

# **MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION RETREAT**

December 15, 2009

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. with opening remarks by President Pat O'Neill.

Board members and staff present: Mr. Chris Barclay, Ms. Laura Berthiaume, Ms. Shirley Brandman, Dr. Judy Docca, Mr. Michael Durso, Mr. Timothy Hwang, Mr. Phil Kauffman, Mrs. Pat O'Neill, Mr. Roland Ikheloa, Ms. Suzann King, Mrs. Glenda Rose (recorder), and Ms. Laura Steinberg.

Administrative staff present: Mr. Brian Edwards, Dr. Frieda Lacey, and Dr. Jerry Weast.

Facilitators: Mr. Andrew Gelber and Dr. Larry Leverett (Panasonic Foundation).

Community present: Mr. Douglas Rosenfeld, Mr. Louis Wilen, and Ms. Danuta Wilson.

## **DISCIPLINED PROCESSES**

The facilitators started the meeting by asking Board members, Dr. Weast, and Dr. Lacey to project to the year 2015 and record their hopes and worries for the school system. Most Board members hoped that all students were learning rigorous material; the achievement gaps were closed; graduations rates were up; unified system that works for all students; stakeholders knew the system works for the county and children; and work is done with respect and collaboration. However, they worried about the fiscal constraints; remediation for graduates; the gaps are not closed; there is a two-tiered system; stagnation of student performance; and college readiness is abandon.

Board members and administrative staff each stated the single most important Board investment to promote the "hoped for" condition for the future of the school system. The following is a compiled list.

1. stay focused on student performance (make the diploma meaningful)
2. figure out optimal approach to resource allocation
3. student outcomes based on high expectations
4. maintain community commitment to ideals and financial support
5. high quality and smooth leadership transition
6. work collaboratively with "new" superintendent and each other
7. explore and help system push through obstacles that stand in the way of readiness
8. continue on the trajectory using the Seven Keys for College Readiness
9. select the new superintendent; put the right person in the job
10. seek wisdom and discernment regarding strategy
11. courage to continue the cultural transformation

## 12. support of high levels of performance for all students

The Board discussed the need to further refine disciplined Board processes to focus on issues with clarity based on the school system's vision and mission, such as:

### Disciplined Process – Board/Administration

1. How do the Board and administration work together on issue/problem identification?
2. How does the Board arrive at the “one voice” with which to speak to administration regarding issue identification and values that should govern strategy development?
3. How can the Board identify key issues as they arise over time without throwing the system “out of balance” each time this happens? How can overall, ongoing focus be maintained?
4. How does the Board “frame” an issue to which it wants administration to give attention – values – overarching objectives – performance measures?
5. What is the role of the Board and administration in issue/problem identification? Strategy development? Monitoring progress?
6. How does an issue of concern to one or more Board members become an issue of concern for the Board as a whole?
7. How does Board use community “input” to help administration prepare effectively?
8. How does Board represent community perspectives without derailing system progress?
9. How do Board members balance “constituent” representation with strategic/policy guidance and stewardship?

### Strategies

10. Does the Board get a clear understanding of what the strategy/solution will be before “implementation” begins? When and how does this occur?
11. How do the Board and administration use the Core Values as a lens for specific policy/strategic details?
12. How do strategies/solutions get developed? Who determines the “how-to”? How does that happen?

### Implement Strategies and Monitor

13. How to place development (how-to) as the role of administration while also giving Board an opportunity to productively ask questions about strategies and solutions?
14. How should the Board monitor implementation and address challenges (including values challenges) that arise?
15. What is the process for deciding if the full Board wants information (data, a formal presentation, etc.) from the administration? What is the role of the Board president in this process?

16. How should Board obtain information about implementation success/challenges (at classroom, school, and system level)?

**ACTION:** The Board appointed an ad hoc committee comprised of Mrs. O'Neill, Ms. Brandman, Ms. Berthiaume and Mr. Ikheloa to draft disciplined processes to address the questions above, including proposing appropriate updates the Board's Handbook to implement the defined processes. The facilitators will provide the Board with information regarding the disciplined processes used by other school systems.

**ACTION:** The Board asked the Fiscal Management Committee to develop a set of processes for the upcoming operating budget process. These processes should take into account the information from this retreat, focus on core values to inform conversations/decisions, and use the Equity and Excellence Framework as a lens.

### **ACADEMIC PRIORITIES**

The Board and facilitators discussed the history of the development of the academic priorities. Given that the strategic plan had enhanced and expanded the academic priorities, the discussion focused on the need for the academic priorities.

There was a discussion about continuous improvement, Board professional development, and Board evaluation.

**ACTION:** The Board did not believe it was necessary to revise the Academic Priorities at this time. However, the Strategic Planning Committee will place the academic priorities on its list of possible agenda items and await the Board's direction.

**ACTION:** The Board will schedule two retreats per year in July and January.

The retreat ended at 3:30 p.m.