

Strategic Planning Committee Meeting  
December 7, 2007  
Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 10:07 a.m. with the following committee members and Board staff present: Dr. Judy Docca (Chair), Mr. Christopher Barclay, Ms. Shirley Brandman, Mr. Ben Moskowitz, Ms. Nancy Navarro, Mr. Roland Ikheloa (Chief of Staff), Laura Steinberg (Staff Assistant for Legislative and Inter-Governmental Relations), and Kathy Yorro (recorder).

The following Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) staff were present: Mr. Larry Bowers, chief operating officer; Dr. Mike Perich, director, Office of the Chief Operating Officer; Mr. Erick Lang, associate superintendent for curriculum and instruction; and Ms. Judy Klimpl, supervisor, Foreign Languages.

**1. Approval of Agenda and Minutes.**

The committee unanimously approved the meeting agenda and the minutes from the Strategic Planning Committee meeting of June 29, 2007.

**2. Planning a Set of Reviews/Updates of the Strategic Plan in Advance of Annual Revision.**

MCPS Staff (Mr. Bowers and Dr. Perich) discussed the ongoing progress with reviewing and monitoring the school system's strategic plan *Our Call to Action: Pursuit of Excellence*. Staff discussed with the committee the need to align the scheduling of items for the Board's review periodically throughout the year rather than what has been done in the past. The Strategic Planning Committee will review the BOE calendar to align the review of the strategic plan with the Board's agenda. Staff also stated that additional data points would be included in the revised annual report.

In closing, staff noted that the strategic plan is a critical working document for the organization. The committee members indicated that the Board is pleased that updates are being given throughout the year—not just in June. Staff indicated that they appreciate the ongoing dialogue with the Board's committee because this prevents the full Board review from being overwhelming.

**Action:** Schedule items periodically throughout the year for full Board review.

- 3. Review of Foreign Language Offerings in MCPS.** MCPS staff (Mr. Erick Lang and Ms. Judith Klimpl) presented information regarding the Immersion Articulation Patterns for 2007-2008, Foreign Language Articulation Patterns for 2007-2008, Languages Offered by School in 2007-2008, and Recommendations and Actions Following Foreign Language Report of 2005. The Strategic Planning Committee members shared their concerns regarding the language programs that are offered and made suggestions as to what they would like to see move forward. Discussion involved options for immersion languages, examining articulation, resources, and gauging the effectiveness of instruction. Committee members urged MCPS staff to examine elementary school offerings in terms of instructional strategies and the guiding philosophy around MCPS course offerings. Committee members indicated that they would like the direction of foreign language offerings to be a top priority for MCPS.

Staff also discussed the immersion programs at the elementary school level and the feeder pattern to middle school. One of the challenges is whether to go on to the natural feeder pattern or to the Highly Gifted Center. The transportation issue from Maryvale Elementary School to Gaithersburg Middle School was discussed.

Mr. Barclay raised the question regarding the quality of instruction received by an Advanced Placement (AP) student who might be in a level 4/5/6 class and wanted to know if we have data on how students do in those classes versus an AP class. Ms. Klimpl indicated that level 5 and 6 students can take the AP language (Level 5 is AP instruction). Mr. Moskowitz discussed the issue of whether a college might offer the same weight to “level” classes and AP labeled classes. He wondered what the implication would be of making all courses as rigorous as AP classes.

The committee requested a report by April 2008 on the “state of immersion programs” – vacancies, recruitment, materials, budget. The committee is interested in addressing challenges in supporting these programs financially. What resources would it take to support these programs in a robust way? What if MCPS were to consider supporting three languages?

The committee would like staff to present recommendations on three different models. Committee would like to see a model for an elementary school program (staff to determine at what level ES program should start), a middle school to high school complete immersion model, including budget

implications, teacher recruitment, facilities, materials, and if possible, analysis around program at Spanish Embassy.

Committee suggested that staff review practices in neighboring jurisdictions.

**Action:**

- MCPS staff to develop a report by April 2008 on the state of immersion programs.
- MCPS staff to review practices in neighboring jurisdictions.

- 4. Survey of MCPS staff.** Dr. Docca observed that while MCPS has performed satisfaction surveys of other groups, school principals have not been surveyed. She stated that it is important to hear from principals because such a survey would be helpful to principals. She stated that she would like to see a survey of principals done.

Staff indicated that surveys are done on a regular basis. Staff surveys are conducted regarding facilities management, security, etc., Staff was concerned about inundating employees with too many surveys. In addition MCPS staff is encouraged to provide feedback – not necessarily through a formal survey. Staff indicated that the committee needs to clarify the information that they need to receive back from such a survey.

Committee members shared that they were concerned about staff working in a positive work environment and making sure that principals are getting the appropriate supports to implement the curriculum. Principals should have the ability to provide feedback anonymously.

For example it would be useful to get information from principals on how learning centers are working and the on-going implementation of High School Plus.

Staff indicated that they are constantly monitoring how things are going. Survey wasn't useful because it was too broad. Informal ways are more constant. Listening and Learning feedback.

Mr. Barclay indicated that there is a difference between actually responding to a supervisor versus getting anonymous feedback. Dr. Docca agreed that Board members don't feel that they are getting the real feedback.

In response to Mr. Bowers who had concerns about the expected outcome of the survey, Dr. Docca indicated that people feel better about how they are listened to. MCPS staff indicated that there are many vehicles for obtaining the information that Board members need. MCPS staff requested follow-up meetings with the committee to get more input and specificity in order to obtain the appropriate instrument. Dr. Docca requested that Ms. Steinberg take the lead. She also requested a meeting with Dr. Becky Newman as part of next steps.

**Action:**

- Ms. Steinberg will work with administration on the development of a principal survey.
- Meeting to be set up with Dr. Newman.

The meeting adjourned at 11:32 a.m.