

Citizens Advisory Committee
Report to the Board of Education
School Year 2014 – 2015

2014-15 Membership¹

Calvert

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¹Members are selected based on High School District

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INTRODUCTION

The Board of Education requested that the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) study the following three topics: Nutrition and Wellness, Closing the Achievement Gap, and Activity Buses. The members divided into three sub-committees to most effectively address these topics.

Presentations from CCPS personnel and community members were received to aid in the study of the topics. The following presentations were given to the full CAC membership:

- Nutrition and Wellness Education by Britta Sparks, Supervisor of Secondary Foreign Language, PE, Health and ESOL
- Child Nutrition Program by Valerie Parmer and Donald Knode, Child Nutrition Program Supervisor
- Achievement Gap in Public Schools by Dusty and Vicki Rhodes, community volunteers
- Analysis of Achievement Gaps for African American Students in Calvert County by Scott McComb, Director of Instruction
- Activity Buses by Kevin Hook, Supervisor of Transportation

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **NUTRITION AND WELLNESS**

The sub-committee reviewed existing policy and procedures and created revised draft documents. Copies of the draft documents are attached to this report.

Recommendations

- Use draft Nutrition Wellness policy and procedures as the basis for a review, within established CCPS guidelines for reviewing Policy and Procedures.
- Include a member of the CAC on the policy and procedure review committee

2. **CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP**

The sub-committee spent the year exploring the extent of the achievement gap within CCPS. They determined that there is evidence of an AG between the various demographic groups represented in the school system.

Recommendations

The CAC recommends continued study of the issue of closing the achievement gap to:

- Determine what motivates/influences students to take honors and AP classes and how that varies among the various demographic groups.
- Identify best practices for use by teachers and parents to support and encourage students to pursue honors and AP level courses.
- Determine the effect of the selection process of various schools on students pursuing honors and AP classes. (i.e., Are teacher recommendations required for students to pursue honors and AP classes?)

3. **ACTIVITY BUSES**

This Sub-committee explored the feasibility of providing additional school to home bus transportation for after school activities.

Background

- a. Activity buses have not been provided since 2000 or 2001. They were discontinued at that time due to a very limited ridership. The CAC was tasked

with reviewing the need/potential use of activity buses during the 2014/2015 academic year.

- b. The subgroup developed a survey questionnaire, which was distributed to all CCPS schools. consisting of the following:
 - i) Would an activity bus increase participation in after-school activities? If yes, what would be the best time?
 - ii) What days of the week would an activity bus be required? Year round or seasonally? What season?
 - iii) Estimated number of students who would use the activity bus?
- c. Information on the use of activity buses was requested from the other Maryland school districts. Thirteen school systems responded to the request.

Discussion

- a. Of the thirteen responses received from the other Maryland school districts, seven offered activity buses and six did not. In the school districts offering activity buses, five provided them only for high schools, primarily in support of athletic teams. Neither of the surrounding counties (Charles & St. Mary's) offers activity buses. Charles County has offered buses in the past, but, eliminated them for the 2014/2015 school year due to the cost.
- b. Responses were received from fourteen CCPS elementary, middle, and high schools. These responses ranged from "not recommended" to "We would love a regularly scheduled activity bus."
- c. A major benefit of activity buses expressed in many responses would be increased participation in opportunities for tutoring and other after-school activities. This was noted in responses from elementary schools and middle schools, especially those with a significant Title I enrollment. At the high school level, as students begin to obtain a driver's license, activity buses could be of some benefit to music and drama programs; however, they would most likely have little if any effect on participation in athletic programs.
- d. A major concern expressed in most responses is the geographical areas served by each school. The areas served by the middle and high schools are of such a size that one bus per school would not be able to deliver the students in a timely manner or close enough to their homes to be efficient. Concerns were expressed that some students could be on the buses for as long as two hours and then still be miles from home when dropped off. In order to reduce the travel time or

deliver the students closer to their home, additional buses would be required. In view of the limited ridership, this would not be cost effective.

- e. The use of the Calvert County Transit network was discussed; however, in view of the potential liability issues, it was not discussed further.

Recommendations

- That a pilot program be implemented at Calvert Elementary School. This school is a Title I school serving a smaller geographical area than most elementary schools.
 - The survey response from Calvert Elementary School indicated that an activity bus would allow the school to offer tutoring as well as the various after school programs to a “greater number of students. Especially many of our students that are Economically Disadvantaged...” Including more students in tutoring programs would also assist in addressing the achievement gap at this school.
 - The geographical area served by Calvert Elementary is such that one bus could be expected to deliver the students within a realistic time frame close enough to their homes to be safe and effective.
- That grant funding be explored to fund the pilot program.

ADDITIONAL PRESENTATIONS

The following Presentations, not related to our study topics, were also received:

- Status of NHS Re-construction and Electronic Access System by George Leah, Director of School Construction.
- Advanced Learning Program by Scott McComb, Director of Instruction and Joyce King, Supervisor of Primary Education
- Current Education Budget (November 2014) by Edith Hutchins, Director of Finance
- Proposed Budget (February 2015) by Superintendent Daniel Curry

PARTICIPATION

Members of the CAC participated in the following committees:

- Teacher of the Year selection committee
- Educational Support Person of the Year selection committee
- 2016-17 Calendar Committee
- Code of Conduct Review Committee

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE CAC STUDY/REVIEW

- Title 9 Issues – Equal opportunity for girls
- The Achievement Gap, see recommendations above
- Elementary Honors (gifted and talented) program – Some schools have it, some don't (at principal's discretion?)