



MCCA Board Memo to Parents

It has been a little over a week since the last visit by Board members to MCCA Parent Council meetings. We appreciate meeting and dialoguing with parents who attended the meetings. Many parents asked for more communication from the Board. This is the first in a series of memos that will outline board actions and matters the board will focus on in the next month. We want to be transparent, as a number of you have requested, while also dealing with sensitive issues that need to be addressed and decided. Below you will find questions and answers that parents and staff have asked. Future memos will feature some of the most asked questions with answers.

Keeping our high quality of child care services is our top priority as MCCA strives to be the child care provider of choice in Montgomery County. MCCA is the oldest nonprofit providing child care services in the County and our future looks bright.

We are committed to being the employer of choice for child care professionals in Montgomery County, improving equity throughout MCCA including staff compensation, resources for centers, all to keep high quality child care for children.

For the past few months the Board has considered the complicated issues of operational reorganization, staff compensation, administrative support, board development and financing MCCA. The Board is reaching the end of understanding these matters in depth and breadth, based on significant amount of analysis, parent and staff discussions and our own deliberations. We will soon begin to finalize these decisions in the best interest for MCCA as an organization in keeping with our mission.

The person who becomes the Executive Director will be significant for the future of MCCA. We are committed to finding the right Executive Director for MCCA and have not rushed the decision. The Executive Director Search Committee has been actively interviewing for that position. With the help of a professional recruiting firm (which has widely advertised the position using all possible media), the Committee has been meeting since June, considered seven vetted candidates and narrowed the field of candidates. We hope to have more news for you soon. For those who are interested in learning more about the position, please follow this link: <http://tbe.taleo.net/NA5/ats/careers/requisition.jsp?org=HELIOHR&cws=1&rid=178>

In the near term Interim Executive Director Linda Dunphy will serve in that position until January, 2012. She worked for more than the initial commitment of six months and we are grateful for all she has contributed to improving MCCA.

May peace and joy be yours during the holiday season and for the coming New Year.

Answers to Parent and Staff Questions December, 2011

The questions and answers below are the beginning of an ongoing process of answering questions proposed by parents and staff. While not every question can be answered, these are common questions that have been voiced.

Question: The Board is not visible, what does it do?

Answer: The MCCA Board of Directors has the responsibility and accountability for a well-functioning MCCA that is sustainable and meets our mission: "...to provide the highest quality child care and play-based education for children in Montgomery County, Maryland; professional training for child care providers; and advocacy for affordable, quality child care for families of all income levels, and for better training, pay and benefits for child care professionals."

The Board delegates authority to the Executive Director to direct MCCA operations and to be the spokesperson for MCCA. The Board sets benchmarks of key indicators such as enrollment to understand how well MCCA is performing and makes adjustments as needed. The Board is also responsible for its own performance. The Spring assessment was one important activity and has been used in developing the Board.

The Board plans to improve its visibility within MCCA through regular emails from Board President Kate Barnes, continuing its visits to centers, staff and parents and actively hearing from both groups. As the MCCA information technology grows, we will be able to do more with the MCCA community. You may email Board President Kate Barnes at Board.president@mccaedu.org with your questions or comments.

The President's email address is also listed on the website under Contact Us.

Question: We are concerned that Centers are not receiving much attention in the Initiative efforts

Answer: Some centers have seen physical improvements during the Initiative; others are scheduled to be improved. A new hiring process that supports the hiring and retention of qualified staff has been implemented which directly benefits the centers. Center staff have been an integral part of discussing and recommending improvements to the centers. These recommendations will be considered by the Board and will be communicated once the Board makes decisions.

Question: What is MCCA going to do with its assets?

Answer: Asset usage is being analyzed. Roughly, the current proposal-yet to be decided-is to have approximately 3 months of reserves held for highly unexpected matters, such as a sudden drop in enrollments or a large facilities expenditure. Another smaller portion will be designated for capital expenditures, such as the center improvement project now underway and other needs to keep MCCA centers safe, healthy, attractive places for child care and other supports for delivering high quality care. Another portion will be for special projects such as the Rising to the Challenge Initiative and other opportunities that are likely to arise to strengthen and improve MCCA. What is left over will be 'seeded' back to the Centers for use within MCCA guidelines. MCCA is continuing the policy of all monies fund raised by each Center are that Center's, held by MCCA, for Center activities within MCCA guidelines.

Question: We are hearing rumors that long term staff salaries may be cut. We want to retain those staff and keep teacher and aide turnover low.

Answer: The Board also wants to retain staff and maintain the lowest possible turnover rate. We are committed to warm and nurturing, consistent child care. Currently the Board is determining how to finance MCCA for the next 3 years. Compensation of teachers and all staff is a critical issue that the Board is spending considerable time understanding and debating so the MCCA continues to hire and retain qualified staff. We anticipate making those decisions by January and will disseminate that information as effectively as possible.

Question: Staff training and development is important. What will be available to staff?

Answer: The Board is looking closely at increased funding and improved accessibility help teachers to more easily and accessibly gain the educational degrees needed to meet Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) requirements. MCCA has chosen to be accredited by MSDE as the best way to ensure high quality child care.

Question: Our Center wants to support other centers, what can we do?

Answer: We welcome your help! The Board has taken steps to support more internal communication including visiting parent councils, communicating regularly and supporting parents council presidents meeting and talking together. At the staff level, Center and Site Directors have meetings during which they can discuss supporting each other. All staff professional development days are continuing to take place. Parent Councils are encouraged to continue their reaching out to each other. These are some of the ways MCCA is creating more of a community.

Please check the MCCA website for more information on Center activities.