

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

March 26, 2012

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education
From: Joshua P. Starr, Superintendent of Schools
Subject: Alternative Governance: Restructuring Plans for Forest Oak and Neelsville Middle Schools

Executive Summary

Under the federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), schools in Year 4 of improvement must develop two-year alternative governance plans to address student and teacher needs. Both Forest Oak and Neelsville middle schools currently are in the process of finalizing plans to meet this mandate. In accordance with this requirement, the alternative governance plans for Forest Oak and Neelsville middle schools for school years 2013 and 2014 will be submitted to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) in April 2012 for feedback. I will then present the plans to the Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) on May 22, 2012. Both plans are predicated upon the concept that by bringing a clearer, sharper focus to teaching and learning within the schools, student performance will improve. It was imperative to develop plans that were respectful of each school community's unique story and were built upon their strengths. Delineated below is an overview of the development of the alternative governance plans and an update on the continuous improvement efforts in both schools based on the collaboration of stakeholders from central services, school staff, and the school community.

Background

When a school does not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for four consecutive years or advances to Year 4 of school improvement, then restructuring requires a major reorganization of a school's governance structure. In particular, it means implementing fundamental reforms to improve student academic achievement and it requires carrying out significantly more rigorous and comprehensive strategies than undertaken as part of corrective action. These reforms and action plans are stated in the Alternative Governance for School Improvement Proposal (AG Proposal). Restructuring also requires that the reasons why the school continues not to make AYP are addressed, thereby facilitating an exit from school improvement as soon as possible. In

order to accomplish this, MSDE allows school systems to select from the following three alternative governance options:

- Option 1: Replace all or most school staff, including the principal, related to the school's failure to make AYP.
- Option 2: Contract with a private management company to operate the school.
- Option 3: Reopen the school as a public charter school.

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) chose Option 1 and established the Alternative Governance Board (AGB) to design the implementation of this path. The principals at both Forest Oak and Neelsville middle schools were given an option to re-interview for their positions and both principals declined. On July 25, 2011, the new principal leadership was appointed by the Board of Education.

The assistant principals at both schools were given the same option to re-interview; three of the four declined. The principal at Neelsville Middle School was able to hire two experienced assistant principals and the principal at Forest Oak Middle School hired one experienced assistant principal. Staff members at both schools who met the criteria outlined in our Professional Growth Systems and provided their commitment to implement and support the Restructuring Planning School Improvement Plan and actively participate in the job-embedded professional development plan were asked to complete a letter of intent offering their commitment to program proposal expectations by February 29, 2012. In addition, instructional leadership team members, such as team leaders and resource teachers, were asked to re-interview for their positions.

Based on this process, 47 professional and supporting services staff at Neelsville Middle School and 29 professional and supporting services staff at Forest Oak Middle School decided not to stay (or be "placed on the voluntary transfer list") for a variety of personal and professional reasons. Both principals received their initial staffing allocation on March 1, one week earlier than all schools, and as of March 23, are making staffing recommendations to fill vacancies with the Office of Human Resources and Development.

School Improvement

The restructuring work for Forest Oak and Neelsville middle schools requires an enhanced school improvement process that coordinates the efforts of school-based leaders, central services staff, and the parent community. The collaboration of the offices of Curriculum and Instructional Programs, Human Resources and Development, School Performance, Special Education and Student Services, and the Chief Technology Officer provided on-going support to both schools. The collaboration of these offices led to the review of our current middle school education policy and the use of this policy as the basis of the school improvement work as follows:

If middle school is an opportunity for students to develop confidence, competence, and independent decision-making skills in a culture where students challenge themselves

academically and explore their interests, then every middle school program will include a comprehensive curriculum; a rigorous and differentiated instructional program; a highly qualified and committed staff and leadership; a collaborative yet flexible organizational structure; extracurricular activities; and opportunities for an engaged parental and stakeholder community that will ensure success for every student. (adopted from the Montgomery County Board of Education Policy IEB, Middle School Education)

MCPS established an Achievement Steering Committee (ASC) at Highland Elementary School in the 2004–2005 school year as a structure to support school improvement. The ASC process represents effective stakeholder collaboration with schools identified for Year 2 of School Improvement or Corrective Action based on the results of the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) or High School Assessment (HSA). All ASCs are based on the Plan-Do-Study-Act model and share a common goal—to implement an effective instructional program that addresses performance concerns on the MSAs and HSAs and leads to student success. The community superintendent works with the director of school performance to facilitate monthly school-based ASC meetings that include school administrators and staff, team members from various central offices who are selected based on the needs of the school and the individual’s area of expertise, the employee associations, and parents or community members. ASC meetings focus on the school’s improvement plan, data analysis and data-driven decision making, the provision of identified supports such as focused professional development, and follow up on specific action items identified by the team. Through regularly scheduled meetings held at the schools, school-based and central services staff members, parents, and association representatives work together to address performance concerns on the MSA and HSA that lead to student achievement. ASCs provide the forum for a structured monthly review of the school improvement action plans and provide focused assistance in the following four key areas:

1. Identification of root causes
2. Identification of possible solutions
3. Implementation of solutions
4. Monitoring and evaluation of implemented solutions

The work of the ASC complements the work of a school’s Instructional Leadership Team (ILT).

The principals at Forest Oak and Neelsville middle schools received coaching and administrative assistance from a retired principal, and various supports from the community superintendent, director of school performance, and acting director of middle school instruction and achievement. The resource teachers received support in analyzing student data, observing teaching and learning through observations and walkthroughs, securing content specific resources, and coaching from their content supervisors and/or instructional specialists. Monthly updates and reports about these supports were shared during the ASCs.

Alternative Governance Board

MSDE requires a process for overseeing and implementing the governance option of replacing all or most school staff, including the principal, related to the school's failure to make AYP. A major part of the restructuring process is the establishment of the AGB, which operates to manage and govern the daily instructional and administrative processes with the two middle schools. The AGB has met 13 times since September 2011 with plans to meet four additional times this year regarding the restructuring planning, implementation process, preparation for the State Board presentation, and agenda setting for the next school year. MSDE expects the Local Education Agency (LEA) AGB to play a vital role in the selection, adoption, implementation, and monitoring of alternative governance activities as outlined in the approved plan. AGB members are central services decision makers, employee association presidents, community representatives, and others who are able to respond in a timely fashion to the needs of the schools. The principals of Forest Oak and Neelsville middle school also serve on the AGB. The AGB is expected to continue to meet during the 2013 and 2014 school years to monitor the alternative governance activities as outlined in the plan.

The AG proposals were developed based on the work of the AGB, school leaders, and community stakeholders. Each AG Proposal is based on the components of the school improvement plan and the approved MSDE reforms and supporting action steps that will improve both teaching and learning. Each reform effort and action plan for each school addresses the need of the school as identified by the root cause analysis. The AGB for Forest Oak and Neelsville middle schools will continue to monitor the implementation of the AG Proposal for the next two years and provide updates to the State Board.

Forest Oak Middle School

Forest Oak middle school's history of performance on the MSAs has had both challenges and successes. In 2011, Forest Oak Middle School did not make AYP in mathematics and reading, and MSDE placed the school in restructuring planning. Because Forest Oak Middle School did not make AYP in mathematics, reading, and attendance (special education), Forest Oak Middle School advanced to restructuring planning as a "priority focused needs school." The term "priority focused needs school" means that a school has not achieved the Annual Measureable Objectives (AMO) in one or two subgroups in the same reported area. MCPS was notified of this AYP status in late June 2011 and thus began the work of the AGB to prepare for the restructuring planning.

The school leadership and members of the ASC conducted a root cause analysis of student performance by participating in classroom observations, data analysis, and walkthroughs. Based on the root cause analysis, school leadership created a professional development plan that is aligned to all components of the school improvement plan and is designed to develop the capacity of the instructional staff in the following areas: academic content focused vocabulary, higher-order questioning, academic discourse, equitable practices, co-teaching for differentiation of instruction, and use of technology to monitor student progress and integrate instructional technology to support learning.

As indicated in the February 9, 2012, memorandum to the Board of Education (attached), there are key components of the AG Proposal. The school leadership team will have additional summer days to build their capacity as instructional leaders, and instructional staff will have additional preservice days to support the implementation of the professional development plan. The school administration and leadership team will deliver a comprehensive professional development plan for the entire instructional staff during preservice week and throughout the school year. Lastly, the master schedule will provide professional development during common team and department time, and the ILT will provide and monitor resources for Cohort Collaborative Work beyond the regular workday. Forest Oak Middle School also will participate in the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Program. The school leadership will work with central services staff and community leaders to increase extended learning opportunities for students after school and during the summer, and will offer Information and Technology Grade 6, with consideration to expanding the entire Information and Technology pathway as well as the Lights, Camera, Literacy! sequence of courses.

Neelsville Middle School

Similar to Forest Oak Middle School, Neelsville Middle School's history of performance on the MSAs is one of both challenges and successes. At the end of the 2010–2011 school year, Neelsville Middle School did not make AYP in mathematics and reading, thus placing the school in restructuring planning. Because Neelsville Middle School did not make AYP in all subgroups for mathematics and the Free and Reduced-price Meals System, Limited English Proficient, and special education subgroups in reading, Neelsville Middle School advanced to restructuring planning as a "priority comprehensive needs school." Comprehensive Needs Pathway is a pathway for a school with a wider pattern of student subgroup failures. Typically, these schools will have failed to meet the AMOs for either reading or mathematics for the *All Students* group and/or will have failed to achieve AMOs for three or more subgroups in either reading or mathematics. MCPS was notified of this AYP status in late June 2011 and thus began coordinating the work of the many offices involved in preparing for the restructuring planning.

The school leadership team conducted a root cause analysis of the student performance by conducting surveys and interviews of various stakeholders and participating in classroom observations, data analysis, and walkthroughs. Based on the root cause analysis, the school leadership team created a professional development plan that is aligned with all components of the school improvement plan and is designed to develop the capacity of the instructional staff in the following areas: rigorous instruction; race and equity; collaboration; and adolescent learner, including brain research, academic identity, and engagement.

As indicated in my February 9, 2012, memorandum to the Board of Education (Attachment 1), there are key components of the AG Proposal (see Attachment 2 for previous communications with the Board of Education). School leadership will work with grade-level and content teams to have staff members develop lessons that result in students working in teams, solving complex problems, thinking strategically, interpreting information, communicating effectively, connecting learning across disciplines, and applying knowledge to real-life situations. The school

administration and leadership team will implement the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme, once approval is granted by the International Baccalaureate (IB) Organization, to support the school's focus on increasing academic rigor and integrating 21st century skills as students engage in research, critical thinking strategies, and studying a second language. School leadership will schedule additional summer days to build their capacity as instructional leaders, and instructional staff will have additional preservice days to support the implementation of the professional development. Lastly, the master schedule will change and the school will adopt an eight-period day to support professional development and cohort collaboration for instructional staff. School leadership also will work with central services staff and community leaders to increase extended learning opportunities for students after school and during the summer. The Lights, Camera, Literacy! courses will be implemented as well.

Next Steps

The AGB will continue to monitor the current school improvement plan with the support of the school leadership and central services staff. The AGB will engage in several work sessions to analyze the lessons learned throughout this year and will make recommendations for the development of an AG Proposal should any other schools advance to the restructuring planning stage of school improvement as outlined by MSDE. Currently, the collaboration of the offices of School Performance and Curriculum and Instructional Programs will engage in best practices sessions with principals whose schools are currently in Corrective Action. These schools are Benjamin Banneker and Gaithersburg middle schools, and Capt. James E. Daly Elementary School. Specifically, the collaboration of these offices will finalize the planning process for the development of the school improvement plan and develop a professional learning community for school leaders to examine student data and instructional practices that promote teacher and student learning.

Conclusion

Although there were challenges associated with choosing Option 1 (replace all or most school staff, including the principal, related to the school's failure to make AYP), the clear focus on teaching and learning helped the schools to identify the resources needed, such as additional training and opportunities for students that led to the development of the AG Proposal. The strategy used focused on the five C's: Focus on the Instructional Core, Enable Collaboration, Enhance Coherence, Develop Capacity, and a Commitment to a 21st Century Culture. The focus of instructional planning and leadership yielded revisions to the leadership management and structure of the schools and continued professional development for staff members. Once the schools analyzed their data through a root cause analysis process, the school improvement plans were created and action steps were monitored by the instructional leadership teams, ASCs, and departments. In addition, the professional development opportunities were designed to build capacity of the school leaders and staff and aligned with the school improvement plan.

In spite of the waiver that MSDE is requesting this year, we have learned that this extensive work by the various offices and stakeholders has provided the opportunity for MCPS leadership to revisit its school improvement processes and to refocus on effective Professional Learning Communities.

The following resolution is included for your consideration.

WHEREAS, Under the federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, schools in Year 4 of improvement must develop two-year alternative governance plans to address student and teacher needs; and

WHEREAS, Forest Oak and Neelsville middle schools currently are in the process of finalizing plans to meet this mandate and have chosen Option 1 of the three governance options as allowed by the Maryland State Department of Education; and

WHEREAS, Option 1 allows Forest Oak and Neelsville middle schools to replace all or most school staff, including the principal, related to the school's failure to make Adequate Yearly Progress; and

WHEREAS, The Alternative Governance Proposal developed for Forest Oak and Neelsville middle schools places a clear focus on teaching and learning; now therefore be it

Resolved, That the Montgomery County Board of Education approves the Alternative Governance Plans for the restructuring of Forest Oak and Neelsville middle schools.

At the table for tonight's discussion are Dr. Darryl L. Williams, community superintendent for the Damascus, Gaithersburg, Col. Zadok Magruder, and Watkins Mill clusters; Dr. Kathy L. Brake, director of school performance for the Damascus, Gaithersburg, Col. Zadok Magruder, and Watkins Mill clusters; Mrs. L. Victoria Lake-Parcan, principal, Neelsville Middle School, and Mr. Arthur Williams, principal, Forest Oak Middle School.

JPS:mmh

Attachments

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

February 9, 2012

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education
From: Joshua P. Starr, Superintendent of Schools
Subject: Support for Schools in Restructuring



I have recommended a budget amendment to provide support for the alternative governance plans for Forest Oak and Neelsville middle schools. Under the federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), schools in Year 4 of improvement must develop two-year alternative governance plans to address student and teacher needs. A summary of the preliminary plans for each school is provided below. The full governance plans for each school will be coming to the Board in March for approval prior to submission to the Maryland State Department of Education in April.

Forest Oak Middle School

The focus of the Forest Oak Middle School restructuring plan will be to develop a comprehensive professional development plan for all staff that is aligned to the school improvement plan. The key components of the plan are to:

- Build capacity of the instructional leadership team during the summer and throughout the school year.
- Provide professional development for the entire staff during the summer.
- Embed professional development during common team and department time.
- Provide resources for Cohort Collaborative Work beyond the regular workday.

All teachers will be required to take the Studying Skillful Teaching course. All instructional leaders who observe and supervise teachers are required to take Observing and Analyzing Teaching (OAT) 1 and 2 and apply their learning to the observation and supervision process. The leadership team is expected to participate in the School Leadership Team Institute (SLTI) and the Professional Learning Communities Institute (PLCI) in order to build capacity and improve school performance.

Forest Oak Middle School's plan is designed to develop the capacity of the instructional staff in the following areas:

- Academic/content-focused vocabulary
- Higher-order questioning
- Academic discourse
- Equitable practices
- Co-teaching for differentiation of instruction for students
- Use of technology to monitor student progress and integrate instructional technology to support learning

In addition to building the capacity of staff, several courses and programs will be implemented next year, including Information and Technology Grade 6 with consideration to expand to the entire Information and Technology pathway, and the Lights, Camera, Literacy! sequence of courses. Additional options for extended learning opportunities are under consideration. Forest Oak Middle School will participate in the Achievement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Program.

Neelsville Middle School

The Neelsville Middle School restructuring plan is designed to develop the capacity of the instructional staff in the following areas:

- Rigorous instruction
- Race and equity
- Collaboration
- Adolescent learner (brain research, academic identify and engagement)

The key components of the plan are to:

- Work with grade-level and content teams to have staff develop lessons that result in students working in teams, solving complex problems, thinking strategically, interpreting information, communicating effectively, connecting learning across disciplines, and applying knowledge to real-life situations.
- Implement the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme to support the school's focus on increasing academic rigor and integrating 21st century skills as students engage in research, critical thinking strategies, and studying a second language.
- Provide preservice days to support the implementation of the professional development plan with all instructional staff.
- Change the master schedule and adopt an eight-period day to support professional development and cohort collaboration for instructional staff.

Similar to Forest Oak Middle School, all Neelsville Middle School teachers will participate in Studying Skillful Teaching and the leadership team will participate in SLTI and PLCI. Additional options for extended learning opportunities are under consideration and the Lights, Camera, Literacy! courses will be implemented as well.

I also have recommended that the Middle Years Programme be extended to Montgomery Village Middle School next year in order for both of the Watkins Mill High School feeder middle schools to offer this program. To ensure a fully implemented Grade 6 through Grade 10 program, the application to International Baccalaureate also will include a future Grade 9 and 10 MYP at Watkins Mill High School. The current plan calls for implementing the Middle Years Programme at Watkins Mill High School in 2015-2016 when next year's Grade 6 students enter high school. Having the three schools apply as implementing one Middle Years Programme will save MCPS additional costs and will allow us to begin offering professional development opportunities to Grade 9 and 10 teachers prior to full implementation.

If you have questions, please contact Mr. Larry A. Bowers, chief operating officer, at 301-279-3626 or Dr. Darryl L. Williams, community superintendent, Office of School Performance, at 301-315-7370.

JPS:lsh

Copy to:


Mr. Bowers
Dr. Lacey
Mr. Edwards
Dr. Williams
Mrs. Casey
Ms. King
Dr. Malaker
Mr. Murphy
Ms. Lake-Parcan
Dr. Pastor
Ms. Spencer
Mr. Williams

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

December 8, 2011

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Joshua P. Starr, Superintendent of Schools 

Subject: Update on the Restructuring Process for Forest Oak and Neelsville Middle Schools

My memorandum (Attachment A) of August 25, 2011, provided you with information on the restructuring process that is under way for Forest Oak and Neelsville middle schools for the 2011–2012 school year. Restructuring requires a major reorganization of a school's governance structure. In particular, it means making fundamental reforms to improve student academic achievement, requiring significantly more rigorous and comprehensive strategies than undertaken as part of corrective action. Restructuring also addresses the reasons why the school continues not to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) facilitating an exit from school improvement as soon as possible. In order to accomplish this, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) allows school systems to select from the following three alternative governance options:

1. Replace all or most school staff, including the principal, related to the school's failure to make AYP;
2. Contract with a private management company to operate the school; or
3. Reopen the school as a public charter school

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) chose the alternative governance option of replacing all or most school staff members. An Alternative Governance Committee that included central services administrators, employee association representatives, school administrators, school instructional staff, and school supporting services staff members met from July 2010 through April 2011 to determine the implementation process. As part of the process, an Alternative Governance Board (AGB) is established to manage and oversee (govern) the daily instructional and administrative processes with a school.

In compliance with MSDE requirements, the AGB has met eight times since September and will continue to meet at least monthly regarding the restructuring planning and implementation process. MSDE expects the Local Education Agency AGB to play a vital role in the selection, adoption, implementation, and monitoring of alternative governance activities. AGB members are central services decision makers, employee association presidents, community representatives, and others who are able to respond in a timely fashion to the needs of the schools (Attachment B).

The crafting of the expectations and requirements for staff members has been a focus of the work of the stakeholders represented on the AGB. All staff members must meet the standards of the Professional Growth Systems, will commit to the school for at least three years, and will participate in job-embedded professional development. In addition, all professional staff will complete the Skillful Teacher/Observing and Analyzing Teachers course, and all staff members must agree to implement and support the Restructuring Planning School Improvement Plan, developed by the school leadership team and staff, and its expectations. The Skillful Teacher/Observing and Analyzing Teachers course will be offered in January 2012 at Forest Oak and Neelsville middle schools with registration priority being given to members of those schools' teaching staffs.

An Alternative Governance Proposal for the 2012–2013 school year is being developed by the AGB based on the extensive root-cause analysis completed by the school leadership team and staff. The principals, along with MCPS leadership, are leading the development of the Alternative Governance Proposal and determining the critical areas of focus and required strategic planning using the analysis of the root causes of the underperformance of achievement. The root-cause analysis process examines:

- Teaching and learning
- The student voice
- School structures and processes
- The knowledge and skills of BOTH students and teachers

This foundation analysis has provided the AGB with the information and data they needed to develop the proposal. Various programmatic options currently are being explored and discussed. It is anticipated that the programmatic option will be submitted to me for my review by December 31, 2011.

Current staff members who meet the criteria, and express their commitment to implement and support the Restructuring Planning School Improvement Plan and actively participate in the job imbedded professional development plan will be asked to complete a letter of intent offering their commitments to these expectations during the month of February 2012. Staff members who decide not to remain at the schools will be able to interview at the April 2012 Job Fair and will receive involuntary transfers if they do not secure voluntary transfers. Staff members who desire a transfer into these schools will be able to be interviewed in March 2012 prior to the job fair, and the principals at Forest Oak and Neelsville middle schools will be able to offer available positions prior to the April 2012 Job Fair.

On November 7 and 8, 2011, the general overview of and the expectations for the staffing plan for restructuring was shared with the staff members at Forest Oak and Neelsville middle schools, respectively. There will be additional meetings to review the specifics of the letter of intent. In moving forward, staff members will continue to be informed about the expectations and full vision for the restructuring.

Next Steps

Process maps (Attachments C and D) have been created that outline the interview process for the leadership team and dialogue process for teachers and supporting services staff members. These maps were approved by the AGB on October 31, 2011. With my approval, these process maps will be shared with all stakeholders through staff and parent meetings. Both principals; Dr. Darryl L. Williams, community superintendent; and Dr. Kathy L. Brake, director of school performance, have been meeting regularly with cluster and PTA leaders and parents/guardians of each school and will continue to do so.

The process for obtaining MSDE approval of the restructuring proposal includes having the local Board of Education review and approve the *2012 Guidelines for Alternative Governance for School Improvement* for Forest Oak and Neelsville middle schools. A date will be scheduled for the Board of Education to review and approve the proposed restructuring plan in early spring. The approved proposal also will require my approval.

The approved proposal must be submitted to MSDE on April 18, 2012, for its review and feedback. On May 22, 2012, MCPS will present the restructuring proposal to the Maryland State Board of Education. If Forest Oak Middle School and/or Neelsville Middle School make AYP for Fiscal Year 2011, the school(s) will be in "holding" in the restructuring planning phase but, nevertheless, will implement the proposal approved by the Maryland State Board of Education.

I will continue to provide you with periodic updates throughout this restructuring planning process. Please refer questions to Dr. Frieda K. Lacey, deputy superintendent of schools, at 301-279-3127.

JPS:bmk

Attachments

Copy to:

Executive Staff

Ms. Cuttitta

Dr. Mugge


Mr. Prouty

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

August 25, 2011

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Joshua P. Starr, Superintendent of Schools 

Subject: Restructuring Process for Forest Oak and Neelsville Middle Schools

I am providing updated information on the restructuring process that is under way for Forest Oak and Neelsville middle schools for the 2011–2012 school year. Restructuring is a procedure mandated by the federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* for schools failing to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for five or more consecutive years. Restructuring requires a major reorganization of a school's governance structure.

Restructuring—

- makes fundamental reforms to improve student academic achievement in the school;
- requires significantly more rigorous and comprehensive strategies than undertaken as part of corrective action; and
- addresses the reasons why the school continues not to make AYP and facilitates the school's ability to exit school improvement as soon as possible.

Planning for restructuring is a collaborative process between the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Alternative Governance Board and the schools identified for restructuring. An Alternative Governance Board is established to manage and oversee (govern) the daily instructional and administrative processes with a school. Effective implementation of the selected alternative governance option should increase student achievement. All schools entering restructuring planning must have their Alternative Governance Plans approved by both their local Board of Education and the State Board of Education.

Maryland schools may select from the following three alternative governance options:

- replace all or most school staff, including the principal, related to the school's failure to make AYP;
- contract with a private management company to operate the school; or
- reopen the school as a public charter school.

MCPS chose the alternative governance option of replacing all or most school staff members. An Alternative Governance Committee that included central services administrators, employee association representatives, school administrators, school instructional staff, and school supporting services staff members met from July 2010 through April 2011 to determine the implementation process. The principals at both Forest Oak and Neelsville middle schools were given the option to reinterview for their positions, and both principals declined.

Forest Oak and Neelsville middle schools each have held community and staff meetings regarding the restructuring process and principal characteristics. As a result of the data collected at those meetings, applicants were chosen to interview for the principal positions. On July 19, 2011, principal interviews were held. On July 25, 2011, the newly selected principals were appointed by the Board of Education. Additionally, during July 2011, the community superintendent and the director of school performance for the Gaithersburg and Clarksburg clusters held discussions with the assistant principals of Forest Oak and Neelsville middle schools regarding the expectation that if they chose to continue to serve at their respective schools, they would agree to stay for at least three years, participate in job-embedded professional development, and complete the Skillful Teacher/Observing and Analyzing Teachers course. Three of the four assistant principals requested reassignments to different schools. During the first week of August 2011, interviews were held for the vacated assistant principal positions and these assignments were in place by August 6, 2011. The Alternative Governance Board membership, dates, timeline, and meeting topics have been determined and an invitation to participate has been sent.

The following next steps will take place:

- Meet with staff members regarding the restructuring process.
- Meet with parents/guardians regarding the restructuring process.
- All staff members will provide a letter of intent regarding the expectations (commit to three years at the school; job-embedded professional development; and complete a Skillful Teacher course).
- School administration will interview leadership team members.
- School administration will determine the leadership team assignments for the 2012–2013 school year.
- School administration will interview the instructional staff members.
- School administration will determine the instructional staff members for the 2012–2013 school year.
- School administration or principal designee will interview supporting services staff members.
- School administration will determine the supporting services staff members for the 2012–2013 school year.
- A special job interview window prior to the 2012 Job Fair will be open for the schools in the restructuring planning.
- The Office of Human Resources and Development will work with staff members who are not chosen to remain on staff or have chosen not to commit to the expectations in order to secure new positions.

I will continue to provide you with updates regarding the restructuring process for Forest Oak and Neelsville middle schools. Please refer questions to Dr. Frank H. Stetson, chief school performance officer, Office of School Performance, at 301-517-8258.

JPS:bnk

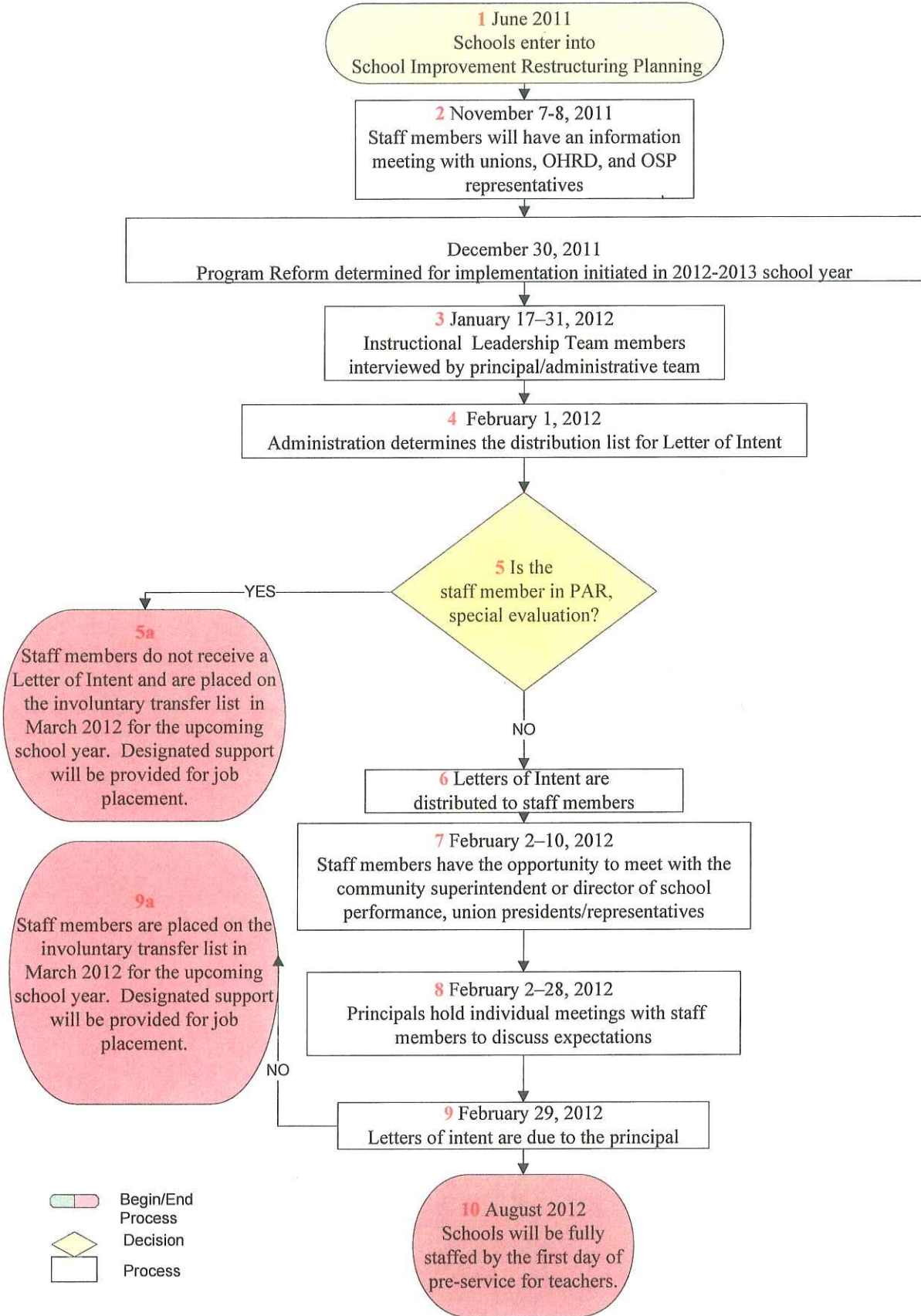
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Executive Staff

Montgomery County Public Schools
Alternative Governance Board Members

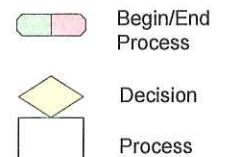
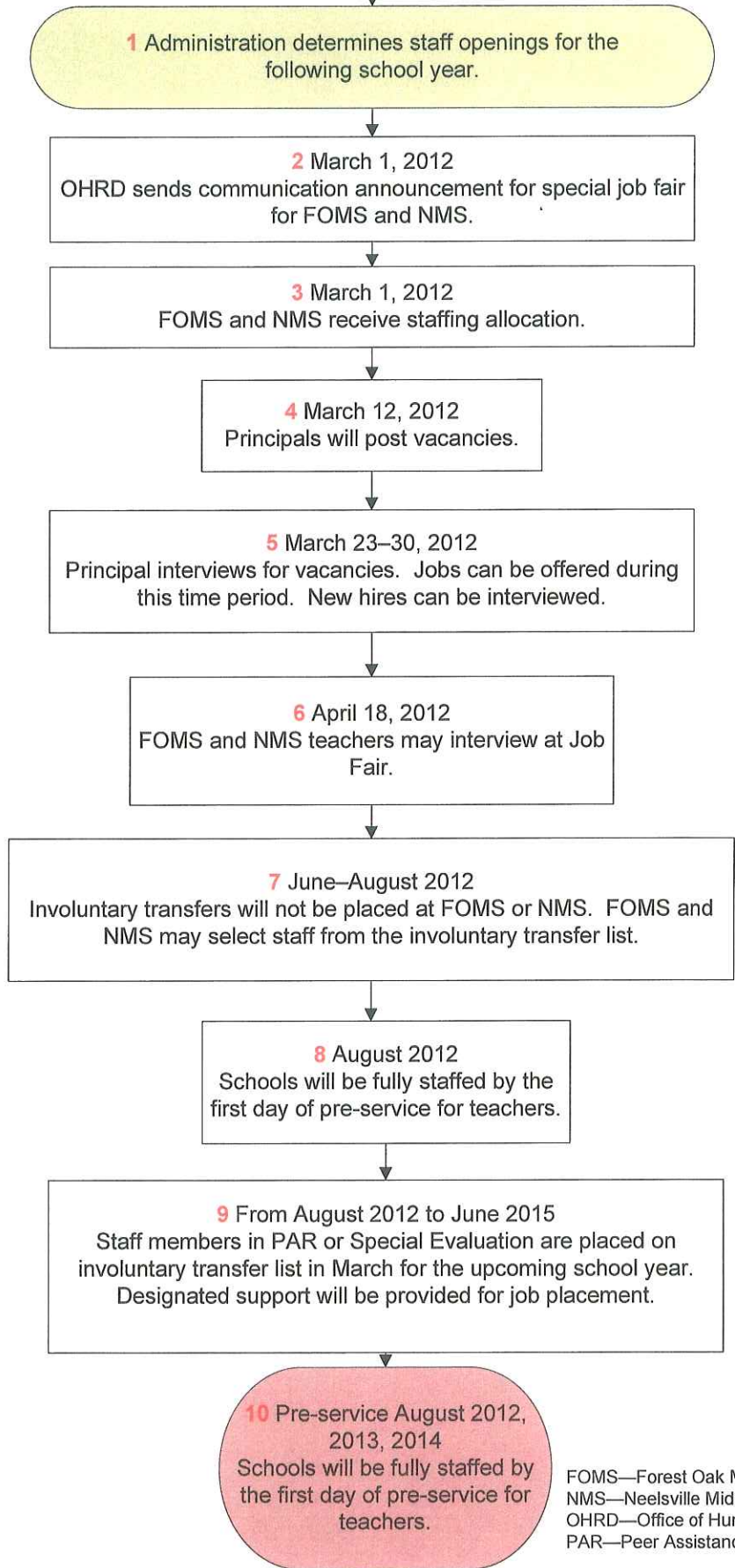
Member	Position Title
Kathy Brake	Director of School Performance
Jane Butler	Coordinator
Merle Cuttitta	President, Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 500
Nicola Diamond	Executive Assistant, Chief Operating Office
Linda Ferrell	Acting Director, Middle School Instruction and Achievement
Barbara Friedlander	School Improvement Specialist
Dale Horos	Coordinator
Lily V. Lake-Parcan	Principal, Neelsville Middle School
Jody Leleck	Consultant
Jeffrey Martinez	Director, Department of Recruitment and Staffing
Gwendolyn Mason	Director, Department of Special Education Services
Debra Mugge	President, Montgomery County Association of Administrators and Principals
Doug Prouty	President, Montgomery County Education Association
Frank H. Stetson	Chief School Performance Officer
Kristin Tribble	President, Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations
Arthur Williams	Principal, Forest Oak Middle School
Darryl Williams	Community Superintendent
Karen Woodson	Director, Division of English for Speakers of Other Languages/Bilingual Programs

Timeline for Restructuring Planning Staffing Process at Forest Oak Middle School and Neelsville Middle School



OSP—Office of School Performance
 OHRD—Office of Human Resources and Development
 PAR—Peer Assistance and Review

Fiscal Year 2012–2013 Staff Process for Forest Oak Middle School and Neelsville Middle School



FOMS—Forest Oak Middle School
 NMS—Neelsville Middle School
 OHRD—Office of Human Resources and Development
 PAR—Peer Assistance and Review