

**Deputy Superintendent of Schools
School Administration and Operations**

**Parent Advisory Committee –Year-end Meeting
Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building
Board Room
February 3, 2009 – Group Notes**

School system staff present: James E. Richmond, Superintendent of Schools, Ronald G. Cunningham, Deputy Superintendent of Schools, Judy W. Estep, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, Mr. Paul T. Balides, Assistant Superintendent for Finance, Business Administration & Technology, Mrs. Maura Cook and Mrs. Pamela Pedersen, Board Members, Ms. Dawn Schaeffer, Coordinator, Instructional Technology, and Mrs. Christine Mais, Executive Assistant to the Deputy Superintendent of Schools

Thirty parents representing 23 schools attended the mid-year meeting of the **Parent Advisory Committee** for school year **2008-09**. Mr. Cunningham opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m., by reviewing the agenda and briefly explained the opportunity for the group to respond tonight to the “What Counts” survey using some of the instructional technology used in our classrooms. First, Mr. Richmond gave an update and reviewed the procedures used when making the decision to call a delayed opening or close schools for the day due to inclement weather. He highlighted the following:

- The decision to close for inclement weather is always made by 5:00 a.m. after consulting with transportation staff, sheriff’s office and the county/state roads people.
- Last week, it did not begin to snow until well after buses were on the road (after 7 a.m.). Once rolling, we cannot leave students who may have already left their homes sitting at bus stops; the best decision at that point is to continue with school opening and close early after allowing time for the state and local roads departments to treat/clear road surfaces.
- All systems in the area received the same information predicting snow would not begin until later in the day.
- Noted the county and state did not begin to treat the roads until after 8:00 a.m., which added to the difficult conditions in the early morning hours.

The Superintendent also highlighted the following:

- Drive to Survive – sponsored by Sheriff’s office, group of students attended activity at RFK Stadium on Sunday; taught advanced driving techniques and skills to handle vehicles under difficult circumstances and driving conditions.
- Newsletter to the community – new format; expect to publish first issue in March
- Maryland ranked number one in the nation (brochures distributed); this is due to the hard work and effort of teachers and educators in the system; everyone needs to understand and appreciate this outstanding achievement; many years of hard work under the leadership of Dr. Grasmick down to the individual school level.

Budget for 2010

Mr. Balides presented the Superintendent’s Proposed Budget for the next school year. He noted reductions anticipated at the state and local level (minimum 2.5 million from the state). Error made by the state in Montgomery County’s budget (24 million) likely made up by reductions in all other counties in the state.

Highlights

- Focus on the classroom and student achievement
- Maintain core programs and progress
- Recognize national and state economic declines and the impact on education
- Maintain realistic expectations for funding
- Request funding only for mandatory costs
- Defer negotiations and salary discussions until final state and county funding levels are determined
- State funding will depend on final legislative budget approval and adjustments for enrollment and wealth calculations (May 2009)

Important Dates

- County Commissioners' public hearing – April 29 (*now rescheduled to May*)
- Board adopts final budget – June

Future Budget Considerations

- Impact of the state and local economy on education
- Impact of budget reductions made in prior years and the ability to make additional cuts
- Impact of funding reductions on staffing, class size and the ability to continue programs and services
- Implications of no enhancements or new program initiatives on accountability
- Loss of funding related to federal and state restricted programs and the ability to continue
- Ability to address cost-of-living increases and employee pension plans

Mr. Cunningham noted that most everyone is feeling the affects of the tightening economy. Anyone aware of a family in need can share information confidentially with the principal of their school. Principal can direct staff services and accommodate those families to the extent possible through system resources.

Instructional Programs Update

Mrs. Estep explained the new initiative "Cluster Road Shows" scheduled at each high school this spring. The cluster schools for each high school include the schools that "feed into" each of the high schools in the school attendance zones around the county. The purpose of the "cluster road shows" is to provide parents information on what is available at each level as their children progress through the system and particularly what to expect as students enter high school.

The cluster groupings are as follows:

- Lackey: Gale-Bailey, Indian Head, Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy, J. C. Parks, Henson, and Gen. Smallwood
- La Plata: Dr. Higdon, Matula, Mitchell, Somers, Piccowaxen
- McDonough: Dr. Brown, Eva Turner, Dr. Craik, Stoddert
- North Point: Diggs, Middleton, Wade and Davis
- Stone: Dr. Mudd, Malcolm, Martin, Ryon, Neal, Hanson
- Westlake: Barnhart, Berry, Jenifer, Mattawoman

"What Counts" – Survey

Mrs. Maura Cook and Mrs. Pamela Pedersen, Board Members
Ms. Dawn Schaeffer, Coordinator, Instructional Technology

Mrs. Cook and Mrs. Pedersen presented background information on the "What Counts" survey. The survey was originally administered through a public forum with invited guests representing a cross-section of citizens in Charles County including the business community, parents and others. The group was given an opportunity to respond to the survey questions using current instructional technology. Each individual was given a responder to "key" their individual response and the group responses were then shared using instructional technology. Demonstration included bar and line graphs; response rates and other various methods of sharing group responses.

Mrs. Cook and Mrs. Pedersen fielded several questions from the group regarding the purpose of this survey and how the Board planned to use the results. They responded the results could assist Board members in supporting the Superintendent's budget to the county commissioners. It can also provide direction in setting goals and priorities for the school system and help educate citizens about the school system. It also shows what we value about public education in Charles County and gives everyone a voice in determining the direction of education in the future.

- *Note: The corrected listing of top ten items and remaining items is attached (note: one item ranked in the top ten was missing from the listing distributed at the meeting). Parents were sent the listing of remaining items, Signs of School Quality Checklist, to rank, comment and return if interested.*

Closing Remarks – Mr. Cunningham

Mr. Cunningham gave an update on several recent incidents of graffiti and weapons at several schools. He assured parents the system and the Sheriff's office work together in the investigation and resolution of all incidents involving criminal activity of any kind occurring in schools. Anyone found involved with racist graffiti is not just charged with vandalism, the charges are much more severe and fall into the category of a hate crime. Students found in possession of weapons or using another implement as a weapon face the full consequences of the law and system policies. He reaffirmed Superintendent Richmond and the Board's top priority to provide for the safety and security of all students, staff and visitors on school system grounds and in all buildings. He asked parents to talk to their children about the importance of obeying school rules and becoming responsible citizens as they move through the educational system.

Mr. Cunningham thanked everyone for coming and reminded all to use the index cards to leave questions for follow-up or suggest topics for future meetings.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.



The following schools were without representation at this meeting: Berry, Dr. Brown, Dr. Craik, Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy, Dr. Mudd, Parks, Turner, Davis, Gen. Smallwood, and Stone.

All school representatives, alternates, and principals receive a copy of the notes from these meetings. If a representative from one of the above schools did attend this meeting, please contact Chris Mais at 301-934-7320 to make the correction.

Reminder: if the school representative cannot attend the PAC meeting, the principal or designee should contact the school alternate. The person listed as the school representative is sent reminder notices; however, alternate representatives are welcome to attend. The parent handbook/calendar lists Parent Advisory Committee meeting dates for the school year.

Handouts:

Next Meeting:

Spring/Year End Meeting: Tuesday, April 28, 2009, 7:00 p.m.

Location for PAC meetings: Starkey Administration Building - Board Room

Contact Information:

Deputy Superintendent: 301-934-7320/Email: rcunningham@ccboe.com

- School Administration and Operations – Mrs. Dorsey or Mr. Cornette (Parent Concerns/School Issues): 301-934-7364
- Email: pdorsey@ccboe.com; jcornette@ccboe.com

Division of Instruction: 301-934-7369 – jestep@ccboe.com

Testing, Research and Evaluation: 301-934-7312 – ceichel@ccboe.com

Communications: 301-934-7220 – komalley@ccboe.com

Charles County Public Schools: www.ccboe.com

This site provides links to every public school in the county, central office administration, the school year calendar of activities, and other resources in the county and state. Emergency closing information is found on page 10 of the parent/handbook calendar, also on the website. Emergency closings and other announcements are also made via the 24 hour information line, 301-934-7410 or 301-870-3814.

Maryland State Department of Education: www.msde.state.md.us

(This site provides statewide information and links to school, system, and state report card information, parent council, and other resources.)

WHAT COUNTS - SIGNS OF SCHOOL QUALITY CHECKLIST
Charles County Public Schools

Signs of School Quality	Rationale
Availability of technology	
Awards in Math and Science	
Clean, well-maintained school facilities	
Community service/citizenship	
Emphasis on citizenship	
Happy children who like school	
High attendance rates	
High graduation and attendance rates	
High graduation rates	
Life long learners	
Low teacher turnover	
Mentoring and tutoring programs for students	
Physical fitness program	
Special programs for gifted students	
Strong principals	
Teacher/Parent/Student communication	
Teachers ability to communicate with parents	
Teachers who know their subject	
Wide range of services offered to parents and students (special education, gifted, etc.)	

WHAT COUNTS - SIGNS OF SCHOOL QUALITY CHECKLIST
Charles County – Summary

Select the top eight signs of school quality from the ten items listed.

Signs of School Quality	Rank in Priority Order 1 – 8 (high) - (low)	Rationale
Community and business involvement in schools		
Extracurricular activities		
High parental involvement		
Small class size		
Staff (teachers, principals, etc.) who believe all students can learn		
Teachers who are well-trained and knowledgeable about how to teach effectively		
Teachers who care about students		
Well-disciplined classrooms		
Wide range of “arts” (music, art, etc) programs in schools		
Wide range of academic programs		
Wide range of services offered to parents and students (special education, gifted, etc.)		