

## **Culture and Climate Subcommittee DRAFT Recommendations vs. 1.5**

Climate and Culture decided to use these 4 Pillars to frame our recommendations around:

**Collaboration, Coordination, Communication, and Cooperation.**

## Impact of Collaboration

How can the collective work together for a common goal?

CURRENT STATE	DESIRED STATE	WHAT RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED TO MEET THE DESIRED STATE?
<i>What are the practices and structures at this time? What is happening now?</i>	<i>What could be the practices and structures to support stronger outcomes in this area? What could be added to support stronger outcomes in this area? Is there a new approach that should be considered?</i>	<i>What could be the practices and structures that need to be considered to strengthen the outcome and move closer to the DESIRED STATE?</i>
<p><b>Breakout Room 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is not a representative voice making the suggestions/decision.</li> <li>Offices/departments are siloed and there is some powerhoarding</li> <li>Processes are not clear and intentional in creating inclusive collaborative practices/spaces/norms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practices are intentionally inclusive when gathering stakeholder voice</li> <li>The culture is rooted in collectivism, open feedback, and shared empowerment (instead of individualism and power hoarding)</li> <li>Time is established to collaborate. (For example, professional time for teachers to engage in PD and PLCs; offices have time established for cross-office collaboration)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure climate surveys are inclusive in access and format- and differentiated for different positions (easily done through pathways on forms)</li> <li>Ensure that the questions are explicit so that the data can be effectively used. Example: Leader could be principal, ILT, administrative team, RTSE, Building Service Manager, Cafeteria Manager, School Administrative Secretary, central administrator</li> <li>In schools collaborative time for all staff is established and protected.</li> <li>Establish PLC time for support professionals in schools/Establish time for all staff, including support professionals, to collaborate. Based on work/job position, that time to collaborate could look very different from a PLC.</li> <li></li> </ul>
<p><b>Breakout Room 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current information or procedures are generally coming from central office with little participation and consultation from stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong policies with accountability that require shared participation at the central and school levels in a substantial manner, the perspective of all stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A standing advisory committee to the BOE which would ensure stakeholders' voices in the system would be considered as BOE policies are decided.</li> <li>Each school should be required to have a similar advisory committee that includes all stakeholders.</li> </ul>

### Breakout Room 3

- MCPS is very isolated from their community
- MCPS employee groups are competing for attention within
- Culture of “Start but don’t finish” initiatives – initiative fatigue
- Varying practices and/or difficult for outside orgs to partner with MCPS schools
- Ties to MC and USG are generally limited to the Superintendent, the partnership office and overwhelmed high school counselors
- Knowledge of and access to the array of services provided to residents by the County is not consistently well known across schools

- *MCPS needs to think beyond their 4 walls and schools - there is a direct influence to local community and MCPS needs to remember to bring the outside in to help it succeed and move our county forward.*
- *MCPS to be receptive to feedback to stakeholders (within and outside MCPS)*
- *Create and foster connections with parents, community, partners, all stakeholders*
- *Deep connections with education institutions in the County including Montgomery College and the Universities at Shady Grove to help ensure all students and parents can thrive –become part of the homegrown talent pool and achieve upward economic mobility*
- *Every school is well versed in county services and knows how to access services to ensure a thriving school community that supports parents and families so students can succeed*

- Include more community/outside stakeholders in MCPS decision making or even those outside the school/department/central office
- Be reasonable in the # of partnerships/programs we are able to implement
- Empower faculty to use community and external stakeholders in the spirit of collaboration
- Training for principals and school leadership teams in the array of programs and services available to county residents—from housing programs to SNAP vouchers to better support families
- Empower principals to bring the outside in—to seek the guidance of their community—residents, parents, business, faith and nonprofit leaders and more— to make for a thriving school and support families. Update and ease the procedure for external partners
- Empower principals to develop relationships with educational institutions—both USG and MC and potentially other schools in the area. One of example would be to have HS school principals seek out the provost of the Montgomery College campus in or near their cluster to support their school. This relationship could lead to simple outcomes like access to campus facilities for off-site meetings, or to bringing programs like ACES or a deeper personal understanding of the array of locally provided postsecondary options from degrees to short-term training for their students and the parents.

### Recommended Actions for Collaboration:

- Ensure climate surveys are inclusive in access and format so that every employee has the opportunity to complete a survey and provide feedback
  - Be explicit and clear on who the “leaders” are for the respective person completing the survey; Example: Leader could be principal, ILT, administrative team, RTSE, Building Service Manager, Cafeteria Manager, School Administrative Secretary, central administrator
  - Potentially differentiated for different positions (i.e. using pathways or smartlogic on forms) with segregated data so that it can be effectively

used.

- Give external stakeholders the opportunity to complete the survey
- Clarify, enhance, and routinize feedback loops so all voices can share opinions and be heard
- Create an advisory committee (representative of all stakeholders) to the BOE to create an unfiltered channel from MCPS
- Formalize and enhance the processes for community partnerships (ease process, standardized procedures from school to school, collaborative approach to welcome community collaboration)
  - Create an inclusive program that provides schools with resources that help build relationships and partnerships with local community organizations
- Active *voice* from all stakeholders

## Coordination for Equal Access

In what areas can we enhance coordination efforts to improve climate and culture?

CURRENT STATE	DESIRED STATE	WHAT RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED TO MEET THE DESIRED STATE?
<p><i>What are the practices and structures at this time? What is happening now?</i></p>	<p><i>What could be the practices and structures to support stronger outcomes in this area? What could be added to support stronger outcomes in this area? Is there a new approach that should be considered?</i></p>	<p><i>What could be the practices and structures that need to be considered to strengthen the outcome and move closer to the DESIRED STATE?</i></p>
<p><b>Breakout Room 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For staff, MCPS does not provide equal access to information, professional development, and technology for all staff. Example: DOT-10 computers for 200 plus employees to use when they are not on duty.</li> <li>There is not currently effective coordination between central office and schools around messages that are centrally developed but sent from the schools</li> <li>Communication is not effectively coordinated for all staff- (For example, bus drivers and attendants having to use their own cell phones to communicate about incidents and coordinate responses - in their own unpaid time)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>All actions are aligned to the goal of antiracist, anti-bias, inclusive education for our students and working conditions for our staff</i></li> <li><i>All staff are equipped to provide equal access through coordination of professional learning and resources</i></li> <li><i>All staff should be paid equally to participate in professional development to increase their ability to provide equal access for students.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide equal access to all staff so that they are empowered and knowledgeable to help close the achievement gaps and support our students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Including time and compensation</li> </ul> </li> <li></li> </ul>
<p><b>Breakout Room 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources are often determined by the socioeconomic conditions surrounding the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish resource standards throughout the system that are not based on financial or political clout.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policies need to be adopted that would ensure reasonable equity among all schools.</li> <li>Create an inclusive program that provides schools with resources that help build relationships and partnerships with local community organizations such as Montgomery</li> </ul>

		Community College, counseling resources, and other entities that promote the wellbeing of staff and students.
<p><b>Breakout Room 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Website is not efficient to access policies and procedures</li> <li>● No mechanism to review anonymous complaints</li> <li>● Little to no follow through on complaints</li> <li>● MD Safe Schools Tip Line - what is the process once a school receives a complaint? Is this process uniform from school to school?</li> <li>● Difference in Community Schools vs. non-community schools and their programs/opportunities, and staffing</li> <li>● Upcounty vs downcounty is different in terms of access and support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Clear policies</i></li> <li>● <i>Accessible policies and procedures (easily found, easy to navigate, easy to download)</i></li> <li>● <i>Clear timelines for renewals, review, and updates</i></li> <li>● <i>Clarity on responsibilities (who is responsible for what i.e. board is creating policies, leadership is implementing and creating procedures)</i></li> <li>● <i>Procedure for reports (informal and formal, anonymous?) with established timelines (sense of urgency)</i></li> <li>● <i>Create and foster a baseline/ methodology for addressing informal complaints</i></li> <li>● <i>Clear roadmap for informal and formal reporting procedures for employees</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review and update/clarify policies and procedures to prevent sexual harassment and bullying and to address romantic relationships within the full chain of command</li> <li>● Identify and update policy review practices - example: standing meeting to review policies and procedures and their renewal process</li> <li>● Updates to policies and procedures should include a standard and routine process to socialize and gain feedback on proposed changes prior to adoption by the BOE and or the Superintendent.</li> <li>● Procedures should have guidelines for implementation - standard operating procedures!</li> <li>● Execute a educational training campaign i..e where to find, how to report, level setting expectations</li> <li>● Sufficient staffing the MCPS Department of Compliance and Investigations to implement recommendations</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommended Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Updates to policies and procedures should include a standard and routine process to gather feedback on proposed changes prior to adoption by the BOE and/or the Superintendent</li> <li>● Clarify and enforce the policies and procedures to prevent sexual harassment and bullying and to address romantic relationships within the full chain of command</li> <li>● Ensure sufficient staffing (time and compensation) especially of the MCPS Department of Compliance and Investigations to implement recommendations</li> </ul>		

**Communication for Inclusivity**

How is communication structured to foster inclusivity and ensure that all stakeholders are informed and engaged in initiatives?  
Are there communication channels that need improvement to effectively convey the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion within the school system?

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<p><b>Breakout Room 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Communication is inconsistent across offices and with schools</li> <li>● Communication is not consistently timely</li> <li>● Communication to families is inconsistent and not inclusive                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Unless emails/updates/weekly messages</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Overwhelm with the quantity and length of email messages and memos.</li> <li>● No transparency around practices, initiatives, processes, or procedures.</li> <li>● Decisions are based on money, and inclusiveness costs the system money (training for all staff). MCPS makes decisions that convey a lack of value. Example: Two paid professional development days for collaborative and inclusive training; however, the third and only day that included support professionals was eliminated from the 2023-2024 budget.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be transparent around practices, initiatives, processes, and procedures and allow staff to ask questions and build understanding without penalty.</li> <li>● Establish</li> </ul>

<p><b>Breakout Room 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Focus tends to be on central office and teachers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>The main survey would be a common set of questions that would branch off based on the group (ie: students, parents, caregivers, staff, and other community groups that contribute to the mission of MCPS/local schools).</i></li> <li>● <i>A new approach would include a bifurcated survey that would branch off based on the individual stakeholder groups.</i></li> <li>●</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A sense of shared responsibility and participation in MCPS policies and decisions at the central and local school levels.</li> <li>●</li> </ul>
<p><b>Breakout Room 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● MCPS will say that we have clear guidelines for DEI language/practices but there is not a norm</li> <li>● Staff and faculty are left out of conversations</li> <li>● Superintendent will communicate with leadership but not all staff</li> <li>● Overload on “priorities” - the weekly email for “top 5 things” is constantly changing and there might be little receptiveness to this</li> <li>● Multilingual communication out to families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Agreeable definition for diversity and equity - how are we approaching equity - are we using the same language? Need consistent messaging for that</i></li> <li>● <i>MCPS needs to share out more to larger communities</i></li> <li>● <i>Empower staff/community to be receptive and willing to take in information given - willing to be informed</i></li> <li>● <i>Prioritize or streamline communications</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improve website, ways to access information, and internal memos</li> <li>● Actually finish what you start! :-) More communication and reporting out as to WHY programs stop, continue, change</li> <li>● Annual end-of-year report?</li> <li>● “State of MCPS” address to all employees where everyone is invited</li> <li>● Execute an internal communication audit</li> <li>● Evaluate the value of a superintendents hosting town halls with themes at least twice a year.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommended Actions</b></p>		
<p><b>Short Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improve website, ways to access information, and internal memos</li> <li>● Streamline information- determine what is essential and only send that</li> </ul>	<p><b>Mid Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Actually finish what you start! :-) More communication and reporting out as to WHY programs stop, continue, change</li> <li>● Two-Way communication: Establish channels for all stakeholders to communicate their needs, input, etc.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Long Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Follow the practices outlined in the contracts, making time for training and implementation of agreed upon structures for ALL.</li> <li>● Evaluate the value of a superintendents hosting town halls with themes at least twice a year.</li> </ul>

**Reflection on Cooperation**

How can elevate a culture of respect and cooperation that creates safe spaces for staff and students?



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<p><b>Breakout Room 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff feel valued by those they work directly with but from the system they do not feel valued or appreciated.</li> <li>● The system does not embrace RESPECT from a system level. (Resolving differences, Enhancing collaboration, Supporting our coworkers, Promoting civility, Encouraging creativity, Communicating openly, Team building through trust)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ask staff what the system, not worksite, could do to make them feel valued and then, act on that information to convey value in a manner that communicates value, sets a tone of inclusiveness, and builds a sense of belonging.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Breakout Room 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A central reporting system for all school incidents and issues.</li> <li>● Forms that can be completed to report different forms of bullying, harassment, and other incidents.</li> <li>● Some (not sure how many) elementary schools now have cameras throughout school.</li> <li>● Counseling offered to students who experience trauma.</li> <li>● MCPS partners with outside groups that provide social and emotional support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be constant with programs and policies that are in place that support students and staff.</li> <li>● Create a community consulting group that could provide consultation to social, religious, and political issues that arise in the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●</li> </ul>

<p><b>Breakout Room 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Overworked staff - to “cooperate” means to do another thing after another, non-stop</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Encourage principals to think of a 3-5 year plan to keep and boost staff morale</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommendation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Spend more time focusing on this pillar-there was not enough subcommittee time to complete actions related to this pillar. (short term)</li> <li>● Follow the practices outlined in the contracts, making time for training and implementation of agreed upon structures for ALL. (short term)</li> <li>● Look at staffing allocations and staffing allocation formulas to determine if the allocations are accurate and meet the needs of students. (short term)</li> <li>● The Culture of Respect document should be updated and embraced. (short term)</li> <li>● Coaching leadership to manage the four Cs from senior management to worksite and worksite to senior management. The flow of feedback, interaction, and decisions would be fluid. (mid to long term)</li> <li>● Ask staff what the system, not worksite, could do to make them feel valued and <b>then, act on that information</b> to convey value in a manner that communicates value, sets a tone of inclusiveness, and builds a sense of belonging. (mid to long term)</li> <li>● ILTs should be trained and function as the mouthpiece of the worksite. (long term)</li> </ul>		