Dear President Haughey and Members of the Board of Education;

This is in response to the request for public comment on the revised version of Policy ABA, as posted to your website. We find the revised statement of your policy on Community Involvement to be essentially quite reasonable and, perhaps fortuitously, especially appropriate, coming - as it does - at a time when the policies and practices of the Board and MCPS are under such intense scrutiny and when community trust in your leadership has been so weakened. We offer the following comments/suggestions in the hope that they will be accepted as constructive criticism. Some of them may seem repetitive of items in previous communications, reflecting our perception that valid points may need to be made a number of times before their validity is recognized.

1. Once again we urge that you place all three-letter code references at the END of such documents and (in parentheses) spell out what the actual title of the document is. We continue to believe this action will serve the goal of communication with the general public, whose knowledgeable support of MCPS and the BoE is vital, but whose time commitment to working through such jargon is limited.

2. Your section on definitions is admirably inclusive, but we would urge you to explicitly name the PTAs, since they are the elements of the Community who put in the most enormous and vital effort to advocate for our children, teachers and support staff.

3. Having observed a number of your committee meetings at which such policy revisions are finalized, we know that you often evaluate "tallies" of what comments have been received and how your revisions have addressed them. We are not aware that this material is posted to your website or otherwise made available in some sort of tabular form. We would urge you, perhaps in section D.1, as an added item "h", to include a statement explicitly indicating your commitment to providing a record of what community input has been received on various issues and how that input has been used. This would be one concrete manifestation of your vision of "shared accountability". It might be worded somewhat along the following lines:

"h. Publish an annual report identifying where community input has been incorporated into or influenced Board actions or MCPS operations. Such a system of accountability reinforces the Board's commitment to supporting community involvement and presents an opportunity to engender community confidence in the Board. Creating a report in tabular format or a database, which records the who, when, where and why of the community input and the Board response or action and outcome provides the transparency desired by community, parents, and other MCPS stakeholders."

Obviously, some of the details may be better put in a regulatory document (ABA-RA?), but the statement - as policy - that the Board will provide a record of the input

it received from the community, as well as how it (and MCPS) responded, would be a very positive step.

We hope you find these suggestions useful and thank you, in advance, for your thoughtful consideration of them.

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