

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
POLICY COMMITTEE**

May 14, 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, Quratul-Ann Malik (Student Member of the Board-elect), Suzann King (staff assistant), and Glenda Rose (recorder).

Other staff present: Stephanie Williams, Harriet Potosky, Brian Edwards, Lori-Christina Webb, Betsy Brown, John Matthews, Cathy Pevey, Christina Yuknis, Linda Ferrell, Phil McGaughey, Erick Lang, Elizabeth Cooper-Martin, and Rachel Hickson.

Others present: Suzanne Weiss, Eric Gabler, and Jane deWinter.

Committee Minutes

Action: The minutes of the April 9, 2008, meeting were approved, as presented.

Honors Level Courses

There were allegations from parents at Rockville High School that the school was not offering honors level courses, but rather, was placing students into advanced placement (AP) and regular courses, in violation of the Board's policy requirements. Staff reported that since Rockville is a small high school scheduling is difficult to obtain a critical mass to offer all of the courses available in other high schools. The students were placed in AP courses based on the belief that all the students were ready for those courses. This change was communicated to the students and parents. Given the expressed concerns, the community superintendent has worked with the principal to provide options other than AP and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses. Staff assured the committee that this issue has been resolved and the community superintendents will continue to monitor honors level courses at Rockville High School and other high schools.

Committee discussion focused on the global issue of the availability of honors level core courses; the requirements of Policies IOA, IFA, and IGA; the parameters that should be required regarding high school course offerings and programs; whether Policy IFA was obsolete; which, if any curricular issues should be reflected in Policy IED; and the need for Board policy to state the core courses that must be available at all high schools. Further, it was noted that these policy statements must be concise and easily understood by members of the community as well as administrators. Staff agreed that

central office needs to have a process to determine high school core courses and how the policy requirement will be met.

Action: Staff will audit the core course designations and develop a well-defined process for identification of categories under current policy. In addition, staff will identify policies they believe should be revised, and provide a timeline for that process.

Middle School Reform – Policy IEB, Middle School Education

Staff reported on the evaluation and implementation of selected components of Middle School Reform. The methodology included in-person interviews with Phase I principals and leaders; review of program documentations; and analysis of MCPS data on student course enrollment, characteristics, and offerings. The evaluation examined the following three goal areas of Middle School Reform:

- Goal 1 - ensure effective leadership that promotes shared ownership for student and staff success and establishes a culture of high expectations
- Goal 2 - engage all students in effective and differentiated instructional practices using a rigorous, standards-based curriculum and challenging assessments
- Goal 4 - implement organizational structures that maximize time for teaching and learning, cultivate positive relationships, and promote increased student achievement

Some of the recommendations emanating from the evaluation were:

1. encourage principals to identify the roles and responsibilities of the new Accelerated and Enriched Instruction (AEI) position
2. implement more staff development
3. give guidance to schools for common planning periods
4. populate Performance Matters with added data and subjects
5. train teachers in other content areas
6. increase classroom technology with training
7. provide speakers for streaming video and audio
8. provide more guidance on rigorous instruction
9. use pre-service days for professional development
10. continue to distribute information to staff in the process of middle school reform

The committee discussed the methodology for the evaluation and how the information was collected and analyzed. Concerns were raised regarding the manner of presentation by staff from Office of Shared Accountability and suggestions were made to make the data more accessible to committee members.

Action: Staff will provide a quarterly report on Middle School Reform in October. Furthermore, staff is to provide a template regarding the policy's implementation and evaluation that will align with presentations to the committee. Improvements will be made to the supporting documentation provided to the committee.

Policy EEA, Student Transportation

The committee reviewed the public comments, summary of responses, and the recommended revised draft policy. Staff recommended some editorial changes as well as the following substantive changes:

1. Line 158 – The following standards will apply to students walking **to schools or school bus stops** ~~be considered in making decisions relative to the factors listed above:~~
2. Line 167 – Students are expected to walk along primary roadways with sidewalks or **shoulders of sufficient width to allow walking off the main road.**
3. Line 210 – MPCS will **follow an effective** ~~develop guidelines that clearly articulate the~~ process for handling and investigating accidents so that injured students and staff are care for promptly, further injury prevented, and correct and timely information is disseminated to all necessary parties.
4. Line 279 – MCPS will implement a system wide outreach and education program to teach safe walking practices en route to and from school, encourage safe bus-riding behavior, and ~~address~~ **reinforce appropriate** student conduct **while riding the bus** ~~on buses.~~
5. Principals and **PTA** presidents ~~of the PTAs or parent teacher organizations of special education centers that operate in lieu of nationally affiliated PTAs will be notified~~ **in advance** of routing changes that involve reductions of service ~~in a timely manner.~~
6. The committee added a new g) to state: **Every effort is made to balance ride times and resources.**

Noting the recurring theme of pedestrian safety in the public comments, staff explained that specifics of pedestrian safety will be addressed in the regulation.

Action: The revised policy will be forwarded to the Board with a recommendation for final approval on June 10, 2008.

Policy DJB, Bid Awards

Staff withdrew its recommendation to rescind this policy.

Action: None

Policy Review Process

Staff reported that the Department of Reporting and Regulatory Accountability has implemented a process for auditing policies and regulations in order to closely evaluate and monitor ongoing changes/revisions.

The audit has focused on older policies and regulations, as a result of which:

- 1 policy was rescinded
- 2 policies recommended for rescission after inclusion into another policy
- 1 policy is regulatory and will be revised
- 1 policy will be rescinded next year
- 4 policies have been retained as written
- 8 policies are under active review

Action: Staff will provide a semi-annual report on the audit process.

Next Meeting and Adjournment

The next committee meeting is scheduled for June 11, 2008, at 2:30 p.m. in Room 120. Agenda items may include:

1. Evaluation update on Policy CNA, *Informational Material and Announcements*
2. Timeline for Policy CFA, *Site-based Participatory Management*

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.