

1 Related Entries: ABA-RA, ABA-EA, ABC, ACA, **BFA, BFA-RA**, BMA,  
2 IOD, IOD-RA, **KBA**  
3 Responsible Office: **Office of the Chief Engagement of Staff; Chief**  
4 **of Strategic Initiatives; Chief of Teaching,**  
5 **Learning, and Partnership Officer**~~Schools~~

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9 Community ~~Involvement~~**Engagement**

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12  
13 A. PURPOSE

14  
15 **To affirm the Board's commitment to the development and**  
16 **promotion of inclusive, culturally responsive, and antiracist**  
17 **engagement guidelines, structures, and practices to be**  
18 **implemented to engage the Montgomery County Public Schools**  
19 **(MCPS) community in Board decision-making processes and that**  
20 ~~input and involvement is sought and encouraged from a broad~~  
21 ~~spectrum of our diverse community. The Board is committed to~~  
22 ~~the maintenance and monitoring of ongoing collaborative and~~  
23 ~~productive communication processes with the community.~~

24 ~~The~~**To affirm the** Montgomery County Board of  
25 ~~Education~~**Education's** (Board) ~~is committed to~~  
26 ~~fostering~~**strongly held belief that equitable educational**  
27 **outcomes, success, and supporting well-being for all students**

28 **require the engagement of the students, families, staff, and**  
29 **other interested members of the Montgomery County** community  
30 ~~interest and involvement~~

31 **To establish research-based guidelines for levels of**  
32 **community engagement** in ~~Montgomery County Public Schools~~  
33 ~~(MCPS), because citizen support of the~~ **Board decision-making**  
34 **processes that strengthen relationships between students,**  
35 **staff, families,** ~~schools, is essential to student success.~~  
36 ~~The Board will ensure that the ideas, interests, and concerns~~  
37 ~~of its~~ **and the broader community**

38 **To acknowledge that engaging** ~~stakeholders are considered and~~  
39 ~~valued~~ **who reflect the community's diversity and experiences,**  
40 **requires intentional and culturally responsive engagement**  
41 **practices and structures**

42  
43 B. ISSUE

44  
45 **1.** ~~Creating processes for community involvement in a large,~~  
46 ~~diverse community such as Montgomery County presents~~  
47 ~~challenges and opportunities. Ensuring that the members~~  
48 ~~of the community are encouraged, supported, and~~  
49 ~~recruited to contribute time, knowledge, skills~~  
50 **Understanding and valuing the ideas, interests,**  
51 **expectations,** ~~and ideas to~~ **concerns of** the ~~public school~~  
52 ~~system~~ **diverse students, families, staff, and other**  
53 **stakeholders of Montgomery County is both**

54 ~~challenging~~**necessary to ensure the district's goal that**  
55 **all students are prepared for college, career, and**  
56 **essential.** ~~Commitment~~**community.**

57  
58 2. **Community engagement efforts may result in not hearing**  
59 **from stakeholders who are most adversely affected by**  
60 **certain decisions, or who have been traditionally**  
61 **marginalized, unless there are clear guidelines and**  
62 ~~resources are required to design, maintain~~**structures for**  
63 **stakeholders and staff and that monitor ~~processes~~  
64 **recognize the complexity of effective, inclusive, and**  
65 **equitable engagement practices.** ~~for~~ ~~productive~~  
66 ~~collaboration and communication between MCPS and the~~  
67 ~~community. These processes must.~~**

68  
69 3. **Research-based models<sup>1</sup> of public participation and**  
70 **engagement recommend that public participation and**  
71 **engagement efforts are most successful when there are**  
72 **clearly stated objectives for the public's role;**  
73 **appropriate commitment of resources and time to design**  
74 **meaningful and inclusive engagement and public**  
75 **participation activities; and ongoing efforts to create**  
76 ~~an environment~~**culturally responsive environments** where  
77 **diverse views may be heard and considered in an**

<sup>1</sup>International Association for Public Participation. (2018). *Core values, ethics, spectrum - the 3 pillars of public participation - IAP2*. IAP2: Advancing the practice of public participation. Retrieved March 8, 2022, from <https://www.iap2.org/?page=pill>

78 atmosphere of **mutual** respect.

79

80 C. DEFINITIONS

81

82 1. A community engagement *goal*<sup>2</sup> is the purpose for which  
83 community members are brought together. For the  
84 purposes of this policy, the goals are informed by the  
85 International Association for Public Participation  
86 *Spectrum of Public Participation* as one of the  
87 following:

88

89 a) *Inform* means to provide the public with balanced  
90 and objective information to assist them in  
91 understanding the problem, alternatives,  
92 opportunities, and/or solutions; or

93

94 b) *Consult* means to obtain public feedback on  
95 analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions; or

96

97 c) *Involve* means to work directly with the public  
98 throughout a process to ensure that public concerns  
99 and aspirations are consistently understood and  
100 considered; or

101

102 d) *Collaborate* means to partner with the public for  
103 advice and innovation in formulating recommended

<sup>2</sup> IAP2, *Ibid.*

104                    **solutions and incorporate their recommendations**  
105                    **into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.**  
106

- 107            2. ~~Community Involvement seeks~~**members refers** to ensure that  
108            the breadth of interests and values from across the  
109            community are heard and considered by the Board,  
110            superintendent of schools, principals, and other  
111            educational leaders, thereby enhancing the decision-  
112            making process. ~~Community is comprised of numerous~~  
113            constituents with a vested interest in **a high-quality**  
114            **public school system for** the education of children. ~~Some~~  
115            ~~of these constituents may~~**all Montgomery County students.**  
116            **These may** include **MCPS students, parents/guardians, and**  
117            **staff; as well as those who advocate on behalf of**  
118            **students, parents/guardians, and staff, including,** but  
119            are not limited to, Montgomery County residents,  
120            ~~advocacy, nonprofit, parent or~~; community-based  
121            organizations **or groups who advocate on behalf of**  
122            **students on the basis of race, ethnicity, color,**  
123            **ancestry, national origin, nationality, religion,**  
124            **immigration status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender**  
125            **expression, sexual orientation, family**  
126            **structure/parental status, marital status, age, ability**  
127            **(cognitive, social/emotional, and physical), poverty and**  
128            **socioeconomic status, language, or other legally or**  
129            **constitutionally protected attributes or affiliations;**  
130            business, civic, and nongovernmental organizations;  
131            local **prekindergarten and postsecondary** educational

132 institutions; **and local**, state, ~~local~~, and federal  
133 agencies; ~~and cultural, ethnic, racial, and religious~~  
134 groups.

- 135
- 136 3. ***Engagement*** means to provide experiences that strengthen  
137 trusting relationships between students, families,  
138 ~~teachersstaff, families, and schools~~, and the Board,  
139 between ~~school~~the Board and the broader community.

140

141 D. POSITION

142

143 ~~1. As part of its responsibility as a community member, the~~  
144 ~~Board will:Develop its role as an advocate~~**The Board seeks**  
145 **engagement of community members representative of the breadth**  
146 **of experiences, interests, and values of those who seek a**  
147 **high-quality school system for all MCPS students.**

- 148
- 149 1. In alignment with Board Policy ACA, *Nondiscrimination,*  
150 *Equity, and Cultural Proficiency*, the Board affirms the  
151 importance of applying an equity lens and culturally  
152 responsive and antiracist approaches that address the  
153 impact on all students of any program, practice,  
154 decision, or action, with a strategic focus on  
155 marginalized student groups.

- 156
- 157 2. The Board may seek community engagement to inform its  
158 decision-making processes and provide opportunities to  
159 hear and consider community concerns, comments, and

160 recommendations regarding the development of Board  
161 policies, as set forth in Board Policy BFA,  
162 *Policysetting*, and other decisions, using the best  
163 interest of the—students as a guiding principle.  
164 Although the Board will consider carefully community  
165 input gathered through community engagement strategies,  
166 the final responsibility for Board-designated decisions  
167 rests with the Board.

168 ~~b. Engage community members in building an~~  
169 ~~organizational culture of respect~~

170 a) ~~e. Establish processes designed to obtain~~  
171 ~~input~~ **This policy works in tandem with Board Policy**  
172 **ABC, Parent and Family Involvement, and Board**  
173 **Policy ACA, Nondiscrimination, Equity, and Cultural**  
174 **Proficiency.**

175 b) **As a substantial portion of Board decisions affect**  
176 **students directly, public engagement activities set**  
177 **forth in this policy shall intentionally include**  
178 **students who reflect the diversity of the student**  
179 **body as much as possible.**

181 ~~b. Seek collaboration with a broad range of community~~  
182 ~~members and organizations that reflect the diverse~~  
183 ~~citizenry and interests of Montgomery County.~~

185 **3. The Board encourages community-initiated engagement to**

186 inform its decision-making processes and welcomes  
187 multiple and varied opportunities for the community to  
188 raise its aspirations, concerns, and analysis of issues  
189 facing MCPS.

190

191 4. The Board, central office, and school-based staff will  
192 show evidence of using culturally responsive engagement  
193 planning and implementation guides and/or resources in  
194 the initial planning, implementation, and evaluation of  
195 all community engagement. Engagement goals (e.g., to  
196 inform, involve, consult, or collaborate) shall be  
197 clearly stated and appropriate to the task, and  
198 engagement practitioners shall be mindful of the guiding  
199 questions below when designing engagement activities:

200

201 a) **Participants (Who will be most impacted by engaging**  
202 ~~in a discussion among a broad variety of~~  
203 ~~stakeholders and utilizing opportunities for~~  
204 ~~input~~ **this decision? Who needs to be involved to**  
205 **make the most effective decision?)**

206

207 b) **Students (How will students who reflect the**  
208 **diversity of MCPS be included in ways that they**  
209 **feel heard?)**

210

211 c) **Outreach (What are the best strategies to engage**  
212 **the participants?)**

213



214 d) Process (How will the engagement process be  
215 organized and facilitated to ensure that the  
216 participants can participate effectively?)

217  
218 e) Evaluation (How do we know that our efforts were  
219 effective?)

220  
221 5. The Board, central office, and school-based staff will  
222 use *Evidence of Equity* to implement and evaluate all  
223 community engagement. *Evidence of Equity* includes  
224 guiding questions such as the following:

225  
226 e)a) Whom does this practice or decision serve or  
227 neglect?

228  
229 b) Whose voices are dominating or lacking from the  
230 ~~public and relevant staff members through any~~  
231 ~~appropriate conversation?~~

232  
233 c) What adverse impacts or unintended consequences  
234 could result from this decision?

235  
236 d) What steps are in place for ongoing data collection  
237 and reflection of the outcomes?

238  
239 e) Are diverse identities and perspectives represented  
240 and informing the implementation of the  
241 practice/decision?

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- 6. Participation techniques may include any method(s) appropriate to the participation goals, such as, but not limited to the following:**
- a) Community-initiated methods of engagement, including public testimony at Board meetings, correspondence with Board members, or invitations to Board members or MCPS administrators to attend meetings of community organizations.**
  - b) Broad public outreach through surveys, public comment data capture, community events, door-to-door contact, or other methods of receiving and analyzing public input on a large scale.**
  - c) Dialogue in facilitated small-group discussions, in person or in virtual space, where members of the public may introduce topics of interest, raise questions, or discuss content or questions prepared by presenters, including -**
    - (1) public meetings where participants are provided the opportunity to engage in facilitated small-group discussions;**
    - (2) study circles, which provide training for both**

269 leaders and participants to engage in  
270 challenging topics and seek common ground;

271  
272 (3) focus groups of participants, typically  
273 selected on the basis of some common interest  
274 or experience;

275  
276 (4) task forces or charettes, typically composed  
277 of participants selected on the basis of their  
278 technical expertise to analyze technical  
279 issues.

280  
281 d) Presentations or large-group meetings where  
282 participants receive information in a public forum,  
283 provide testimony or ask questions, or may be  
284 provided opportunities for facilitated small group  
285 discussions.

286  
287 ~~(1) Focus groups~~  
288 f) ~~(2) Task forces~~  
289 ~~(3) Work groups~~  
290 ~~(4) Technologically facilitated communication~~  
291 ~~(5) Advisory groups~~  
292 ~~(6) Public forums~~  
293

294 6. The Board is committed to providing appropriate time,  
295 financial support, professional learning, and  
296 consider MCPS staff to design, facilitate, and conduct  
297 community comments and concerns regarding engagement

298           **activities.**

299

300           **7. Prior to its action on decisions about which the**  
301 ~~development~~**Board has requested community engagement, the**  
302           **following information shall be included in materials**  
303 **provided for the Board's deliberation:**

304

305           a)   **A summary of ~~MCPS policies~~community engagement**  
306           **activities conducted, which should include a**  
307           **description of the participants, the participation**  
308           **goals, the participation results, and ~~other~~**  
309           ~~decisions~~**the techniques used to reach community**  
310           **members.**

311

312           b)   **A summary of how students were engaged or an**  
313           **explanation for why students were not engaged.**

314

315           c)   **A summary of focus areas and/or preferences**  
316           **identified, even if consensus recommendations are**  
317           **not obtained.**

318

319           ~~e. Seek to engage members of our diverse community,~~  
320           ~~particularly organizations representing new or~~  
321           ~~traditionally underrepresented communities, in a~~  
322           ~~committed, productive partnership to support the~~  
323           ~~MCPS strategic plan~~

324

325           ~~f. Advocate for the MCPS student population and~~

326 ~~their families through engagement with local,~~  
327 ~~state, and federal government agencies 2. As~~  
328 ~~part of its responsibility as a community member,~~  
329 ~~the school system offices will: a. Integrate~~  
330 ~~resources and services from the community to~~  
331 ~~strengthen school programs, family practices, and~~  
332 ~~student learning and development~~

333

334 **8. Regarding Board decisions about issues specific to local**  
335 **school communities, the Board will make every effort to**  
336 **ascertain and respect the preferences of students,**  
337 **families, and staff of that school.**

338  
339 **a) The Board affirms the primacy of engagement through**  
340 **local schools communicating directly with their own**  
341 **communities.**

342  
343 **b) e. Seek and The superintendent of**  
344 **schools/designee is responsible for providing**  
345 **support and technical assistance as needed to local**  
346 **administrators to design and implement robust**  
347 **participation goals and activities consistent with**  
348 **this policy. the involvement of local**  
349 **organizations, particularly organizations**  
350 **representing new or traditionally underrepresented**  
351 **communities, in the school system d. Provide**  
352 **access and opportunity for broad segments of the**  
353 **community, representing the wide variety of**

354 ~~interests within the community, to participate in~~  
355 ~~decision-making processes e. Provide, to the~~  
356 ~~extent possible, interpretation services and~~  
357 ~~translations of important information about school~~  
358 ~~system programs, services, policies, or issues 3.~~  
359 ~~As part of its responsibility as a community~~  
360 ~~member, each school will: a. Seek involvement~~  
361 ~~from the community and provide opportunities to~~  
362 ~~strengthen the home/school connection b.~~  
363 ~~Establish and maintain regular and ongoing~~  
364 ~~two-way communication with families and the~~  
365 ~~community to provide information and solicit~~  
366 ~~feedback about school progress, resources,~~  
367 ~~policies, and issues~~  
368 ~~e) e. Provide, to the extent possible, information~~  
369 ~~in the native languages of members of the school~~  
370 ~~community~~  
371 ~~d. Access community services to support and foster~~  
372 ~~academic achievement and positive development for~~  
373 ~~all students~~  
374 ~~e. Participate actively and responsibly in the life~~  
375 ~~and social fabric of the local community~~

377 E. DESIRED OUTCOME

378  
379 There will be an actively engaged community that is reflective  
380 of all residents. ~~The system~~**Students** will benefit from the  
381 **diverse** community's contribution ~~of its~~ **of** skills, knowledge,

382 ideas, **experiences**, and time to support the **equitable**  
383 **education** success and **well-being** of all students in  
384 partnership with MCPS. **Community stakeholders will be well-**  
385 **informed and understand the issues, opportunities,**  
386 **alternatives, and potential solutions that shape Board**  
387 **decisionmaking; and community stakeholders will have multiple**  
388 **and varied opportunities for their aspirations, concerns, and**  
389 **analysis to be heard.**

390

391 F. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

392

393 1. ~~1.~~—The superintendent of schools will ~~assess the~~  
394 ~~status of community involvement, review existing~~  
395 ~~policies—~~

396 a) **create** and ~~procedures,~~ ~~revise~~ ~~necessary~~  
397 ~~regulations~~ **maintain a cross-office committee**  
398 **responsible for developing** and ~~procedures to~~  
399 ~~support this policy,~~ **updating culturally responsive**  
400 **community engagement** and ~~make periodic reports to~~  
401 ~~the Board regarding the status of community~~  
402 ~~involvement~~ **implementation guides and/or resources,**  
403 **and**

404

405 b) **provide training for staff at all levels on how to**  
406 **implement inclusive, culturally responsive, and**  
407 **antiracist strategies for community engagement.**

408

409 2. The Board will seek community input ~~on school system,~~

410 involvement, consultation, or collaboration, as  
411 appropriate, on Board decisions related to policies,  
412 including curriculum, facilities, and funding issues  
413 from a broad spectrum of our culturally and  
414 linguistically diverse community.

415  
416 3. Further, the Board will seek appropriate strategies to  
417 inform engagement participants of how community input  
418 was considered and/or used in decisionmaking resulting  
419 from their engagement.

420

421 G. REVIEW AND REPORTING

422

423 This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the Board  
424 policy review process.

425

426

427 **Related Sources: International Association for Public**  
428 **Participation Spectrum of Public**  
429 **Participation; Montgomery County Public**  
430 **Schools Evidence of Equity; MCPS Culturally**  
431 **Responsive Community Engagement and**  
432 **Implementation Tool**

433

434 Policy History: Adopted by Resolution No. 287--74, May 28,  
435 1974; amended by Resolution No. 268--76, May  
436 11, 1976; amended by Resolution No. 346-06,  
437 July 18, 2006; amended by Resolution No. 327-



438

13, June 13, 2013; **amended** .