement is making sure their child does her homework or taking part in school governance, it is clear parents occupy an important position in education and can be a potent force for change. While you were on the board,

6. How involved were parents in your opinion?

7. What kinds of activities were parents in Prince George's most likely to be involved in?

8. Were some parents more actively involved than others? [Prompt: Which parents were more active?]

9. Were there things you would have liked to see parents do, or do more of?

Often involvement in schools is not limited to parents. Let's talk about other community members and their involvement in county education while you were on the school board,

10. How involved was the business sector in education?

11. What about community organizations and advocacy groups? Were they actively involved?

12. Were there people or groups you would have liked to see be more active in education?

Turning to education politics, sometimes, education decisions are highly visible and generate a lot of conflict. Sometimes, they are handled pretty routinely and out of the public eye.

13. When you were on the board, what was the level of conflict? [**SKIP FOR TIME**]

14. When there was conflict, what was likely to be the source, and who was likely to be involved?

[Prompt: Is it typically groups in the community struggling against school officials or is it more likely to be conflict between groups in the community? Or, is the conflict typically within the school system; board vs. superintendent, factions within the board, or factional divisions within the school administration?]

The tensions between former Superintendent Metts and the school board at the time were well documented.

15a. FOR OLD ELECTED BOARD: In your opinion, what was the source of the tension and why did it seem to grow?

15b. FOR APPOINTED BOARD: Were there tensions between Superintendent Hornsby and your board? What was the source of the tension?

15c. FOR THE CURRENT BOARD: When Superintendent Deasy left, there were news articles hinting at some tension with the board. Were there tensions, and what was the source?

ASK IF CURRENT BOARD MEMBER IS FAMILIAR WITH 2002 EVENTS. IF NO, go to question 18b.

Now I would like to talk about the dissolution of the board in 2002. Some in the General Assembly cited the ongoing tension as the reason for a need to take action. Nonetheless,

16. Dissolving the school board was a rather extraordinary step, why, do you think, people were willing to take such a step?

17a. FOR OLD ELECTED BOARD: How would you describe the community's reaction to the General Assembly's action? [**SKIP FOR TIME**]

[PROMPT: Were you disappointed with the community's reaction?]

17b. FOR APPOINTED BOARD AND CURRENT BOARD: Did you agree with the decision to dissolve the board? {PROMPT: Why did you agree or disagree?}

Now let's look at the general state of county education during the time you were on the board,

18a. FOR PREVIOUS BOARDS: Recognizing that no county can do everything that it would like to do in education, would you say the county,

A___ Did everything that could be done,

B___ Did fairly well,

C___ Neither succeeded nor failed,

D___ Fail short of what it could be doing,

F___ Did not do well at all.

[PROMPT: Why did you choose ___?]

18b. FOR CURRENT BOARD: Recognizing that no county can do everything that it would like to do in education, would you say the county is,

A___ Doing everything that can be done,

B___ Doing fairly well,

C___ Neither succeeding nor failing

D___ Falling short of what it could be doing,

F___ Not doing well at all.

[Probe: Why did you choose ____?]

ASK OF PREVIOUS BOARD MEMBERS: Do you follow what is happening in county education today? IF NO, go to Question 22.

FOR CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS: Skip questions 19-21 if they are unfamiliar with 2002 events.

19. In addition to the school board changes, the county has gone through several superintendents in the last seven years. Looking at county education today, what has been the net effect of all of these leadership changes? **[SKIP 19 OR 20 FOR TIME]**

20. Earlier we talked about past conflict in education politics. Would you say there is more or less conflict today than in the past? Why? **[SKIP 19 OR 20 FOR TIME]**

21. Overall, comparing the state of education in Prince George's today to the time when you were on the board?

Would you say?

- 1 _____ There has been a great deal of improvement,
- 2 _____ There has been some improvement,
- 3 _____ Some things have improved but others have worsened,
- 4 _____ Things have gotten worse.

21a. Why did you choose ____?

As we wrap up,

22. Is there anything else about education or programs to improve academic achievement in Prince George's County that I should be aware of? Reports? Other studies?

23. Are there other people who would be especially useful for me to talk to?
[Prompt: People who were active in education but are no longer active?]

THANK RESPONDENT.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON RESPONDENT:

CHECK: GENDER: Male Female

ETHNICITY/RACE:

Hispanic African--American

White Asian-American

Native American

Other (Specify: _____)

References

- Abadjian, Margo. 2002a. "Board Awards Metts a 2nd Chance as Chief: Superintendent-turned-CEO Gets 1-Year Term." *Prince George's Journal*, June 4.
- . 2002b. "Activist Reflects on Blacks' Progress: Man Says Court-Ordered Desegregation was Positive for County Schools." *Prince George's Journal*, June 28.
- . 2002c. "Public's Trust is Elusive for Board." *Prince George's Journal*, July 26.
- Abramowitz, Michael. 1993a. "Pr. George's Set for Tumult in Politics." *Washington Post*, July 18.
- . 1993b. "The Turner Commission: Turner's Perspective; A Man in a Minefield." *Washington Post*, September 30.
- . 1994. "Curry Rides In on New Wave; Conventional Wisdom is Loser in Pr. George's Primary." *Vote 94. Washington Post*, September 15.
- Abramowitz, Michael and Lisa Frazier. 1997. "Pr. George's Schools Face New Scrutiny; Maryland Legislator Notes Test Scores, Other Problems." *Washington Post*, June 24.
- Abramowitz, Michael and Lisa Leff. 1993. "P.G. Report Assails 'Failing' Schools, 'Questionable' Safety." *Washington Post*, September 23.
- Abramowitz, Michael and Richard Morin. 1994. "Curry Built P.G. Victory on Black Vote." *Washington Post*, September 18.
- Aizanman, Nurith C. 2001. "The Culture Clash Next Door; Neighborhood Quarrels Take on Ethnic Tint as Pr. George's Gains Hispanics." *Washington Post*, March 21.
- Aizenman, Nurith C. and Brigid Schulte. 2002. "Md. Reports Broad Decline in Key Test Scores; Montgomery Officials Continue to Question Validity of Results." *Washington Post*, January 29.
- Anderson, Nick. 2005a. "School Election Bill May Hit Wall; Lawmakers Divided on Pr. George's Plan." *Washington Post*, March 29.
- . 2005b. "PTA Group Votes No Confidence in Hornsby." *Washington Post*, April 27.
- . 2005c. "Pr. George's Poised to Shift Back to Neighborhood Schools." *Washington Post*, May 3.
- . 2005d. "'I Have to Keep Going Forward,' Hornsby Says." *Washington Post*, May 5.
- . 2005e. "Dubious Hornsby Conduct Cited; Report Tracks Dealings with Consulting Firm, Contracts; Wrongdoing Denied." *Washington Post*, June 7.

- . 2005f. "Pr. George's PTA Leaders in Conflict." *Washington Post*, September 29.
- . 2005g. "Simmering Dispute Boils Over at County PTA Meeting." *Washington Post*, November 3.
- . 2005h. "'We Are Not the Enemy': A Boundary Battle Royal; Officials Face Parents Angry Over Proposed School Changes." *Washington Post*, December 22.
- . 2006a. "Pr. George's Board Seeks Longevity; Schools Appointees See Harm in Vote." *Washington Post*, February 3.
- . 2006b. "Pr. George's Hunt for Schools Chief Whittled to Three." *Washington Post*, February 13.
- . 2006c. "Pr. George's Board Picks New Leader for Schools; Chief from California has Record of Raising Minority Test Scores." *Washington Post*, February 17.
- . 2006d. "Poised to Raise Expectations, Achievement; Lead Candidate to Head County Schools Looks for Teamwork, Accountability." *Washington Post*, February 23.
- . 2006e. "Next Schools Chief Wins Applause; John E. Deasy Sets High Goals in Session with County Leaders, Principals." *Washington Post*, April 6.
- . 2006f. "Pr. George's School Board Race Crowded." *Washington Post*, July 26.
- Armor, David J. 2006. "Lessons Learned from School Desegregation." in *Generational Change: Closing the Test Score Gap*, ed. Paul E. Peterson, 115-142. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Aud, Susan, Mary Ann Fox, and Angelina KewalRamani. 2010. *Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups (NCES 2010-015)*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, July.
- Babington, Charles. 1996. "Md. Offer Links Increased Aid to Overhaul of Baltimore School Management." *Washington Post*, June 20.
- Babington, Charles and Richard Tapscott. 1994. "Md. Facing Lawsuit Over School Funds; Children in Baltimore Shortchanged, ACLU Says." *Washington Post*, December 7.
- Barton, Paul. 2003. *Parsing the Achievement Gap: Baselines for Tracking Progress*. Princeton, NJ: Policy Information Center, Educational Testing Service.
- Barton, Paul E. and Richard J. Coley. 2010. *The Black-White Achievement Gap: When Progress Stopped*. Princeton, New Jersey: Policy Evaluation and Research Center, Policy Information Center, Educational Testing Service, July.
- Berends, Mark and Roberto Peñaloza. 2010. "Increasing Racial Isolation and Test Score Gaps in Mathematics: A 30 Year Perspective." *Teachers College Record* 112, no 4 (April): 978-1007.

- Beyers, Dan. 1990. "Anti-Tax Sentiment in Md. Similar to 1978 Spawning of TRIM." *Washington Post*, October 28.
- Bhatti, Jabeen. 2000a. "In the Eye of the Storm; New Prince George's Schools Chief Irritates, Drives Off Many Educators." *Washington Times*, February 29.
- 2000b. "PTA in Trouble Once Again in PG." *Washington Times*, September 23.
- 2003. "PG Schools Search Lacks Big Name for a Big Job." *Washington Times*, March 17.
- Bhatti, Jabeen and Vaishali Honawar. 2003. "'Need for New Blood' in PG; Metts' Departure Seen as Positive Step for Schools." *Washintgon Times*, February 11.
- Birkland, Thomas A. 1998. "Focusing Events, Mobilization, and Agenda Setting." *Journal of Public Policy* 18, no. 1 (Jan.- Apr.): 53-74.
- 2004. "'The World Changed Today': Agenda Setting and Policy Change in the Wake of the September 11 Terrorist Attacks." *Review of Policy Research* 21, no. 2: 179-200.
- Birnbaum, Michael. 2008. "Downturn Puts Strain on School Boundaries; Redistricting Has Fewer Alternatives." *Washington Post*, December 30.
- Bishaw, Alemayehu. 2005. *Areas with Concentrated Poverty: 1999. Census 2000 Special Report, CENSR-16*, Washington, D.C.: United States Census Bureau, July.
- Bowie, Carole H. 1961. "Two Nearby Counties Differ on Desegregation." *Washington Post, Times Herald*, March 17.
- Brenner, Elsa. 1998. "Report Card in Yonkers on New Schools Chief." *New York Times*, October 25.
- Brown, DeNeen L. 1998. "Pr. George's School Chief Is Put on Notice; Majority on Education Board Give Clark Poor to Average Job Rating." *Washington Post*, February 5.
- Bulkley, Katrina. 2007. "Bringing the Private into the Public: Chnaging the Rules of the Game and the New Regime Politics in Philadelphia Public Education." *Educational Policy* 21, no.1: 155-184.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2010. *Employment Projections*. May 27, 2010. http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm (accessed January 9, 2011).
- 2011. *Economic News Release Table A-2 Employment Status of the Civilian Population by Race, Sex, and Age*. January 7. <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t02.htm> (accessed January 9, 2011).
- Bunting, Elaine and Patricia D'Amario. 1998. *Coutnies of Central Maryland part of Our Maryland County Series*. Centreville, MD: Tidewater Publishers.

- Callcott, George H. 1985. *Maryland & America 1940-1980*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Carnevale, Anthony P., Nicole Smith, and Jeff Strohl. 2010. "Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018." *Center on Education and the Workforce, Georgetown University*. June 2010. <http://cew.georgetown.edu> (accessed November 22, 2010).
- Carter, Dennis. 2007a. "Officials Striving to Get Beyond Learning Curve, System's Reputation." *Gazette*, July 26.
- 2007b. "State Leaders Join Push to bring back County PTA." *Gazette*, August 2.
- 2007c. "State Violated Bylaws in Revoking Charter, Former Head of County PTA Says." *Gazette*, September 13.
- Cashin, Sheryll. 2004. *The Failures of Integregation: How Race and Class are Undermining the American Dream*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Center for Reform of School Systems. 2010. *Training Programs and Customized Solutions*. 2010. <http://www.crss.org/rga-for-urban-school-boards.html> (accessed May 18, 2010).
- Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, The Brookings Institution. 1999. *A Region Divided: The State of Growth in Greater Washington, D.C.* Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.
- Chappell, Kevin. 2006. "Prince George's County: 'America's Wealthiest Black County'." *Ebony*, November: 88-94.
- Chenoweth, Karin. 2003. "Critics of Metts Should Consider the Challenging Environment." *Homeroom, Washington Post*, February 13.
- 2007. *It's Being Done: Academic Success in Unexpected Schools*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- 2009. *How It's being Done: Urgent Lessons from Unexpected Schools*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Cho, Hanah. 2005. "Ethics Questions Followed Hornsby; Pr. George's School Board Ignored Past Allegations in Hiring CEO, Critics Say; 'Kept Their Heads in the Sand'." *Baltimore Sun*, May 29.
- Chong, Dennis. 1991. *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement*. University of Chicago Press
- Coia, David Alan and Jim Keary. 1994. "PG Schools to End Busing After 21 Years; \$346 Million Plan Seeks Return to Neighborhoods." *Washington Times*, July 21.
- Commission on Education Finance, Equity, and Excellence. 2002. "Final Report." Annapolis, MD, January.

- Community Advisory Council on Magnet and Compensatory Educational Programs. 1987. "Second Interim Report. Annual Report. Unpublished.
- , 1991. "1990-91 Interim Report." May 23. Unpublished.
- "County Executive Candidates Take on Education." 2006. *Washington Post*, September 7.
- Court Appointed Panel Vaughns, et. al. v. Prince George's County Board of Education, et. al. 1997. "Report." Unpublished.
- Creighton, Roger L. and Douglas M. Hamlin. 1995. "Crossing the Redistricting Minefield." *School Administrator* 52, no. 2: 18-22.
- Cuban, Larry and Michael Usdan. 2003. *Powerful Reforms with Shallow Roots: Improving America's Urban Schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Dawson, Michael C. 1994. *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African-American Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- De Vise, Daniel and Rosalind S. Helderman. 2009. "Funding Might Decrease for Some Area Systems: O'Malley Proposal Comes After Years of Increases." *Washington Post*, January 24.
- Deasy, John E. 2006. *The Business Plan of Children Come First, Phase I*. <http://www1.pgcps.org/assets/0/16/42/3144/3322/0eb333e6b7a94b5f8af0bfb99cf83ca4.pdf> (accessed April 31, 2010).
- , 2008. "FY 2010-2015 Capital Improvement Program (CIP)." *Memorandum*. Upper Marlboro, Maryland: Prince George's County Public Schools, August 28.
- Deasy, John E., William R. Hite and Derek Mitchell. 2008. "New School Strategy & Recommendations ESP Program Replications & New Small High School Incubations 6-26-08." Upper Marlboro, MD: Prince George's County Public Schools, June 26.
- Denny, Jr., George. 1997. *Proud Past Promising Future: Cities and Towns in Prince George's County, Maryland*. Brentwood, MD : Dilden Company.
- Dent, David J. 1992. "The New Black Suburbs." *New York Times Magazine*, June 14: 18-25.
- Denton, Herbert H. 1972a. "NAACP Sues County, Asks More Integragtion." *Washington Post, Times Herald*, March 30.
- , 1972b. "Judge Flays Board Over School Plans." *Washington Post, Times Herald*, December 14.
- Department of Business & Economic Development. 2009. "Prince George's County: Brief Economic Facts." *Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development*. 2008-2009.

<http://www.choosemaryland.org/Resources/pdffiles/briefeconomicfacts/PrGeorgesBEF.pdf> (accessed April 26, 2009).

DeRenzis, Brooke and Alice M. Rivlin. 2007. "A Pathway to the middle Class: Migration and Demographic Change in Prince George's County." *The Brookings Institution Greater Washington Research Program*. April.

http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2007/04washington_derenzis.aspx (accessed April 2, 2009).

Division of Accountability. Department of Testing, Research, and Evaluation. 2004. *An Investigation of the Effects of Magnet School Programs on the Reading and Mathematics Performance of Students in Prince George's County Public Schools FY 2003*. Upper Marlboro, Md: Prince George's Public Schools.

Eastman, Michael. 1980. "Problems and Progress." *Washington Post*, August 14.

Eaton, Susan E. and Elizabeth Crutcher. 1996. "Magnets, Media, and Mirages: Prince George's County's "Miracle" Cure." In *Dismantling Desegregation: The Quite Reversal of Brown v. Board of Education*, eds. Gary Orfield, Susan E. Eaton, and the Harvard Project on School Desegregation, 265-289. New York: The New Press.

Editorial. 1962. "Slow Learner." *Washington Post, Times Herald*, March 1.

----- 1997. "Bossing Prince George's Schools." *Washington Post*, October 17.

----- 2003. "A Choice for Schools." *Washington Post*, March 12.

----- 2005. "Mr. Hornsby's Ethics." *Washington Post*, June 10.

Ehrlander, Mary F. 2002. *Equal Educational Opportunity: Brown's Elusive Mandate*. New York: LFB Scholarly Publishing.

Elkin, Stephen L. 1987. *City and Regime in the American Republic*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Erie, Steven P. 1988. *Rainbow's End: Irish-Americans and the Dilemmas of Urban Machine Politics, 1840-1985*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Fallis, David S. and Scott Wilson. 2000. "Favorites Won Stadium Jobs; Curry Friends Got Preference for Landover Work." *Washington Post*, July 9.

Feinberg, Lawrence. 1975. "White Flight Unbalances P.G. Schools." *Washington Post, Times Herald*, December 11.

----- 1976. "White Pupil Enrollment Dips Dramatically in Pr. George's." *Washington Post, Times Herald*, December 1.

----- 1978. "White Enrollment in P.G. Schools Decreases 10.4%; White Student Population Down 10.4 Percent in Prince George's." *Washington Post, Times Herald*, December 17.

- 1979. "P.G. School, NAACP Leaders Agree to Curb Busing; Busing 6 Years later; P.G. Busing 6 Years later: Blacks at Mostly Black Schools." *Washington Post*, February 28.
- 1981. "Nearly 50 Percent of Area Blacks Live in Suburbs; Nearly Half of Area Blacks Live in Suburbs." *Washington Post*, March 21.
- 1988. "7 Md. Schools, 1 in D.C. Win National Honors." *Washington Post*, May 18.
- Ferguson, Ronald F. 2002. "What Doesn't Meet the Eye: Understanding and Addressing Racial Disparities in High-Achieving Suburban Schools." North Central Regional Education Laboratory (NCREL) *Policy Issues*,13 (December).
- Ferman, Barbara. 1996. *Challenging the Growth Machine: Neighborhood Politics in Chicago and Pittsburgh*. University Press of Kansas.
- Fitzgerald, Jim. 1999. "Teachers Say Superintendent Thinks He's King." *Associated Press State & Local Wire*, October 1. <http://www.lexisnexis.com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/hottopics/lnacademic/>? (accessed March 28, 2010).
- Frazier, Lisa. 1995a. "Council Approves School Budget Pact; Compromise Found on Risk-Management Fund." *Washington Post*, August 3.
- 1995b. "P.G. Weighs Cost of End to Busing; Magnet School Funds Could be Forfeited ." *Washington Post*, August 27.
- 1996a. "Pr. George's Schools Vote to End Racial Quotas." *Washington Post*, June 19.
- 1996b. "Pr. George's School Board member takes System Job." *Washington Post*, November 22.
- 1997. "Prince George's Parents face Tough Academic Choice; lacking Confidence in Public Schools, Some Middle-Class Blacks are Looking Elsewhere." *Washington Post*, June 2.
- 1998a. "Final Accord Reached on Ending Pr. George's Busing." *Washington Post*, March 20.
- 1998b. "School Audit: Prince George's Losing Millions." *Washington Post*, July 8.
- 2000a. "In Bowie, 'White Angst' Bubbles Beneath Secession Movement." *Washington Post*, October 26.
- 2000b. "Some on School Board Spare No Expense-on Selves." *Washington Post*, June 8.
- Frazier, Lisa and Terry M. Neal. 1996. "Tax-Limit Referendum Divides Loyalties in P.G." *Washington Post*, September 21.

- Fuhrman, Susan H. 2003. "Riding Waves, Trading Horses: The Twenty-Year Effort to Reform Education." In *A Nation Reformed?: American Education 20 Years after A Nation at Risk*, ed. David T. Gordon, 7-22. Cambridge: Harvard Education Press.
- Fuller, Howard L., Christine Campbell, Mary Beth Celio, James Harvey, John Immerwahr, and Abigail Winger. 2003. *An Impossible Job? The View from the Urban Superintendent's Chair*. funded study, Seattle: Center on Reinventing Public Education university of Washington, July.
- Gale, Dennis E. 1987. *Washington, D.C.: Inner-City Revitalization and Minority Suburbanization*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Garner, Joshua. 2009. "Parents Push for More Answers in School Proposal." *Gazette*, March 6.
- Genz, Dan. 2002. "Students From Bowie Oppose Move to DuVal; Proposed Enrollment Shift a Response to Crowding." *Washington Post*, November 28.
- Gonzalez, Enrique J. 1991. "Report Criticizes PG Busing System." *Washington Post*, April 23.
- Goodlad, John I. *A Place Called School*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984.
- Governor's Commission on School Performance. 1989. "The Report of the Governor's Commission on School Performance." Baltimore, MD, August.
- Granat, Diane. 1986. "The Greening of Prince George's." *The Washingtonian*, May.
- Greater Washington Research at Brookings. 2009. *Demographic and Economic Trends in the National Capitol Region and Their Effects on Children, Youth and Families*. Report. Washington, D.C.: Venture Philanthropy Partners, January.
- Green, Robert. 1985. "Final Report on Desegregation of Prince George's County Public Schools." Unpublished Report. Submitted to Chief Judge Frank A. Kaufman. March, 11.
- Gregg, Sandra R. 1983a. "Trial Recalls Earlier Era of Police." *Washington Post*, May 14.
- , 1983b. "Last of P.G.'s Movers, Shakers; Jess Baggett Recalled as 'Rough-cut Kind of Guy'." *Washington Post*, December 31.
- Groff, Frances. 2003. "Looking for School Leaders." *State Legislatures*, 29, no. 2 February:33-35.
- Haigh, John A. 1996. *Maryland School Performance Program. Outcomes, Standards, and High-Stakes Accountability: Perspectives from Maryland and Kentucky*. ERIC 304 776, April 3. Microfiche.

- Hanushek, Eric A. and Margaret E. Raymond. 2006. "Early Rounds from School Accountability." In *Generational Change: Closing the Test Score Gap*, ed. Paul E. Peterson, 143-166. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Harriston, Keith. 1987. "Pr. George's Poll Finds Satisfaction with Police, but Brutality Perception Remains." *Washington Post*, July 30.
- Hedges, Larry V. and Amy Nowell. 1998. "Black-White test Score Convergence since 1965." In *The Black-White Test Score Gap*, ed. Christopher Jencks and Meredith Phillips, 149-181. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Helderman, Rosalind S. 2008. "Pr. George's Faces Gap of \$100 Million Next Year." *Washington Post*, January 12.
- Helderman, Rosalind S. and Nelson Hernandez. 2008a. "At Budget Time, County Council Gets a Shopping List." *Washington Post*, May 15.
- , 2008b. "Timing of School Headquarters Move in Pr. George's is Criticized by Some." *Washington Post*, May 26, 2008: Metro B1.
- , 2009. "Pr. George's Education Funds Face Possible Cut; Senate Tells Board to Drop New Office or Lose \$36 Million." *Washington Post*, April 3.
- Henig, Jeffrey R. 2004. "Washington, D.C.: Race, Issue Definition, and School Board Restructuring." In *Mayors in the Middle: Politics, Race, and Mayoral Control of Urban Schools*, ed. Jeffrey R. Henig and Wilbur C. Rich, 191-218. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Henig, Jeffrey R., Richard Hula, Marion Orr, and Desiree S. Pedescleaux. 1999. *The Color of School Reform: Race, Politics, and the Challenge of Urban Education*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Henry, Neil. 1979. "Martin Suspended as NAACP Chief in P.G.; National NAACP Chairman Suspends Martin in P.G." *Washington Post*, March 9.
- Hernandez, Nelson. 2006a. "Partisanship Decried in School Elections; Lawmakers Gave Endorsements." *Washington Post*, October 19.
- , 2006b. "New School Board, Power-Sharing Voted." *Washington Post*, November 9.
- , 2006c. "New Education Board Vows to Work, Not Bicker; Elected Stewards of Huge School System Replace Appointees as Democratic party Dominates County Offices in Balloting." *Washington Post*, November 16.
- , 2006d. "Final Tally Proclaims a Different Winner." *Washington Post*, November 21.
- , 2007a. "Prince George's PTA Council Has Charter Revoked." *Washington Post*, June 8.

- 2007b. "Deasy Gets Raise After Evaluation by Board; Schools Chief's Leadership Praised." *Washington Post*, July 10.
- 2007c. "Deasy Points to Success, Previews Schools' Hurdles." *Washington Post*, October 10.
- 2008a. "Education Board Approves \$36 Million Headquarter; Move Would Come Amid Pr. George's Budget Shortfall." *Washington Post*, June 28.
- 2008b. "Pr. George's Schools Chief's PhD Under Scrutiny." *Washington Post*, September 11.
- 2008c. "Interim Chief Takes the Schools' Helm; Hite Seen by Some as Deasy's Double." *Washington Post*, October 5.
- 2008d. "Tall Order for New Schools Chief; Fiscal Woes Add to Challenges in Pr. George's." *Washington Post*, December 1.
- 2008e. "Headquarters Move Bugs State Officials; Lawmakers Cite Troubled Economy, Press Board to be Honest about Costs." *Washington Post*, December 10.
- 2008f. "Md. Senate Leader Objects to School Building Plan." *Washington Post*, December 13.
- 2009a. "'You're Playing with People's Lives'; A Proposal to Save \$11.9 Million by Closing Some Schools, Realigning the Boundaries of Others and Shifting Some Programs Sparks Outrage." *Washington Post*, February 12.
- 2009b. "Doubts About Deal in Prince George's; School Headquarters Plan Scrutinized." *Washington Post*, February 20.
- 2009c. "Hite Top Prospect to Lead School; Pr. George's Seeks to End Turnover." *Washington Post*, March 7.
- 2009d. "Pr. George's Board to Close 8 Schools, Alter Several Others." *Washington Post*, March 27.
- Hernandez, Nelson and Daniel De Vise. 2006. "State Board Reprimands System Over Test Scores; Officials are Ordered to Improve Academics." *Washington Post*, October 26.
- Hernandez, Nelson and Michael Birnbaum. 2009. "Pr. George's Schools' Revolving Door May Finally Stop." *Washington Post*, April 4.
- Hernandez, Nelson and Ovetta Wiggins. 2009. "School Board Seeks Input on Redrawing Boundaries." *Washington Post*, March 12.
- Hernandez, Nelson and Rosalind S. Helderman. 2008. "Support for Parent Liaisons Delays Vote on \$1.68 Billion School Budget." *Washington Post*, February 28.

- Hernandez, Nelson, Ovetta Wiggins and Rosalind S. Helderman. 2008. "County Must Submit New School Construction Request." *Washington Post*, December 18.
- Hess, Frederick M. 1999. *Spinning Wheels: the Politics of Urban School Reform*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Hill, Paul T., Christine Campbell, and James Harvey. 2000. *It Takes a City: Getting Serious about Urban School Reform*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution.
- Hill, Retha. 1994a. "In Md. Governor's Race, Widely Diverging Paths to School Reform." *Washington Post*, October 23.
- . 1994b. "Students Closer to State Goals, Test Results Show." *Washington Post*, December 15.
- Hite, William R. 2009a. "Revised FY 2010 Operating Budget & Approved Economic Stimulus Package." Upper Marlboro, MD: PGCPSS, February 18.
- . 2009b. "FY 2010 Budget Reconciliation." Upper Marlboro, MD: PGCPSS, June 25.
- Hite, William R. and Derek Mitchell. 2009. "Prince George's County-wide Boundary Review." Upper Marlboro, MD: PGCPSS, January 8, 2009.
- Homan, Richard. 1965. "Baggett's Politics Reflect County's Change." *Washington Post*, December 17.
- Honawar, Vaishali. 2000. "Area Voters Decide on Hunting Rights, Term Limits and Lottery." *Washington Times*, November 8.
- . 2003. "PG Eyes 3 for Schools CEO Post; Critics Fault Their Qualifications." *Washington Times*, March 7.
- Hornsby, Andre J. 2004a. "Prince George's County Public Schools Fiscal Status." Annapolis, MD: PGCPSS, February 10.
- . 2004b. "CEO's Comprehensive Recommendations on Magnet Programs." Upper Marlboro, MD : PGCPSS, February 12.
- Hyslop, Margie and Vaishali Honawar. 2002. "House to Get Bill Aimed at Metts Firing." *Washington Times*, February 9.
- Interagency Committee on School Construction. 2010. "Summary of Project Requests & Approvals FY 2010." *Maryland Public School Construction Program*. May 6. <http://www.pscp.state.md.us/cip/2010/Section%20XIII%20Summary%20of%20FY%202010%20Project%20Requests%20and%20Approvals.pdf> (accessed May 16, 2010).
- "An Interview with Nancy Grasmick; Md. Schools Chief Hopes to Stay the Course on Reform." 1994. *Washington Post*, August 25.

- Interview with Beatrice Tignor. 2002. "Questions and Answers." *Washington Post*, November 10, 2002.
- Ipka, V. W. 2003. "At Risk Children in Resegregated Schools: An Analysis of the Achievement Gap." *Journal of Instructional Psychology* 30, no.4: 294-304.
- Ita, Eyobong. 2000. "Election of PTA Council President in Jeopardy." *Gazette*, August, 24.
- Jencks, Christopher and Merdith Phillips, ed. 1998. *The Black-White Test Score Gap*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Johnson Administration. 2004. *Prince George's County, Maryland 2004 Annual Report: Looking Back...Moving Forward*. Upper Marlboro, MD: Prince George's County Government.
- Johnson, Valerie C. 2002. *Black Power in the Suburbs: The Myth or Reality of African American Suburban Political Incorporation*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.
- Keane, Carole Portas and Kola K. Sunmohu. 2007. *SY2006-2007 School Climate Survey: District-wide Report*. Research Report, Upper Marlboro, MD: Division of Accountability, Department of Research and Evaluation, June.
- Keary, Jim. 1994. "White and Black Voters Give Win to PG's Curry." *Washington Times*, September 15.
- Kennedy, Eugene F. 2002. "Look Inside the Beltway I Want... Letter to the Editor." *Washington Post*, August 15.
- Key, Jr., V. O. 1958. *Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell.
- King, Megan. 2008a. "Deasy Resignation a Shocker." *Gazette*, October 2.
- , 2008b. "Miller Blasts School System's Capital Improvement Requests: State Senate President Says County Leaders Playing Politics with School Construction." *Gazette*, December 12.
- , 2008c. "County Asked to Revise List of School Construction Priorities: State Senate President Says County Leaders Playing Politics with School Construction." *Gazette*, December 16.
- , 2008d. "Nearly 900 County School Jobs May be Cut Next Year." *Gazette*, December 18.
- , 2009a. "Johnson Seeks to Cut Additional \$23.6M from Schools." *Gazette*, March 26.
- , 2009b. "School Leaders Navigate Budget, Politics: Officials Maintain Right Decision was Made on New Headquarters." *Gazette*, April 23.

- 2009c. "County Makes Case for School Funding Waiver." *Gazette*, April 27.
- 2009d. "Teachers Ask Council to Prevent Further School System Cuts." *Gazette*, May 13.
- King, Megan and Natalie McGill. 2009. "School Board Makes Switch on School Closure List." *Gazette*, February 19.
- Kingdon, John W. 1984. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co.
- Krause, Charles A. 1973. "Pr. George's Conservative Slate Wins." *Washington Post, Times Herald*, November 7.
- 1974. "Pr. George's Democrats Try to Form Harmony Slate." *Washington Post*, April 16.
- Krughoff, Alexander. 2002a. "Group Hopes to Put Appointed School Board to Vote." *Gazette*, May 16.
- "2002b. Tutman Heads PTA Council." *Gazette*, June 21.
- 2002c. "Board Asks Metts t Tie Budget to Master Plan." *Gazette*, December 12.
- 2002d. "Old Problems with Metts' Leadership Now Resurfacing." *Gazette*, December 19.
- 2003a. "Schools CEO Selected." *Gazette*, April 3.
- 2003b. "Reassignment of Nine Principals Will Not be The End for Schools or Chief." *Gazette*, August 22.
- 2003c. "Johnson Aims to Get Parents Involved in Education." *Gazette*, September 5.
- 2003d. "Change on the Way." *Gazette*, September 12.
- Kurtz, Josh. 2002. "Wynn's Wins; King of Prince George's; Consolidating Power at Home, Wynn May Face Strongest Foe Yet." *Roll Call*, December 9 Monday.
- Lacy, Karyn R. 2007. *Blue Chip Black: Race, Class, and Status in the New Black Middle Class*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Landers, Jim. "1973. 11 Pr. George's Schools 50 Pct. Black." *Washington Post, Times Herald*, October 27.
- Lawson, Hal A., Nancy Claiborne, Eric Hardiman, Sandra Austin, and Michael Surko. 2007. "Deriving Theories of Change from Successful Community Development

- Partnerships for Youths: Implications for School Improvement." *American Journal of Education* 114, (November): 1-40.
- Lee, Angela Swinson. 2004a. "Hornsby Praised, Critiqued on First Year." *Gazette*, June 25.
- 2004b. "Schools Announce New Principals, Executive Branch." *Gazette*, July 21.
- 2004c. "Hornsby Looks Back, Plans for Second Year." *Gazette*, July 22.
- 2004d. "Hornsby Calls Criticism of His Communication Unfair." *Gazette*, August 4.
- 2004e. "Schools Withhold Figures." *Gazette*, August 5.
- 2004f. "Overcrowding Debate Continues as Task Force Forum is Planned." *Gazette*, September 3.
- 2004g. "CEO Concerns Focus on Relationship, Trip." *Gazette*, October 21.
- 2004h. ""Here We Go Again"." *Gazette*, October 21.
- 2004i. "Changes Proposed for Parent Group." *Gazette*, December 22.
- Lee, Ellen. 2000a. "Metts Told to Rescind Bonuses to Deputies; Payments Beyond Her Authority, Board Says." *Washington Post*, August 17.
- 2000b. "State PTA Disbands Pr. George's Affiliate." *Washington Post*, October 10.
- Lee, Jaekyung. 2006. *Tracking Achievement Gaps and Assessing the Impact of NCLB on the Gaps: An In-depth Look into National and State Reading and Math Outcome Trends*. Cambridge: The Civil Rights Project, Harvard University, June.
- Lee, Valerie and Julia Smith. 1997. "High School Size: What Works Best for Whom?" *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 19: 205-227.
- Leff, Lisa. 1991a. "As P.G. Numbers Change, Some are Refiguring Busing." *Washington Post*, January 20.
- 1991b. "Pr. George's to Close Schools 3 Days to Trim Deficit." *Washington Post*, November 16.
- 1993a. "For Schools, Court Order Provided No Shortcut to Excellence." *Washington Post*, September 13.
- 1993b. "Mistrust, High Costs Conspire Against Alternatives." *Washington Post*, September 14.
- Leonard, Guy. 2005a. "School Board's Wait-and See Approach Angers Residents." *Gazette*, May 4.
- 2005b. "Prince George's School Board Was in Dark on Hornsby Report." *Gazette*, June 10.

- . 2005c. "Groups Push to Halt Selection of School's CEO." *Gazette*, August 23
- . 2005d. "New County PTA Leadership Must Reconcile Audits." *Gazette*, August 23.
- . 2006a. "Deasy: Solutions , Not Race, Are main Focus." *Gazette*, February 23.
- . 2006b. "Deasy: Schools Need at Least Eight Years to Improve." *Gazette*, March 2.
- . 2006c. "New Schools CEO Deasy Preparing Battle Plan." *Gazette*, April 6.
- . 2006d. "Slates Likely to Determine the Outcome of Prince George's School Board Election." *Gazette*, April 21.
- . 2006e. "Tignor Offers Advice to Incoming School Board." *Gazette*, November 16.
- Letters. 2001. "Letters Exchanged Between Grasmick, Officials." *Washington Post*, July 26.
- Levin, Ben and Michael Fullan. 2008. "Learning about System Renewal." *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*. Vol. 36 (2): 289-303.
- Lindblom, Charles E. 1977. *Politics and Markets: The World's Political-Economic Systems*. New York: Basic Books.
- Lipton, Eric. 1998. "School System Beset by Problems: Among Them are Poor Test Scores, Uncertified Teachers, Leadership." *Washington Post*, June 21.
- Logan, John R. 2001. *The New Ethnic Enclaves in America's Suburbs*. Albany: Lewis Mumford Center, State University of New York.
- MacGillis, Alec. 2004a. "Pitching the Quick Fix; Education Software Companies Zero In on Schools Pressured to Improve by the No Child Left Behind Law--with Potential Downsides for the Neediest Students Series: Poor Schools, Rich Targets--First in a Series." *Baltimore Sun*, September 19.
- . 2004b. "Schools Chief Took Junket Paid by Seller of Software; Prince George's Considers Big Contract with Sponsor." *Baltimore Sun*, September 25.
- . 2004c. "Sales Rep's Ties to Schools CEO Raise Issues in Software Deal; Prince George's Official Backed \$1 Million Contract." *Baltimore Sun*, October 14.
- . 2004d. "FBI, U.S. Attorney Open Investigation into Prince George's Public School's CEO; Latest Probe of Hornsby Added to Growing List of Inquiries." *Baltimore Sun*, November 5.
- . 2004e. "Exit Sparks New Probe of Pr. George's Schools Chief; Hornsby's Girlfriend, Second Saleswoman Leave." *Baltimore Sun*, December 16.
- Malen, Betty, Kim Basinger, Rquel L. Gonzalez, and Ann Nutter. 2007. *Urgent Work in Progress: The First Year of the ISIS Initiative*. Upper Marlboro, Md: Prince George's County Public Schools, September 25.

- Marquand, Robert. 1987. "Magnet 'School of Choice' System." *Christian Science Monitor*, October 2: 19.
- Maryland Budget & Tax Policy Institute. 2007. "Final Action on Maryland's FY2008 Budget." *Maryland Policy Reports* 7, No. 2, Silver Spring, MD.
- Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development. 2009. "Brief Economic Facts, Prince George's County." *Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation.com*. <http://www.pgcedc.com/docs/common/bef0910.pdf> (accessed December 22, 2010).
- Maryland Department of Budget & Management. 2009. "Maryland FY2010 Budget Highlights." Annapolis, MD, January 21.
- Maryland Department of Planning. 2002. "Black and White Neighborhood Concentrations: 2000 & 1990." *Maryland State Data Center/ Prince George's*. February. http://www.mdp.state.md.us/msdc/census/Cen2000/Housing_Patterns/prin9000t.pdf (accessed April 13, 2009).
- Maryland House Ways and Means Committee. 2009. "Prince George's County - Board of Education - Expenditures PG 407-09 ." Annapolis, MD, April 4.
- Maryland State Board of Education. 1980. *State of Maryland 114th Annual Report: A Statistical Review for the Year Ending June 30, 1980*. Annual Report, Baltimore: Maryland State Department of Education.
- 2009. "Opinion In Re Waiver Request of Prince George's County Before the Maryland State Board." *Fiscal Year 2010 Maintenance of Effort Waiver Request No. 2009-2*. Annapolis, MD, May 15.
- Maryland State Board of Elections. 2002. *Monthly Voter Registration Activity Report yearly reports*. www.elections.state.md.us/voter_registration/monthly.html (accessed May 23, 2009).
- 2008. *Monthly Voter Registration Activity Report yearly reports*. www.elections.state.md.us/voter_registration/monthly.html (accessed May 23, 2009).
- Maryland State Department of Education. 1998. *Maryland School Performance Report 1998 State and School Systems*. Baltimore: MSDE.
- 2002. *Maryland School Performance Report 2002: State and School Systems*. Baltimore: MSDE.
- 2003. *The Fact Book 2001-2002 A Statistical Handbook*. Baltimore: Division of Business Services.

- , 2009. *2009 Maryland State Report Card*.
<http://www.mdreportcard.org/supporting/definitions.aspx?WDATA=def&inc=ayp>
 (accessed May 19, 2010).
- , 2009. "A Parent's Guide to the MSA." *Maryland Classroom* 13, no. 1. Baltimore:
 Maryland State Department of Education, July.
- , 2010. *2010 Maryland State Report Card*. <http://www.mdreportcard.org/index.aspx>
 (accessed January 7, 2011)
- Maryland State Education That Is Multicultural Advisory Council. 1998. *Minority
 Achievement in Maryland: The State of the State Final Report*. Baltimore, MD:
 Maryland State Department of Education. September.
- "Marylanders of the Year: School Reform: Grasmick, Sondheim and Rawlings have
 Played Crucial Roles in Moving Public Schools Toward the 21st Century." 1997.
Baltimore Sun, December 28.
- Massey, Douglas S. and Nancy A. Denton. 1987. "Trends in the Residential Segregation
 of Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians: 1970-1980." *American Sociological Review* 52
 (December): 802-825.
- Massey, Douglas S. and Zoltan Hajnal. 1995. "The Changing Geographic Structure of
 Black-White Segregation in the United States." *Social Science Quarterly* 76, no. 3
 (September): 527-642.
- Mathews, Jay. 2008. "Deasy's Departure Hints of Friction with Board." *Washington Post*,
 October 13.
- McBee, Susan. 1978. "Prop 13 Spawns Tax-Curb on 16 State Ballots." *Washington Post*,
 November 1.
- McCombs, Philip A. and Grayson Mitchell. 1973. "First Week of Busing Ends."
Washington Post, Times Herald, February 3.
- McGill, Natalie. 2009. "Parents Raise Concerns About Relocating Pullen Students."
Gazette, February 12.
- McGuinn, Patrick J. 2006. *No Child Left Behind and the Transformation of Federal
 Education Policy, 1965-2005*. Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press.
- McNabb, David E. 2010. *Research Methods for Political Science: Quantitative and
 Qualitative Approaches 2nd Edition*. New York: M.E. Sharpe.
- McQueen, Michel and Margaret Shapiro. 1983. "Tax Revolt Stirs P.G.; Despite Doubts,
 County Politicians Feared to Oppose Popular Initiative." *Washington Post*,
 August 15.
- McQueen, Michel. 1984. "Power and Politics in Pr. George's; Impact of Jackson Victory
 Debated." *Washington Post*, May 14.

- Meier, Kenneth J. 2004. "Structure, Politics, and Policy: The Logic of Mayoral Control." In *Mayors in the Middle: Politics, Race, and Mayoral Control of Urban Schools*, ed. Jeffrey R. Henig and Wilbur C. Rich, 221-231. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Mercurio, John. 1995. "Battle Over PG School Budget May Go to Court." *Washington Times*, March 31.
- Merkowitz, David. 2006. "Commentary: Slates May Determine Board Members." *Gazette*, August 17.
- Meszoly, Robin. 1979. "P.G. School Board Eliminates 550 Jobs, Junior High Sports." *Washington Post*, June 5.
- "Metro; In Brief." 2002. *Washington Post*, November 11.
- Metts, Iris Interview with Nancy Trejos of *Washington Post*. 2003. "'It Became Very Clear to Me That...It was Time'." *Washington Post*, February 13.
- Metts, Iris T. 2003. "FY 2004 Superintendent's Proposed Budget." Upper Marlboro, MD: PGCPs, January.
- Meyer, Eugene L. 1977. "Peter O'Malley: Political Kingpin of Prince George's 'Symbol of Democrats' Faces Off for '78 Race." *Washington Post*, July 17.
- 1992. "Voters Held Their Fire on Taxes, but Reached Their Limit on Terms." *Washington Post*, November 5.
- 1994a. "73 State Assembly Candidates Create Free-for-All." *Washington Post*, July 14.
- 1994b. "Senate Race Fires Up in the 25th." *Washington Post*, September 1.
- 1994c. "Election Reflects a Changing P.G.; Voters Face New Names, Issues in County with Black Majority." *Washington Post*, September 14.
- 1998. "Enmity Grows from Planter Dividing Subdivisions; In Predominantly Black Prince George's Neighborhoods, Some Say Barrier Sparks Class Rivalry." *Washington Post*, February 2.
- 2001. "Leaders, Activists Get Ready for TRIM Battle; School Board Taking Tax Cap to Court." *Washington Post*, October 4.
- Meyer, Eugene L. and Peter Behr. 1997. "In Prince George's, 2 Steps Up, 1 Step Back; High-Profile Businesses Moving to County, But Job Development Isn't Keeping Pace." *Washington Post*, June 16.
- MGT of America, Inc. 2008. *An Evaluation of the Effect of Increased State Aid to Local School Systems Through the Bridge to Excellence Act Final Report (Volume I)*. Baltimore: Maryland State Department of Education. December 19.

- Milloy, Courtland. 2006. "A New Refrain in Prince George's." *Washington Post*, February 19.
- Montgomery County Office of Management and Budget. 2009. *Approved FY2010 Operating Budget*. Rockville, MD: Montgomery County Government.
- Montgomery, David. 1996. "Campaigns Near the Last Accounting; Prince George's; Hard Facts Show No Easy Answers to TRIM Question." *Washington Post*, November 3.
- Montgomery, David and Terry M. Neal. 1996. "In P.G., a New School of Thought; Evolving Views on Race, Segregation Lead to Busing Consensus." *Washington Post*, July 28.
- Montgomery, Lori and Tracy A. Reeves. 2002. "New Pr. George' Board Endorsed; County's Senators Support Appointed Schools Panel." *Washington Post*, April 2.
- Mosk, Matthew and Nurith C. Aizenman. 2002. "Delegates Pin Funds to Change in Board; Pr. George's Lawmakers Call School Bill Blackmail." *Washington Post*, March 24.
- Mountford, Meredith. 2004. "Motives and Power of School Board Members: Implications for School Board-Superintendent Relationships." *Educational Administration Quarterly* 40: 704.
- Mossberger, Karen and Gerry Stoker. 2001. "The Evolution of Urban Regime Theory: The Challenge of Conceptualization." *Urban Affairs Review* 36, no. 6 (July): 810-835.
- Nakamura, David. 1999a. "Prince George's Superintendent to Retire; Clark Defends Troubled Record but Decides Against Fight for New Contract." *Washington Post*, February 2.
- . 1999b. "A Voice of Influence in Pr. George's; Head of Schools Oversight Panel at Center of Takeover Debate." *Washington Post*, February 8.
- . 1999c. "Pr. George's Schools Tap Del. Official." *Washington Post*, June 17.
- . 1999d. "Metts Puts Her Earnings on the Line; New Superintendent Vows to Get Results." *Washington Post*, June 18.
- . 1999e. "Consultants May Join Pr. George's School Staff; Metts Wants Them to be Her Deputies." *Washington Post*, July 21.
- . 2000a. "Renewed Infighting Roils School Board in Prince George's." *Washington Post*, August 1.
- . 2000b. "Schools Chief Often Acts First, Asks Later; Metts Style Shuts Some Out." *Washington Post*, August 20.
- . 2000c. "A Board Distracted by Dysfunction; In Pr. George's, Bickering of School Leaders Often Drowns Out Reform Debate." *Washington Post*, September 25.

- 2000d. "Pr. George's County School Board Grilled; Lawmakers Blast Conduct, Spending." *Washington Post*, October 4.
- 2001a. "Schools' Oversight Panel May Get Boost; Lawmakers Slam Pr. George's Board." *Washington Post*, February 2.
- 2001b. "Lawsuits on School Bonuses in Works; Metts Aides Fail to Repay Money." *Washington Post*, March 11.
- 2001c. "Pr. George's Battle Creates Test of Resolve; School Board Chairman Unapologetic for Style." *Washington Post*, June 17.
- 2001d. "Metts's Deputies Can Keep Bonuses; Superintendent Reaches Agreement with School Board." *Washington Post*, June 22.
- 2001e. "State Warns Pr. George's Schools; Official Threatens to Withhold Funds over Management Problems." *Washington Post*, July 18.
- 2001f. "Metts Calls lawyer on Review's Release; School Chief Denies She'll Seek Buyout." *Washington Post*, July 31.
- Nakamura, David and Robert E. Pierre. 1999. "Pr. George's Chided on School Reform; Head of State Oversight panel Says officials Appear Headed in 'Wrong Direction'." *Washington Post*, January 22.
- National Center for Education Statistics. U. S. Department of Education. 2005. *The Nation's Report Card. NAEP 2004 Trends in Academic Progress: Three Decades of Student Performance in Reading and Mathematics*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- 2007. "Indicator 14 Trends in the Achievement Gaps in Reading and Mathematics." *The Condition of Education 2007* (NCES 2007-064). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Neal, Terry M. 1995. "P.G. School Board Takes Budget Fight to Court." *Washington Post*, May 4.
- 1997. "Pr. George's Wants a Deal Like Baltimore's--or Else." *Washington Post*, January 25.
- Niemann, Doyle. 2001. "Our School System Is at Stake." *Washington Post*, June 19.
- Norris, Michele L. 1988. "P.G. Schools Just Short of Desegregation Goals; 81.4% of Students Fall within Plan's Guidelines." *Washington Post*, November 16.
- Office of Policy Analysis. 2009. Department of Legislative Services. Maryland General Assembly. "Maintenance of Effort Requirements for Education." *Presentation to the Joint Legislative Workgroup to Study, State, County, and Municipal Fiscal Relationships*. Annapolis, MD: Department of Legislative Services. November 5.

- Ogbu, John U. 2003. *Black American Students in an Affluent Suburb: A Study of Academic Disengagement*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Orfield, Gary, Susan Eaton and the Harvard Project on School Desegregation. 1996. *Dismantling Desegregation: The Quite Reversal of Brown v. Board of Education*. New York: The New Press.
- Orfield, Myron. 1999. *Washington Metropolitcs: A Regional Agenda for Community and Stability*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.
- Orr, Marion. 1999. *Black Social Capital: The Politics of School Reform in Baltimore, 1986-1998*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas.
- Orr, Marion E. and Gerry Stocker. 1994. "Urban Regimes and Leadership in Detroit." *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 30, no.1 (September): 48-73.
- Osnos, Peter. 1968. "County Democrats Organize Coalition." *Washington Post*, November 23.
- Paige, Rod and Elaine Witty. 2010. *The Black-White Achievement Gap: Why Closing It is the Greatest Civil Rights Issue of Our Time*. New York: AMACOM American Management Association.
- Paik, Susan J. and Herbert J. Walberg, Editors. 2007. *Narrowing the Achievement Gap: Strategies for Educating Latino, Black and Asian Students*. New York: Springer.
- Pan, Philip P. 1998. "School Panel's Report is Setback for Pr. George's." *Washington Post*, January 6.
- Parker, Loanne O'Neal. 2007. "Bilingual Summit Targets Parents; Sessions Aim to Get Parents Involved." *Washington Post*, October 7.
- Parsons 3D/International. 2008. *3D/I Report*. Upper Marlboro, MD: Prince George's County Public Schools.
- Pattillo, Mary. 2005. "Black Middle class Neighborhoods." *Annual Review of Sociology* 31: 305-29.
- Pearl, Susan G. 1996. *African-American Heritage Survey, 1996*. Upper Marlboro, MD: The Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission.
- Pearlstein, Steven. 2007. "Sorry State of a County." *Washington Post*, April 27.
- Pedescleaux, Desiree, Jorge Ruiz-de-Velasco, Lana Stein, and Clarence Stone. 1994. "Urban Education as an Arena of Reform." Paper presented at the annual meeting for the American Political Science Association, September 1-4 in New York City.
- Perez-Rivas, Neal Terry M. and Manuel. "1996. Pr. George's Caps Taxes Even Tighter; Montgomery Rejects Ficker's Call for a Cut." *Washington Post*, November 6.

- Pierre, Robert E. 1995. "Curry, School Board Reach Tentative Deal on Education Funding." *Washington Post*, May 31.
- , 1999. "Pr. George's School Takeover threat Brings Hard Lesson; Instead of laying Blme, Officials Say, focus Must Be on Putting System on Track." *Washington Post*, February 1.
- Pierre, Robert E. and Amy Argetsinger. 1999. "Twin Threats Face School Officials in Pr. George's." *Washinton Post*, January 27.
- Pierre, Robert E. and David Nakamura. 1999. "Md. Lawmaker Blasts Pr. George's Schools." *Washington Post*, January 23.
- Portz, John, Lana Stein and Robin R. Jones. 1999. *City Schools and City Politics: Institutions and Leadership in Pittsburg, Boston, and St. Louis*. Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press.
- Potomac Incorporated. 2003. *Business Education Alliance Prince george's County Voter Survey: Detailed Findings*. College Park, MD: Prince George's Business Education Alliance, June.
- Prince George's Business-Education Alliance. n.d. *Prince George's Business-Education Alliance*. <http://www.pgbea.org/index.html> (accessed June 18, 2009).
- , 2003. "Research." *Prince George's Business-Education Alliance*. June. http://www.pgbea.org/03_Executive_Summary.pdf (accessed December 3, 2009).
- , 2004. "Investing in Our Future: Education and the Economy in Prince George's County." *A Report on the Prince George's Business-Education Summit*. College Park, MD: Prince George's Business-Education Alliance. December 4.
- Prince George's County Board of Education. 1965. *A Century of Public Edcuation in Prince George's County 1865-1965*. Annual Report 1965-1966, Upper Marlboro: Prince George's County Public Schools.
- , 2003. " Prince George's County Board of Education Announces New Cheif Executive officer (CEO)." *Press Release*. Upper Marlboro, Md: Prince George's County Public Schools, April 2.
- , 2004. "Minutes, April 29, 2004 Board Meeting." Upper Marlboro, Md: Prince George's County Public Schools, April 29.
- , 2006a. *Bridge to Excellence Master Plan: 2006 Annual Update*. Annual Report, Upper Marlboro, MD: Prince George's County Public Schools, October.
- , 2006b. "Decmeber 14, 2006 Board Minutes." Upper Marlboro, Md.: PGCPS, December 14.

- 2006c. "Board of Education and Superintendent Begin New Year Building Positive Working Relationship ." *Press Release*. Upper Marlboro, MD: Prince George's County Public Schools, December 29.
- 2007a. "Board of Education Reorganizes Office to Provide Better Constituent Service." *Press Release*. Upper Marlboro, MD: PGCPS, January 29.
- 2007b. "Board of Education Announces Superintendent's Annual Evaluation." *Press Release*. Upper Marlboro, MD: Prince George's County Public Schools, July, 9.
- 2008a. "Board of Education Requested FY2009 Annual Operating Budget July 1, 2008-June 30, 2009." Upper Marlboro, MD: PGCPS, February 26.
- 2008b. "Work Session Minutes." Upper Marlboro, MD: Prince George's County Public Schools, March 13.
- 2008c. *Approved Capital Improvement Program for the Funding Years 2010-2015*. Upper Marlboro, MD: Prince George's County Public Schools, September, 16.
- 2008d. "Minutes September 16, 2008." Upper Marlboro, MD: PGCPS, September 16.
- 2008e. "Board of Education Recognizes School Parent Liaisons." Upper Marlboro, Md: Prince George's County Public Schools, October 6.
- 2008f. "Prince George's County Board of Education Announces Transition to Interim Superintendent." Upper Marlboro, MD: PGCPS, October 23.
- 2008g. "Washington Plaza Fact Sheet." Upper Marlboro, MD: PGCPS, December 19.
- 2009a. "FY 2010 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Supplemental Request." *Board Resolution 657-09*. Upper Marlboro, MD, January 22.
- 2009b. "After Massive Public Input Effort, Board of Education Delbeartes on Top Traits and Characteristics for a New Superintendent." Upper Marlboro, MD: PGCPS, February 13.
- 2009c. "Board of Education Approves School System's FY 2010 Requested Operating Budget." *Press Release*. Upper Marlboro, MD: PGCPS, February 27.
- 2009d. "Minutes March 7, 2009 Phase I Work Session." Upper Marlboro, MD: PGCPS, March 7.
- 2009e. "Board of Education Votes to Expand Educational Choices, Consolidate Under-Enrolled Schools." *Press Release*. Upper Marlboro, MD: Prince George's County Public Schools, March 26.

- 2009f. "Board of Education Names William R. Hite, Jr. as New Superintendent of Schools." *Press Release*. Upper Marlboro: Prince George's County Public Schools, April 3.
- 2009g. "Minutes April 21, 2009 Special Meeting to Approve Proposed Boundaries." Upper Marlboro, MD: PGCPSS, April 21.
- 2009h. "Board of Education Approves School Boundaries: Attendance Zones Set to Expand Choice, Better Utilize Space Next School Year." *Press Release*. Upper Marlboro, MD: Prince George's County Public Schools, April 22.
- 2009i. "Minutes May 18, 2009 Board Meeting." Upper Marlboro, MD, May 18.
- 2009j. "Minutes June 15, 2009 Board Meeting." Upper Marlboro, MD: PGCPSS, June 15.
- 2009k. "Minutes June 25, 2009 Board Meeting." Upper Marlboro, MD: PGCPSS, June 25.
- 2009l. "Board of Education Approved Annual Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2010 July1, 2009-June 30, 2010." Upper Marlboro, MD: PGCPSS, September.

Prince George's County Board of Elections. 2006. *2006 Official Election Results Summary*. November 22.
<http://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/Government/AgencyIndex/Elections/results.asp> (accessed September 5, 2010).

Prince George's County Delegation. 2002. "HB949 Prince George's County School System - Education - Management , Governance, and Financing PG 415-02." Annapolis, MD: Maryland General Assembly, House Ways and Means Committee, February 8.

----- 2005a. "HB1103 Prince George's County--Parent and Community Advisory Board PG 413-5." Annapolis, MD: Maryland General Assembly, House Ways and Means Committee, February 11, 2005.

----- 2005b. "HB 1117 Prince George's County - Board of Education - Election of Members PG 409-05 ." *Ways and Means*. Annapolis, Md: Maryland General Assembly, House Ways and Means Committee, February 11, 2005.

----- 2005c. "HB 1123 Prince George's County- Board of Education-Districts and Membership PG 401-05." Annapolis, Md: Maryland General Assembly, House Ways and Means Committee, February 11, 2005.

----- 2006. "HB1360 Prince George's County--Board of Education--Election of Members PG 401-06." Annapolis, MD: Maryland General Assembly, House Ways and Means Committee, March 15.

- 2008. "HB1041 Prince George's County-Board of Education PG 401-08. Annapolis, Md: Maryland General Assembly, House Ways and Means Committee, February 7.
- 2009. "HB 958 Prince George's County - Public School Construction - Joint Signature Letter and State Funding PG 404-09." Annapolis, MD: Maryland General Assembly, House Ways and Means Committee, February 13.
- Prince George's County Department of Planning, The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. 2004. "Planning Department On-Line Publications." *Prince George's County Planning Department*. September. <http://www.pgplanning.org/Resources/Publications.htm> (accessed March 21, 2006).
- Prince George's County Government. 2010. "Livable Communities Initiative." *Prince George's County, Maryland*. May 28. <http://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/> (accessed June 1, 2010).
- Prince George's County Office of Management and Budget. 2009. *Approved Budget FY2010*. Upper Marlboro, MD: Prince George's County.
- Prince George's County Public Schools. 1998. *Master Plan 1998-2000*. Upper Marlboro, MD.
- 2002. *2002 Maryland School Performance Program Report: State, School System and Schools PGCPs*. Annual Report, Upper Marlboro, MD: Prince George's County Public Schools.
- 2009. "Prince George's County Boundary Review Expansion of New School Options & School Consolidation Recommendations." Upper Marlboro, MD: PGCPs, January 22.
- Prince George's County Task Force on Education Funding. 1996. "Report of the Prince George's County Task Force on Education Funding." Submitted to the Prince George's County Delegation to the Maryland General Assembly, Upper Marlboro, MD, March.
- Pupil Accounting and School Boundaries. Prince George's County Public Schools. n.d. "Documents Related to County-Wide Boundary Review." <http://www1.pgcp.org/WorkArea/showcontent.aspx?id=81202> (accessed May 24, 2009).
- Puriefoy, Wendy D. 2005. "The Education of Democratic Citizens: Citizen Mobilization and Public Education." In *The Public Schools*, ed Susan Fuhrman and Marvin Lazerson, 235-251. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Raspberry, William. 1998. "School Reform to Nowhere." *Washington Post*, March 27.

- Reed, Rodney J. 1991. "School Decentralization and Empowerment." In *Politics of Education Association Yearbook 1991*, ed. James G. Cibulka, Rodney J. Reed, and Kenneth K. Wong, 149-165. Washington, D.C.: Falmer Press.
- Reeves, Tracey A. 2000. "Parents Oppose Plan to Shift School Funds." *Washington Post*, August 10, 2000.
- 2002a. "Five Pr. George's Schools Added to State's Watch List; Institutions Put on Notice to Improve MSPAP Test Scores." *Washington Post*, January 30.
- 2002b. "An Outsider's Input Draws Fire; Rawlings a Player in School Struggle." *Washington Post*, February 6.
- Reeves, Tracey and David Nakamura. 2001. "4 More Pr. George's Schools Cited; Gaywood, Longfield, Johnson and Madison Join List Facing Threat of Takeover." *Washington Post*, February 1.
- Rich, Eric and Ovetta Wiggins. 2004. "FBI Probing Pr. George's Officials; Separate Investigations Scrutinize Council, Hornsby." *Washington Post*, November 6.
- Rich, Wilbur C. 1996. *Black Mayors and School Politics: The Failure of Reform in Detroit, Gary, and Newark*. New York: Garland Publishing.
- Robbins, Lindsey. 2010. "County Continues to Lead Md with Torrent of Foreclosures; Prince George's Records 881 Filings in First Quarter, and Bank-owned Homes Account for 35% of Sales." *Gazette*, July 15.
- Rothman, Robert. 2007. *City Schools: How Districts and Communities Can Create Smart Education Systems*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Rothstein, Richard. 2004. *Class and Schools: Using Social, Economic, and Educational Reform to Close the Black-White Achievement Gap*. Washington, D.C.: Economic Policy Institute & Teachers College.
- Rucker, Philip and Avis Thomas-Lester. 2007. "Shifting Migration Patterns Alter Portrait of Pr. George's." *Washington Post*, July 26.
- Sable, Jennifer, Chris Plotts, and Lindsey Mitchell. 2010. *Characteristics of the 100 Largest Public Elementary and Secondary School Districts in the United States: 2008-09 (NCES 2011-301)*. Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.
- Senate Committee on Education and Environment Affairs. 2006. "SB1094 Prince George's County--Board of Education--Membership." Annapolis, MD: Maryland General Assembly. April 7.
- Schwartzman, Paul. 2002a. "Maryland Lawmakers Clash on Pr. George's Schools; NAACP Vows to Fight State-Imposed Changes." *Washington Post*, January 10.

- . 2002b. "In Pr. George's, A Political Void; Term Limits, Ambitions Create Fre-for-All." *Washington Post*, January 14
- . 2002c. "House Panel Threatens Pr. George's School Aid." *Washington Post*, March 20.
- . 2002d. "For 6 Contenders, a High-Stakes Race; Schools, Crime, Development Pose Big Challenges for Candidates." *Washington Post*, May 23.
- . 2002e. "Politically Savvy Candidates Study Geography, Too; Beltway Divides Constituencies in Executive Race." *Washington Post*, June 13.
- . 2003. "Law Firm's Political Clout Wanes; New Leadership in Pr. George's Shakes Up Power Structure." *Washington Post*, August 3.
- Shapiro, Margaret. 1980. "P.G. Board Approves Plan to Reduce Busing; P.G. School Board Votes to Reduce Racial Busing." *Washington Post*, April 11.
- . 1981. "Blacks in the Suburbs: D.C. is Still Home." *Washington Post*, October 5.
- Shapiro, Margaret and Michel McQueen. 1983. "Tax Freeze Cuts County Services to the Bone in Prince George's." *Washington Post*, August 14.
- Shipp, Dorothy. 2003. "Pulling Together: Civic Capacity and Urban School Reform." *American Educational Research Journal* Winter 40, no 4: 841-878.
- . 2006. *School Reform, Corporate Style: Chicago, 1880-2000*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas.
- Singham, Mano. 2005. *The Achievement Gap in U.S. Education: Canaries in the Mine*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Sinha, Vandana. 2010. "University of Maryland May be Dimensions Healthcare Systems Savior." *Washington Business Journal*, May 24.
- Spinner, Jackie. 1997. "Curry Says School System Needs His Clout; 'I'm the Guy,' He Says, but Education Board Member has Doubts." *Washington Post*, December 23.
- Stone, Clarence N. 1989. *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta 1946-1988*. Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press.
- . 1993. "Urban Regime and the Capacity to Govern: A Political Economy Approach." *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 15, no 1: 1-28.
- . 1996. "The Politics of Urban School Reform: Civic Capacity, Social Capital, and the Intergroup Context." Paper presented at the annual meeting for the *American Political Science Association*, August 29-September 1 in San Francisco.
- . 1998. "Introduction: Urban Education in Political Context." In *Changing Urban Education*, ed. Clarence N. Stone, 1-20. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas.

- , 2001. "Civic Capacity and Urban Education." *Urban Affairs Review* 36, no 5 (May): 595-619.
- Stone, Clarence N., Jeffrey R. Henig, Bryan D. Jones, and Carol Pierannunzi. 2001. *Building Civic Capacity: The Politics of Reforming Urban Schools*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.
- Stone, Clarence, Kathryn Doherty, Cheryl Jones, and Timothy Ross. 1999. "Schools and Disadvantaged Neighborhoods: The Community Development Challenge." In *Urban Problems and Community Development*, ed. Ronald F. Ferguson and William T. Dickens, 339-380. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.
- Stone, Clarence N., Marion E. Orr, and David Imbroscio. 1991. "The Reshaping of Urban Leadership in U.S. Cities: A Regime Analysis." In *Urban Life in Transition vol. 39 Urban Affairs Annual Reviews*, ed. M. Gottdiener and Chris G. Pickvance, 222-239. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
- Stuckey, Tom. 2003. "Rawlings Played Key Role in Shaping Maryland's Fiscal Policy." *The Associated Press State & Local Wire*, November 14. <http://www.lexisnexis.com.proxy-m.researchport.umd.edu/hottopics/lnacademic/> (accessed November 16 2009).
- Swinson, Angela and Sonsyrea Tate. 2004. "Council Demands Apology from Hornsby." *Gazette*, June 9.
- Tallman, Douglas and Megan King. 2009a. "School Board Could Get More Money If Headquarters Stays Put: Senate Offers \$36 Million If Plans to Move from Upper Marlboro are Cancelled." *Gazette*, April 2.
- . 2009b. "Senate Targets Schools Headquarters: Lawmakers Mull Bill to Block System's Move to New Site." *Gazette*, April 9.
- Task Force on Education Funding Equity, Accountability, and Partnerships. 1998. "Preliminary Report." Annapolis, MD, January.
- Tate, Sonsyrea. 2004a. "Johnson Investigated Over Hospital Hiring." *Gazette*, May 7.
- , 2004b. "Council Members Grill Officials Over Requested Budgets." *Gazette*, May 27.
- Tate, Sonsyrea and Alexander Krughoff. 2003. "TRIM Splits Prince George's." *Gazette*, July 25.
- Thompson, Marilyn W. 1990. "P.G. Chamber Criticizes County on Development; Group Says Inside-Beltway Areas Ignored." *Washington Post*, May 19.
- Thornton, Alvin and Karen Willams Gooden. 1997. *Like a Phoenix I'll Rise: An Illustrated History of African American in Prince Georg's County Maryland, 1696-1996*. Virginia Beach, Virginia: The Donning Company/Publishers.

- Trejos, Nancy. 2001a. "For Pr. George's School Board, Exam Time; Lawmakers Look for More Progress and Less Conflict Among Education Leaders." *Washington Post*, November 6.
- . 2001b. "Lawmakers Poised to Alter Pr. George's School Board; 8 Bills Differ in Scope, But Effort Gains Support." *Washington Post*, November 18.
- . 2001c. "Metts's Grant Use Prompts Audit; Pr. George's School Board Splits with Superintendent Again." *Washington Post*, December 15.
- . 2002a. "Board Cuts Metts's Contract-Signing Power to \$5,000." *Washington Post*, January 26.
- . 2002b. "County Assessment Test Scores Dip Again; Results Spur Questions About Metts, Exam." *Washington Post*, January 31.
- . 2002c. "Board Fires Metts; Prince george's Schools Chief Calls Dismissal Illegal." *Washington Post*, February 3.
- . 2002d. "Nine Picked for Schools Panel: Opponents Say Appointees Don't Represent All of Pr. George's." *Washington Post*, May 31.
- . "2002e. Overstaffing, Accounting Blamed for School Deficit." *Washington Post*, October 17.
- . 2002f. "Metts Proposes Delay of Magnet Overhaul; State, Judge Must Approve Decision." *Washington Post*, November 7.
- . 2003a. "Time is Running Out for Metts to Prove Worth; Deadline for Rehiring Decision Looms." *Washington Post*, January 26.
- . 2003b. "A Big Leap for Pr. George's Finalists." *Washington Post*, March 8.
- . 2003c. "Preparing to Inherit Systemwide Struggle; Three Schools Chief Finalists Face High Expectations." *Washington Post*, March 13.
- . 2003d. "Prince George's Unions Fight Schools Finalists." *Washington Post*, March 19.
- . 2003e. "Pr. George's Fills Top Schools Job." *Washington Post*, April 2.
- . 2003f. "Hornsby Wins Praise, Raises Concerns; New Schools Chief Known to Get Results, but Unions Wary." *Washington Post*, April 10.
- . 2003g. "Nine Principals are Ousted in Prince George's; 1 Week Before School Opens, Announcement Angers Union." *Washington Post*, August 20.
- . 2003h. "For System's New Board, Award is Milestone." *Washington Post*, Novemebr 16.

- . 2004a. "School Boundary Shift Upsets Parents; Crowding at Bowie High May Force 66 Students to Attend DuVal." *Washington Post*, June 15.
- . 2004b. "\$1.3 Billion Budget Approved for Schools, Deficit is Gone, Hornsby Says." *Washington Post*, June 24.
- . 2004c. "Schools Chief Raises Scores, Ruffles Pr. George's." *Washington Post*, September 26.
- . 2004d. "Tighter Ethics Laws Considered in Md.; Hornsby's Action Prompts Call for More Disclosure." *Washington Post*, October 15.
- . 2004e. "Audit Sought of Pr. George's School Pacts; Legislators Question Hiring of Vendor Who was Deputy of Hornsby at Former Post." *Washington Post*, October 30.
- . 2004f. "Adequacy of Hornsby Probe Questioned in Pr. George's." *Washington Post*, December 4.
- . 2004g. "Consulting Deal has Link to Hornsby; Firm Pursues 'E-Rate' Funds." *Washington Post*, December 23.
- . 2005. "Some Doubts About Outspoken Critic of Hornsby." *Washington Post*, January 16.
- Trejos, Nancy and Eric Rich. 2004. "Prosecutor Reviews Hornsby Trip to Africa." *Washington Post*, October 19.
- Trejos, Nancy and Ovetta Wiggins. 2004. "Two New High Schools Planned for Pr. George's." *Washington Post*, November 11.
- Trejos, Nancy and Susan Levine. 2003. "Metts Says Turmoil Put End to Job; Schools Chief Goes to Private Firm." *Washington Post*, February 10, 2003: A1.
- Trejos, Nancy and Theola Labbe. 2002. "School Board Takes Heat as Metts Gains Time and Support; Some Members Weary, Others Defiant." *Washington Post*, February 5.
- . 2003. "A Bold Choice for Pr. George's; School Board Taps New Chief with History of Ruffling Feathers." *Washington Post*, April 3.
- Trejos, Nancy and Tracey A. Reeves. 2001. "MD. House Panel Hails Metts for Reforms; School Board Chief Scolded over Directive." *Washington Post*, November 7.
- Turner Commission, Prince George's County Government Operations Review Commission. 1993. *Navigating the 90s: Charting a Course for Prince George's County*. Final Report, Upper Marlboro, MD: Prince George's County, September.
- U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1983. 1980 Census of the Population. Summary File 1. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.

- , 1992. 1990 Census of the Population. Summary File 1. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.
- , 2002. 2000 Census of the Population. Summary File 1. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.
- , 2005. *2004 American Community Survey*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.
- , 2008. *2007 American Community Survey*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.
- , 2009. *2008 American Community Survey*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.
- U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. 1976 *A Long Days Journey into Light: School Desegregation in Prince George's County*. Pub. 52, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, March.
- U.S. Commission on Excellence in Education. 1983. *A Nation at Risk*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Valentine, Daniel. 2008a. "Prince George's County Questions School Board: Headquarters Move Raises Concerns as Construction is Delayed." *Gazette*, July 10.
- , 2008b. "County Could Cut \$49M from Schools: Executive Removes South County School Replacements from State Funding Priority List." *Gazette*, November 13, 2008.
- , 2008c. "Senators Seek Input on School Construction Priorities: Education Officials Say Proposed Legislation Could be Cumbersome." *Gazette*, November 20.
- , 2008d. "Lawmakers Eye School Board Decisions." *Gazette*, December 11.
- , 2008e. "School List Controversy May Pose Threat to Projects: Education Leaders Hope to Add Schools to List of Funding Priorities Rather Than Replace Items." *Gazette*, December 25.
- , 2009a. "School Board Chastised by County for Funding Request: Lawmakers Say Education Officials Have 'Unreasonable Expectations'." *Gazette*, February 5.
- , 2009b. "Prince George's County Sticks Bill to Schools." *Gazette*, May 21.
- Valentine, Daniel and Magen King. 2009. "Prince George's Weighs Whether to Appeal School Funding Decision." *Gazette*, May 21.
- Vanneman, Alan, Linda Hamilton, Janet Baldwin Anderson, and Taslima Rahman. 2009. *Achievement Gaps: How Black and White Students in Public Schools Perform in*

Mathematics and Reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, (NCES 2009-45). Washington, D.C.: NCES, Institute of Education Science, U.S. Department of Education.

- Virta, Alan. 1991. *Prince George's County A Pictorial History*. Virginia Beach, VA: The Donning Company/Publishers.
- Vobjeda, Barbara. 1985a. "Desegregation Plan Criticized; P.G. School Officials Oppose More Busing." *Washington Post*, March 13, 1985: C1.
- , 1985b. "P.G. Desegregation: 2 New Plans; Parents, Officials Wrestle with Busing, Magnet School Proposals." *Washington Post*, April 7.
- , 1985c. "Black P.G. Group Opposes Busing; Nearby Schools Preferred, Even if Attended Mostly by One Race." *Washington Post*, April 15.
- , 1985d. "Judge Clears Way for P.G. Magnet School Desegregation Plan." *Washington Post*, June 8.
- , 1985e. "County School's in Transition; New 'Magnet' Program Designed to End P.G. Desegregation Dispute." *Washington Post*, August 29.
- , 1985f. "Magnet Schools Aid Desegregation but Questions Remain." *Washington Post*, December 23.
- Wagner, John. 2007. "Lawmakers Peruse Options to Remedy Budget Shortfall." *Washington Post*, March 11.
- Walsh, Edward. 1973. "Pr. George's Bill to Provide Elected School Board of 9." *Washington Post, Times Herald*, January 18.
- "Wanted: Ways to Change the System; From Superintendent to Student Rep, Local Leaders Share Their Solutions." 2002. *Washington Post*, January 17.
- Washington Post. 2002. *Washington Post Prince George's County Poll August* [Computer file]. ICPSR03559-v1. Horsham, PA: Taylor Nelson Sofres Intersearch [producer], 2002. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2002. doi:10.3886/ICPSR03559
- Weiss, Johnathan D. 2004. *Public Schools and Economic Development: What the Research Shows*. Cincinnati, OH: Knowledge Works Foundation.
- Whitlock, Craig and David S. Fallis. 2001. "Study Reveals Bias by Police in Pr. George's; White Officers More Brutal to Blacks." *Washington Post*, November 4.
- Wiese, Andrew. 2004. *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wiggins, Ovetta. 2003. "Johnson's Agenda for County Leaves Key Word Unspoken; Pr. George's Leader Eyes Lifting Tax Cap." *Washington Post*, June 17.

- , 2005. "Johnson Capitulates on Tax Cap; Repeal Unnecessary, Pr. George's Executive Says." *Washington Post*, April 19, 2005: Metro, B1.
- Wiggins, Ovetta and Nancy Trejos. 2004. "Task Force to Tackle School Crowding." *Washington Post*, June 10.
- Wilson, Carter A. 2000. "Policy Regimes and Policy Change." *Journal of Public Policy* 20, no.3: 247-274.
- Woellert, Lorraine. 1993. "PG Officials Reject Proposal to Put Schools Under Executive." *Washington Times*, September 20.
- Wong, Kenneth W. 1991. "The Politics of Urban Education as a Field of Study: An Interpretive Analysis." In *Politics of Education Association Yearbook 1991*, ed. James G. Cibulka, Rodney J. Reed, and Kenneth K. Wong, 3-26. Washington, D.C.: Falmer Press.
- Wynter, Leon. 1981. "The Black Vote's Time Has Come; A Commentary." *Washington Post*, April 23.
- , 1982. "Prince George's School Desegregation Trail Begins Today." *Washington Post*, May 3.
- , 1983. "Guidelines Set for Schools' Racial Balance." *Washington Post*, September 9.
- Wynter, Leon and Tom Vesey. 1982. "Drastic Cuts Adopted by P.G. Schools." *Washington Post*, June 3.