

APPROVED
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Rockville, Maryland
December 5, 2006

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in special session at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Tuesday, December 5, 2006, at 7:40 p.m.

Present: Ms. Sarah Horvitz, Student Board Member,
in the Chair
Ms. Shirley Brandman
Ms Sharon Cox
Dr. Judy Docca
Mrs. Nancy Navarro
Mrs. Patricia O'Neill
Dr. Jerry Weast, Secretary/Treasurer

Absent: Mr. Steve Abrams

The Board of Education held its annual meeting with the Montgomery County Region of the Maryland Association of Student Councils, the Montgomery County Junior Council/Montgomery County Region, and the representatives of Student Government Associations.

Several topics were brought up by students, and the Board and staff commented, offered suggestions, and asked for followup.

There are **unsafe conditions** in some middle school concerning fights and drug use. There is a need for more security personnel per student. The Board thought that through new data collection of serious incidents, there could be a budget recommendation for more staff. Also, students need to report serious incidents in order for staff to deal with specific situations.

There is a need for more **extracurricular** sponsors. Staff agreed, but it was difficult to recruit sponsors due to their workload and distance traveled by staff. This could be addressed with increased extracurricular stipends for staff and collaboration with other agencies, such as recreation.

The middle school **cell phone** pilot is a success, and all middle schools should adopt the program. The Board was pleased that the pilot was a success, but principals are still reluctant to expand the pilot.

As more programs and people are in the buildings, things are broken and in **disrepair**. Staff stated that when schools are used extensively it is inevitable that things break. There is a system of work orders that the principals can use for repairs.

The MCPS **internet filters** block even legitimate searches by students. Staff reported that there is work group reviewing this concern, and they will report to the Board very soon. At the present time, teachers can submit research projects and the filter will be disabled for that subject and school.

The pace of **math instruction** is too fast, and there is not enough time to learn the concepts. Staff replied that math instruction should be flexible, but there is a need to move quickly. Students should voice this concern to the teacher, counselor, or other adult in the building.

Night school availability has been cut. Staff replied that night school will be replaced with High School Plus since it is a better model and offered at the home school.

The students were concerned about signing **contracts for participation in athletics**, and students are held to a higher standard since they are role models. The Board thought that many of the contracts were developed at a school based on a specific issue.

The length of time to eat in the **cafeteria** is not sufficient. The Board believed that this is a matter of logistics and students should work with school staff to find a solution.

Students felt that the Board did not receive enough **student input** to better its policy making. The Board stated that the Policy Committee seeks public comment on all policies, and the committee welcomed student remarks. The Board always welcomes communications through letters and emails.

Lockers are too small, and there is not enough time between classes. The Board replied that a student can take enough supplies for several classes. The superintendent commented that everything boils down to time. Everyone needs to work together for efficiency.

The 2.0 **grade point average** for eligibility is not appropriate. The Board thought it was important that students get support when their grades make them ineligible for extracurricular activities. The superintendent stated that some think the standard is too high; others think it is too low. This is an opportunity for a student to manage time and activities.

The **meals** in the cafeteria are not nutritious with little options for vegetarians. The Board believed that Food Services works very hard to make nutritious and appealing meals. There are students on the committee that taste and select menu items. One Board member suggested that the student leadership tour Food Services.

The **school buses** are late and some students miss instructional time. Staff got the bus number of the bus and name of the school served in order to rectify the problem.

There is no **study time** for tests. Staff explained that students and teachers need to cooperate in learning and teaching. If this is a problem, the teacher and principal should be contacted.

The **class sizes** are too large, and there is not enough time for individual attention from the teacher. Staff explained how the number of students per class is calculated, and how the master schedule works.

Other topics brought up by the students, but not discussed in depth:

- Out-of-state field trips
- Art and music
- Soap and paper towels
- Weight Honors and AP
- Sports equipment
- Bell times

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

PRESIDENT

SECRETARY

JDW:gr