

APPROVED  
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Rockville, Maryland  
December 17, 2007

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in special session at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Monday, December 17, 2007, at 7:30 p.m.

Present: Mr. Ben Moskowitz, Student Board Member,  
in the Chair  
Ms. Shirley Brandman  
Ms Sharon Cox  
Mrs. Patricia O'Neill  
Dr. Jerry Weast, Secretary/Treasurer

Absent: Mr. Steve Abrams  
Dr. Judy Docca  
Mrs. Nancy Navarro

The Board of Education held its annual meeting with the Montgomery County Region of the Maryland Association of Student Councils, the Montgomery County Junior Council/Montgomery County Region, and the representatives of Student Government Associations.

Several topics were brought up by students, and the Board and staff commented, offered suggestions, and asked for follow-up.

There was a concern about how ***Student Rights and Responsibilities*** is communicated in the schools. Board members stated that the booklet is available to all students, and it is a topic of at least one class. Students should talk with the principal if there is a specific problem in a school. Also, the document should be clearly written; that is why it is reviewed on a regular basis by the Student Affairs Office.

The **dialogue on race** and the climate in the schools around achievement issues and experiences of students in the classroom. Staff explained that they are responsive to issues that involve inappropriate language. Board members focused on the respect and interventions in a climate of acceptance. All staff must be culturally competent through diversity training. The Board will discuss this issue periodically and, hopeful, the message will encourage schools to do the same.

The students wanted a clarification of the policy on **cell phones**. The Board has worked hard to change the law in Annapolis, and the regulation states that cell phones must be turned off during school hours, but the phones are available to students after school.

A student wanted to know how students can help the **achievement gap**. The Board thought students could encourage and support other students to take rigorous courses.

The culture in every school must support excellence for every student, beginning with the administration. Students need to know each other, since everyone has a talent and we can all learn from one another. In sports, team members could support one another to make all players eligible, with acceptable grades.

There was a concern about the availability of **counselors** to help students with myriad concerns, including scheduling. It was suggested that students speak to the principal in order to provide oversight and ensure that students' needs are met. If the principal cannot help, then the Student Affairs Office should be contacted for help and coordination of a solution.

One student was concerned about the number of **gifted and talented** programs. The Board pointed out that the school system delivers services and not programs. It ensures that the curriculum provides for the acceleration of learning for those students ready to meet the challenge.

There are few minorities in **Honors** classes, and the parents do not get enough information to encourage their children to select the courses themselves. The Board stated that Parent Academies have been formed by staff. Again, it is important for students to engage their peers with encouragement to enroll in Honors and Advanced Placement courses.

The condition of **Ridgeview Middle School** needs repairs/renovation for the HVAC, paint, bathrooms, etc. With the reduction in funding, when will these projects get done? The Board explained the CIP process, and explained that they had asked for a feasibility study to address priorities of the school community.

Other topics brought up by the students, but not discussed in depth:

- Bathrooms have no soap
- Physical education after lunch
- Honors and AP are not as challenging as in the past
- Quality of food in the cafeteria
- Reduction in utility costs
- Mass discipline for the actions of a few

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

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PRESIDENT

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SECRETARY

JDW:gr