

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION  
COMMITTEE ON SPECIAL POPULATIONS**

July 18, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. with the following Board members and Board support staff present: Shirley Brandman (chair), Sharon Cox, Laura Steinberg, and Glenda Rose (recorder).

Staff present: Mary Lee Phelps, Judy Pattik, Martha Young, Ellen Schaefer, Felicia Piacente, Maureen Ryan, and Diane Mohr.

Other presenters: Aldrin Leung, Gadi Romem, and Rose Sachs.

**MINUTES**

The minutes from May 16, 2008, were approved, as amended.

**UPDATE ON TRANSITION OF MARK TWAIN STUDENTS**

Staff gave the committee an update on the status of students transitioning out of the Twain program.

Referral to RICA Day program	3 students
Referral to RICA Residential Program	1 student
Nonpublic placement	2 students
ED Cluster Program	4 students
Return to Home School	2 students
Withdrawn	3 students
CEIP Meeting in August	4 students

In addition, three (3) students were ready to take their GED; one student enrolled in Job Corps, one student enrolled in the Montgomery College GED program and one student was incarcerated and an additional five (5) students who had been pursuing a GED withdrew.

The committee asked where the ED Cluster students were placed. Staff replied that two went to one school and the others were split between two schools. Also, the social worker from Mark Twain will support the ED Cluster Program. The central office case managers will work with the students, parents, and schools. There have been no new programs created with the Mark Twain students since they have been absorbed into existing programs. The former staff at Mark Twain have been reassigned, and staff reported that it has been a smooth transition.

**ACTION:** Staff will update the committee on the progress of these students after the first quarter of the school year in November.

## **DISCUSSION OF MCPS ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS**

Staff provided Board members with an overview of the alternative programs within the school system. MCPS currently operates seven secondary alternative school programs that are considered Level 2 and 3 programs in the continuum of interventions for at-risk students. Current capacity for all Level 2 and Level 3 programs is 313 students. Each Alternative Program offers a variety of courses to help students gain the necessary credits and requirements for graduation. Teachers use the same curriculum as in all comprehensive high schools. Level 2 and 3 programs have a supervisor for Alternative Programs who serves as a principal, and there is one school improvement plan for all of the centers. Furthermore, there are core exit criteria to return to the home school. Staff indicated that most students do return to their home school and graduate with a very few students needing referral to another Level 2 or Level 3 program.

Level 1 intervention programs are located in all secondary schools. Staff explained that a student could have one period a day with the alternative teacher and the rest of the classes would be in the regular program; however, this is based on the need of the student. The transition teacher works on the scheduling and program for each student.

Committee members inquired about evaluation of the alternative programs and how goals are measured. Staff responded that the goal is for students to receive diplomas and pass the HSAs. Assessment of students' academic achievement remains the responsibility of the home school. Committee members also inquired about the staffing model used for these alternative programs and whether the Office of School Performance (OSP) is involved in review and feedback to the schools? Discussion followed regarding ongoing OSP efforts to evaluate success and monitor interventions. Board members asked for OSP to follow up with more detail in this area. Staff was also going to review issues relating to disproportionality in enrollment for alternative programs in response to committee member questions.

**ACTION:** A follow-up conversation will include OSP evaluation and feedback, process of sharing models, and action plans. Staff will define success for the program and students as well as update on disproportionality and dropouts.

## **DISCUSSION OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY ACCUPLACER ASSESSMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS**

A staff member from Montgomery College explained the accommodations and use of the Accuplacer test at Montgomery College. Students with learning accommodations may take the test without timing restrictions and any student can take the test in parts; however, the college cannot provide a reader or calculator.

After a short discussion, the committee agreed that this was a concern of the Special Education Continuous Improvement Team (SECIT). This item should be

placed on its agenda. If there is a recommendation for Board action from the SECIT, that recommendation should come back to the committee.

**CONVERSATION WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM ESOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The committee co-chairs of the ESOL Advisory Committee briefly outlined the work they are doing. The chairs will concentrate on attracting more members next year. They meet once a month and determine the agenda for the coming year at the first meeting in the fall. The advisory committee improves communication with the school system and serves as advocates for ESOL students and parents.

**ACTION:** The Special Populations committee will receive a copy of the charge and agenda when the ESOL advisory committee develops those documents for 2008-09. Outreach to ESOL staff to identify issues for the committee's attention will be ongoing.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the committee will be held on September 19, 2008, at 9:00 a.m. in Room 120.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.