

**PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES COMMITTEE**

**NOVEMBER 14, 2024 – 3 PM via Zoom**

**In Attendance:**

Mr. Jack Pumphrey, Committee Chair

Ms. Marion Mullauer, Board Chair

Mr. Craig Ballew

Dr. Lorraine Costella

Mr. Lou Smith

Mr. Rob Hair, MSB Superintendent

Dr. Joshua Irzyk, MSB Education Director

Ms. Maureen Bisesi, MSB Residential and Related Services Director

Ms. Diane Colburn, MSB Statewide Services and Outreach Director

Ms. April Tucker, MSB Human Resources Director

Mr. Bill McCubbin, MSB Facilities and Operations Director

Ms. Valerie Johnson, MSB Executive Assistant

**Absent:**

Dr. Nancy Grasmick

Dr. Joanne Waeltermann

**Call to Order:** Mr. Jack Pumphrey called the meeting to order at 3 PM.

**Approval September 6, 2024 Minutes:** Mr. Pumphrey inquired if there were any edits, objections, or concerns regarding the minutes. Hearing none, he announced that the minutes were accepted.

**MSB Student Post Graduation/Discharge Survey:** Mr. Pumphrey and Mr. Lou Smith reviewed the work group's purpose, structure, and membership. The group held its initial meeting, and the November 5 minutes were distributed.

The work group's objectives are:

●      To gather feedback from former MSB students, contacting graduates at six months

and other former students at three months.

●      To assess graduates' progress in various life domains after leaving MSB.

The group is developing survey questions, consent forms, and methods for collecting and reporting the data.

**Construction Updates:**  Mr. Bill McCubbin provided updates on the Bledsoe Cottages dashboard, change orders, Bledsoe Building and pool demolition progress, as well as the timeline for student occupancy in the cottages.

He noted that MSB would host the IAC (Interagency Commission on School Construction) Facilities Planner quarterly meeting on November 15.

Mr. Rob Hair shared that bricks from the Bledsoe Building demolition are being collected for a memorial structure. Dates for the dedication ceremonies for the newly named buildings are still being finalized. He also reported that the Bill Ratchford Outdoor Learning Area is nearing completion, with final furnishings and equipment being ordered.

**2024 Strategic Plan Overview:** Mr. Hair will present an overview of the strategic plan at the December 6 Board meeting, outlining key priorities and goals to guide MSB's focus over the next three years.

The vision for education and programs emphasizes delivering high-quality, accessible curriculum, rigorous IEPs, successful transitions to adulthood, strong family collaboration, and an informed MSB community. He noted the post-graduation survey aligns with the transition to adulthood goal.

Key focus areas include:

●      High-quality curriculum and individualized IEPs.

●      Supporting successful transitions to adulthood.

●      Strengthening family collaboration and support.

●      Implementing a comprehensive communications plan.

**Campus Master Plan CIP (Capital Improvement Program) Update:** Mr. Hair reported that MSB has requested $64.5 million for the athletics facility and front entrance upgrades and will testify before the IAC in December to seek $22 million for FY26. Funding options are being explored through the Maryland Health and Education Facility Authority (MHEFA) to avoid using endowment funds.

**IT Modernization Project Update:** Mr. Hair commented that the IT project has been focusing on the Student Information System (SIS) selection and upgrading the entire Wi-Fi infrastructure to improve indoor and outdoor connectivity across the campus.

**Legislative Update:** Mr. Hair stated that the FY26 Pay Plan is expected to be covered by formula funding, avoiding additional state funding requests. However, the enhanced funding for this year and next remains uncertain due to delays at MSDE (Maryland State Department of Education), which has yet to finalize this year’s award.

A projected FY25 surplus of over $1 million, primarily due to unfilled vacancies, may impact the budget. Efforts are focused on filling these positions to mitigate budget ripple effects. It was advised to avoid using the term "surplus," opting for "unexpended funds" to prevent concerns about potential budget cuts.

Options for using unexpended funds include addressing other requirements or making one-time investments, such as purchasing Monarch Braille devices, rather than committing to ongoing expenses.

**Statewide Student Services:** Ms. Diane Colburn reported 206 unique student interactions and 13 new enrollments, provided an update on pending admissions, and outlined the admissions process. She noted preparations for the winter festival, Braille Challenge events, and upcoming county-requested career readiness events.

**STUDENT SERVICES:** Dr. Irzyk reported a 67.19% increase in IEP goal attainment, emphasizing the importance of staff training in writing practical goals.

Current enrollment is 205 students (110 male, 95 female; 84 Black/African American, 80 Caucasian).

The graduating class of 2025 includes 12 students (2 earning high school diplomas), with post-graduation plans ranging from college to horticulture certification and childcare programs.

Dr. Irzyk noted an increase in English Language Learner students and reported one brief restraint incident this school year, with seclusion no longer permitted by the state.

Ms. Maureen Bisesi outlined MSB’s annual parent survey process, highlighting recent surveys on family training needs, schedule changes, and strategic planning input. This fall, a Secondary Transition survey is targeting parents of students aged 14 and older to assess their knowledge and needs for transition planning, with follow-up phone calls planned to boost response rates. Mr. Pumphrey and Dr. Lorraine Costella requested copies of survey questions for needs assessment, transition, and parent satisfaction.

Dr. Irzyk commented on the new Monarch Braille devices being used by 5-6 students in classes and at home, highlighting the significant positive impact these devices are having on our students. The Committee explored acquiring additional devices with unexpended funds, with participants expressing enthusiasm for the technology's potential impact on students.

**Turnover and Vacancies Update:** Ms. April Tucker reported a 6.8% turnover rate for Q1 FY25, slightly improved from 6.9% in Q1 FY24. The current headcount is 392, with 18 vacancies, down from 22 the previous year. She outlined recruitment and retention strategies, including job fairs, social media, university partnerships, and maintaining connections with past candidates.

Mr. Pumphrey asked what portion of the 18 vacancies are traditionally hard-to-fill positions. Ms. Tucker confirmed that many are teachers, paraeducators, physical therapists, and O&M specialists. The Committee discussed using unexpended funds to create short-term positions to address staffing needs through the fiscal year.

Mr. Pumphrey requested that the agenda be reordered to prioritize program updates at the start of the meeting, and the Committee agreed.

**Adjournment:** Mr. Pumphrey adjourned the meeting at 4:30 PM.

**Action Items:**

●      Ms. Maureen Bisesi is to provide copies of the parent survey questions to the workgroup.

●      Dr. Irzyk to contact MSDE to obtain the latest parent satisfaction survey questions.

●      Ms. Diane Colburn will explore using some of the unexpended funds to purchase more Monarch Braille devices.

●      Ms. April Tucker to provide more detailed information on the reasons for vacancies and how long positions have been open.