Montgomery County Schools
Certified Staff Advisory Meeting
Minutes
October 19, 2011

Dr. Ellis welcomed everyone and explained the purpose of the Certified Staff Advisory – to gain feedback from the certified staff point of view. Dr. Ellis strongly encouraged everyone present to bring concerns forward and to encourage co-workers to bring concerns as well—there will be no retribution for bringing concerns forward.

Next, Dr. Ellis briefly reviewed what was discussed at the Community Area Advisory earlier in the week – Student Cell Phone Policy & Quarter Cent Sales Tax Referendum

Feedback from Certified Staff Advisory discussions – Cell Phone Ban?

Pro:

- Respect between teacher and student
- Eliminate/reduce class distractions (3)
- Will stop students from videotaping fights and/or teachers and posting them online
- Fair for all

Con:

- It will make it more difficult for club members, sports coaches and team members to easily communicate information about games and practice changes
- Administration will be overloaded with ban/confiscation
- Use of phone = technology tool that reduces paper usage
- Sometimes phones are used in class as a part of their lesson/assignment

Other feedback:

- Policy should be set by faculty sponsor for extracurricular activities
- Require cell phone policy to be signed by student and parent, with penalties spelled out and enforced
- Need consistency throughout the school

Dr. Ellis then opened the floor for questions.

Q: Is there a plan with the online EOG testing at Page Street Elementary – we have one computer lab?

A: Busing kids to Troy, Piloting this year and seeing how effective it is.

Q: Is there a possibility to spread paychecks out over 12 months?

A: Better to use credit union, get interest.. Becomes tough on the accounting side – easier not to do that, and better for employee to get the interest. If it is a major issue, get feedback to Dr. Ellis.

Q: Several teachers are concerned about the regular insurance that comes out of the May paycheck, in addition to the insurance payment for August since 10 month employees won't get an August check – so, they will have to pay double insurance in May and still suffer from getting no check in August.

A: This is a valid concern. Contact Representatives (Jerry Tillman & Justin Burr), maybe it can be overturned. Also, in the meantime, since employees know about this in advance, they can try their best to prepare for the worst, in the event it doesn't change.

Q: My major concern is some students can go to Montgomery Learning Academy and complete assignments easily and received credit for classes such as English. How rigorous is the credit recovery process?

A: MLA uses Apex Learning, which meets the diverse needs of transitioning students and put them on the path to graduation. Apex Learning is a digital curriculum that comprises standards-based instructional content specifically developed for online delivery, with assessment opportunities integrated throughout, scaffolding to support learning for all students, and resources to support effective teaching. It may be a different learning format, but it is still high-quality instruction.

Q: is there a possibility of getting better food in the cafeteria?

A: Frank Fiorella, child nutrition director for MCS, is open to suggestions from teachers and staff members. He has worked diligently to streamline lunch menus and provide nutritious, healthy meals for our students and employees. Sometimes students have to get acclimated to healthier options. Also, Frank has guidelines that he must stay within; however, he will be glad to discuss any issues or concerns.

With no more questions, the meeting was concluded. The next Certified Staff Advisory meeting is scheduled for January 25, 2012 at 3:30 pm.