

APPROVED  
41-2012

Rockville, Maryland  
December 6, 2012

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in special session at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on December 6, 2012, at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Ms. Shirley Brandman, President  
in the Chair  
Mr. Christopher Barclay  
Dr. Judy Docca  
Mr. Michael Durso  
Mr. Philip Kauffman  
Mr. John Mannes  
Mrs. Patricia O'Neill  
Ms. Rebecca Smondrowski  
Dr. Joshua Starr, Secretary/Treasurer

Absent: None

The Board of Education held its annual meeting with the Montgomery County Region of the Maryland Association of Student Councils, the Montgomery County Junior Council/Montgomery County Region, and the representatives of Student Government Associations.

The format for this year was a round-table discussion with student leaders, school administration, and the Board of Education. Several topics were brought up by students, and the Board and staff commented, offered suggestions, and asked for follow-up.

The most popular questions centered on the following topics:

- 1. Technology:** Students were interested in updating technology, internet access, wireless, Curriculum 2.0 and computers, promethean boards, MCPS technology available to student's homes, software and hardware updates in schools, and a centralized system. The Board of Education and staff offered the following responses at the meeting. The County Council has recently approved a request for more Promethean boards in the classroom and all school will be wireless. With this requested granted, the school system can plan for the next steps in technology in the schools. Curriculum 2.0 and the Common Core Standards will necessitate more computers in the schools for testing. As the cost of computers come down, students will start to be given more access to technology, and the system is planning for more interaction between home and the school through technology. The system refreshes computers every four years since software requires more powerful computers. The plans of the system are to put more computers in the classroom

since there will be more assessments online.

- 2. Curriculum 2.0:** Students noted that Curriculum 2.0 is a new initiative that will affect elementary school students in the next two years, how will it change/improve current MCPS education quality? In response, the curriculum is driven by the Common Core State Standards implementing a curriculum with the same standards and equal expectation throughout the school system, such as mathematics and social studies. This curriculum has been used in Grades K – 3. This curriculum will continue to be implemented and the new initiative will affect elementary school students that will change and improve current MCPS instruction. Current curriculum has not been focused on goals and targets for the development of writers, Curriculum 2.0 are really interdisciplinary, and gets to “how we learn what we learn”. The curriculum communicates what students have learned, not necessarily the notion of creative writing, since grammar comes before poetry and expository writing. The curriculum links to other subjects, i.e., stressing communication in science, thinking logically/critically in reviewing literature. At the elementary school level, the curriculum builds natural connection of subjects through hands-on activities. Plus, assessments are done in a more authentic way, i.e., deviation from standardized testing.
- 3. Bell Times:** The students wanted to know if there will be an advisory committee to look into changing school starting times? The discussion that followed covered the following points: (a) the school start time petition was presented to the Board; (b) the Board did look at the issue; (c) previous reports have been uploaded onto the website; (d) board members are committed to look at the reports again; (e) though later school start times may cause other problems, such as busing and energy usage. When asked, the students thought (a) it takes a long time for students to wake up; however, starting early gives time for extracurricular activities; (b) if school started later, students may stay up later; (c) changing start times may not have much of an effect; and (d) block scheduling could be a solution to help students with their tight schedules.
- 4. AP Classes:** Students wanted to know why there is such a big push for AP classes, and why is it so hard to get out? The response included that (a) the system does not like to see a reduction in rigor and try to encourage students to persevere and build skills for life and college; (b) the system looks at school records to see whether or not students will be successful or not and taking AP classes will make it easier for students in college; (c) studies show that the more AP classes the higher student grades; and (d) more students complain about work load but most of it doesn't fall on AP classes since even normal classes have work load.
- 5. Loss of Credit/Attendance:** Students noted that in the handbook, students cannot be punished for attendance related things by receiving bad grades. When the Board eradicated Loss of Credit policy, a lot of students stopped attending. There should

be something to enforce students' attendance. A lot of students thought that they didn't have to attend and could just get the grade; they took advantage of that. How can we improve the attendance intervention policy so that it does not hinder a student's learning abilities? The answers to these concerns were that a teachers' need to understand students not just from their perspective, but they must consider the future of students as well; right now the Board mostly strives to eliminate inconsistencies as much as possible; attendance policies are needed to prevent kids just walking into classes in a carefree manner, especially in high school; there is still a lot of inconsistency out there; the Board will be working with principals to eliminate confusion and clarify what expectations are; a key is to provide supports to kids who have difficulties and give assistance to students to be successful; the purpose of school is not to get grades but to learn; and, for now, the policy will not be changed.

6. **Overcrowded Classes:** Students asked what can the board do to remedy the crowding of class size, especially those in a magnet program? It is a big issue, and we need innovative ways to avoid inflicting other problems. The system officially raised classes by 1 a few years ago, but strive to maintain small classes; studies have shown that learning quality difference due to class size only occurs before 3<sup>rd</sup> grade (the mark is 17 students); the difference is the teacher. Money/budget, fiscal issues going on, the system must be selective of how to spend it. Reduce student-teacher ratio in key subjects; however, more teachers is key as opposed to redistributed classes. There could be an increase in the use portables, and students can take better care of our schools. Adding more periods, use a better schedule to increase efficiency (which has been done at Blair), a negative side is increased transportation fee
7. **Discipline:** Students wanted to know what is the Board's response to new the Maryland disciplinary standards. In response, MCPS will definitely comply with those regulations. However, the system will investigate the validity of all potential cases via Study Circles, MCEA, and Alternative Educational Services to make sure no undue burden is inflicted upon anyone.

Other topics:

- Use of cell phones
- Safety and security
- Bus depot at Shady Grove
- Counselors
- Advance classes in middle school
- Alcohol use on MCPS property
- Special needs students

FOLLOWUPS

1. Mr. Bowers will check to determine why MCJC does not have an advisor?
2. Dr. Starr will follow up on why don't some schools get recognized for their actions?

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

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PRESIDENT

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SECRETARY

JPS:gr