

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
POLICY COMMITTEE**

October 10, 2007

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m. with the following committee members and staff present: Sharon Cox (chair), Steve Abrams, Ben Moskowitz, Pat O'Neill, Suzann King (staff assistant), and Glenda Rose (recorder). Board members Shirley Brandman and Judy Docca were also present.

Other staff present: Stephanie Williams, Lori-Christina Webb, Holli Swann, Cathy Pevey, Christina Yuknis, Karen Crawford, Harriet Potosky, Mike Cohen, Diane Golden, Janine Bacquie, Erick Lang, Judy Brubaker, Wayne Whigham, Elaine Lessenco, Roland Ikheloa, and Linda Ferrell.

Others present: Judy Bresler, Jane de Winter, Madelyn Hamilton, and Charles Sye.

1. **Committee Minutes**

Action: The minutes for the September 12, 2007, meeting were approved as presented.

2. **Committee Charge**

The president of the Board asked each Board committee to review its charge and report back to the Board regarding whether any changes are necessary. Given that the Policy Committee's charge is derived from Policy BFA, *Policysetting*, and the committee is implementing that policy, no changes are currently needed.

Action: By consensus, the committee decided to inform the board president that no changes are needed to its charge.

3. **Policy KMC, Services Provided to Non-Profit Private Organizations**

The general counsel for the school system stated that the policy was adopted in 1979. She had three concerns about the policy: (1) it is vague and must have been adopted for a specific reason; (2) there is uncertainty as to where or how it applies; and (3) it is too broad to cover all non-profit organizations. For all those reasons, it was recommended that Policy KMC be rescinded. Committee members speculated about the rationale for the policy's adoption and usefulness.

Action: Prior to the committee recommending rescission, staff will check the Board's minutes to see if we can determine the rationale for enacting Policy KMC.

4. **Policies Needing Non-substantive Changes or Rescission**

Staff brought forward the following policies that either contained non-substantive changes or were being recommended for rescission:

- a. Policy JHC: *Child Abuse and Neglect* –non-substantive changes. Staff recommended adding the responsible office, correcting the reference to “Related Entries” and “Related Sources”, substituting “regulations” for “administrative procedures”, deleting the reference to number of years in which a policy will be reviewed, and eradicating the duplicative language concerning “immunity from civil liability and criminal penalty.”
- b. Policy COA: *Visitors to Schools* – recommended for rescission given that it was more appropriately considered a regulation under a school safety-related (or other applicable) policy.
- c. Policy JFC: *Registration and Voting for Students*–non-substantive changes. Staff recommended adding the responsible office, and deleting the reference to number of years in which a policy will be reviewed.
- d. Policy CGA: *Summer School*– recommended for rescission given that it was an operational issue that was addressed by other requirements.
- e. Policy ISE: *Summer School Graduation* – recommended for rescission given that it dealt with an operational issue that was addressed by other requirements.

The committee had no objection to the non-substantive changes or the policies recommended for rescission. Noting that Policy JHC required an annual report, the committee questioned the compliance with the reporting requirement in Policy JHC or other policies that had a similar requirement.

Action: The committee agreed to forward the Policies COA, CGA and ISE to the full Board, with a recommendation for rescission. Staff will investigate and report back to the committee with a recommendation regarding the annual report requirement in MCPS policies.

5. **Professional Growth Plan for Board Staff**

The Chief of Staff reported on the development of a professional growth plan for Board staff that was planned in collaboration and patterned after the central office administrators’ evaluation tool. Although the committee believed that this plan was under the purview of the Chief of Staff, it was pleased with the alignment of the professional growth plan and the collaboration with central office staff.

Action: No action is required by the committee. The Chief of Staff will use the professional growth plan and share the information with the Board, as appropriate.

6. **Policy JEB, *Early Entrance to Prekindergarten, Kindergarten, and First Grade***

Policy JEB allows parents of children born after September 1, 2002, but on or before October 15, 2002, to submit an application and have their child assessed by MCPS to determine readiness for kindergarten. It has been MCPS’ practice that if a child’s birth date

fell outside this time period (the six week window), the parents were required to submit compelling evidence of the child's above-age-level performance and development. Early childhood educators previously contacted the committee due to their concern about children being granted early entrance to kindergarten. The committee invited the kindergarten teachers and staff to discuss the impact of Policy JEB and the practice of reviewing and assessing children for early entrance to kindergarten.

Staff provided the committee with a preliminary summary of 2006-07 end-of-year teacher report card ratings for the personal, social, and motor development skills of children within and beyond the six-week window. Generally, children beyond the six-week window received lower ratings than children within the six-week window. Staff also noted that several other jurisdictions do not consider cases beyond the six-week window prescribed by law.

A kindergarten teacher explained that children beyond the six-week window are often frustrated because they are deficient in fine motor skills needed for writing, lack confidence, and cannot keep up with the emotional demands of full day kindergarten and older children. She also expressed concern about the assessment process for those students within and outside the six-week window.

An elementary principal reported that some younger children come into school with good skills, such as reading. However, their comprehension and writing skills lag behind because they are reading words only. She worried about the younger children always striving to catch up with the older students. She observed that early entrance to kindergarten seldom results in identification for gifted and talented instruction. However, it appeared that one more year of growing and maturing leads to higher achievement in the long run.

The committee inquired about the time needed to evaluate children, and if there was an added administrative burden for assessing those children beyond the six-week window. Staff explained that assessment is time consuming with many points of contact. The committee noted that if a child is not admitted to early entrance to kindergarten, that child can benefit from flexible groupings and differentiated instruction, and be accelerated later if necessary.

The committee wanted more information on the impact on children who were denied entrance, and those who were accepted beyond the six-week window. Also, there was concern about the funds expended for assessments and screening. Further, the committee noted that the policy does not require assessments for early entrance to kindergarten beyond the six-week window.

Action: By consensus, the committee asked staff to come back with information concerning: the cost for central office staff in evaluating children beyond the six week window, potential for redeployment of resources if different operating procedures were utilized, and the impact on children who applied but were not admitted early entrance into kindergarten.

7. **Middle School Reform Update**

As requested by the committee, staff provided a quarterly update to the committee highlighting the implementation of the middle school reform policy, Policy IEB, *Middle School Instruction*. There was a handout that highlighted areas of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; extended learning opportunities; leadership and professional development; and parent and community engagement and communication. Fifteen schools are working through Promethean technology feedback systems and twelve schools are implementing Performance Matters.

The discussion focused on the content of the handout, as well as summative and formative assessments, students who were afforded extended learning opportunities, how to improve the achievement gap, and the professional development occurring as a result of the middle school reform initiative.

Action: The committee will receive its next update concerning middle school reform in January.

Next Meeting and Adjournment. The next committee meeting is scheduled for November 14, 2007, at 3:30 p.m. in Room 120. Possible agenda items include:

- Policy KMC, *Services Provided to Non-Profit Private Organizations*
- Policy Evaluation Work Plan
- Update on Grading and Reporting
- Policy IOA, *Gifted and Talented Education*

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.