

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
POLICY COMMITTEE**

May 10, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m. with the following Board members and Board staff present: Pat O'Neill, (chair), Shirley Brandman, John Mannes, Rebecca Smondrowski, Suzann King (staff assistant), and Glenda Rose (recorder).

Other staff present: Stephanie Williams, Harriet Potosky, Brian Edwards, Robin Confino, James Song, Steve Neff, Mary Dempsey, Marty Creel, Jeannie Franklin, Laura Newton, Ann Bauman, June Zillich, Kara Grant, Sally Davis, and Bruce Crispell.

Others: Judy Bresler.

Guests: Danuta Wilson, John Phillips, Janis Sartucci, Carissa Lovelace, Jordon Cooper, and Curtis Uhre.

The minutes from the March 19, 2013, committee meeting were approved.

Policy IGN, Combating Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse

After the Board tentatively approved Policy IGN, the policy was sent out for public comments. Those comments continue to be received even though the deadline has passed. If there are any more proposed changes to the policy, staff will inform the Board of those changes. The committee discussed the comments that were received from the public and decided to make the following additional proposed changes to the policy:

- Added a reference to “researched-based” in the language regarding the curriculum
- In referring to “drugs,” the language was changed to “alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.”
- Added “socio-emotional” to the list of items referencing student potential in lines 38-42
- Replaced “psychological” with “socio-emotional well-being” in line 120, which refers to the kinds of impacts that drugs can have on an individual
- Added “highly-addictive” before “chemicals and medications” in line 36

In addition to the changes noted above, the committee discussed how several suggestions from the public were already covered in the health curriculum, including how MCPS addresses the reasons that motivate students to use drugs.

The committee decided to recommend that the Board take final action on Policy IGN, as amended, on June 13, 2013. The chair requested that the public comments be included in the packet of materials sent to the Board.

Policy ABA, Community involvement

After the Board tentatively approved Policy ABA, the policy was sent out for public comments. One comment was received which recommended that “older adults” be referenced in the policy. Since there are broad references to the community in the policy, staff recommended no changes to the policy. The committee recommended that the policy be forwarded to the Board for final action on June 13, 2013.

MCPS Consortium Process.

It was noted that the Board of Education asked the Policy Committee to review certain aspects of the Choice Process for the Consortia. In response to a question, staff noted that in the Northeast Consortium a little over a 100 of the 1300 students did not get their first choice, and in the Downcounty Consortium approximately 250 of the 2000 students in the process did not receive their first choice of schools.

Staff indicated that in Grade 8, students rank order a high school they would like to attend based on the Signature program in which they are interested. Students are guaranteed assignment to their base area high school if (1) it is the base school indicated as first choice on the Choice form or (2) indicated as a second choice and the first choice school is not available. In a lottery, high school capacities and projected student enrollments are used to control student assignment to prevent schools from becoming disproportionately overutilized. Demographic controls are applied to the student assignment process, as needed. Assignment decisions are guided by the principle that comparable demographics at the three high schools will provide educational benefits to all students. Among the factors considered in the lottery process are Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS) status, sibling link, and gender.

Younger siblings of students enrolled in a consortium high school are guaranteed attendance at the same school as their older sibling if indicated as the first choice on the Choice form; and the older sibling is scheduled to continue attendance at the high school for the following school year.

The committee was concerned about the communities’ perception that a student is always guaranteed their base school. Staff stated that was not true since students must select their base school for that guarantee. There is an appeal process, which will be reviewed based on a unique hardship.

Policy JEE, Student Transfers and Regulation JEE-RA, Transfer of Students

Staff reported that the policy is under review given the number of issues that have surfaced regarding its implementation. Changes will include middle school students on an approved COSA must reapply for high school, definition of siblings and its application within the policy, student receiving a transfer is ineligible to participate in athletics for one year, and a firm deadline of April 1 for applying for a transfer

Discussion focused on the following:

- the steps that staff members generally follow to verify the reasons given by parents in the COSA process concerning their unique hardship

- the enrollment numbers of Grade 7 and Grade 9 students attending schools outside of their service area;
- Clarification of the sibling rule in relationship to special programs.
- The timing of implementation of the revised policy and regulation.
- Parents of Sligo Creek Elementary School who desire to increase enrollment by giving preference to siblings of students in the immersion program.
- whether special consideration should be given to staff members who seek COSA for their children who attend MCPS, and who want to have their children transferred into the school in which they teach.
- The desire to enforce the April 1 deadline for applying for transfers.

In reviewing the language of the policy and accompanying regulation JEE-RA, *Student Transfers*, the committee decided to:

- Duplicate in the policy the language that is in the regulation that states COSAs are to be submitted between February 1 and April 1
- Support strict enforcement of the April 1 deadline for submitting COSAs unless the student is a new resident, there is a bona fide emergency or event that could not have been foreseen prior to April 1. (It was noted that staff generally receives 525 to 586 COSA requests in August, often with no justification for why the request was not submitted by the April 1 deadline.)
- Suggest that the language not be deleted from line 303 of the regulation that states the chief operating officer serves as the superintendent's designee
- Recommend that the Board of Education take tentative action on Policy JEE on May 30 or June 13, 2013; have an extended period of time for public comments; and take final action on the policy during the September evening Board meeting so that the changes could be in place for the next transfer season.

The committee also stressed to staff that they needed to have a good communications plan (press release, QuickNotes, etc.) to inform the community about the proposed changes to the policy. Furthermore, such communication needs to draw attention to the strict enforcement of the April 1 deadline for COSAs.

Update on ICB/Childcare Policy

The *Interagency Coordinating Board (ICB)* for Community Use of Public Facilities appointed a subcommittee to review and incorporate comments or other changes to the Montgomery County Regulation on Before and After School Childcare Programs in Public Schools. Staff provided a draft of the regulation and noted that the draft also is being circulated to other agencies. Furthermore, staff noted that guidelines will be developed with more detail instructions on the regulation's implementation.

Committee discussion focused on the criteria for the providers, selection process through interviews with a consensus, the fact that final decisions are not appealable, the implementation criteria, the need to clarify "decision maker" on page 5, section 9 should reflect that Effective date is after the Board approves the regulation and the County

council adopts it, and the need for staff to develop a communications plan due to the anticipated impact this regulations will have on certain MCPS facilities.

The anticipated timeline is for the Board of Education to approve the draft regulation on June 13 with final action taken by the County Council thereafter.

“Guidelines for Leasing, Licensing, or Using MCPS Property that is Being Held as a Future School Site.” (Policy DNA, Management of Board of Education Property)

Staff provided an overview of the proposed changes to the policy that would cover the leasing, licensing or use of MCPS sites, as well as the disposition of property when it is no longer needed for school purposes. It was noted that this policy addresses real property, not other property, such as equipment, which is disposed of at trade value and reported to the Board pursuant to Board policy, DNA, *Disposition of Board of Education Property*.

Discussion focused on the interplay of the capital budget process, reclaiming leased property and the site selection process; how enrollment trends impact the need for real property; the language needed in termination clauses for the reclamation of the property (make sure the language in the lease is clear and strong, especially if the property is transferred to another agency); the need for monitoring reports to be sent to the Board; whether the renewal of leases should be approved by the Board; how to prioritize our need for land to accommodate future development; and how this policy fits into the vision of the county-wide examination of real property needs.

The committee asked staff to review and make recommendations concerning: the length of terms for leases (whether five years may be too long); a proactive plan to reclaim property and strengthen MCPS reclamations; ways to lease property at fair market value; the vision of possible collocation with other county agencies; an assessment of short- and long-term leases; whether current leases are at fair market value; how to clarify that the policy not only refers to unimproved site, but also applies to sites that have buildings that do not have a joint occupancy agreement; how to broaden the purpose section of the policy so that it is a broader vision and outlines items to consider before leasing property; and how to articulate our interest when we have a tenant – around priorities that we have for educational purposes.

The policy will be revised and brought back to the Policy Committee for review.

The meeting ended at 3:37 p.m.