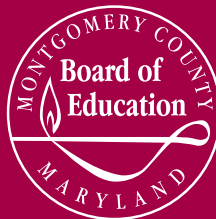
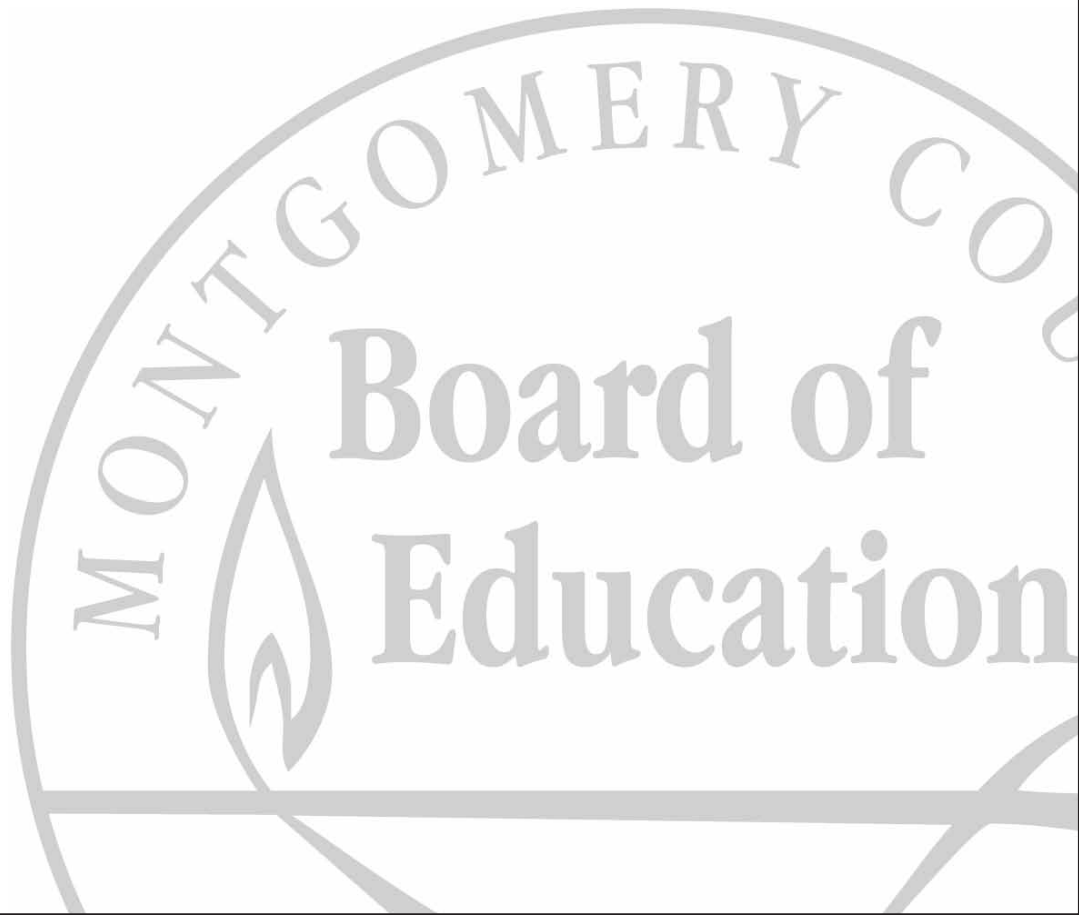


THE YEAR
2009
in Review





VISION

A high-quality education is the fundamental right of every child. All children will receive the respect, encouragement, and opportunities they need to build the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be successful, contributing members of a global society.

MISSION

The Montgomery County Board of Education provides leadership and oversight for the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) by setting goals, establishing policies, and committing resources to benefit our diverse student population. The Board's work is guided by its academic priorities, as outlined in the MCPS Strategic Plan, *Our Call to Action: Pursuit of Excellence*.

Members of the Board of Education

Mrs. Patricia B. O'Neill
President

Mr. Christopher S. Barclay
Vice President

Ms. Laura Berthiaume

Ms. Shirley Brandman

Dr. Judith R. Docca

Mr. Michael A. Durso

Mr. Philip Kauffman

Mr. Timothy T. Hwang
Student Member

Dr. Jerry D. Weast
Superintendent of Schools and Secretary-Treasurer

Contact Information

Board of Education
Carver Educational Services Center
850 Hungerford Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Ikhide Roland Ikheloa
Chief of Staff and Ombudsman

Suzann M. King
Staff Assistant, Policy and Communications

Laura Steinberg
Staff Assistant, Legislative and Inter-Governmental Relations

Contact the Board

301-279-3617 Phone

301-279-3860 Fax

boe@mcpsmd.org

www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/boe

A Message from Immediate Past President

Dear Fellow Citizens,

As I reflect on the past year as president of the Montgomery County Board of Education, it was a year marked by unique challenges. A rapidly worsening economy and the unexpected demands of rapidly rising enrollment required us to confront change. While remaining resolute in our commitment to ensure that all students are prepared to be successful in college and career, we had to oversee a system that continued to try and do more with less. The dedication and passion of all who work in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), and among my colleagues on the Board, have united our service on behalf of the children of Montgomery County.

Clearly, the biggest challenge that we encountered this past year was the fiscal crisis. I cannot express enough admiration for the enormous sacrifice shown by our employees in taking \$89 million in salary cuts as their contribution to stemming the fiscal crisis. Our teachers, principals, administrators, and supporting service workers joined with the Board, the superintendent of schools, the County Council, and the county executive to minimize disruptions to the Board's initiatives and instructional programs. For the first time in many years, the Board was confronted with the need for significant reductions. Through deliberate targeting, we were able to preserve crucial academic initiatives and hold the line on average class sizes. The only silver lining to the economic conditions was that it greatly reduced construction costs and lowered interest rates for bond funding. The Board took maximum advantage of these favorable conditions and recommended an ambitious Capital Improvements Program that would allow us to honor our commitment to aggressively pursue the desperately needed modernizations of Paint Branch, Gaithersburg, Seneca Valley, and Wheaton high schools, as well as to address the ever-increasing demands of our growing enrollment through needed addition projects.

For the first time in 10 years, the Board also took up the challenge of reexamining our core values. The Board emphatically reaffirmed its commitment to closing the achievement gap by ensuring that "student outcomes shall not be predictable by race or ethnicity"; while, at the same time, committing to high expectations of all students. The Board continues to embrace our obligation to provide equity and excellence as we strive to close the gap and raise the bar. Indeed, our school system's commitment to equity and excellence was recognized this year in the publication by Harvard Press—*Leading for Equity: The Pursuit of Excellence in Montgomery County Public Schools*. The book chronicles the reform efforts of the Board and superintendent over the past decade to raise academic achievement for all students while closing the achievement gap.

This year the Board also revisited the challenge of dropouts and took a firm legislative position in support of raising the compulsory age of attendance from 16 to 18 years of age. Currently, Maryland requires children between the ages of 5 and 15 to attend school but upon turning 16, a student is permitted to permanently withdraw from school. While recognizing that raising the compulsory age of attendance alone is not a silver bullet, the Board felt that it was critical that our laws and policies limit the ease with which students can drop out of school, knowing the severe consequences of such action. In our changing economy, workers need at least a high school diploma to compete in the workforce. The Board is actively advocating for legislative change while also working to ensure the availability of engaging instructional programs and personal supports that must



Shirley Brandman

Immediate Past President

At Large

Ms. Brandman was elected to her first 4-year term on November 7, 2006, as an at-large representative. She is the chair of the Board's Policy Committee and the Committee on Special Populations and a member of the Communications and Public Engagement Committee.

accompany requiring students to stay in school beyond age 16. (The Board's complete Legislative Platform is available on our website at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/boe/about/legislative.shtm.)

This year also was a time of transition. In the summer of 2009, Board Member Nancy Navarro moved on to the County Council and Mr. Michael Durso, who recently retired from Montgomery County Public Schools as principal of Springbrook High School, was appointed to fill her vacancy. Ms. Navarro showed steadfast determination as a leader and advocate who encouraged the system to invest in resources for communicating with all segments of our community. Mr. Durso has proven to be a valuable addition to our team in providing the Board the benefit of his years of experience as a dedicated and passionate teacher and principal. In July 2009, we also bid farewell to Student Member of the Board Quratul-Ann Malik, who was replaced by Mr. Timothy Hwang, a senior at Thomas S. Wootton High School. Ms. Malik distinguished herself by her gentle but persistent advocacy and her fresh ideas for sharing information about resources that could enhance academic achievement. In his time on the Board, Mr. Hwang has impressed us with his energy, intellect, and ability to connect with students and the community at large using traditional and cutting-edge tools.



Sadly, in June, our county lost Mr. Blair G. Ewing, a tireless crusader for high-quality educational opportunities for all children. History will remember him as a passionate, brilliant leader who successfully championed desegregation efforts in Montgomery County. In October, the Board renamed the school building formerly known as The Mark Twain School the Blair G. Ewing Center. In doing so, the Board recognized Mr. Ewing for his many years of dedicated service to the children of Montgomery County. Mr. Ewing will be greatly missed.

Finally, in September, our own Mrs. Patricia O'Neill was recognized by the Maryland Association of Boards of Education with its highest honor, the Charles W. Willis Award. Limited to a single honoree annually, the award represents recognition by board member peers of outstanding service at the local and state levels. This well-deserved honor is a fitting tribute to Mrs. O'Neill, who is our longest serving Board member and currently serving her fourth term as president of the Board of Education.

I thank my colleagues for giving me the opportunity to serve as president this past year and pledge my continued commitment to our mutual effort on behalf of all children.

Shirley Brandman
Immediate Past President

The Role and Mission of the Board of Education

The Montgomery County Board of Education provides leadership and oversight for MCPS by setting goals, establishing policies, and committing resources to benefit our diverse student population. The Board's work is guided by its core values and academic priorities, as outlined in the strategic plan, *Our Call to Action: Pursuit of Excellence*.

To carry out its duties, the Board usually meets twice each month, convening for one all-day meeting and one evening meeting. Other meetings are held to hear appeals; review and act on budgets and facilities; preside over public hearings; meet with other elected officials and public bodies; host community forums; hold parent, student, and employee meetings; and participate in local, state, and national association meetings. In addition, the Board consists of the following committees, which meet regularly to review issues and make recommendations for adoption by the full Board: Communications and Public Engagement, Fiscal Management, Policy, Strategic Planning, and Special Populations.

Overcoming Fiscal Challenges and Maintenance of Effort

This was an exceedingly challenging year to prepare a budget. We faced our worst economic crisis in decades, absorbed a larger-than-expected increase in student enrollment, and experienced some of the greatest uncertainty ever in terms of the amount of state and local funding we would be receiving. We had to make difficult cuts but, in the end, we emerged with a budget that preserved crucial initiatives in the school system's strategic plan, due in large part to the sacrifice of our employees who voluntarily gave up their cost-of-living adjustments. The Board adopted a \$2.2 billion FY 2010 operating budget. Additional funds were made available through the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009*, signed into law by President Barack Obama on February 17, 2009. Our Board was one of the first in the state to take action to utilize the funds on February 23, 2009. As a result of ARRA, the Board included amendments to the FY 2010 Operating Budget Request that restored \$21.4 million in total funding. This funding allowed us to better meet the needs of some of our most vulnerable students by allocating an additional \$6.1 million for Title I services for low-income students and \$15.3 million for special education under an *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* grant. The Board also sustained its commitment to providing summer instruction for students needing intervention, enrichment, and acceleration of academic instruction, for which the system received the 2009 Champion of Summer Learning Award.

For the operating budget, state law requires each county to fund its school system Maintenance of Effort (MOE). MOE is conceived as a floor of funding to ensure a basic level of local support for education and requires each school district to receive the same local appropriation per pupil in the subsequent year that was provided during the current year. MOE also is designed to prevent a county from reducing its own contribution to public education when the state increases the amount of aid to a school district. As enrollment changes, MOE may increase or decrease to maintain the same dollars per pupil in local funds. Given the economic situation facing the county at this time last year, the county determined that it would be unable to meet the MOE requirement. The Board faced a difficult decision with respect to MOE. After careful deliberation,



Patricia B. O'Neill
President
District 3

Mrs. O'Neill currently is serving her fourth term as Board of Education president and also served four times as vice president of the Board. She is a member of the Board's Policy and Strategic Planning committees.





Christopher S. Barclay
*Vice President
District 4*

Mr. Barclay was elected to his first 4-year term on November 4, 2008, after being appointed to the Board on December 9, 2006. He is chair of the Board's Fiscal Management Committee and a member of the Policy Committee.

the Board deemed it appropriate to collaborate with county government in seeking a waiver. The Board felt it could craft a sustainable school system budget with sacrifices from employees that permitted county funds to be available to avoid more severe cuts to the safety net services—health, fire, police—upon which our students and families also rely. The Board also believed it could collaborate on a one-time limited waiver because it received additional federal stimulus dollars through ARRA and unanticipated state dollars to account for a previous error in funding formulas. However, when the Maryland State Board of Education denied the MOE waiver, it left the county in uncharted territory and with few viable options. As a result of the denial of the waiver, the County Council funded the Board's budget with the stipulation that nearly \$80 million of the school system's appropriation be used to pay debt service costs on county bonds that were sold for constructing schools. In November, however, Maryland State's Attorney General Douglas Gansler issued an opinion finding that this shifting of an obligation previously funded by the county had not met the requirement for local MOE funding for the FY 2010 operating budget for MCPS. According to state law, the failure to meet MOE can result in a significant financial penalty being imposed directly upon the school system. The Board and the superintendent have since been involved in aggressive efforts to avoid the imposition of such a penalty that would cause the children of MCPS to lose funding that is critically needed for instructional programs. The Board's legislative platform includes advocacy to provide clarity on the implementation of Maintenance of Effort and we continue to advocate vigorously against the imposition of any penalty on MCPS. As this document goes to print, resolution of the FY 2010 MOE penalty is being considered by the state legislature.

Collaborating and Networking to Get the Job Done

As a Board and a team, we have continued to collaborate with other government officials and education leaders for the benefit of our children. In the past year, the Board met three times with the Montgomery County Council to discuss a variety of issues—student suspensions, enrollment trends, and the federal stimulus package. In May the Board met with the Montgomery County Planning Board and engaged in dialogue on a broad range of issues, including the county's annual growth policy; smart growth; special protection areas; and concerns regarding the use, scheduling, and maintenance of synthetic ball fields. In June, for the first time in our shared history, the Board met with the Universities at Shady Grove's Board of Advisors to engage in a discussion on our common goals for ensuring excellent educational opportunities from pre-K through postsecondary education. Together, the two boards brainstormed ways in which our institutions can work more effectively together.



In November, the Board met with the Montgomery County Delegation to Annapolis. Following the tradition that was established last year, the Board invited the members of the Montgomery County Council's Education Committee and the leadership of the Montgomery County Council of Parent-Teacher Associations (MCCPTA) to join us at the table. The Board presented its legislative priorities and urged lawmakers to address pressing needs, such as ensuring that no unfunded mandates are passed back to local school districts and advocating for our fair share of school construction dollars. This meeting allowed Board members to provide our delegation with information about our growing needs and allowed for a free exchange of ideas on ways to ensure a successful year in Annapolis. Earlier in the year, Board officers met with the members of our senate delegation to Annapolis for a presentation and focused dialogue on MCPS demographic trends, funding needs, and strategies for effective legislative work on behalf of our children. This was a first in the history of our partnership with our colleagues in Annapolis and it proved to be very productive. The Board continues to enjoy annual meetings with the leadership of MCCPTA, both at the county and the high school cluster levels. Working together with MCCPTA, the Board strives to design a process for the local high school cluster meetings that will involve and engage more community members.

Working on the Vision

This past year, the Board convened three retreats that emphasized envisioning the future of our school system, networking, team-building, and structural alignments of our work processes. The retreats allowed the Board to reflect on how best to advance the school district's mission and be vested in our ongoing reform efforts. The Board reflected on the origins of our reforms, where we are now, and where we need to go as a team. The Board also worked on developing a framework to ensure equity in all aspects of the school district's work.

Much was accomplished by the Board as a result of these retreats. For the first time in a decade, the Board updated its core values to comprehensively affirm the Board's commitment to our students by pledging "to do whatever it takes" to ensure the success of every child, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, language proficiency, or disability. The Board also addressed the issue of equity through these retreats, which included a "study circles" discussion on race, and adopted a *Framework for Equity and Excellence* as part of the strategic plan, *Our Call to Action: Pursuit of Excellence*. A significant part of the retreats also was devoted to clarifying roles and responsibilities of Board members and the superintendent and reviewing the Board's academic priorities. These retreats have enabled the Board to improve on its work through the establishment of clear processes and structures. For example, this past year, the Board instituted a process that requires the administration to outline separately any "consent" expenditure item on our meeting agenda that is more than \$1 million. This was done in an effort to increase transparency and allow the Board and the community to better identify significant expenditures prior to the Board's review. The Board



Laura Berthiaume

Board Member

District 2

Ms. Berthiaume was elected to her first 4-year term on November 4, 2008.

She is a member of the Board's Committee on Special Populations.





Judith Docca

Board Member

District 1

Dr. Docca was elected to her first 4-year term on November 7, 2006. She is chair of the Board's Strategic Planning and Communications and Public Engagement committees.

also has tightened restrictions on Board members' and staff travel expenses and will be revising the Board's handbook to reflect these changes.

Oversight of the School System: One of the major functions of the Board is to make a continuous appraisal of the educational and administrative management of the school system. During regularly scheduled business meetings, the Board took action on several matters, including the following:

- **Adopted the Operating and Capital Budgets.** In addition to the \$2.2 billion operating budget, the Board approved a \$1.49 billion, six-year Capital Improvements Program (CIP) that includes the construction of 2 new schools and the expansion of 10 more. In addition, the Board requested and obtained County Council approval to increase the FY 2010 appropriation for the modernization of Paint Branch High School from \$20 million to \$87.5 million to allow MCPS to accelerate the construction bid for this project in order to take advantage of favorable construction market conditions. The Board did not adopt the superintendent's recommendation to consolidate Monocacy Elementary School at Poolesville Elementary School and directed that a group that includes representatives from neighboring clusters be empanelled to explore options to address underutilization in the Poolesville Cluster. As a result of the Board's outreach to the Oakland Terrace Elementary School community, the Board adopted a resolution to allow MCPS to work with the community on a temporary solution to relieve the severe overcrowding at the school until a permanent solution is implemented.
- **Adopted a Legislative Platform for 2009 to ensure that the Board's voice is heard proactively on statewide funding and legislative issues that impact the needs of MCPS students and staff.** The legislative platform is shared with community stakeholders and elected officials in Montgomery County and across the state. Of the 90 bills brought to the Board for consideration, 30 were enacted and will impact, among other things, suspensions and expulsions, student health and wellness, data collection and reporting, procurement, and collective bargaining. Bills defeated, among other things, would have created tuition vouchers, eliminated the High School Assessments, and created a labor relations board.
- **Approved amended agreements with the Montgomery County Association of Administrators and Principals, Montgomery County Business and Operations Administrators, Montgomery County Education Association, and SEIU Local 500 concerning salaries.** Through the amended agreements, MCPS staff agreed to forgo cost-of-living salary adjustments that were previously negotiated for FY 2010, saving a projected \$89 million.
- **Approved the annual revisions to the school system's strategic plan, *Our Call to Action: Pursuit of Excellence*.** The updates to the 2009–2014 strategic plan included the Board's revision



of the core values to highlight MCPS's commitment to viewing all students as unique learners and doing whatever it takes to ensure that every child learns and succeeds, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, limited English proficiency, socioeconomic status, or disability. The revised strategic plan also included a new *Framework for Equity and Excellence*, aimed at ensuring that there is a firm commitment to high standards and expectations for all students.

- **Approved the updated Comprehensive Master Plan**, which is submitted annually to the Maryland State Department of Education as part of the *Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act*. The Comprehensive Master Plan is based on the school system's strategic plan, *Our Call to Action: Pursuit of Excellence*. The master plan describes the goals, objectives, and strategies that will be used to improve student achievement and meet Maryland's performance goals.
- **Fulfilled the Board's responsibility for evaluating the performance and effectiveness of the superintendent of schools** by conducting his annual evaluation.
- **Reviewed the Montgomery County Public Schools Seven Keys to College Readiness** initiative, which identifies a research-based pathway with seven key academic milestones, from Grades K–12, that will ensure students will be fully ready for college and the world of work. The June 2009 revision to the MCPS strategic plan incorporated the Seven Keys to College Readiness as the framework for preparing all students for postsecondary success in college or a career.
- **Approved tuition rates for nonresident students for the 2009–2010 school year.** Each year's rates are based on the approved operating budget, cost of debt service, and current revenue funding for the capital budget.
- **Reviewed state legislation that would require the Board to develop and operate a website for users to search and view summary information on payments made to vendors in aggregated amounts of \$10,000 or more.** The Board voted to support the legislation, contingent upon funding from the state and with a change in the reporting amount to \$25,000, to be consistent with the Code of Maryland Regulations.
- **Reviewed the systemwide effort to reduce out-of-school suspensions.** MCPS continues to refine the improvements that have been successful, instituting deeper analysis to identify root causes for discretionary suspensions and reviewing alternatives to out-of-school suspension, with primary emphasis on how in-school suspension is utilized in our schools. The Board has made it a priority to address the disproportionate suspension of minority students and to encourage and support MCPS in its efforts to reduce suspensions that take students out of a learning environment. Although pleased with the progress that is being made in reducing suspensions and the disproportionality in suspensions among racial/ethnic and special education groups, and with the significant progress made in addressing this target of the strategic plan, the Board has made it a priority to address, and remains committed to, reducing the number of suspensions,



Michael Durso
Board Member
District 5

Mr. Durso was appointed by the Board on June 26, 2009. He is a member of the Board's Communications and Public Engagement, Fiscal Management, and Strategic Planning committees.





Philip Kauffman

Board Member

At Large

Mr. Kauffman was elected to his first 4-year term on November 4, 2008, as an at-large representative.

He is a member of the Board's Fiscal Management and Special Populations committees.

the percentage of students being suspended, and the disproportionate number of suspensions of certain student groups while maintaining safe and focused teaching and learning environments. This commitment includes the expectation that all schools promote engagement in the learning process as the primary strategy for addressing problematic behaviors.

- **Discussed locally funded prekindergarten and federally funded Head Start programs**, which offer educational services to 3- and 4-year-olds from income-eligible families.
- **Discussed literacy education in Montgomery County Public Schools**, along with actions being taken to address identified challenges at various grade levels. The Board also discussed the school system's various Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs, which have expanded to provide opportunities for more students to take the most challenging courses available.
- **Adopted work plans for its committees and agreed to review the committee work plans annually.** This action resulted from a previous retreat in which the Board members agreed to undertake an annual review of the work of its committees and develop, as a Committee of the Whole, the work plans and assignments for the existing committees. These work plans are aligned with the Board's work, academic priorities, and goals of the MCPS strategic plan, *Our Call to Action: Pursuit of Excellence*.
- **Recognized Francis Scott Key Middle School for attaining LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold Level Certification** through the U.S. Green Building Council. Key was completely modernized and reopened this fall. It is the first middle school in Maryland and the mid-Atlantic region to be LEED certified and the fourth middle school in the nation to obtain LEED Gold Level Certification.
- **Adopted a resolution urging the County Council to require that land be set aside for future school construction needs prior to the approval of any master plan.** The Board also took specific action to request that the County Council include an elementary school site at the White Flint Mall South location when it adopts the White Flint Sector Plan, which envisions a community of up to 9,800 residential units that would likely result in more than 400 elementary school students. The Board also recommended that the County Council consider three sites as possible backup sites to White Flint Mall South: Luttrell/Higgins, White Flint Park North, and the Maple Avenue sites.
- **Received an update from staff and discussed many MCPS energy conservation and sustainability programs and initiatives**, including the School Energy and Recycling Team; automated energy management; energy retrofits; solar photovoltaic



system installations; green cleaning; construction; LEED; and green initiatives in transportation, procurement, and food services.

- **Approved the name William B. Gibbs, Jr. Elementary School** for the new elementary school that opened last August in Clarksburg. The school was named in honor of a former teacher and principal of the former Rockville Colored Elementary School, who made history in 1936 when he challenged the policy of disparate salary schedules for White and African American educators.
- **Received a briefing on the school system's Professional Learning Communities Institute.** The institute aims to increase student achievement and eliminate the achievement gap in middle and elementary schools by building the capacity of each school's leadership team.
- **Discussed the professional growth systems (PGSs), which clarify the standards and competencies that all MCPS employees are expected to attain.** PGSs support the school system's efforts to attract, mentor, develop, evaluate, and recognize employees.
- **Discussed an update on the phase-out of the MCPS secondary learning centers.** Evaluation recommendations focused on ongoing support and training for school staff, with an emphasis on co-teaching and differentiation, additional job-embedded professional development for teachers who have transitioned students, continuing opportunities for parents to share their concerns, and a reexamination of the relationship between course grades and state assessment scores.
- **Received a staff briefing and discussed the status of this year's senior class, with regard to the state's High School Assessments (HSAs) and graduation requirements.** Students in the Class of 2009 were the first required to pass the HSAs in four subject areas—English, algebra, biology, and government—to earn a Maryland diploma. The Maryland State Board of Education approved a series of modifications that would provide alternative options for students who have either not passed an HSA after several attempts or have not had the opportunity to take the exams by their senior year.
- **Discussed the Achievement Steering Committee (ASC) process,** in which stakeholders collaborate with schools identified for Year 2 of School Improvement or Corrective Action, based on the results of the Maryland School Assessment or High School Assessment. The first ASC—involving collaboration by schools, the central office, and the community—took place at Highland Elementary School in the 2004–2005 school year. Since that time, Highland Elementary School has improved vastly in performance, as demonstrated by its having been named a Maryland Blue Ribbon School.
- **Discussed the Differentiated Accountability Pilot for full implementation by the Maryland State Department of Education in the 2009–2010 school year.** The pilot is an alternative way to identify



Timothy Hwang
Student Member

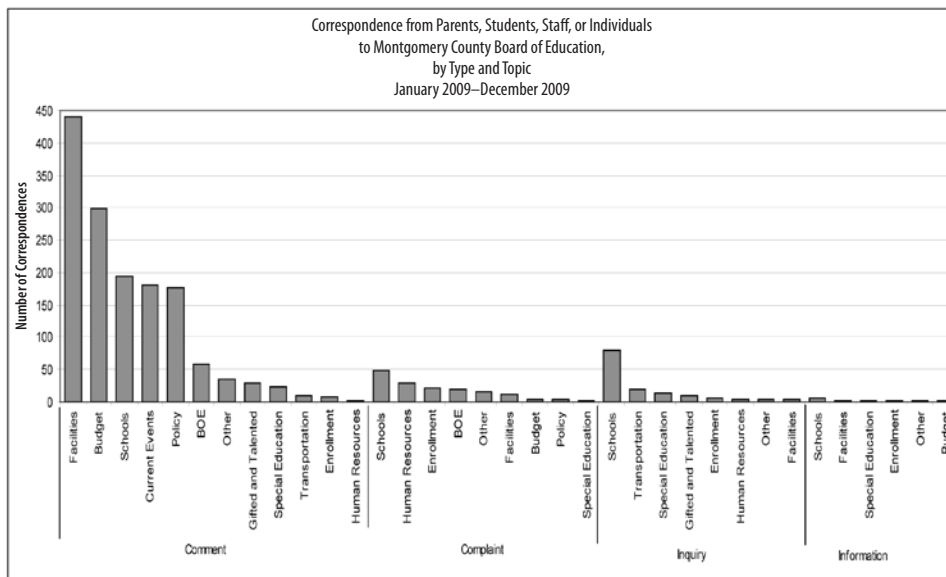
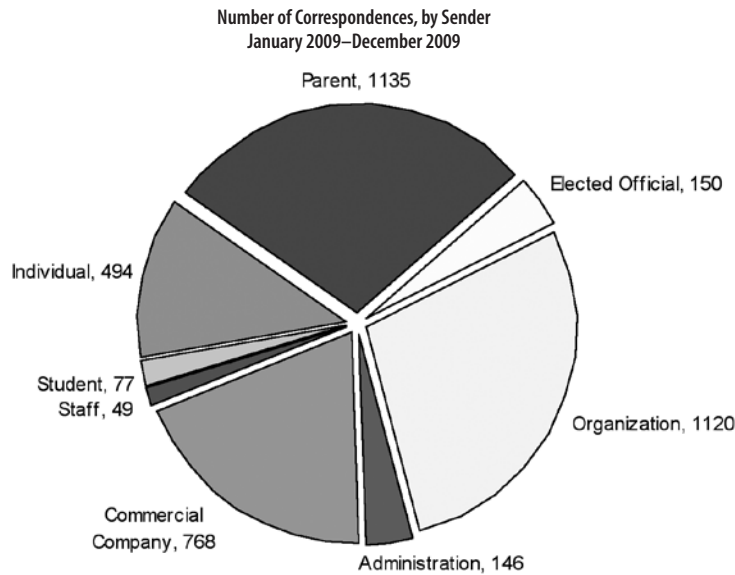
Mr. Hwang, a senior at Thomas S. Wootton High School, is the 32nd Student Member of the Board of Education. He is a member of the Communications and Public Engagement and Policy committees.



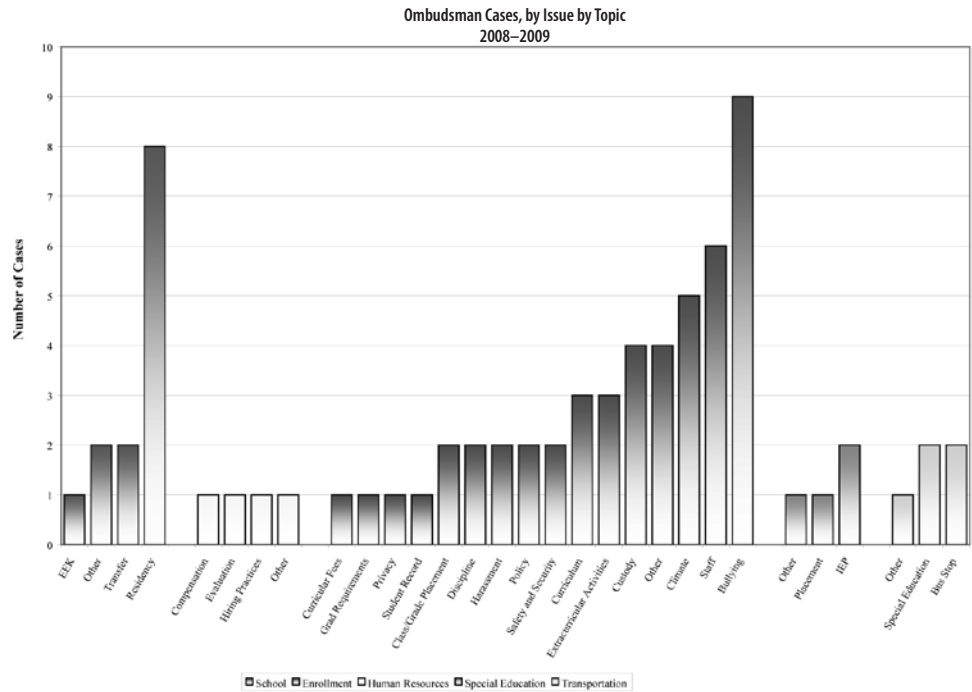
schools for improvement when they do not achieve Adequate Yearly Progress on state assessments.

- **Heard a presentation on MyMCPS**, a Web-based system that consolidates a range of data systems into a comprehensive portal that provides one-stop access to a range of pertinent information. MyMCPS simplifies staff access to student performance data; provides a structure for online curriculum and multimedia resources; and enables staff to share learning resources, successful practices, and strategies.
- **Discussed ongoing efforts to increase enrollment and improve performance of all students in advanced-level courses, graduation rates, and progress made during the 2008–2009 school year** to help eliminate the disproportionate suspension rates of African American, Hispanic, and special education students. The Board reviewed the range of strategies and interventions that MCPS uses to engage students so they are not at risk of dropping out. As a result, the Board unanimously adopted a motion to advocate for a change in state law to raise the compulsory school attendance age from 16 years old. Although this is not the only solution to the issue of why students drop out of school, the Board believes that raising the compulsory school attendance age from 16 is an important incentive for our students to stay in school.
- **Discussed a report on MCPS career- and life-readiness programs prepared by the Office of Legislative Oversight.** Areas included in the report were Career and Technology Education, transition services for students with disabilities, Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement, and career-counseling services.
- **Adjudicated 74 appeals.** Thirty-nine appeals were related to student suspensions, expulsions, teacher dismissals, early entrance to kindergarten, admission to highly gifted centers, tuition/residency matters, and complaints from the public; and 35 were for transfers and consortia assignments.
- **Implemented a robust process for tracking incoming public correspondence to the Board as a whole**, during the 2008–2009 school year. Additionally, in the spring, the Board office initiated a process to ensure that receipt of all correspondence is acknowledged and answers are provided in a timely manner, or that there is an indication as to when a response can be expected. The Board acted to ensure acknowledgment of all correspondence, in keeping with its commitment to encourage community input. During the past year, the Board received, in combination, nearly 4,000 letters and e-mails. These correspondences were sent by a variety of stakeholders (parents, students, staff, individuals, organizations, elected officials, administration, and commercial companies) and fell within 11 broad categories (Board of Education, Budget, Current Events, Enrollment, Facilities, Gifted and Talented, Human Resources, Policy, Schools, Special Education, Transportation, and Other). Of the approximately 1,000 correspondences received from parents, students, staff, and individuals, 535 were sent a response.





- **Handled an average of six complaints per month to the ombudsman**, which were received through telephone calls, written correspondence, and walk-in visits, with a total of 74 complaints for the 2008–2009 school year. A majority of these ombudsman issues involved residency compliance, discipline, school climate, and community concerns.



- Honored 16 individuals and organizations in the county** during the Board of Education’s Thirteenth Annual Awards for Distinguished Service to Public Education ceremony, which was held on October 20, 2009. The Distinguished Service Awards recognize and show appreciation for exemplary contributions to public education and MCPS. The awardees by category were as follows:

Community Individual

Officer Marcus Dixon
Emily McDonell

Community Group

Admissions and Enrollment
of Montgomery College
Junior Achievement
of the National Capital Area
Montgomery County Students
Construction Trades Foundation, Inc.

Business

Deloitte
United Communications Group

MCPS Staff

Karen Crawford
Susan Freiman
Daric Jackson
Susan Marks
Linda Wanner
Bernard Warfield

School Service Volunteer

John Burley
Mark Freedman

Individual Pioneer

John William Smith

Committees

During the past year, the Board's five committees developed work plans that were then adopted by the full Board. The work plans are aligned with the Board's work, academic priorities, and goals of the MCPS strategic plan, *Our Call to Action: Pursuit of Excellence*.

The Communications and Public Engagement Committee implemented a new recognition process for students' academic and extracurricular achievements and presentation of proclamations at events. Serving as the ad hoc committee for the Distinguished Service Awards, the committee reviewed the nominations for the annual awards and recommended the award recipients to the Board. The committee also reviewed the engagement of parent groups, the MCPS Parent Advisory Council, and the Department of Family and Community Partnerships. The committee also is exploring the development of a Board blog, a new Parent Academy Seminar, and participating in the MCPS "Drop-in Coffee" events. For 2009, the members of the Communications and Public Engagement Committee were Dr. Judith Docca (chair), Ms. Quratul-Ann Malik (until her term expired on June 30, 2009), Ms. Nancy Navarro (until her resignation on June 1, 2009), Mrs. Patricia O'Neill, and Mr. Michael Durso (when his committee term began on July 14, 2009).

The Fiscal Management Committee continued its review of the Independent Activity Funds (IAF) and collaborated with the Policy Committee on the review of course-related fees. The committee also received briefings about programs and initiatives aimed at increasing cost savings and efficiencies. Other issues that the committee worked on included monitoring of recommendations made by the Office of Legislative Audits; updates on operating budget issues, including Maintenance of Effort, MCPS Employees' Retirement and Pension System, and Other Post Employment Benefits Plan Trust; Financial Management System Update; the report on MCPS actuarial valuation; and 403(b) website-regulations and common remitter. For 2009, the members of the Fiscal Management Committee were Mr. Christopher Barclay (chair), Mr. Philip Kauffman, and Mrs. Patricia O'Neill.

The Policy Committee recommended final action on several policies, including Policy AEB, *Strategic Planning for Continuous Improvement*; Policy GIG, *Funding Retirement/Pension System*; and Policy GIH, *Funding Other Postemployment Benefits*. In addition, the committee recommended tentative action on the following policies: Policy ECK, *Use of Smith Center for Non-MCPS Groups*; Policy GFC, *Reassignment of Personnel After 25 Years of Service or Age 50*; Policy EID, *Tax-Deferred Annuity Program*; Policy GIJ, *Operating Fund Investments*; and Policy JHF, *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation*. The committee also rescinded several policies, including Policy CFA, *Site-Based Participatory Management*; Policy DBA, *Budget Preparation and Procedures*; Policy GMB, *Internship Program in School Administration*; and Policy GFA, *Establishment of Permanent and Conditional Positions*. The committee, in collaboration with staff, reviewed and evaluated the implementation of Board of Education Policy JPG, *Wellness: Physical and Nutritional Health*, to determine if the Board's desired outcomes have been achieved. The policy was evaluated using seven criteria and recommendations were made based on the evaluation findings. For 2009, the members were Mrs. Patricia O'Neill (chair), Mr. Christopher



Barclay, Ms. Shirley Brandman, Ms. Quratul-Ann Malik (until her term expired on June 30, 2009), and Mr. Timothy Hwang (when his term began July 1, 2009).

The Special Populations Committee is charged specifically with reviewing issues and instructional programs designed to meet the needs of special populations that require special education services, gifted and talented instruction, alternative programs, ESOL services, and multilingual supports. The committee received updates and reviewed data on both the transition of students from secondary learning centers to their home schools and work-group recommendations to eliminate the disproportionate identification of students with disabilities based on race and ethnicity. The Special Education Continuous Improvement Team presented preliminary recommendations regarding special education students transitioning from school to the community. The committee also was briefed on the array of services for both limited English proficient students and those requiring an alternative program. For 2009, the members of the committee were Ms. Shirley Brandman (chair), Mr. Philip Kauffman, and Ms. Laura Berthiaume.

The Strategic Planning Committee worked with MCPS staff to develop effective approaches to strategic planning for the school system's instructional and support functions. The committee received updates on progress toward reducing the disproportionate suspension rate among minority students, the reformulated graduation rate and implications for making Annual Yearly Progress, and implementation of High School Plus. In addition, the committee was provided with the results of a principal survey and reviewed the school system's strategic plan before adoption by the full Board. For 2009, the members were Dr. Judith Docca (chair), Ms. Laura Berthiaume, Ms. Nancy Navarro (until her resignation on June 1, 2009), and Mr. Michael Durso (when his committee term began on July 14, 2009).

Community Forums

The Board of Education held two community forums on the strategic plan and the operating budget on September 17 and October 15, 2009, at Quince Orchard High School and John F. Kennedy High School, respectively. The speakers were asked to offer testimony based on the question: "During difficult economic times, what priorities in



the Montgomery County Public Schools strategic plan should we focus on for the 2010–2011 school year to improve achievement for all students?” Foreign language interpreters were available in Chinese, French, Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Sign language interpretation was available upon request. A total of 54 community leaders and individuals signed up to speak before the Board; 18 on September 17, and 36 on October 15. There was a total of 140 attendees at both forums. In reviewing the testimonies, 10 themes were identified and they are summarized as follows:

After-school Activities

- Invest in after-school clubs for fun learning activities.
- Continue funding youth development programs for at-risk youth.
- Sensitize principals about the worth of after-school programs.
- Ensure that activity providers have access to school-related data for schools they serve.

Building Capacity

- Organize/optimize land and other resources to build additional school capacity.
- Modernize Paint Branch, Gaithersburg, Wheaton, and Seneca Valley high schools to improve morale and make learning attractive.

Class Size and Groupings

- Maintain small class sizes.
- Assess the needs of each individual student.
- Address oversized classes in overutilized schools.
- Maintain discrete grade-level classes by reducing or eliminating combination classes.
- Regroup students for homogeneous reading and writing for more focused instructional time.

Curriculum and Instructional Programming

- Phase in the Seven Keys criteria as the new standard for an on-grade-level curriculum; ensure that the Seven Keys is a realistic set of goals for students.
- Reassess speed and sustainability of curriculum reforms.
- Focus on education in the early years; provide early intervention—focus funding on Head Start and Pre-K (Rolling Terrace ES).
- Provide less online teaching; rely more on textbooks.
- Make financial literacy a priority.
- Invest in fine arts and physical education.
- Provide writing instruction.
- Teach a second language and music at an earlier age.
- Provide more full language immersion.

Communications and Parent Involvement

- Ensure that families with limited English skills/computer access stay involved with their students’ academic progress; find creative ways for all parents to monitor their students’ progress.
- Encourage Asian American parent involvement. Provide more ESOL parent community coordinators.



- Provide resources and staff for effective communication with non-English-speaking families.
- Continue to fund ESOL services.

Gifted and Talented (GT) and Special Programs

- Fund programs that help to provide students with enrichment opportunities.
- Provide challenging material for our highly able students.
- Maintain funding for the Blair magnet program.
- Provide competitive programs for highly able students in elementary school, middle school, and high school; changing the GT program is of concern—fund the GT program.
- Provide support for the College Institute Program at Gaithersburg High School.
- Continue funding the Loiederman Middle School programs.
- Maintain the high school academies in the Downcounty Consortium.
- Provide enhanced academic programs in middle schools.

Ideas for Savings

- Share personnel vacancies among cluster elementary schools (e.g., when one school ends up with a .2 intervention vacancy and another school ends up with a .2 focus vacancy, and so on, they can pool those vacancies and share the position).
- Eliminate global screening.
- Create some innovative partnerships with other county departments and share resources.

Safety and Security

- Secure school buildings to eliminate gang recruitment and provide safety for the children; improve safety at recess and limit building access.
- Update and modernize the schools to improve upon safety and security features.
- Install a Visitor Management System in all our schools.
- Continue initiative to reduce or eliminate relocatable classrooms.
- Install security cameras at Strawberry Knolls Elementary School.
- Support the Wellness Center at Northwood High School.
- Fund initiatives on anti-bullying.

Special Needs and Alternative Programs

- Continue to fund hours-based staffing; student needs are being addressed with this type of staffing.
- Count special education students in general education classes in order to provide appropriate staffing and services to all students.
- Provide transition support teachers to assist with planning and transition to higher education and to adult service providers.
- Provide training for paraeducators.
- Fund adequate staff development.
- Implement Universal Design for Learning (UDL).



Staffing Support and Development

- Provide adequate and motivated staff, staff training, and support for curriculum initiatives.
- Implement a new staffing model that is sensitive to the student population in large elementary schools. Provide more resources for large elementary schools.
- Provide a math content coach in every middle school.
- Increase teacher capacity by providing more effective techniques and tools to help their teaching.
- Provide staffing and staff release periods to help with building teacher capacity.



Support for At-risk Students

- Provide strong support network in high schools to catch failing kids; explore alternative high school—one that recognizes the challenges our students face; revise staffing to reflect educational load and support needed for at-risk students; provide academic interventions/support staff.
- Meet the needs of the Asian American and Pacific Islander population of kids who are not doing well academically.
- Research and address the cause of the decline in graduation rates.
- Form productive partnerships with other county agencies to better support students.

Videos and electronic copies of the testimony are available on the Board's website at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/community/forums.



Montgomery County Board of Education Advisory Committees

Ethics Panel

Appointments to the Board's Ethics Panel are for three years, and applicants must be Montgomery County residents.

Among the panel's responsibilities are the following:

1. Interpret the Board's Ethics Policy.
2. Conduct a hearing on any complaint filed regarding an alleged violation.
3. Approve financial disclosure forms.
4. Direct implementation of an educational program to inform school system employees and the public about the policy.

Family Life and Human Development Advisory Committee

This 15-member committee works to review draft revisions or additions to the curriculum on family life and human development developed by the educators and the materials of instruction evaluated by education staff and provide its comments and recommendations on the curriculum and on the instructional materials to the superintendent and, through the superintendent, to the Board of Education, in a final report.

Collaboration Board for Career and Technology Education

This 13-member committee advises the Board of Education and the Board of Trustees of Montgomery College on—

1. The distribution of career and technical education funds;
2. County career and technical education program accountability reports;
3. County job needs; and
4. The adequacy of career and technology education programs.

Special Education Continuous Improvement Advisory Committee

This committee, composed of between 15 and 20 members, is charged with reviewing issues and instructional programs designed to meet the needs of students who require special education services.

Committees

Board Officers and Members

Mrs. Patricia O’Neill
President

Mr. Christopher S. Barclay
Vice President

Ms. Laura V. Berthiaume
Member

Ms. Shirley Brandman
Member

Dr. Judith Docca
Member

Mr. Michael Durso
Member

Mr. Philip Kauffman
Member

Mr. Timothy Hwang
Student Member

Dr. Jerry D. Weast
Secretary & Treasurer

Board of Education Staff

Mr. Ikhide Roland Ikheloa
Chief of Staff–Ombudsman

Ms. Suzann M. King
Staff Assistant

Ms. Laura Steinberg
Staff Assistant

Mrs. Kathy Yorro
Administrative Services Manager

Mrs. Glenda Rose
Administrative Secretary

Ms. Becky Gibson
Fiscal Assistant

Ms. Martha Sequeira
Administrative Secretary

Legal Counsel



Communications and Public Engagement

Dr. Judith Docca, *Chair*

Ms. Shirley Brandman Mr. Michael Durso Mr. Timothy Hwang
Staff: Ms. Suzann M. King and Ms. Martha Sequeira

Role: Responsible for enhancing the Board’s use of external and internal mechanisms of communications, Board discussions and presentations at the Board table during business meetings, opportunities to gather perceptions and viewpoints from diverse segments of the community and staff, and other means to promote good communications and public engagement between the Board and its stakeholders.

Fiscal Management

Mr. Christopher Barclay, *Chair*

Mr. Michael Durso Mr. Philip Kauffman
Staff: Ms. Laura Steinberg and Ms. Becky Gibson

Role: Responsible for reviewing issues pertaining to the management and audit of Montgomery County Public Schools’ fiscal, capital, and human resources, including the Board’s operating budget, the Capital Improvement Program, staffing plans, and allocations.

Policy

Ms. Shirley Brandman, *Chair*

Mr. Christopher Barclay Mrs. Patricia O’Neill Mr. Timothy Hwang
Staff: Ms. Suzann M. King and Mrs. Glenda Rose

Role: Responsible for working with superintendent and staff to develop draft policy, presenting draft policy to the full Board, and making recommendations regarding policy.

Special Populations

Ms. Shirley Brandman, *Chair*

Ms. Laura Berthiaume Mr. Philip Kauffman
Staff: Ms. Laura Steinberg and Mrs. Glenda Rose

Role: Responsible for reviewing issues and instructional programs designed to meet the needs of special populations that require special education services, gifted and talented instruction, alternative programs, ESOL services, and multilingual support.

Strategic Planning

Dr. Judith Docca, *Chair*

Mr. Michael Durso Mrs. Patricia O’Neill
Staff: Ms. Laura Steinberg and Mrs. Kathy Yorro

Role: Responsible for providing a forum to consider the long-range direction of the school system, evaluating approaches to long-range planning, and making strategic planning recommendations to the Board.



2009 Board of Education Members

Back Row, left to right:

Timothy Hwang—*Student Member*, Michael Durso,
Dr. Jerry Weast—*Superintendent of Schools*,
Philip Kauffman, Laura Berthiaume

Front Row, left to right:

Judith Docca, Shirley Brandman,
Patricia O'Neill, Christopher Barclay

Retired Board Members



Nancy Navarro

2006–2009 Board Member
District 5



Quratul-Ann Malik

2008–2009 Student Member

Board of Education January–June 2010 Meeting Calendar

DATE	TIME	EVENT
Monday, January 11	1:00 p.m.	Committee on Special Populations
Tuesday, January 12	9:00 a.m.	Closed Session
	10:00 a.m.	All-day Business Meeting
Wednesday, January 13	7:00 p.m.	Operating Budget Hearing
Wednesday, January 20	7:00 p.m.	Operating Budget Hearing
Friday, January 22	10:00 a.m.	Fiscal Management Committee
Tuesday, January 26	2:30 p.m.	Policy Committee
Wednesday, January 27	6:30 p.m.	Operating Budget Work Session
Thursday, January 28	6:30 p.m.	Operating Budget Work Session
Wednesday, February 17	8:30 a.m.	Closed Session
	10:00 a.m.	All-day Business Meeting, Adoption of Proposed Operating Budget
Monday, February 22	5:30 p.m.	Closed Session
	6:30 p.m.	Evening Business Meeting, Boundaries Alternatives Work Session
Wednesday, February 24	7:00 p.m.	Cluster Meeting (Walter Johnson)
Wednesday, March 3	7:00 p.m.	Facilities and Boundaries Hearing
Tuesday, March 9	9:00 a.m.	Closed Session
	10:00 a.m.	All-day Business Meeting, Facilities Decisions
Thursday, March 11	2:30 p.m.	Communications and Public Engagement Committee
	7:00 p.m.	Cluster Meeting (Whitman)
Tuesday, March 16	2:30 p.m.	Policy Committee
Thursday, March 18	7:00 p.m.	Cluster Meeting (Richard Montgomery)
Monday, March 22	5:30 p.m.	Closed Session
	6:00 p.m.	Evening Business Meeting
Wednesday, March 24	1:00 p.m.	Strategic Planning Committee
Thursday, March 25	7:00 p.m.	Cluster Meeting (Bethesda–Chevy Chase)
Thursday, April 8	6:00 p.m.	Meeting with Montgomery College
	9:00 a.m.	Closed Session
Thursday, April 15	10:00 a.m.	All-day Business Meeting
	10:00 a.m.	Fiscal Management Committee
Monday, April 19	10:00 a.m.	Fiscal Management Committee
Tuesday, April 20	7:00 p.m.	Cluster Meeting (Clarksburg)
Thursday, April 22	7:00 p.m.	Cluster Meeting (Watkins Mill)
Monday, April 26	5:30 p.m.	Closed Session
	6:00 p.m.	Evening Business Meeting
Wednesday, April 28	10:00 a.m.	Strategic Planning Committee
Wednesday, May 5	7:00 p.m.	Meeting with RICA
Monday, May 10	1:00 p.m.	Committee on Special Populations
Tuesday, May 11	9:00 a.m.	Closed Session
	10:00 a.m.	All-day Business Meeting
Monday, May 24	5:30 p.m.	Closed Session
	6:00 p.m.	Evening Business Meeting
Wednesday, May 26	1:00 p.m.	Strategic Planning Committee
Tuesday, June 8	9:00 a.m.	Closed Session
	10:00 a.m.	All-day Business Meeting
Thursday, June 10	5:00 p.m.	Ceremony
Monday, June 28	5:30 p.m.	Closed Session
	6:00 p.m.	Evening Business Meeting

Note: This is the meeting schedule at the time of publication. Webcasts and agendas for the Board’s business meetings are available online at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/boe. Please check the website for additional meetings or call the Board of Education Office at 301-279-3617.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS AT A GLANCE

Our students

- Demographics (2008–09)
 - 38.1% White
 - 23.2% African American
 - 22.7% Hispanic
 - 15.6% Asian American
 - 0.3% Native American
- Enrollment (2008–09)
 - Pre–K (including Head Start): 3,416
 - Elementary (K–5): 62,161
 - Middle (6–8): 30,733
 - High (9–12): 44,580
 - Special schools/alternative programs: 887
- Services
 - 12.5% participate in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
 - 11.2% receive special education services
 - 29.2% participate in Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS)
 - 39.4% have ever received FARMS
- Attendance
 - Grades 1–5 : 95.6%
 - Grades 6–8: 95.5%
 - Grades 9–12: 94.9%
 - Dropout rate: 2.72%
- Performance
 - 87.4% graduation rate
 - 64.4% AP participation rate
 - 1615 average combined SAT score
 - 126 National Merit Scholars
 - 34 National Blue Ribbon Schools
 - \$185 million in Scholarships, Class of 2009

Our school system

- 141,777 students
- Largest school system in Maryland
- About one of every seven county residents is a public school student
- 16th largest school system in the United States
- Students from 164 countries speaking 134 languages
- 12.85 million school lunches served
- More than 96,000 students transported on 1,272 buses
- 200 schools
 - 131 elementary schools
 - 38 middle schools
 - 25 high schools
 - 1 career and technology center
 - 5 special schools

Our employees

- 22,026 employees
- 11,503 teachers
- 83.9% of teachers have a master's degree or equivalent

Transportation and meals

- 1,272 buses transport 96,000 students
- 13.1 million meals served

System resources

- \$2.2 billion FY 2009 Operating Budget
- Funding sources
 - Montgomery County: 71.5%
 - State education aid: 20%
 - Federal government grants: 5.3%
 - Enterprise funds: 2.5%
 - Fees, other sources: 0.6%
 - Special revenue fund: 0.1%
- Expenditures by category
 - Instruction: 79.3%
 - School support: 15.3%
 - Systemwide support: 2.5%
 - Food services/other: 2.7%
- \$264.5 million FY 2010 Capital Budget
- \$1.271 billion six-year Capital Improvements Program (FY 2009–2014)



Rockville, Maryland

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