

POLICY

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Related Entries: ABA-RA, ABA-EA, ABC, ACA, BMA, IOD, IOD-RA

Responsible Office: Department of Communications

Community Involvement

A. PURPOSE

The Board of Education is committed to fostering and supporting community interest and involvement in the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) because citizen support of the schools is essential to student success. The Board of Education will ensure the ideas, interests, and concerns of its stakeholders are considered and valued in decision-making processes and that input and involvement is sought and encouraged from a broad spectrum of our diverse community. The Board is committed to the maintenance and monitoring of ongoing collaborative and productive communication processes with the community.

B. ISSUE

Creating processes for community involvement in a large, diverse community such as Montgomery County presents challenges and opportunities. Ensuring that the members of the community are encouraged, supported, and recruited to contribute time, knowledge, skills, and ideas to the public school system is both challenging and essential. Commitment and resources are required to design, maintain, and monitor processes for productive collaboration and communication between MCPS and the community. These processes must create an environment where diverse views can be heard and considered in an atmosphere of respect.

C. DEFINITIONS

1. *Community Involvement* seeks to ensure that the breadth of interests and values from across the community are heard and considered by the Board of Education, superintendent, principals, and other educational leaders, thereby enhancing the decision-making process.
2. *Community* is comprised of numerous constituents with a vested interest in the education of children. Some of these constituents may include, but are not limited to, Montgomery County residents, advocacy, non-profit, parent or community-based organizations; business, civic and non-government organizations; local

postsecondary educational institutions; state, local, and federal agencies; and cultural, ethnic, racial, and religious groups.

D. POSITION

1. As part of its responsibility as a community member, the Board of Education will:
 - a. Develop its role as an advocate, using the best interest of the students as a guiding principle
 - b. Engage community members in building an organizational culture of respect
 - c. Establish processes for community involvement through the use of Advisory Committees (See Board of Education Policy BMA: *Board of Education Advisory Committees*)
 - d. Ensure community involvement by utilizing opportunities for input such as, but not limited to, hearings, forums, and public comment
 - e. Solicit and consider community comments and concerns regarding the development of Board of Education policies and other decisions
 - f. Seek to engage members of our diverse community, particularly organizations representing new or traditionally underrepresented communities, in a committed, productive partnership to support the MCPS strategic plan
 - g. Advocate for the MCPS student population and their families through engagement with local, state, and federal government agencies
2. As part of its responsibility as a community member, the school system offices will:
 - a. Integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development
 - b. Seek collaboration with a broad range of community members and organizations that reflect the diverse citizenry and interests of Montgomery County
 - c. Seek and support the involvement of local organizations, particularly organizations representing new or traditionally underrepresented communities, in the school system

- d. Provide access and opportunity for broad segments of the community, representing the wide variety of interests within the community, to participate in decision-making processes
 - e. Provide, to the extent possible, interpretation services and translations of important information about school system programs, services, policies, or issues
3. As part of its responsibility as a community member, each school will:
- a. Seek involvement from the community and provide opportunities to strengthen the home/school connection
 - b. Establish and maintain regular and ongoing two-way communication with families and the community to provide information and solicit feedback about school progress, resources, policies, and issues
 - c. Provide, to the extent possible, information in the native languages of members of the school community
 - d. Access community services to support and foster academic achievement and positive development for all students
 - e. Participate actively and responsibly in the life and social fabric of the local community

E. DESIRED OUTCOME

There will be an actively engaged community that is reflective of all residents. The system will benefit from the community's contribution of its skills, knowledge, ideas, and time to support the success of all students in partnership with MCPS.

F. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- 1. The superintendent will assess the status of community involvement, review existing policies and procedures, revise necessary regulations and procedures to support this policy, and make periodic reports to the Board of Education regarding the status of community involvement.
- 2. The Board of Education will seek community input on school system policies, including curriculum, facilities, and funding issues from a broad spectrum of our culturally and linguistically diverse community.

G. REVIEW AND REPORTING

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the Board of Education policy review process.

Policy History: Adopted by Resolution No. 287-74, May 28, 1974; amended by Resolution No. 268-76, May 11, 1976; amended by Resolution No. 346-06, July 18, 2006.