

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

June 29, 2004

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jerry D. Weast, Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Organizational Improvements

I am strengthening the organization of the executive leadership of the Montgomery County Public Schools by realigning offices to better serve and support teaching and learning. The realignment enhances our ability to ensure that priorities are met as we move forward with plans to improve student achievement. The realignment elevates the area of technology as a primary strategy of the school system to deliver improved instructional services. The school system faces an enormous task of providing timely solutions to issues teachers and principals face in using student performance data on a daily basis to improve student achievement. Current methods are labor intensive and time consuming. In addition, technology solutions are needed to support new instructional models for professional development to implement the school system's priorities. The goal is to find innovative ways to use strategic technologies to increase instructional time for teachers and students.

The central services functions of the school system will remain focused on the mission of providing quality instructional and student services and managing the day-to-day operations of schools. Achieving this mission requires, in part, consistent and timely professional development and accountability throughout the entire school system's workforce of more than 20,000 employees. Consequently, the traditional mission of the staff development function will be broadened to incorporate a comprehensive mission for improving *organizational* development, as well as *staff* development. The organizational realignments will increase the school system's ability to accomplish this through the strengthening of cross-functional organizational initiatives that were started two years ago.

These organizational changes realign all of the essential services of the school system under three deputy superintendents—deputy superintendent of schools, deputy superintendent for strategic technologies and accountability, and chief operating officer. This effort is consistent with the ongoing evolution of our strategic plan and the identification of areas for continuous improvement. The school system periodically needs to modify the organizational structure to address current challenges and take advantage of new insights to improve the support provided to teachers and principals. We remain committed to implementing the strategic plan to ensure challenging academic standards and assessments and adequate yearly progress for all students. The realignment addresses the increasingly challenging requirements of Maryland's *Bridge to*

Excellence in Public Schools Act and the federal *No Child Left Behind Act*, particularly the need to maintain adequate yearly progress for students and provide highly qualified teachers and paraeducators. We understand that our school system must remain flexible and agile in adapting to the continuous changes inherent in meeting and exceeding increasingly rigorous standards and expectations. The following provides a summary of the major realignments. A copy of the new organizational chart is attached.

Office of the Deputy Superintendent of Schools

The first step of the realignment occurred with the appointment of Dr. Frieda K. Lacey as deputy superintendent of schools by the Board of Education on June 21, 2004. Dr. Lacey will have responsibility for the offices of School Performance, Curriculum and Instructional Programs, and Special Education and Student Services. This aligns all of our educational components into a single team that enhances the provision of services in the support of schools, provides unified leadership for systemwide school and program improvement, and strengthens the oversight of school performance.

The Office of the Deputy Superintendent of Schools will oversee all educational services to ensure improved student performance. These include specific initiatives within the school system's strategic plan and related efforts designed to raise expectations for student achievement and narrow the gap in student performance by race and ethnicity. This office will provide the necessary leadership, collaboration, and support for the units reporting to the deputy superintendent of schools.

Office of School Performance

Mr. Donald Kress will continue his leadership for the Office of School Performance. His title will be changed from coordinating community superintendent to chief school performance officer, with responsibility to improve the coordination, efficiency, and consistency among the six community superintendents in the administration of the school system's 24 school clusters. The significant span of control of the Office of School Performance in overseeing the progress of 24 high schools, 36 middle schools, and 125 elementary schools requires greater organizational alignment, streamlined decision-making, and improved communication and collaboration.

Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs

The Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs will continue to provide leadership and direction in the development and implementation of curriculum and programs that support quality instruction. Under the leadership of Mr. Dale Fulton, associate superintendent, this office will continue to provide the direction for unified development and implementation of rigorous curricula, innovative academic programs, and strengthened instructional resources that prepare students to meet or exceed local, state, and federal assessment requirements.

Office of Special Education and Student Services

The name of this office has been changed to the Office of Special Education and Student Services to better reflect its responsibilities. The office will continue to provide support for the implementation of effective school-based programs that enhance teaching and learning. This office provides leadership for a comprehensive, collaborative, and coordinated support system from preschool through adult education. Dr. Carey Wright, associate superintendent, will continue to ensure that the office provides services necessary for all students to acquire the skills essential for academic achievement, career and educational decision-making, and personal and social development.

Office of Strategic Technologies and Accountability

The Office of Global Access Technology and the departments of Reporting and Regulatory Accountability and Shared Accountability will be organized under the Office of Strategic Technologies and Accountability. Mr. John Q. Porter will lead this office as deputy superintendent, and will provide a unified approach to data and information management, research, and quality control. Aligning the work of these units is essential to ensuring initiatives are implemented with a consistency that facilitates programmatic and student success across the district.

The office will be responsible for the continued development of knowledge management systems that assure alignment among organizational goals, human resources, and technology systems. This requires teamwork in the development of effective technology systems and a high level of organizational coordination linking the work of this office with the offices of the Deputy Superintendent of Schools and Chief Operating Officer in a dynamic, collaborative, and systematic manner.

The office will focus resources on saving time for teachers and other staff, providing data to target professional development, and optimizing and supporting a productive workforce. Access to student performance data on a daily basis by teachers and principals, as well as parents and students, is necessary in order for all schools to meet or exceed increasingly rigorous standards and expectations. In addition, evaluating the effectiveness of staff development in changing behaviors and practices is key in achieving organizational goals. This will ultimately be realized through the creation of a knowledge management model and process that assures alignment among all of the offices in the school system.

This organizational design aligns and strengthens the work of the staff, supporting more rapid provision of enabling technologies that increase “anywhere, anytime” access to timely information, instructional models and best practices, and professional development offerings to implement the school system’s priorities. The work of these organizational units is essential to ensuring that staff development is focused and clearly aligned based on student performance results.

Teachers and principals need to be able to have real-time access to performance data that can inform the instructional decisions being made daily in helping children succeed. This office will identify and provide the technological solutions necessary to improve significantly the process of teaching and learning in our school system.

Aligning the work of these units is essential to ensuring that initiatives are implemented with a consistency that facilitates programmatic and student success across the district. The office will focus resources on saving time for teachers and supporting a productive workforce.

Department of Shared Accountability

The alignment of the Department of Shared Accountability (DSA) with the Office of Strategic Technologies and Accountability will improve the work of the units responsible for Testing, Program Evaluation, and Applied Research. These units encompass the design and implementation of research and evaluation studies to monitor systemwide initiatives and administration, analysis, interpretation, and reporting of both state and local mandated tests and assessments. Monitoring student performance and providing timely, relevant data and information to guide decision-making are the key elements of the ongoing reform and continuous improvement efforts of the school system.

Department of Reporting and Regulatory Accountability

The Department of Reporting and Regulatory Accountability (DRRA) includes Internal Audit, Policy and Records, and Enrollment and Attendance Compliance. The organizational realignment will enhance the department's focus on issues surrounding reporting and regulatory accountability, such as external audits; federal, state, and local reporting requirements; policy and regulation development and revision; residency compliance; and technical support around issues regarding enrollment and attendance. The ability of DRRA to provide accurate, timely, and thorough information concerning reporting and regulatory affairs also is critical to the school system's continuous improvement.

Department of Student and Business Technologies

This department will continue to provide the leadership, collaboration, and coordination needed to ensure that information technology systems are developed and implemented based on end-user and reporting requirements, meet quality standards prior to and during deployment, and exemplify systems engineering best practices. The department also will provide the coordination needed to ensure that departmental activities, products, and services meet the information technology needs of MCPS users, are aligned with *Our Call to Action: Pursuit of Excellence* and the vision and strategic plan for technology innovation, and are accomplished efficiently and successfully.

Department of Technology Consulting and Communication Systems

The Department of Technology Consulting and Communication Systems combines and expands the work of the eLearning Team and the Division of Information Services. The primary role of the department will be to assure the successful integration of technologies that support student achievement and workforce excellence through training and creating vehicles for frequently collecting user feedback on the added-value of deployed systems. The department also will develop relationships to facilitate the identification of needs that can be addressed through technology; design, develop, and deploy highly effective electronic and print information systems; and educate stakeholders on how MCPS leverages technology to support student achievement.

Department of Technology Implementation and Support

The Department of End User Support will become the Department of Technology Implementation and Support. The department will continue to provide the leadership that is required in supporting and promoting the productive use of information technology throughout MCPS. The department implements technology throughout the school system, supports the network infrastructure, telecommunications, school and office hardware/software installations, and school-based technical operations; and provides daily maintenance and Help Desk services to end users.

Office of the Chief Operating Officer

As chief operating officer, Mr. Larry Bowers will continue to provide the oversight and integrated management of the Office of Human Resources and all systemwide support functions that form the infrastructure of the school system's daily operations. These include the departments of Association Relations; Facilities Management; Financial Services; Management, Budget, and Planning; Materials Management; Planning and Capital Programming; and Transportation, and divisions of Construction; Food and Nutrition Services; Maintenance; and School Plant Operations. As part of the realignment, the chief operating officer will assume responsibility for the Department of School Safety and Security, which will help foster unified support services for the school system. Moreover, Mr. Bowers will assume responsibility for all grants activities. The school system has the opportunity to receive additional external resources, and we need to organize ourselves to develop the programs and proposals to respond to these grant opportunities. He also will maintain responsibility for legal services and interscholastic athletics.

Mr. Bowers also will continue to be the primary account manager for all school-based instructional resources, and he will continue to work closely with the community superintendents in the allocation of these instructional resources to schools. In addition, because the Office of Human Resources reports to Mr. Bowers, he will work with Mr. Matthew Tronzano, associate superintendent for human resources, Dr. Lacey, Mr. Kress, and the community superintendents on the selection, placement, and reassignment of school-based administrators.

Office of Organizational Development

The school system has made a major investment in the development and training of staff for the implementation of new and innovative programs and academic reforms. This responsibility remains vital to the school system's continued success in teaching and learning, but there are additional needs for expanding the expertise of personnel into multiple, cross-functional areas beyond the traditional view of staff training and professional development. Therefore, the current Office of Staff Development will broaden its responsibilities as the Office of Organizational Development to include systemic components of the school system's efforts to implement comprehensive reform initiatives. The office will continue to focus on strengthening the knowledge, skills, strategies, and practices of school-based and central services personnel; and it will extend this focus to include helping staff increase teamwork, collaboration, and shared decision making necessary for a successful organization. Ms. Darlene Merry, associate superintendent for staff development, will continue to lead this office as the associate superintendent for organizational development.

The Office of Organizational Development will have a critical role in ensuring the success of other offices by providing training to employees to equip them to achieve specific organizational goals. In light of the unified cross-functional nature of these responsibilities, the office will report collectively to the deputy superintendent of schools, the deputy superintendent for strategic technologies and accountability, and the chief operating officer. They will work collaboratively to ensure that the development of the school system's employees builds the capacity in our human systems to accomplish organizational goals. The linkages and high level of cross-functional collaboration are supported by this organizational alignment to ensure focus in the use of resources and to optimize results from the investment in organizational development.

Department of Communications and Public Information

The responsibilities of the current Department of Communications will be broadened to unify the school system's internal and external communications efforts, including all print and electronic media produced by the school system. This will enhance the system's parent and community outreach efforts and improve the access of parents, employees, and members of the community to school system and program information. Ms. Aggie Alvez, currently director of special projects, will be the director of the Department of Communications and Public Information. The department, which will include the current communications department, will provide oversight for the work products of the Web Team, Electronic Graphics and Publishing, and Instructional Television to ensure a consistent message that is aligned with our strategic plan. Mr. Brian J. Porter, the current director of communications, will be my chief of staff. He will continue to provide support in the area of news media relations and strategic communication.

Conclusion

The realignment strengthens our efforts to improve teaching and learning. In some respects, the changes reflect relatively minor modifications of existing staff responsibilities and program activities. However, there are important improvements in the organizational structure designed to better manage our responsibilities, provide the leadership necessary for effective change, and fulfill the academic priorities of the Board of Education.

It is important to note that the total number of administrative and supervisory and executive positions does not change in the new organization, although there are position modifications that include upgrades in duties and responsibilities. There are no additional costs expected to implement these organizational changes.

I am appreciative of the Board of Education's support for my executive team. The incorporation of an organizational system involving two deputy superintendents and a chief operating officer will provide the strengthened leadership necessary to ensure continuity and collaboration in our reform and improvement efforts. We face increasingly difficult challenges in the months and years ahead in the implementation of the Board of Education's goals and academic priorities, the school system's strategic plan, and the master plan for the *Bridge to Excellence*. However, the record of success over the past five years demonstrates the significant progress already made and the promise of greater advancements yet to come.

We will continue to provide the Board of Education with information on our progress in achieving specific performance measures as reports become available and as part of the continuing review of information and data. The executive staff participates in an ongoing monitoring process that occurs during regular Executive Leadership Team meetings, which also enhance the collaboration between and among the various offices of the school system.

The members of my senior staff recognize that accountability for improved performance, not only progress in student achievement but also demonstrated attainment of measurable benchmarks for program implementation and administration, is more important now than ever before. They are committed to attaining those goals and providing a high quality, world-class educational institution for the citizens of Montgomery County.

JDW:sz

Attachment

Copy to:
Executive Staff