

Communications & Public Engagement Committee Meeting
October 28, 2008
Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 2:28 p.m. with the following committee members and Board staff present: Mrs. Patricia O'Neill (chair), Ms. Sharon Cox (member), Dr. Judy Docca (member), Mr. Roland Ikheloa (chief of staff), Ms. Suzann King (staff assistant), and Mrs. Kathy Yorro (reporter).

Other MCPS staff present: Mr. Kent Weaver, supervisor, School Counseling Unit; Ms. Aggie Alvez, director, Department of Communications.

Committee Minutes

Action: The minutes of the January 23, 2008, committee meeting were approved unanimously.

Debriefing – Distinguished Service Awards

Committee members and staff discussed the Distinguished Service Awards (DSA) ceremony held on October 23, 2008, including the following items to be reviewed in preparation for the 2009 ceremony:

- A chair for the photographer
- Providing food for the student musicians
- Notation on invitations regarding RSVPs
- Bite sized food
- Shortening the length of time for the ceremony and/or shortening the Board member's comments
- Issuing the call for nominations for the DSA to earlier in the school year (possibly in March), although the ceremony would still be held in the fall.

In summary, committee members were very pleased with the ceremony and thanked Ms. King for the work of staff in preparing for the ceremony.

Action: Staff will send out the call for DSA nominations earlier in the year.

Recognition of Scholarship Winners

The committee previously submitted a recommendation to the Board (which it adopted) stating that a ceremony should be held to recognize students for academic achievement. However, due to budgetary constraints, the decision was made not to

hold the ceremony. In light of the fiscal constraints, the committee discussed alternatives for recognizing students for academic achievement, as well as extracurricular activities, including the following:

- Providing a signed certificate to high schools, with possibly a letter from the Board (or from the Board and the superintendent) accompanying the certificate.
- Acknowledging state championships.
- Coordinating with the Department of Communications to develop a form of recognition/congratulations on behalf of the Board on the MCPS Cable channel to acknowledge these groups, along with a picture of the group, that could scroll for a few months. The photos could be shown during the break at Board meetings with remarks by the Board president. Ms. Alvez suggested that acknowledgements such as those at the state and national level come through the Department of Communications for use in *The Bulletin*.
- The possibility of recognizing students who perform student service learning hours above and beyond the norm, perhaps recognizing students with 1,000 hours or more.

The committee also noted the need to establish identifiable parameters for the student recognitions. Mr. Weaver described a tracking system (Workspace K-12) used in his offices and indicated that his staff could assist with this effort. He indicated that students who identify themselves as scholarships winners also are included in this database. The committee noted that there should be no burden placed on the schools for this project.

The committee discussed specific scholarships/awards to be recognized and how to begin this effort. It was suggested that this initiative begin with recognizing the following: Maryland Distinguished Scholars, National Merit Scholars, Presidential Fitness, National Achievement, Siemens, Intel, NAACP Awards/Scholarships, Asian American Education Association Scholarships, Hispanic Scholars, Leadership Montgomery, Education Foundation, George B. Thomas, Riderwood, Organizations that partner with MCPS, any groups that had historically been issued resolutions, Destination Imagination, and Chess Champions.

The committee also questioned what other school systems do to recognize their students.

Action: Staff will undertake the following items and report back to the committee:

1. Develop a set of suggestions for committee approval regarding the identification of students for Board recognition.
2. Consult with Ms. Pam Meador regarding identification of students earning 1,000 student service learning hours or more.
3. Consult and develop a vehicle to be used for these awards.
4. Create a proclamation that Board members could present at events they are attending.
5. Survey other school systems to ascertain what they do to recognize students' academic and extracurricular achievements.

Potential Future Agendas Items

1. Committee members suggested moving the time of the committee meetings to earlier in the day. Staff will work with committee members to adjust the meeting schedule.

2. Hold a discussion of the May 2005 information regarding Focus Group Discussion on Communication/Outreach to determine whether a new survey is needed.

3. Strategic Planning Forums vs. Town Hall Meetings. Discussion focused on whether the strategic planning forums work; whether they really focus on the strategic plan; that a joint meeting be held with the Strategic Planning Committee to review the expected outcome for the Strategic Planning Forums; the optimal ways of sending and receiving information, not just layering on new activities; dividing the county into sectors to conduct town hall meetings with feedback on the strategic plan with the possibility of eliminating the cluster meetings.

Committee members suggested starting off with three or four town hall meetings, and holding quad-cluster meetings as a town hall gatherings. It was also suggested that the joint committee meeting could focus on what the purpose of the cluster meetings and the expected "result."

4. Committee suggested scheduling a meeting with MCR/MCJC similar to a strategic planning forum. Committee noted that many students do testify at the Strategic Planning Forums, and that this meeting with MCR/MCJC would not preclude students from attending the strategic planning forums. Board office staff

will hold discussions with Karen Crawford, coordinator of Student Affairs, to possibly hold this forum with MCR/MCJC in September or October 2009.

Action: Staff will:

1. Examine the committee meeting schedule.
2. Schedule joint meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee and the Communications and Public Engagement Committee.
3. Hold discussions with Karen Crawford regarding MCR/MCJC meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm.