

Communications and Public Engagement Committee Meeting
February 1, 2012
2:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. with the following committee members and Board staff present: Dr. Judy Docca (chair), Ms. Shirley Brandman (member), Mr. Michael Durso (member), Mr. Roland Ikheloa (Board chief of staff), Ms. Suzann King (staff assistant), and Ms. Martha Sequeira (reporter). MCPS staff present: Ms. Denise Stultz, acting director, Department of Family and Community Partnerships; Mr. Dana Tofig, director, Office of Public Information; and Ms. Marcia Vogel, supervisor, Office of Communications.

Committee Minutes:

The minutes of the March 11, 2010, committee meeting were approved with comments that the Board Blog has not been completed and noting the spelling correction of *Baldrige*. The minutes for the September 21, 2011, Strategic Planning and Communications and Public Engagement Joint Committee Meeting were approved.

Briefing by the Department of Family and Community Partnerships (DFCP):

The committee received copies of an overview of the Department's activities. Additional committee discussion focused on the following aspects of the Department's overview:

- **Parent Advisory Council (PAC).** The PAC is providing feedback on a new parent satisfaction survey. It was suggested that the work on this survey should be coordinated with other parent groups and the administration, given comments by the superintendent that such surveys should be comprised of one question "Would you recommend this school?".
- **Priority Schools:** The criteria used to select the top ten priority schools was discussed. It was noted that the schools are generally selected from the list of restructuring schools and those who have concerns/challenges meeting AYP, in consultation with the Office of School Performance. The ten top priority schools receive weekly ongoing service from a parent community coordinator working with the school's principal, counselor, and pupil personnel worker.
- **Study Circles:** DFCP meets with the principal and school leadership to find out what issues they would like to address, and then a Study Circle is tailored to meet the school's needs. A lot of the Study Circles have been conducted in Spanish. Additional discussion focused on the great work of DFCP and how staff makes decisions when the number of requests exceeds staff capacity. It was noted that sessions are being held to train and retain outside facilitators to assist with such programs.
- **Parent Leadership Study Circle:** Representatives from various organizations participated a Study Circle and desired to continuing meeting, with support from DFCP. There is an interest in forming a cultural committee through MCCPTA to help PTAs and schools be more inclusive and try creative ways of engaging diverse families.

Additional discussion focused on how the Board may collaborate with DFCP and use their community engagement efforts to also allow the Board to gather meaningful feedback from the community (and different segments of the community) on issues of concern. It was agreed that DFCP would let the Board know about its different outreach/public engagement efforts and the Board would provide similar information to DFCP.

Briefing by the Office of Communications: The committee received a briefing from staff about the Office's activities. Additional committee discussion focused on the following aspects of the overview:

- It was noted that the Office of Communications is supporting the superintendent of schools in conducting various community events. For example, the Second Book Club was a big success; more than 400 people were engaged. The Office has begun preparations for four forums in the spring, which will be in a different format than the Listen and Learn sessions. Two Student Town Hall meetings also have been scheduled.
- The Office is working to be strategic in its communications and to enhance its outreach with the Spanish-speaking community. It was noted that there are 7312 Twitter followers and the staff would like to see 10,000 by the end of the year, as well as being able to start tweeting in Spanish.

Additional discussion focused on how to utilize Twitter to communicate information about the Board's work. It was noted that the Board's policy statements should be on Twitter with an email to Board members that such a tweet has been made. In addition, the Board's Twitter feed could be embedded in its web page similar to what is currently active on the superintendent's web page.

It was agreed that the Board needs to be aware of the universe of things that the Office of Communications and the administration are working on so that there may be alignment and collaboration with the Board's work. Further, the committee stated that it would be helpful to know the vision for outreach to the Spanish-speaking community to further such collaboration with the Board.

2012 Committee Work Plan:

The committee discussed and adopted the attached draft work plan. Discussion focused on the items in the work plan as well as how the Board may be able to reach deeper into the community by partnering with other county and community organizations that are also conducting outreach activities.

It was also suggested that the committee have a focus group with principals to brainstorm about how to reach their community populations, as well as a leadership summit with community groups about how to reach their communities. The focus group with the principals' idea will be discussed with the superintendent.

The meeting was adjourned at: 3:30 p.m.