

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**

Community Involvement Engagement

13 A. PURPOSE

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

24 The —— **To affirm** the Montgomery County Board of
25 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 models¹ 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

¹ 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.

80 C. DEFINITIONS

82 1. A community engagement goal² 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:

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

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

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
00 considered; or

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

2 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 (bognitive, 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 ~~teachers~~ staff, ~~families,~~ and schools, and the Board,
139 between ~~schools~~ 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) c. 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.

180
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.

184
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?

242

246

247 a) Community-initiated methods of engagement,
248 including public testimony at Board meetings,
249 correspondence with Board members, or invitations
250 to Board members or MCPS administrators to attend
251 meetings of community organizations.

252

257

258 c) Dialogue in facilitated small-group discussions, in
259 person or in virtual space, where members of the
260 public may introduce topics of interest, raise
261 questions, or discuss content or questions prepared
262 by presenters, including -

263

264 (1) public meetings where participants are
265 provided the opportunity to engage in
266 facilitated small-group discussions;

267

(2) study circles, which provide training for both

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

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

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.

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.

287 (1) Focus groups

288 (2) Task forces

289 (3) Work groups

290 (4) Technologically facilitated communication

291 (5) Advisory groups

292 (6) Public forums

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 developmentBoard 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 policiescommunity engagement
306 activities conducted, which should include a
307 description of the participants, the participation
308 goals, the participation results, and other
309 decisionsthe 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

their families through engagement with local, state, and federal government agencies 2. As part of its responsibility as a community member, the school system offices will:

- a. Integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development

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

a) The Board affirms the primacy of engagement through local schools communicating directly with their own communities.

b) c. Seek and The superintendent of schools/designee is responsible for providing support and technical assistance as needed to local administrators to design and implement robust participation goals and activities consistent with this policy. the involvement of local organizations, particularly organizations representing new or traditionally underrepresented communities, in the school system d. Provide access and opportunity for broad segments of the community, representing the wide variety of

354 interests within the community, to participate in
355 decision-making processes e. Provide, to the extent possible,
356 interpretation services and translations of important information about school
357 system programs, services, policies, or issues 3.

359 As part of its responsibility as a community member, each school will: a. Seek involvement from the community and provide opportunities to strengthen the home/school connection b.
360
361 Establish and maintain regular and ongoing two-way communication with families and the community to provide information and solicit feedback about school progress, resources, policies, and issues

362
363 c) c. Provide, to the extent possible, information in the native languages of members of the school community

364
365 d. Access community services to support and foster academic achievement and positive development for all students

366
367 e. Participate actively and responsibly in the life and social fabric of the local community

376
377 E. DESIRED OUTCOME

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