

Montgomery County Board of Education

Ethics Panel Meeting Minutes

October 26, 2022

The Montgomery County Board of Education Ethics Panel held a meeting on Wednesday, October 26, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. at the Carver Education Services Center, 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 120, Rockville, Maryland.

Panel Members Present: Susan Beard, Dan Fisher, Lisa Jones Toms, David Curren

Staff Present: Lori-Christina Webb, chief of staff, Office of the Board of Education; Robyn Seabrook, director of governance, policy and community relations; and Eric Broussides, legal counsel.

Call to Order: Susan Beard called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Review of Policy BBB, *Ethics*

Ms. Beard provided a brief overview of the purpose of the meeting. Ms. Beard explained that the panel would accomplish the following: 1) review the policy in light of changes to Maryland Ethics Law and the State Ethics Commission's Model Policy; 2) recommend any other amendments to the policy based on the panels experience and, in an effort, to clarify the policy for the public; 3) determine whether any recommended changes would have an impact on the superintendent's Regulation, GCA, *Conflict of Interest*.

The panel reviewed the policy by section and discussed changes that must be made to policy BBB to comply with the State Ethics Commission's Model Policy. The panel also discussed and proposed revisions to ensure that terms and format are consistent throughout the policy. The panel proposed substantive revisions to the following sections:

Definitions – Lobbying, Section C.11 – Revised the definition to acknowledge that lobbying can be conducted whether communications with school officials occur in person or by other means and removal of the words “food” and “entertainment” as examples of gifts and retain the reference to “gifts or a series of gifts”.

Gifts – Section 6.d.3. – Revised language to clarify that an official may accept unsolicited gifts not to exceed \$20, *per individual, per calendar year* or trivial items of *nominal* value.

They recommended that Board staff review financial disclosure forms and revise them in accordance with state law amendments and any other revisions approved by the Board of Education. The panel voted unanimously to forward these recommendations to the Board's Policy Management Committee.

Adjournment Ms. Beard made a motion, seconded by David Curren, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 p.m.