

Strategic Planning Committee Minutes
October 20, 2010
1:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. with the following committee members and Board staff present: Dr. Judy Docca (Chair), Mr. Michael Durso, Mrs. Patricia O'Neill, Ms. Laura Steinberg, and Ms. Kathy Yorro (recorder).

The following Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) staff members were present: Mr. Larry Bowers, chief operating officer; Mr. Brian Edwards, chief of staff, Office of the Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Erick Lang, associate superintendent for curriculum and instruction; Mr. Brian Bartels, director, Psychological Services; and Ms. Maureen Ryan, assistant to the associate superintendent for special education and student services.

Guest presenters included: Mr. David Holdefer, psychologist, Psychological Services; Dr. Sharon O'Donnell, psychologist, Psychological Services; and Ms. June Zillich, psychologist, Placement and Assessment Services.

Approval of Agenda and Minutes – The committee unanimously approved the meeting agenda and the minutes for the Strategic Planning Committee meeting of April 28, 2010.

2011 Legislative Platform

The committee reviewed the proposed changes to the 2011 Legislative Platform as presented by Ms. Laura Steinberg, staff assistant, Legislative and Inter-Governmental Relations, Office of the Board of Education. Changes, additions, and deletions to the Legislative Platform approved by the committee to be brought to the full Board included the following:

Funding/Accountability

- Pension/Retirement remains in the platform. Additional language was added to the Funding/Accountability header indicating that the school system cannot afford “significant additional workload burdens.” The committee suggested that we would need to find a way to convey these “significant workload burdens” to the legislature. One suggestion was that the issue of charging for transportation rather than eliminating transportation to special programs should be raised.
- Maintenance of Effort – Additional language suggested by Dr. Marshall Spatz, director, Management, Budget and Planning, regarding the expectation of no increase in state school aid, penalties, and requiring use of a previous year’s MOE amount if a county violates the MOE requirement was approved by the committee.
- Capital Budget/School Construction remains in the platform with language regarding forward funding projects.

- Operating Budget remains in the platform with minor addition indicating that GCEI be fully funded in FY 2010 “and 2011.”
- Special Education Nonpublic Tuition remains in platform with no changes.
- Public Funding for Private Schools remains in the platform with no changes.
- Comprehensive Master Plan was removed from the platform.

Local Board Authority

- Collective Bargaining was removed from the platform.
- Curriculum remains in platform with no changes.
- Charter Schools remain in platform with no changes.

Students

- Compulsory Age of Attendance remains in platform with no changes.
- Early Childhood Education remains in platform with no changes.
- Nutrition and Health remains in the platform with no changes.
- Safety and Security remains in the platform. Mr. Durso brought up the issue of the county ambulance fee if passed in the November election and where the school system is with that issue if there were a major incident at a school. Mrs. O’Neill indicated that this is a “county” issue and suggested that the Board write a letter to the County Executive and County Council regarding the importance of this issue to the school system.
- Home Schooling remains in the platform with no changes.
- Student Member of Boards of Education remains in the platform.

Ms. Steinberg will present the 2011 Legislative Platform as approved by the Strategic Planning Committee to the full Board on November 9, 2011.

BOE Meeting with the Montgomery County Delegation

Ms. Steinberg presented an update to the committee regarding the BOE meeting with the Montgomery County Delegation including:

- Invitations sent to the Delegation, the Montgomery County Council Education Committee, the Montgomery County Council of PTAs Executive Board, and two State Board of Education members who are residents of Montgomery County. Invitations to

newly-elected state senators and delegates will be sent after the November 2 elections.

- Ms. Steinberg suggested that Board members be asked to call the senators and delegates from specific districts to encourage their attendance at the BOE/Delegation meeting. Committee members agreed.
- Committee discussed the content of the meeting. It was agreed that the primary focus of the meeting should be on the budget, including MOE and pensions, the increase in enrollment and the impact on the capital budget, and the impact of Race to Top.
- Packet of information will be distributed to the delegation which will include demographic information.

The committee discussed the possibility of holding a separate orientation with the newly-elected legislators. It was agreed that this would be beneficial, possibly taking them into the schools in their district. The goal would be to start these orientation/tours starting in January. Ms. Steinberg will facilitate setting up these meetings.

Middle School Reform

Mr. Lang presented an update to the committee on Middle School Reform. He began by explaining the resources that ALL middle schools receive, as well as the additional resources/components provided to the eleven Phase I and Phase II schools. After reviewing the lists of resources/components, Mr. Lang explained that, due to budget constraints, expansion of the middle school reform initiative has been postponed. He said that many things initiated in the reform schools are happening in all schools, with the exception of elective offerings. Elective offerings present huge scheduling challenges due to fiscal constraints. Staff is working to identify solutions that go beyond the 8-period day. Another challenge with offering electives is finding team planning time without the need for additional staff.

Mr. Bowers explained to the committee that staff is looking at several models to enable offering electives to students without going to an 8-period day. A work group was formed to come up with ideas to work around the issues involved. There are different options, but it would need to be piloted.

The committee asked that an update be presented to the full Board. Scheduling of presentation would be presented at Agenda Setting. Content of the presentation would be discussed with the Board officers. The committee felt that it would be good to hear from non phase I and phase II schools. The committee also felt that an update on hours-based staffing should come to the full Board.

Committee Work Plan

The committee reviewed their work plan suggesting that substantive comments from the community roundtables be brought to the committee in consultation with staff. This could be added to the January 19 committee agenda.

Dates for future committee meetings are to be sent to the committee members.

Montgomery County School Psychologists Association

Ms. June Zillich, Mr. David Holdefer, and Dr. Sharon O'Donnell, representatives from the School Psychologists Association, presented information to the committee about the role of school psychologists and the support they provide to schools and teachers. Included in their presentation were 10 domains of practice; examples of how they can provide direct educational, behavioral, and mental health services for children and youth; and how they work with families, school administrators, educators, and other professionals to create supportive learning and social environments for all students.

Committee members agreed that the services provided by school psychologists are invaluable. Mr. Durso asked whether there are lingering issues related to the reorganization. Mr. Holdefer responded that the psychologists have worked with MCEA to bring in a mediator who is helping to resolve any outstanding issues.

The committee thanked the representatives for their presentation.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:13 p.m.