

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION  
COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING  
JANUARY 23, 2008  
5:30 p.m.**

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. with the following committee members and Board staff present: Patricia O'Neill (chair), Sharon Cox (member), Judy Docca (member), Ben Moskowitz (member), Suzann King (staff assistant), and Kathy Yorro (reporter).

Other MCPS staff present: Aggie Alvez and Brian Edwards

**Committee Minutes**

Action: The minutes of the July 24, 2007 committee meeting were approved unanimously.

**Review of Committee Charge**

The committee was established by resolution on July 9, 2004 to promote good communications and public engagement between the Board and its stakeholders. After reviewing and discussing its charge, the committee discussed various ways in which the community has been engaged to date, including the use of QuickNotes, strategic planning forums, the Parent Academy, meetings with MCR/MCJC, and a community leader meeting held in 2005.

The committee discussed the need to analyze the feedback from the 2005 leadership meeting, outreach efforts to students for the strategic planning forums, whether to hold a separate forum for students, and the summary feedback memorandum that was sent to the Board regarding the strategic planning forums.

**Action:** By consensus, the committee decided to: (1) obtain feedback from MCR/MCJC concerning the regularly-held strategic planning forums and the efficacy of having a separate student forum (for discussion at the next committee meeting); (2) obtain and review the feedback report from the 2005 meeting with community leaders (for discussion at the next meeting); and (3) request a joint meeting with the Strategic Planning Committee to examine how best to engage the community in the 2008 forums.

**Planning for Recognition of Scholarship Winners**

Review of Organizations Recognized at Past Board Meetings

Based on the committee's recommendation, on October 9, 2007, the Board voted to hold a scholarship award winner reception in May or June with Board members and the superintendent in attendance. The committee reviewed a handout that detailed the

academic scholarship-related recognitions that have traditionally occurred during Board meetings. Noting that parameters needed to be established regarding how to identify participants for inclusion in the scholarship award winner reception, the committee discussed organizations/groups that have not been recognized at the Board table, such as National Merit scholars, Intel winners, Siemens, the Educational Foundation/MC, and various fraternities and sororities.

The committee discussed the following preparations for the reception:

- **Date.** Noting that the event needed to occur before the first high school graduation, the committee would like to hold the recognition ceremony in late May.
- **How to identify the scholars:** The organizations that have traditionally been recognized during Board meetings should be included in this event. The committee determined that scholarships from individual colleges would not be included, and only scholarships above \$1,000 would be considered for inclusion in the event. Staff should consider communicating with high school principals and career counselors to gather information about the scholarships being offered. Mr. Weaver in the Division of Student Services was suggested as a possible resource for that information. Discussion also focused on the need to monitor the number of students to be recognized and the possibility of limiting the number of guests a student may invite. Further, it was suggested that the sponsoring scholarship organizations should also be recognized at the event but not give speeches.
- **Location:** It was proposed that the event be held at Richard Montgomery or Rockville High Schools. It was suggested that punch and cookies could be provided for the reception and that students could walk across the stage and receive a certificate of recognition for academic achievement. However, it was suggested that the committee consider a different format for the event to really engage the students.
- **Televising the event:** The event should be televised; televising an event encourages students to want to be included in the ceremony.

**Action:** By consensus, the committee decided to: (1) send communication to principals and career counselors requesting assistance on identifying scholarships over \$1,000, not including universities/colleges; (2) look at possible dates in late May for the ceremony and to secure a location for the event (possibly Richard Montgomery or Rockville high school); and (3) for those organizations that have been traditionally recognized during a Board meeting, they are to be informed about the Board's intent to hold a scholarship reception to build upon the foundation laid by those organizations. (Note: Due to budgetary restraints, this activity was placed on hold.)

## **Establishment of Parameters Regarding Recognition of Sports Teams and Extracurricular Groups**

Based on the committee's recommendation, on October 9, 2007, the Board voted that a resolution be read into the record at the Board table recognizing students' extracurricular achievements at the state and national level, with the possibility of video snapshots of those teams/students being aired on Channel 34 during the Board meeting lunch break. The Board also voted to be flexible with recognizing extracurricular programs to ensure that outstanding community-led programs are encouraged and highlighted appropriately.

Committee discussion focused on the current recognitions occurring concerning students' extracurricular achievements, the limitations of the Board's recognitions, the possibility of the Board presenting proclamations, the need for a formal system of notification to the Board on team accomplishments, the feasibility of asking principals on a quarterly basis for lists of activities/events for the Board to recognize, and whether the Board should be added to the distribution list to receive the memorandum from the MCPS' Director of Systemwide Athletics regarding the list of teams that win championships.

**Action:** Given the short timeframe in which to prepare for the scholarship award winners reception, the committee indicated that it should focus on academic scholarships now and work on extracurricular activities next school year. The committee asked staff to work on a mock-up proclamation.

## **Discussion of Future Committee Agenda Items**

The committee discussed the following items for possible inclusion in its committee workplan:

- Examining the information from the 2005 meeting with community leaders in view of the committee's charge. Also, conduct an inventory of perceptions and viewpoints based on feedback from community leaders. This may also include an examination of the cluster meetings to obtain feedback from the clusters about the efficacy of the meetings and how they may be improved.
- Having a joint meeting with the Strategic Planning Committee to plan for the 2008 community forums (possibly to occur in March).
- Asking for a review of current ways the Board of Education uses to communicate, other than hearings and strategic planning forums.
- Receiving a presentation from the NAACP Education Committee concerning its Strategic Plan (possibly for the next committee meeting).

**Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 6:36 p.m.