

APPROVED
33-2008

Rockville, Maryland
December 2, 2008

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in special session at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Tuesday, December 2, 2008, at 7:10 p.m.

Present: Ms. Quratul-Ann Malik, Student Board Member,
in the Chair
Mr. Christopher Barclay
Ms. Laura Berthiaume
Ms. Shirley Brandman
Dr. Judy Docca
Mr. Philip Kauffman
Ms. Nancy Navarro
Mrs. Patricia O'Neill

Absent: Dr. Jerry Weast, Secretary/Treasurer

The Board of Education held its annual meeting with the Montgomery County Region of the Maryland Association of Student Councils, the Montgomery County Junior Council/Montgomery County Region, and the representatives of Student Government Associations.

Several topics were brought up by students, and the Board and staff commented, offered suggestions, and asked for follow-up.

The students were concerned about the school system communicating with parents and students when there was little or no **technology** available to them in the home. This is an issue that the Board is interested in because it is hard to meet the needs of all students. There are partnerships that help families to address communication with families. However, families, students, and school personnel need to come together to open communication.

Students were interested in seniors and the **High School Assessments** (HSAs). Mrs. O'Neill agreed, and it was a major concern for her. However, every high school principal has taken ownership of the graduation requirements for their students. Furthermore, there is a bridge plan developed by the state for those students who have trouble passing the HSAs. The Board had asked the state to defer the requirement until next year, based on the fact that the Class of 2009 are held to a different standard.

Regarding **safety and security**, students questioned behavior in the classroom and the use of drugs and alcohol. Board members responded that every adult in the building has the responsibility to monitor what is happening within the school building. The school is a microcosm of society, but there is no desire to lock down the school with metal detectors

and zero tolerance. Furthermore, the educational facilities officer (EFO) in each school can be utilized to help build relationships with students and staff.

Students complained that the school **buses are overcrowded**, which presents a safety issue. Mrs. O'Neill suggested that the *Ride by the Rules* campaign might be reactivated. The Board also suggested an assembly where bus drivers would be invited to share their thoughts.

One student asked about teachers following the **Grading and Reporting Policy**. Board members were concerned that teachers were not consistent in applying the policy. There was a request for the community superintendent to talk with the student to address the issue within her school. If students find an issue, they should document it and present their concerns to the school's leadership for a resolution.

A student leader questioned the lack of transportation to the **annual conference**, due to the freeze on funds. Ms. Brandman wanted to know the process to present a request to the Freeze Committee. Ms. Malik asked for the cost of transporting SGA representatives to the conference.

The question arose about the value and quality of **school lunches**. Mrs. O'Neill suggested that student government leaders make arrangements to tour the Food and Nutrition Services Facility.

Environmental issues were presented such as hot air hand dryers and solar panels. Board members assured the students that MCPS was well aware of the "green" issue, and the system was building green schools, using hand dryers, solar panels, and geothermal heat, among other things. Mr. Barclay asked that the information on solar panels be shared with student leaders.

Mr. Barclay asked staff to get information on whether or not **PE classes** could be assessed at a later date. The concern was that students get in the class and are assessed on skills that they may not have had much time to practice or master.

Mrs. O'Neill asked staff to review the guidelines on **student athletes transporting** other students to sports events.

Other topics brought up by the students, but not discussed in depth:

- Price of school lunches
- Lack of textbooks
- Inauguration Day
- Time management for students
- Promethean boards
- School start times
- Religious holiday observances

- Study circles
- Artificial turf

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

PRESIDENT

SECRETARY

JDW:gr