

**Citizens Advisory Committee
Calvert County Board of Education
May 20th, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

Members Attended

Andrew Clark
Will Miller
Kris Nicely
James Arthur
Claire Hill
Alicia Abresch
Christine Schrupf
Sarah David
Greg Cooper
Felicia Sorrells
Maggie Silverman
Sherbie Corazza
Rama Latin
J.C. Hooker
Emma Ann Nowak

Board Members

Lisa Grenis
Jana Post

C.C.P.S. Staff

Karen Maxey, Administrative Assistant
Jackie Jacobs, Director of System and Instructional Performance
Cecilia Lewis, Director of Student Services
Larry Titus, Supervisor of Student Services
Dr. Susan Johnson, Chief Academic Officer

Presenters

- Jackie Jacobs, Director of System and Instructional Performance
- Cecilia Lewis, Director of Student Services
- Larry Titus, Supervisor of Student Services

Documents for the Record

- Each member of the committee was provided with a copy of the minutes from April's meeting, an agenda for the current meeting, a copy of a comprehensive packet detailing the process of purchasing and reviewing materials of instruction and library materials, as

well as a print-out of the powerpoint presentation corresponding to the library reconsideration process.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Maxey at 6:06pm, and the minutes from the previous meeting were approved. Presenters from both the Department of Instruction and the Department of Student Services were promptly introduced, with the topics of library book offerings/review process and the presence of law enforcement in school buildings being of primary focus.

Presentation

- Ms. Jacobs began a presentation on the library reconsideration process. This process was explained in three parts: 1.) informal complaint, 2.) formal request, and 3.) the appeal process. The informal complaint step is brought to the principal and the school librarian by a concerned parent. This step can be filed by persons within or affiliated with the school district, and happens within an individual schoolhouse. At the informal complaint stage, books are not removed from the library's collection, but the individual student of the concerned parent is restricted from accessing the material. At the formal request stage, a form is provided to detail the complaint and must be returned within 10 business days. The complaint and subsequent form is shared with the superintendent, the school library committee, the individual school librarian, and the department supervisor. The school library committee meets four times a year, and reads the entire book in question—their voted-upon decision regarding a material stands for five years. Lastly, the appeal process entails a written appeal to Ms. Jacobs as Director of System and Instructional Performance within 10 business days, with her response required within 20 business days. If the complainant is still not satisfied with the subsequent decision, the process moves to the superintendent whose receipt/response follows the same time frame. This process applies only to library materials, not those found in individual classrooms. Permissions slips for restricted books are available only from the school's librarian, and there are currently three books requiring this permission slip in CCPS. The Freedom to Read Act in Maryland may change these policies in the future.
- Ms. Lewis and Mr. Titus followed with a question-and-answer period regarding law enforcement presence and protocol within school buildings. An important distinction was made between school safety advocates and school resource officers: a safety advocate is a school employee, often a retired member of law enforcement, and serves a more investigative role, while school resource officers are current law enforcement members. All schools in the CCPS system have at least one individual in each position currently. School resource officers are certified to work in schools, having undergone specialized as well as general police training and who must attend routing re-training. The presenters expounded on the fact that the Calvert County Sheriff's Office is not involved in disciplinary issues at the school level unless a crime has been committed or suspected. In

this case, CCPS will pause their own investigation to coordinate with partners such as the CCSO, DSS, CPS, etc. Schools can make complaints to the school resource officer, but unless the officer is physically present at the time of transgression or crime, the SRO cannot immediately detain but will investigate and acknowledge any charges subsequently brought. School principals have discretion between deeming an incident and general bad behavior per the school's code of conduct, or potential criminal activity calling for an investigation. Both law enforcement and school personnel are primarily concerned with the intent of the infraction. The Maryland Center for School Safety is in receipt of every school arrest as it is required to be reported by all schools; this information has always been available, but current initiatives have made this report more visible on a local, public level. Concerns were raised by the committee regarding the public posting of charges against children; the committee was assured that no identifying information is posted in these reports. These reports can be found at:

<https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/DSFSS/SSSP/StudentArrest/index.aspx>

- Ms. Lewis explained that school discipline is carried out solely through school administrators, and that widespread community notification from CCPS is only done under certain criteria. In regards to vaping—a current major issue of note to the committee—it was explained that SROs will not take a vaping apparatus from a student unless THC or another controlled dangerous substance is suspected; otherwise, this issue is handled by school administrators. Disciplinary issues are thoroughly considered on a case-by-case basis, taking several factors into consideration regarding the involved individuals. The school code of conduct serves to guide discipline decisions and possible consequences; this is primarily due to both ethics as well as the fact that Maryland no longer allows for zero-tolerance discipline policies and instead promotes restorative practices. Administrative staff responsible for this function are encouraged and expected to use professional discretion for individual incidents. As Maryland guidelines are the ultimate authority, the age and the developmental level of the student is required to be taken into account—these metrics are measured on a 1-5 range of severity and expected consequences. In conclusion, the presenters expounded that SROs should also serve as mentors to troubled as well as typical students, with a great initiative to build relationships within the school community.

Questions with the Board

At 7:30 pm, the committee was given the opportunity to ask questions in a free-form style of the board members present, Ms. Lisa Grenis and Ms. Jana Post. Discourse centered primarily on the publishing of arrest rates in schools, as well as the lately-contentious nature of the library book review process.

Conclusion/Meeting Adjourn

Ms. Maxey concluded the meeting at approximately 7:35 pm. Committee members were encouraged to forward any further questions or comments to Ms. Maxey or other speakers, and were thanked for their time during this committee's session.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Secretary Kristina Nicely.