

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION AD HOC COMMITTEE**

September 21, 2007

The meeting was called to order at 9:10 a.m. with the following Board members and support staff present: Shirley Brandman (chair), Steve Abrams, Sharon Cox, Roland Ikheloa, and Glenda Rose (recorder).

Staff present: Carey Wright, Gwen Mason, Kathy Kolan, and Judy Pattik

MINUTES

The minutes from July 19, 2007, were approved as presented.

FINAL REPORT OF THE SECIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The committee had reviewed the final report of the committee, and the members agreed with the recommendations. A memorandum was prepared for the committee transmitting the recommendations to the full Board for approval. At the suggestion of Mr. Moskowitz, the committee agreed to add two students to the membership of the Special Education Continuous Improvement Team Advisory Committee. The resolution was approved to send to the full Board on the September 24, 2007.

The committee suggested that the SECIT focus on universal design for learning (UDL) as a project from the coming year. Staff advised that a meeting to discuss UDL had occurred between the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs and the Office of Special Education and Student Services. Dr. Wright volunteered to bring more information to the committee on the cross functional groups involved with UDL. Discussion followed regarding an upcoming opportunity for community and staff to hear from Mr. David Rose, an expert in UDL, who has volunteered to speak at CESC. It was agreed that an effort should be made to publicize this event to the general community.

UPDATE ON THE COLLABORATION ACTION PROCESS (CAP) EVALUATION

Board members were curious as to the status of the formal evaluation of CAP which is one of the MCPS initiatives designed to address overrepresentation of minority students in special education. Dr. Wright spoke about the ongoing evaluation process. She explained that the evaluation process consisted of two steps: (1) fidelity of implementation, and (2) impact or effectiveness. Dr. Wright was aware that the Department of Shared Accountability is still studying the first step—is CAP being implemented as intended at the local school level? At the present time, there are 60 schools implementing CAP to some degree. CAP was designed for interventions for a child prior to a referral for special education services. CAP is used for academic or behavioral management.

In designing an individual student's plan, staff conduct observations, review existing interventions and collect data. Students are then followed for several weeks to determine the effectiveness of the plan which can then be modified, if needed based upon student achievement.

The formal evaluation of CAP is ongoing but not complete. The formal evaluation process will be completed by next year by the Department of Shared Accountability. Dr. Wright agreed to bring to the next meeting the available data collected on the Collaboration Action Process, especially disproportionality.

The committee also inquired about a staffing ratio for psychologists. Staff explained that MCPS does not use a formula to automatically increase the number of psychologists when new schools are opened. However, staff is reviewing the number of psychologists and their caseloads and considering that information in develop staffing proposals for the operating budget. The committee thought it was important to get information about our current practices as well as benchmarks from other jurisdictions in order to better understand the need since the issue of staffing ratios comes up frequently in budget hearings.

TRANSITION SERVICES AND TRACKING GRADUATES

The committee wanted to follow up on an earlier conversation regarding tracking our students upon their departure from MCPS as a way of evaluating the effectiveness of the preparation they receive through transitional services. Staff advised the committee that the state has issued an RFP to hire a company to track graduates who had received special education and transition services. The state performance plan was developed from federal guidelines and audit practices. The state has indicated its interest in ensuring that the data is collected uniformly. According to the state timeline and the process will start this year and continue yearly thereafter.

The committee suggested that transition staff contact the state to encourage their efforts at data collection that would lead to improvement of services. The committee also encouraged staff to communicate to the state the type of information and questions which MCPS would find useful so that the instrument which is designed can address our needs.

UPDATE ON THE LEARNING CENTERS

Staff gave a brief report to the committee on the status of the transition for rising sixth graders from the learning centers to inclusion at the students' home schools. The students have been monitored closely by school and central office staff to facilitate a smooth transition for the students. Case managers are working closely with the parents so that they feel supported. The parents will be surveyed with the 30-day review. The committee asked for the enrollment data of learning center students who have returned to their home schools. The committee wanted to know if support services increased in the receiving schools. The committee also wanted feedback on whether or not the training for staff was

effective in working with students from the Learning Centers. Finally, the committee was interested in the effect on class size with the inclusion of learning center students.

There will be a report and presentation to the full Board on October 9, 2007.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Abrams asked staff to investigate the District of Columbia school which is failing and where MCPS has placed special education students.

The meeting adjourned at 10:20 a.m.