

Minutes
SW Education Advisory Meeting
February 18, 2004

Council Attendees: Sharon Loving, Dr. Richard Milbourne, Sam Macer, Lisa Orens (chair), Amanda Smith

Others in attendance: Marsha Brett (Winfield AP), Mike Kennedy (BOE), Michele D Manigault (Catonsville Times), Bonita Faye Vincent, Jean Paynter (Office of Magnet Programs)

Tour begun at 7:26 pm.

Magnet Presentation begun at 7:45 pm.

Magnet Programs have been in place 10 years. There are currently 27 in elementary, middle and high schools across Baltimore County. There are 9 programs available in the SW: The Southwest Academy and Sudbrook (in the NW but serving SW) are MS programs; Carver Center for Arts & Technology (in Central but serving SW), Lansdowne HS Academy of Finance, Milford Mill International Baccalaureate & Technical Academy, Western School of Technology and Environmental Studies, and Woodlawn HS Center for Pre-Engineering and Student Conducted Research are HS programs; Church Lane Elementary Technology School and Wellwood International School offer ES programs but neither is in the SW.

Magnet programs should serve students with a range of ability to ensure diversity. Counseling and the need for college education imply that Vocational Technology is no longer adequate and therefore is no longer available; students must achieve in math and reading to be successful. The number of applicants is increasing while the number of available seats is the same.

This past year, there have been few changes to the program and process:

- 1 – The brochure was changed to place a focus on the programs rather than the school.
- 2 – The application process was centralized for the MS and HS programs that previously were handled solely by the school.
 - A – This was the first recommendation from a major study of the magnet program in BC with the intended goal of making the application process more fair, open, and objective.
 - B – Criteria was reviewed and clearly defined for MS process.
 - 1 – Performance factors and grades are evaluated for a possible 40 points; all applicants' start at 40 and subtractions are made.
 - 2 – Individual schools determine a required magnet evaluation for a possible 50 points.
 - 3 – Applicants must have at least 70 point total for qualification; if there are then more qualified applicants than seats, a random lottery is held to determine final acceptance. In this process, there is no advantage for students in a GT program.
- 3 – BCPS is working on a Magnet Schools of America grant that, if awarded, would add Lansdowne MS and HS in SW (as well as Deep Creek MS and Chesapeake HS in the Southeast area) as magnet programs for 2005-2006 school year. The 3-year renewable grant carries a requirement to prove a diverse environment and would therefore create programs at these schools that do not have entrance criteria. It would help the proposal if a letter of support could be provided from the council (Jean and Lisa will discuss this detail).

Note: While it was discussed that since Lansdowne MS is not currently an available choice due to its current performance status, concern was expressed that adding a magnet program at Lansdowne MS in the event this proposal is granted to BC would remove that school as an option from parents and students slated for Woodlawn MS, currently a reconstititional/eligible school. Under No Child Left Behind, these students will have an option to choose another BC school due to current performance status at Woodlawn MS and magnet schools are not available choices. Adding another school to the magnet list (and one without entrance criteria) would give students more selection for magnet programs if they were to select that application option. The current focus in BC is on schools in need.

Business meeting called to order at 9:03 pm by Lisa Orens.

Attendees: Marsha Brett, Mike Kennedy, Sharon Loving, Dr. Richard Milbourne, Sam Macer, Lisa Orens (chair), (Bonita) Faye Vincent

1. Old business:

- Advisory Council website is up and running. www.bcps.org/community/educational/edu_advisory_council/default.asp
- Update provided on small learning communities meeting by Sam Macer.
- Reminder from Lisa Orens that the budget is still in process and the proposed county budget is available on the BCPS website.
- Request from Lisa that all members begin thinking about officer elections for next year.
- Notified by Lisa that there is still no information from Woodlawn or Lansdowne High Schools regarding student members.
- Informed by Lisa that Anita Newkirk is serving on Calendar Committee

2. New Business:

- PTA Council meeting scheduled for 2/19/04 at Catonsville HS has been cancelled.
- Town Meeting planned for 2/19/04 at Hillcrest ES if anyone can attend.
- Alternative placement for middle school students has approximately 70 seats and some concern has been expressed about these placements perhaps not being long enough.
- A proposal is underway to use grounds at Catonsville HS for an arboretum.
- Recent incidents at several schools regarding student security and safety discussed. Sharon Loving questioned follow-up regarding lockdown drills at Woodbridge with non-locking doors.
- Lisa suggested several small meetings be held with Dr. Hairston allowing council and PTA members to have informal discussions. Questions were raised regarding how to keep groups small.
- Advisory Council officers are scheduled for 6pm dinner meeting with BOE on March 9.
- Sam challenged members to invite parents to other meetings to help get others involved.
- Sam notified the group that Professional Development would be holding a March meeting to develop a teacher course in Parent Development and that they would be looking for parents to attend to provide input.

Business meeting adjourned approximately 9:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Loving
Secretary, SW Education Advisory Council