



May 12, 2008

Dr. Jane de Winter, President  
Montgomery County Council of  
Parent-Teacher Associations  
2096 Gaither Road, Suite 204  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Dr. de Winter:

I received a copy of your letter to Ms. Nancy Navarro, president of the Montgomery County Board of Education, regarding the Montgomery County Council of Parent-Teacher Associations' concerns about the cessation of the Surveys of School Environment for the 2007-2008 school year. In your letter, you referenced my discussion about local school surveys with PTA leaders. I want to take this opportunity to clarify a couple of points.

In the context of questions about the MCPS Surveys of School Environment, I shared that individual schools have used surveying processes in conjunction with reviews of school improvement plans. Such surveys are typically done around specific aspects of the plans such as the effectiveness of actions identified in the plan. The locally-based surveys are developed around these individual school items and, therefore, have a very specific focus. They are not designed to have implications beyond the particular item, to be compared with like or different items in other schools' surveys, or to compare one school to another. They are also not subject to such statistical analysis as broader surveys, such as the Surveys of School Environment, would be.

In regards to the role of the Office of School Performance in encouraging individual schools to conduct surveys, we have been providing a refresher training program on the Baldrige School Improvement plans. Doing analyses of information to determine whether or not goals have been met is one aspect of the training. Surveying is and has been encouraged as one means of information gathering and has been included in all the trainings that have been done. It is also included in the Baldrige Principal's Handbook for Guiding the School Improvement Process that is available for reference in each of our schools.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Sincerely,

Frank H. Stetson, Ed.D.  
Community Superintendent

FHS:mb

Copy to: Mr. Bowers, Dr. Lacey, Dr. Scott, Mr. Bedford

Office of School Performance

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