

# MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY COMMITTEE

January 9, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m. with the following committee members and Board staff present: Sharon Cox (chair), Shirley Brandman, Ben Moskowitz, Pat O'Neill, Suzann King (staff assistant), and Glenda Rose (recorder).

Other staff present: Stephanie Williams, Christina Yuknis, Erick Lang, Robin Confino, John Matthews, Brian Edwards, Linda Ferrell, Elizabeth Cooper, Rachel Hickson, and Cathy Pevey.

Others present: Kay Romero, Suzanne Weiss, and Jane de Winter.

## **Committee Minutes**

**ACTION:** The minutes of the December 12, 2007, meeting were approved as presented.

### **Update on Implementation of Policy IEB: *Middle School Education***

Based on the committee's request, Ms. Ferrell presented the quarterly update on the evaluation of the middle school reform initiative in the five Phase I middle schools. In evaluating the implementation of the policy, the Department of Shared Accountability interviews and surveys staff, conducts classroom observations, surveys students, and collects feedback from parents. This evaluation is undertaken to ascertain whether implementation of the following six goals of the policy is evident in the Phase I schools :

1. School leadership
2. Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment
3. Extended Learning Opportunities
4. School Organizational Structures
5. Staff Content Knowledge and Skills
6. Engaging Parents and Community

The first observation occurred in December and consisted of the following:

1. In-person interviews with staff
2. Pilot of instrument for classroom observations
3. Document review (Integrated Reform Initiatives project team records, program records, school system data, and training)

An advisory committee – comprised of parents, staff, union representatives, and representatives from MCPS offices and departments -- is involved in the evaluation process. This advisory committee is focused on developing evaluation questions, and identifying areas for more resources, ways to collect data, and increased parent participation. The committee has met four or five times beginning in June 2007, and will continue until the evaluation is completed.

Discussion focused on professional development, the evaluation process, the role of the

advisory committee, and how informal feedback is collected. The Policy Committee is interested in receiving (especially during the budget process) empirical data demonstrating that the reform is working. More specifically, how can it be demonstrated that students are achieving, and how can that information be communicated to parents. Furthermore, the feedback received (such as best practices) from the evaluation should be disseminated.

**ACTION:** The committee will receive an update concerning middle school reform during its April meeting. Staff will provide information about composition of the advisory committee, including a recommendation concerning adding students to the advisory committee.

### **Policy EEA, Student Transportation**

During the public comments portion of a recent Board meeting, a member of the community asked the Board to reconsider its policy concerning the transportation of kindergarten students. This issue was referred to the Policy Committee. Staff explained that children who attended a half-day program were dropped off at the place chosen by the parents during the mid-day bus run. If a person was not present at the stop to receive the child, the child was returned to school. Now all children attend full-day kindergarten and are dropped off at bus stops with other groups of children. Staff described possible special arrangements for young children who ride the bus; however, none are fail safe methods. It was also mentioned that a court case in Carroll County, in essence, upheld MCPS' transportation practices. The committee decided that this was not a policy issue, but encouraged staff to make every effort to create a bus ride that is as safe as possible for young children.

Staff presented a revised draft of Policy EEA based on the suggestions made during the last Policy Committee meeting. The committee suggested various additions, deletions, and editorial changes to the policy. The most substantive of those actions were:

1. Change negative statements to positive statements
2. Assure that language is consistent throughout the policy
3. Arrange sections so that the policy language logically flows together
4. Suggested adding information in the regulation concerning the complaint process and communication with parents
5. "MCPS will work in partnership ... " (Line 234)
6. "Parents are responsible for their child's ... " (Line 259)
7. Delete "to the most immediately affected parties" (Line 308)
8. Delete Number 8 that references COMAR (Line 415)
9. Delete "to and from school" (Line 478)
10. Align duplicative language

**ACTION:** The revised policy and regulation will be reviewed at the February committee meeting.

### **Update on Evaluation of Policy IPD: Field Trips**

As part of the committee's emphasis on monitoring policy implementation, it received an

update on the evaluation of Policy IPD, *Field Trips*. Staff stated that the document analysis has been completed, and they are in the process of writing the final report. The documents included in the analysis were forms associated with school-sponsored trips, the Principals Handbook, and field trip planning packets. Focus groups will be held and the information gathered will be included in the report. To this point, it appears that implementation of this policy is accomplished in a variety of ways and systemwide consistency is an issue. Staff stated that the report can address the evaluation in one of three ways: (1) evaluate each criterion separately, (2) evaluate all criteria as a whole, and (3) review patterns in instances where the policy is not followed.

After a discussion of the issues, the committee stated that the desired result is to determine effectiveness of implementation of the policy systemwide. Since this initial evaluation process is a learning process, the committee suggested reviewing the results and definitions and obtaining feedback on the three strategies for the report. The final report should use the strategy that focuses on overall consistency with the policy.

**ACTION:** Staff will provide an update on the evaluation process in February and the final evaluation report of Policy IPD will be reviewed in April. In March, staff will inform the committee about the evaluation plan for Policy CNA, Informational Materials and Announcements.

#### **Review of Internal Policy Audit Regarding Need for Policy Revision/Recession**

Staff provided a handout listing the targeted policies and the status of each in the system's internal audit process. Staff explained that the policies are audited by sorting the policies by age, core governance, and similar topics. Discussion focused on policies that may be coming before the Policy Committee at a future date.

**ACTION:** Staff will provide an update on the status of audit items at the March committee meeting.

**Review of Draft Regulation Regarding External Audits Requiring Board of Education Approval.** The committee was asked to provide any comments to Mr. Bowers concerning the draft regulation.

**ACTION:** N/A

**Next Meeting and Adjournment.** The next committee meeting is scheduled for February 13, 2008, at 2:30 p.m. in Room 120. Agenda items may include:

1. The Board of Education Handbook
2. Site-based Participatory Management
3. Policy CNA, *Informational Material and Announcements* (implementation evaluation)
4. Policy EEA, *Student Transportation*

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.