

**MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL & MCPS SCHOOL BOARD
EDUCATION FORWARD COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, AUGUST 11, 2011
SECOND FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
MANASSAS CITY HALL**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Vice Mayor Andrew L. Harrover
Council Member Sheryl L. Bass
Council Member Mark D. Wolfe
School Board Member Arthur Bushnell
School Board Member Timothy Demeria
School Board Member Pamela Sebesky

OTHERS PRESENT: Mayor Harry J. Parrish II, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Gail Pope, City Manager Lawrence D. Hughes, School Board Member Kermit Dance, and City Clerk Andrea P. Madden.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mr. Wolfe.

Item 1 of the Agenda: Approve Minutes of March 10, 2011 Education Forward Ad Hoc Committee Meeting and April 29, 2011 Retreat.

A motion was made, seconded and carried **unanimously** to approve the March 10, 2011 and April 29, 2011 Education Forward Committee Meeting Minutes.

Item 2 of the Agenda: Preliminary Discussion Regarding School Staff Proposals Resulting from the Education Forward Committee Retreat.

Mr. Bushnell stated that the School Board has increased their FY 2012 Budget by \$200,000 in order to make immediate changes within the system. Mr. Bushnell and Dr. Pope reviewed the changes that will be in effect when the school year begins in September. Mr. Bushnell commented that the MCPS staff suggested many of the change that will be implemented in the coming school year. Those changes are as follows:

- **A Freshman Academy will be established to assist all Freshman, but particularly at-risk students.**
- **A “Best Class Period” will be established to allow more time to those students who need assistance.**
- **The MCPS will pay for A/P exams, which will be required for those students taking A/P classes and dual enrollment classes.**
- **Metz Middle School and Osbourn High School will have literacy coaches to work with teachers in the implementation of the Content Literacy Continuum [CLC]. The CLC focuses on helping secondary**

schools develop and sustain comprehensive and integrated literacy programs which impact all subject areas.

- **Osborn teachers in the four core areas will have common planning times.**

Mr. Bushnell reviewed the other changes that have been suggested, but are more mid- to long-term goals. Those include the following:

- **A coordinated PR Plan with the City (mid-term)**
- **Extended school day and year (mid-term)**
- **Summer hours for certain libraries (mid-term)**
- **STEM expansion (mid-term)**

- **Private like school environment, including uniforms (long-term)**
- **Year-round school year (long-term)**
- **City-wide required Pre-K program (long-term)**
- **Rebuilding of Baldwin and other facilities (long-term)**

Mr. Bushnell and Dr. Pope both commented on the benefit of developing a PR Plan and staffing a PR professional to communicate with the media and general public. It is important to note that much of the information that has been reported is out of date and does not reflect the current situation in the schools. For example, there has been significant progress made in area of reading comprehension at the 8th grade level, which will continue to benefit students during their high school career. This news is not reported or widely known and is only one example of the many successes at our schools.

Mr. Bushnell asked City Council to direct those citizens with complaints back to the School Board for resolutions. As an elected body, the School Board answers to voters and should be given the opportunity to address any problems that arise.

Mr. Bushnell commented that the kind of directional change that is being considered will require an investment by the City and studies must be done to determine the feasibility and effectiveness of the significant proposed changes.

The members of the Education Forward Committee (EFC) made individual comments regarding the proposed changes identified earlier in the evening and the desired results of the EFC. Ms. Sebesky stated that the EFC has generated positive changes and encouraged the School Board to look at their options and consider creative solutions.

There was general discussion regarding the anticipated impact of the immediate changes and the need for a method to measure the success of the proposed changes. Dr. Pope noted that English and Algebra I are often the most challenging subjects for the incoming freshmen, but with the implementation of the Freshmen Academy and “Best Class Period,” additional support and assistance will be available for those students in

need. Dr. Pope stated that she expects to see solid academic achievement within the at-risk student population and continued progress with the K – 6 grade students.

Dr. Pope discussed the purpose of the literacy coaches and reported that schools that have utilized literacy coaches have had tremendous success and growth in their program. There is more to reading than simply reading words; the key is in one's ability to retain and comprehend the material.

Mayor Parrish made a brief statement and thanked all those involved in the process. Mayor Parrish stated that he will work with Mr. Bushnell to schedule a joint City Council and School Board meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m. by Mr. Wolfe.

Mark D. Wolfe, Chair

City Clerk

Date Approved

DRAFT