



BOARD OF EDUCATION COMPENSATION COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes – Meeting Five
Nov. 1, 2024

Meeting held virtually via Microsoft Teams

Attendance

Members Present:

Gretchen Blankenship
Kayon Graham
Nichole McDonald
Jaslynn Laurence

Members Absent:

Rachel Watanabe-Tate

Staff Present:

Dale Tibbitts, Spec. Asst. to the County
Executive

Sonia E. Mora, MPH
Assistant Chief Administrative Officer

Lindsay Bolt, Sr. Executive Administrative
Aide, Office of the County Executive

1. Call to Order

Kayon (Chair) called the meeting to order at 5:01 PM.

2. Interview of Grace Rivera-Oven, MCPS Board of Education Member

1. What prompted you to run for election for a MCPS School Board Member seat?

- My experience prior to Covid
- Being a former ESOL Immigrant Student I wanted my community (Germantown area) to get access to the education resources, wifi etc

2. What is the role of the MCPS School Board?

- We oversee the policy, review and update policies specifically with an equity lens
- Support our teachers, students and parents
- Support our Black and Brown students

3. What characteristics, education, and experience are required to be a board member?

- Someone who is in touch with the School system
- Someone who is in touch with the Community in which they serve
- Someone with good communication skills; who talk to all the folks, including support staff like the Buss Drivers, Parents, and Advocates

4. Describe your role in the review/approval of the annual budget of MCPS.

- I dive into the budget before it is budget time, I am nerdy like that
- I assess the budget by asking the hard questions; getting to the heart of whether we are investing in the right programs and personal
- Making sure the budget supports wellness and the teachers

5. How large is the team that directly supports the Board of Education (and are not MCPS employees), and do you believe it is adequate?

- We have a team of 7 currently, and we are interviewing for an ombudsman
- While I was at the National Board of Education summit, we chatted with other fellow Board of Education members and found that as an example:
 - In California, each Board Member has their own Chief of Staff; someone who could handle constituent issues, legislative issues, follow up on the Board Members questions
 - Montgomery County Board Members are at a disadvantage currently being a part time role, as an example, I get 350 emails a day

Follow up question: Who recommends or hires the staff, is the Board of Education Chief of Staff

6. What is your role in the day-to-day operations of the School Board; How many hours per week do you spend on Board of Education work?

- I average 30 hrs/wk minimum
- I support the largest district: UpCounty which runs from Montgomery Village to Poolesville, Damascus and everything in between
- I do 2 school visits per week
- Email checked by Noon where on avg I would have 150 emails by noon
- I do interviews by Students on my role
- I work with a Young Women's Group at Seneca Valley
- I support the Apprenticeship program
- Check on Principals when any large event has occurred
- Look at the Budget daily
 - As an example, there were 3 kids hit by cars in UpCounty; the State has not put up the required signs so I continue to connect with the Head of Transportation

7. Thinking about the work a board member does, how would it relate to other management positions both within the school system and in the marketplace?

- I would equate our work to that of a Principal of a large High School like Seneca Valley or Gaithersburg
- The complexity of the issues, traffic, public safety etc
- Nothing I can think of in the general marketplace equates to that of an MCPS Board of Education Board Member role

8. Describe the school board's role in the safety and well-being of the students, staff and community they serve.

- I started in Public Safety at the State's Attorney's office

- versatile in everything
- I know what is going on around my area, what the crime rate is etc.
- I pushed for Daily updates from the School on any Public Safety events that took place; these updates come from the School System and Marcus Jones (head of School Security)
- I review trends – push for more security in the schools where extra security is needed; additional cameras for all Elem. Schools
- My work with the UpCounty Hub, supporting wellness centers, food security, housing instability

9. If you could use your superpowers to change the MCPS School Board, what would that be and why?

- Make Montgomery County Board Member Positions Full Time!
 - This would allow the Board Members to more effectively hold the School System accountable
- Currently the Board is made up of all Women (accept the SMOB); if Men were on the Board, compensation would be higher

The meeting was adjourned at 5:28 PM.

Next meeting is scheduled for Mon., Nov.4, 7pm-7:45pm

- Virtually via Microsoft Teams
 - Interview of Sami Saeed, Former Student Member of the Board, MCPS Board of Education Member

Respectfully submitted,

Lindsay Bolt