

Strategic Planning Committee Minutes  
October 21, 2009  
1:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 p.m. with the following committee members and Board staff present: Dr. Judy Docca (Chair), Mr. Michael Durso, Ms. Laura Berthiaume, Ms. Laura Steinberg, and Ms. Kathy Yorro (recorder).

The following Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) staff members were present: Mr. Steve Bedford, chief school performance officer; Mr. Larry Bowers, chief operating officer; Mr. Sean Gallagher, assistant director, Department of Facilities Management; Ms. Julie Hall, coordinator of special projects, Office of School Performance; Dr. Michael Perich, acting director of systemwide improvement, Office of the Chief Operating Officer; Mr. Joe Lavorgna, acting director, Department of Facilities Management; and Mr. Marshall Spatz, director, Department of Management, Budget and Planning.

**Approval of Agenda and Minutes** – The committee unanimously approved the meeting agenda and the minutes for the Strategic Planning Committee meeting of May 20, 2009.

**Facilities Management Survey Results** – Mr. Lavorgna and Mr. Gallagher presented the results of the web principal survey conducted by the Department of Facilities Management. Presentation was put together to give background. The survey provided customer feedback for the following services provided by the Department of Facilities Management—Maintenance, Indoor Air Quality, Energy Management, Recycling, SERT, School Plant Operations, Systemwide Safety, Long Range Planning, and Equity.

The process and results of the survey included:

- Survey conducted annually.
- Survey was web-site based (Test Pilot).
- Survey was brief, including 23 questions – not to overburden principals.
- Electronic results were provided to the division managers and/or key staff with color-coded data, comments and statistical results.
- Individual managers/key staff analyzed survey data and comments, comparing survey to previous years, trends in responses and comments, key source(s) and nature of complaints.
- Plan prepared to visit each school facility that provided “Red – Not very pleased” level of satisfaction.
- Staff members recognized where positive feedback was provided.

Discussion regarding the survey included:

- Principals concentrate on enrollment forecasts when responding to survey. Interesting that some principals have less issue in terms of rating on enrollment forecasting – realize that it is not a precise science. Depending on how far over or under the enrollment forecast is shows how pleased or displeased principals are. Enrollment

projections determine staffing issues which would represent reductions or increases in staff.

- Many principals take advantage of the “General Comment” area of the survey.
- Approximately 130 schools respond.
- Committee members questioned whether there was more representation from the elementary schools or secondary level schools.
- Committee members questioned whether there was any feeling of why other schools did not respond and whether there was something that could be done to get a greater response. Staff felt that generally it represents that they are “satisfied” customers.
- Committee member discussed concern regarding non-response, particularly from building service managers.
- Staff felt that principals are bombarded by surveys.
- Division of Construction is not represented in this survey.
- Committee member discussed concern that the facilities management person or the secretary enters the data into the response to minor areas, if the principals respond. Staff response indicated that principals should have the greatest knowledge (or the business manager). Principals go through training and internship for the management of school.
- Committee chair shared that she felt that principals take this very seriously.
- Committee member questioned the process for including information from PTAs and felt that it would be useful for PTAs to submit their lists of facility issues. Staff responded that the MCCPTA clusters meet with Facilities Management staff and he cited how they review the work orders that are completed and incomplete for individual schools; those that are CIP related and those that are operating budget items.
- Staff indicated that one of the trends in the survey is communications. When there is good communication between the principal and the Facilities Management staff, there is greater satisfaction shown in the survey.
- Committee member questioned whether there is a survey regarding copiers in schools. Facilities Management staff indicated that they did not know; that would fall under Materials Management staff who do keep close contact with their customers.

### **Followup**

1. Staff will review the results to see which level schools are represented and whether the responses represent new vs. veteran principals.

**Office of School Performance Principal Survey** – Mr. Bedford and Ms. Hall presented the results of the principal survey conducted by the Office of School Performance (OSP) with validation of results conducted by the Office of Shared Accountability. Mr. Bedford began by discussing the real purpose of this survey was to obtain provider feedback. He indicated that the survey and review of the results was a process approach vs. reaction approach and that there is a new “process” for OSP looking at feedback results. He explained the process management approach now being used in OSP. Each OSP staff member has a written process for work management looking at how each person goes about their work, being accountable to themselves and the system, with succession planning for when a staff member should leave a position.

The process and results of the survey included:

- There was 75% response rate. Deadline was extended twice – Unions felt that pleas for response had been exhausted after the second deadline extension.
- Principals were offered the opportunity to clarify or elaborate on their responses. Received a lot of feedback that was written.
- Of Elementary School respondents, 90 percent were very satisfied. Most feedback came from comments and recommendations, not categorical ratings.
- Each community superintendent has an action plan to work with principals—looking at feedback for areas that need change and where the focus should be for the next year.
- Comments from principals indicated that there are too many surveys.

Committee members comments included:

- Questioned whether respondents were aware of the different approach of this survey before it was sent out.
- Hear from principals that there are too many meetings.
- Feel that there is a need for a less standardized method of survey.
- Survey was helpful.

**Process Management Initiative** – Mr. Bowers and Dr. Perich presented a new Process Management Initiative to begin an open standards benchmarking process. The discussion/presentation included:

- In education it is hard to get good benchmark data from other school districts.
- A number of school districts have begun this process.
- Began looking at not just benchmarking but where we are with our processes. We started thinking about formalizing the work, what is expected of all staff, and our key processes.
- Looking at processes – not just outcomes.
- First step – Identification of key processes – what is so important that if not done well we would not be successful.
- Began looking at these processes to formalize them. Got a group of people who looked at key processes to get interpretation.
- Second step – Make sure that everyone understands how that process will work; holding staff accountable, system accountable.
- Question – If everyone resigned on Friday and you could hire a new staff, how would they know what to do?
- This is an attempt to formalize work, identify key processes, and how do we evaluate to make sure it is working.
- Training in sic sigma, staff training in an attempt to make sure that processes are efficient.
- Make sure that 13 people aren't doing the same thing,
- At this point, every office has identified their key processes and is looking at in-process measures. We should know month by month how our students are doing – this is also true of our processes. These measures will be the other part of our strategic plan.

- Using a process – IGO – developed by the Defense Department. How do you organize across the organization? How does the same process affect other offices? This speaks to efficiency and effectiveness.
- We have been selected as a HUB project. HUB school districts will help school districts in our geographic area learn about this process centered organization.
- Monitoring on a monthly basis with directors. Just like data points – key processes are measured—see how processes are improving.
- APQC (Jack Grayson and members of APQC) will help us. Will need to raise the money to do this. This is a great opportunity and we are fortunate to be able to work with him.
- Beginning to develop our skills and building a cadre of people to go out and do the same kinds of things – probably begin with Transportation.
- Testing and training of staff.
- CEO will look at this from a financial standpoint for more consistent process.
- Just beginning conversations, but see great potential in helping schools in being effective and efficient.
- At some point all processes, data, etc. should be electronic.

Committee members discussion included:

- Is MCPS the first educational school system for this company to work with. Response: They have worked with a number of school systems in Texas. They have also worked with Brazys Port – 20,000 in size, as well as systems around Houston and one in Nevada—working with large and small school systems.)
- Important to document processes (especially with retirement of staff members)

**Legislative Platform** – Ms. Steinberg reviewed information regarding the Board's Legislative Platform beginning with platform from last year. Heard at MABE conference what is coming before the Maryland Delegation. Collective bargaining bill will come before the Ways and Means Committee on November 17. Maintenance of effort will be quite significant.

Ms. Steinberg asked for any suggested changes to the language included in last year's platform. There will be opportunity to change positions, or if nothing else, make some amendments.

Dr. Spatz informed committee how Maintenance of Effort is before the Attorney General – no information regarding status. Staff and committee discussed whether the language in the support/oppose section for Maintenance of Effort needs to be changed. It was suggested that language be included to specifically get at the issue of the penalty being on the local government, not school system being penalized. Ms. Steinberg will pick up language from MABE to include in the platform.

Other items in the Legislative Platform were reviewed. Ms. Steinberg will clarify information regarding the comprehensive master plan and language on providing preexisting management plans.

Discussion by committee members included:

- Hot topics on SMART GROWTH. MABE did not have on hot topics – want that to be looked at.
- Should language be added about local board authority about bullying and gangs. Probably not something to add to our platform, but to keep an eye on.

**Followups:**

1. **Ms. Steinberg will pick up language regarding Maintenance of Effort from MABE to include in the platform.**
2. **Ms. Steinberg will clarify information regarding the comprehensive master plan and language on providing preexisting management plans.**
3. **Legislative Platform will be presented to the full Board on November 10, 2009.**
4. **Look at hot topic of SMART GROWTH.**

**Meeting with Maryland Delegation** – Ms. Steinberg introduced discussion regarding the upcoming meeting of the Board with the Maryland Delegation. Staff and committee discussion included:

- Possibly consider asking the delegation to report out to us, as well as us providing them information. Last year we engaged in discussion of strategies.
- The County Council Education Committee, as well as MCCPTA Cluster leadership have been invited.
- Problem was that many of the delegates did not show up last year. Maybe we should go to them. Ms. Steinberg indicated that the delegation is not in session. She also encouraged committee members to contact those delegates who did not show up. Ms. Steinberg will work to get more delegates to attend. Mr. Bowers feels that we will get better attendance because of what we did last year inviting the Council and clusters.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.