

Montgomery County Public Schools

PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

December 3, 2008

6:30–8:30 p.m.

Carver Educational Services Center Auditorium

Attendees

Parents: Vicmarie Arocho, Bonnie Arze, Wanda Coates, Kelley Eiskant, Hugo Escobar, Elisia George, David Griffith, Holly Searl Hurst, Sandeep Khanna, Chris McDermott, Juliet Mellow, Alma Orellana, Jill Ortman-Fouse, Richard Sieber, Damika Somasundaram, Doug Sunshine

Department of Communications and Family Outreach Staff: Eric Davis, Denise Stultz, Marcia Vogel

Desired Outcomes

By the end of this meeting, participants will have:

- Reviewed the action items from the October 6, 2008, Parent Advisory Council (PAC) meeting.
- Provided feedback on revisions to Montgomery County Board of Education Policy ABC, *Parental Involvement*.
- Engaged in a discussion about parent leadership/advocacy opportunities.
- Evaluated the meeting.

Welcome

Eric Davis, acting director, Department of Family and Community Partnerships (DFCP), welcomed participants to the second PAC meeting of the school year and reviewed the agenda, ground rules, and action items from the October 6, 2008, meeting. Mr. Davis reminded PAC members to submit a short bio for posting on the DFCP website if they have not already done so.

Policy ABC, *Parental Involvement*

Mr. Davis reviewed the updated timeline for revision of Montgomery County Board of Education Policy ABC, *Parental Involvement*. The revised timeline is as follows:

Date	Event	Purpose
October and November 2008	Workgroup Meetings	Receive feedback on new draft. Members will share policy with their constituencies.
October, November, and December 2008	Writing Group Meetings	Incorporate feedback and create a new draft.
October 15, 2008	Parent Academy Workshop	Open invitation to all parents to share feedback and thoughts on the policy.
January 2009	Board Policy Committee	Share new draft of the policy.

January 2009	Writing Group Meeting	Incorporate feedback of Board Policy Committee and create new draft.
January 2009	Board Policy Committee	Share new draft of policy.
February 2009	Board of Education	Tentative action.

Mr. Davis asked the Council for its feedback on the revised draft of the policy. Among the comments offered by PAC members were the following:

- Title is confusing
- Prefer the word “involvement” to “engagement”
- Sounds as if the family is the subordinate partner
- Need definition of “engagement”
- Who is the policy speaking to?
- Clarify that “family” means person(s) responsible for child’s education
- “Supporting” is too soft a word—message should be that responsible adults should be directly involved in child’s learning

Council members are welcome to submit additional feedback to Mr. Davis on the policy.

Parent Leadership/Advocacy Opportunities

Mr. Davis and Denise Stultz noted that leadership training can help families of all backgrounds learn and practice the skills they need to be advocates and problem solvers. The school system is planning to offer parent leadership training opportunities as part of the Parent Academy. The meeting participants discussed the following questions in small groups and came back together to share their ideas: What do parents need to know and be able to do to truly speak up for their child and other children in the school? What steps should we take to develop a parent leadership training program (in the next couple of months and during the next school year and beyond)? What else should we consider? Among the comments were the following:

What do parents need to know and be able to do?

- Workshop for parents should include information on structure of school system.
- Parents need information on expectations.
- Create a sheet that explains the responsibilities of different school system staff so parents know who to contact in a given situation.
- Parents need to know school procedures and policies, including information on report cards, forms, reporting absences, emailing staff, homework procedures.
- Parents need to know that they have a right to speak up.
- Parents need to know that parent involvement is allowed and encouraged, that resolution in the best interest of the student is the goal, and that every family has the same options to resolve concerns.
- Parents need to be able to contact teachers directly and expect a timely response.

Other comments and suggestions:

- Consider modeling program on Howard County’s international parent leadership program.
- Need commitment to promoting parent advocacy from school leadership.

- Trainings should be tailored to meet the needs of the audience.
- Train “parent leaders’ in the schools to train other parents.
- Research established programs in schools that are working well.
- Develop FAQ guidelines for parent advocacy by level.
- Consider podcast/web accessibility.
- Create video that includes role playing.
- Identify people to become trainers (“authentic voice”) for parents from different cultures and who speak languages other than English—i.e., church leaders, daycare providers.
- Be mindful of literacy issues in target audience.
- Training should include sharing between parents and teachers of each other’s perspective and expectations.
- There are different expectations for the parent–teacher partnership at different stages of a child’s education.

Mr. Davis suggested that a workgroup of PAC members be formed to create a training plan for a parent advocacy and leadership workshop. PAC members who would like to participate and who did not sign up at the meeting are welcome to contact Mr. Davis to express their interest in serving on the workgroup.

Next Meeting

Monday, March 2, 2009

Action Items

Action	Who	By When
Submit bio (100 words) to Eric Davis	Council members who have not already done so	ASAP
Submit feedback on Policy ABC revisions to Eric Davis	Council members	ASAP
Post notes of December 3, 2008, PAC meeting on DFCP website	Eric Davis	December 9, 2008
Contact Eric Davis to sign up to serve on workgroup creating training plan for parent advocacy/leadership workshop	Interested Council members who have not already done so	December 19, 2008
Submit any agenda items for consideration for March 2, 2009, meeting	Council members	February 17, 2009