

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION  
POLICY COMMITTEE**

July 11, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. with the following Board members and Board staff present: Pat O'Neill, (chair), Shirley Brandman, Rebecca Smondrowski, Suzann King (staff assistant), and Glenda Rose (recorder).

Other staff present: Stephanie Williams, Harriet Potosky, Debra Berner, James Song, Essie McGuire, Karalee Turner-Little, and Lori-Cristina Webb.

Guests: Danuta Wilson and Melissa Ceballos.

The minutes from the May 15, 2013, committee meeting were approved, as amended.

**Policy CNE, Facility Improvements That Are Not Funded with Montgomery County Revenues**

The Board of Education (Board) previously referred Policy CNE to the Policy Committee to review the policy and associated issues of equity given that some communities are able to conduct extremely successful fundraising efforts for facility improvements, and others may not be able to do so.

Mr. Song reported the policy requires that a report be sent to the Board regarding the projects approved under this policy. In reviewing a draft of the report prepared for the Board, Mr. Song noted that there are several requests for small amounts from \$160 to \$20,000, which usually includes landscaping and gardens. One of the larger amounts involves a turf field.

It was noted that the County Council's Education Committee was also going to receive an update on the projects approved pursuant to Policy CNE, and was interested in any recommendations from the Board or the committee concerning issues of equity in the policy, as well as programs and services.

Staff members reported that they surveyed other jurisdictions and learned that they do not have policies or formal structures for addressing non-tax revenue. Discussion focused on the following possibilities for how to address the equity issues:

- Create a partnering school program (not a sister school program). For example, if \$5,000 is raised at one school, equal value would have to go to the partnered school. If more than \$5,000 is raised, then 10% would be contributed to the partner school or sister school. If more than \$100,000 is raised, then 5% would be contributed to a partnered school. It was noted that such a program would have to be structured so as not to discourage private agencies from providing

donations, as well as to ensure that one school is not raising all of the money needed for two schools.

- When there are left over funds for projects pursuant to Policy CNE, the left over funds usually go back to original contributor or the school. One option could be to put some of those monies into a fund or give them to a sister school, with a defined methodology for prioritizing the requests that are received.
- Contact business partnerships, which have core missions to support schools, to identify collaboration efforts, such as an “adopt a school” program.
- Consider participating in State programs to help with improvements at “needy” schools. It should be noted that some programs require matching funds.

Additional discussion focused on staff capacity to address such matters, the value of having a pre-approval discussion with the community before they begin fundraising, the desire to ensure that there are not unintended consequences for developing such programs, the need to solicit comments and suggestions from the community about how to address the equity issues, the ramifications of increased community use of MCPS facilities, and the desire not to have such efforts diminish county government’s responsibility to ensure adequate buildings for the community.

Staff will continue developing ideas, as well as ideas for seeking community input.

### **Policy CNA, Informational Material and Announcements**

When the Board of Education took final action on Policy CNA during its June 25, 2012, meeting, it voted that after the completion of the 2012–2013 school year, staff would conduct an evaluation regarding the impact and implications of the changes in policy. The Board was concerned about whether age inappropriate material would be distributed and/or whether the elementary schools were inundated with flyers.

Staff reviewed the evaluation of the flyer policy. The feedback from the elementary principals was that: the number of flyers being distributed has increased, storage of flyers can be challenging, and there was an increased responsibility on school staff to sort flyers and distribute them to the classes. However, there was not a recommendation to cease flyer distribution at the elementary level.

Discussion focused on the measures taken to notify staff of the change of policy and to solicit feedback, the evaluation results, the need to have information about the numbers of flyers staff is being asked to distribute pursuant to the policy, and the need to continue to monitor developments as some schools decide to distribute materials electronically.

The committee decided to inform the Board that, at this juncture, there is no recommendation for further changes to the policy. Staff will continue to monitor the flyer distribution and encourage principals to keep copies of the flyers.

### **Update on Curricular Expenses**

After conducting a survey of school fees, staff provided an update to the committee concerning curricular expenses. Staff reported that all course fees remain the same

with the exception of two requests from Edison to increase fees in its Nail Technician Class and Cosmetology Class because the materials for those classes have increased.

Staff noted that there is sometimes a range of fees for a given item. In these instances, schools may still choose to charge the lower fee, but they cannot charge more than the maximum amount. Some schools were subsidizing fees and thus charging the lower range of the fees versus the upper range of the fees.

The committee was interested in knowing if there were mechanisms in place to collect feedback from schools about the impact of the school fees, as well as to find out about any concerns regarding the fees. Staff was asked to monitor such items.

It was noted that the public comment period has been extended until September 30, 2013, for Policy JEE, *Student Transfers*. It was further noted that the next committee meeting is scheduled for September 17, 2013.

The meeting ended at 2:28 p.m.