

MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY COMMITTEE

March 19, 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, Lori-Christina Webb, Steve Neff, Mary Dempsey, Marty Creel, Ursula Herrmann, Denise Greene, and Jeannie Franklin.

Others: Judy Bresler.

Guest: Ed Krauss, Danuta Wilson, and Vivian Yao.

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

Update on ICB/Childcare Policy

Staff reported that following a court ruling and a subsequent request from the County Executive, the Board of Education was asked to adopt a resolution delegating authority to the Interagency Coordinating Board (ICB) and Community Use for Public Facilities (CUPF), for the purpose of administering child-care providers in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). The Board of Education adopted a resolution on January 8, 2013. In order to comply, the County is to draft regulations to describe the administration and selection process for before- and after-school child-care service providers. In addition, an implementation plan that will be used by ICB and CUPF to administer the before- and after-school child-care programs in MCPS schools will be developed. An informal work group is in process of developing the draft regulation. The draft regulation is to be reviewed by ICB, approved by the Board of Education, and then approved by the County Council. At this time, it is anticipated that the Policy Committee will review the regulation in May and the Board will take tentative action on the regulation on June 13, 2013. There will be a communications plan developed due to this anticipated impact on MCPS facilities.

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

Staff reported that policy is under review given the number of issues that have surfaced regarding its implementation, including concerns about the provision that allows students attending a middle school on a change of school assignment (COSA) to automatically continue in that feeder pattern to high school, definition of sibling, sibling transfers, under-enrolled schools, and whether there should be additional consideration/accommodation for MCPS employees seeking COSAs for their children based on work requirements.

Staff reviewed the proposed changes in the policy and the regulation, including the following:

- 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
- A firm deadline of April 1 for applying for a transfer

The new policy and regulation will not affect the 2013-14 school year transfer process.

Discussion focused on the following:

- In appeals, the superintendent references over enrollment as a reason for denial of a transfer; there should be a more detailed and explicit reason about the impact on the school.
- The provision of the policy that prohibits the student receiving a COSA for participating in athletics for a year, the history/rationale for why that provision was included in the policy, the process by which athletic waivers are reviewed, and the criteria for receiving a waiver.
- Sibling transfer to the regular program when the other sibling has been accepted into a special program. There is a need for clarification at Line 45.
- The question arose as to whether transfers should be liberally granted to under enrolled schools. Due to the need to understand the enrollment numbers and the impact such a provision would have on the elementary and secondary levels, staff suggested that this item be placed on a future committee agenda so that Mr. Crispell could participate in the discussion. In addition to discussing the enrollment figures, staff is also asked to address how many middle school students in 7th grade are out of area? What is the number of Grade 9 students in high school are out of the service area?
- Should the definition for “hardship” be changed/expanded? For example, is it a hardship to remain in a certain school?
- There was a short discussion on administrative placement of a student. This process is followed when a student must go to another school based on a unique situation. Transportation is provided for that student.
- After discussing the concerns about granting staff special consideration in COSA requests for their children, it was decided that such requests should be continued to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis using the “unique hardship” standard.
- Staff noted that they have not firmly adhered to the deadline of April 1 for transfer applications, which has caused challenges for staff, in capacity and being able to know enrollment figures for staffing. Noting that the State Board of Education firmly adheres to submission deadlines, staff inquired about whether there would be support for them doing the same. Applications would be accepted after the deadline if there were a change in circumstances that could not have been foreseen by the April 1 deadline.

The committee discussed a communication plan for involving the community in the changes to the policy. There should be a statement that “this policy is under consideration, and the Policy Committee is working on possible changes.” Mrs. O’Neill

can report out at a Board meeting on what is happening with this policy.

The committee's timeline for the work on the policy and regulation will be such that the policy and regulation can be sent out in the fall for public comment.

Board Requests to the Policy Committee. The following items were referred to the Policy Committee by the Board for further review:

1. Implementation of Policy JHF, Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation

This item was brought to the committee due to concerns about the implementation of Policy JHF. The committee was interested in knowing information about the process when a complaint is received, available disciplinary actions and therapeutic measures to address/change behavior, and assistance available to the victim.

Staff explained that there is a definition of bullying and there are consequences for each behavior. Each school has a practice with guidelines for implementation which are reviewed by the Office of Student Support and Improvement (OSSI). The Department of Student Support (DDS) provides information to principals, investigates incidents, and talks to principals and parents.

The committee noted that parents are frustrated because it appears that there are no consequences for the bully. Staff stated that the schools have the tools to deal with the issues but there is a need to bolster their capacity to deal with the issues with compliance and an adaptive culture.

It was decided to ask the Board officers to schedule a presentation to the full Board on bullying, the measures taken by the schools to address bullying, and the initiatives of DSS to address these issues.

2. Consortium Policy

The committee decided to reschedule this item for the May meeting.

3. "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)

It was noted that this issue was introduced by Mr. Kauffman as a new business item. It will be on the May agenda of the Policy Committee

The meeting ended at 4:20 p.m.