

MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
Communications and Public Engagement Committee

June 25, 2012
4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. with the following committee members and Board staff present: Dr. Judy Docca, chair; Ms. Shirley Brandman, member; Mr. Michael Durso, member; Mr. Ikhide Roland Ikheloa, Board chief of staff; Ms. Suzann King, staff assistant; and Ms. Martha Sequeira, reporter.

MCPS staff present: Dr. Joshua Starr, superintendent of schools; Mr. Brian Edwards, chief of staff, Office of the Superintendent of Schools; Ms. Denise Stultz, Director, Department of Family and Community Partnerships; and Ms. Marcia Vogel, supervisor, Office of Communications.

Committee Minutes

The minutes of the May 25, 2012, committee meeting were approved.

Discussion of Systemwide Public Engagement Events Schedule for the Fall

Dr. Joshua Starr discussed a draft schedule for his 2012-2013 school year public engagement activities, and noted that the Board may be interested in participating in some of the events. He noted the desire to have a variety of events that include: a broad geographic distribution, school-based and neighborhood locations, large and “micro-level” events, a focus on the school system’s strategic priorities, and variety of stakeholders, business and community partners. Some of the ideas include: a book club, Neighbor to Neighbor engagement, community service day for staff, student town halls, quad/quint cluster days, roundtables with student reporters, reaching out to faith based communities, a state of the system address, live online chats, small group dialogues, brown bag lunches, and shadow a student days.

A question arose about the “Neighbor to Neighbor” engagement model. Staff explained that it was a vehicle to facilitate grassroots discussions/conversations. A tool kit is developed by staff and posted online so community members could have small group discussions about a particular topic and then upload a summary of the discussions and any comments.

For the state of schools event, Dr. Starr discussed having an event that is distinct from the annual budget presentation. This event would allow the community to come out (maybe on a federal holiday) and express support for the school system. Discussions are underway regarding the possibility of holding the event at Strathmore, sometime in the fall (Veterans Day or Columbus Day) beginning with a breakfast, and including students’ performances and art displays. Discussion focused on whether to raise money for the education foundation and to pay for the any of the events’ expenses by charging a small admission fee.

Noting that the Board of Education already had meetings scheduled with the clusters for the 2012-2013 school year, questions arose about the vision for the quad/quint cluster days events. It was explained that the idea is to visit the cluster schools throughout the day and end with an evening event with parents. It was suggested that the evening event could be a combination Board and superintendent cluster meeting. Discussion focused on how the respective MCCPTA clusters generally handle the arrangements for the cluster meetings with the Board. Further, if the quad/quint cluster events were going to be combined with the Board's cluster visits, then consideration would need to be given as to how to a combination event would address MCCPTA's needs. Discussion focused on the possibility of altering the traditional cluster visits; the desire to encourage the MCCPTA, NAACP, and Parent Council to be actively involved in using their resources for community engagement; and the vision of the quad/quint cluster days. Dr. Starr offered to follow up with leaders of MCCPTA, NAACP, and Parent Council to obtain their input.

The question arose about how to obtain community input on this year's strategic plan and its relation to the upcoming budget, given that the fall forum will be focused on obtaining feedback from the community about the development of the Board's core values. Discussion focused on using the Neighbor-to-Neighbor model, which could include the following items: a video clip of the Board president and superintendent video asking for input from the community, information on the strategic plan/budget process, guiding questions, and information about how to submit the feedback. Given the renovation of the strategic plan, there was consensus to try the Neighbor to Neighbor model for this year.

Adjournment: 5:05 p.m.