



Rock Terrace School/Tilden Middle School Roundtable Discussion Group

Summary of Meeting #1—December 18, 2014

The Rock Terrace School/Tilden Middle School Roundtable Discussion Group (Roundtable) met for its first meeting on December 18, 2014. The meeting was held in the Library Media Center of Tilden Middle School from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. The materials handed out at the meeting follow this summary.

Dr. Gwendolyn J. Mason, director, Department of Special Education Services (DSES), and Ms. Deborah S. Szyfer, senior planner, Division of Long-range Planning, Department of Facilities Management, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) facilitated the meeting. Mr. Seth P. Adams, assistant to the director, Division of Construction also attended the meeting and provided information. Seventeen Roundtable members were present at the meeting. The Roundtable roster follows the summary.

Ms. Szyfer welcomed the Roundtable and invited representatives to introduce themselves. Dr. Mason provided background information, including the programs at Rock Terrace School and Tilden Middle School. Ms. Szyfer provided information on the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Capital Funding and Board Policy IOB, *Education of Students with Disabilities*. The Roundtable charge and planned activities were reviewed and the role of representatives and MCPS staff was clarified. Ground rules for the Roundtable meetings also were reviewed. The Roundtable timeline and dates for the release of the superintendent's recommendation and Board of Education (Board) meetings were shared with the Roundtable. Ms. Szyfer explained that the Board has not made a decision to collocate the schools at this time. The only decision made by the Board was to approve the Roundtable study for the possible collocation of Rock Terrace School and Tilden Middle School.

The Roundtable members shared hopes and concerns for the possible collocation in small group discussions. The Roundtable members recorded their hopes and concerns on large posters and shared the information with the full group. A summary of the hopes and concerns are attached. Ms. Szyfer explained that the purpose of this exercise was to learn about each other and to help guide future meeting discussions and planning issues.

Roundtable Committee Criteria

MCPS provided the Roundtable members with a copy of the Maryvale Elementary School/Carl Sandburg Learning Center Roundtable Report to help with the development of criteria that will be used to evaluate collocation concepts.

The committee criteria included the following (items listed with no priority order):

- Plan the physical structures with logistical aspects in mind to ensure that all programmatic needs are addressed
- Meet sensory, motor, and behavioral needs of all students
- Respect and preserve identity of each school
- Provide opportunities for students to interact when appropriate
- Provide supports to teachers to enable successful inclusion outcomes
- Make sure the facilities are built with the future in mind to accommodate future enrollment and technology changes
- Keep the needs of the neighborhood with respect to transportation and parking
- Maintain career experiences for Rock Terrace School students
- Maintain outdoor space at Tilden Middle School that is unique to the school culture
- Maintain autonomy and integrity of Rock Terrace School for the student
- Create a state-of-the-art facility—cutting edge and innovative
- Be mindful of the sensory needs of the student
- Extra sensitive communication in a building (implementation)

Following development of the criteria, Ms. Szyfer explained the roundtable activities and process in more detail. Ms. Szyfer explained that a stand-alone revitalization/expansion project for Rock Terrace School would not be possible due to the state funding structure for special schools. The Maryland State Department of Education/Division of Special Education and Early Intervention Services in accordance with the Individual with Disabilities Education Act requires students with disabilities to have access to the general education environment to the maximum extent appropriate. The concept of collocating a special school with a comprehensive school provides an Individualized Education Program team the opportunity to consider and implement appropriate inclusive opportunities for students. An explanation of the capital budget funding schedule for the Tilden Middle School revitalization/schedule project was provided. Mr. Adams explained that the upcoming feasibility study will determine the budget for the revitalization/expansion project for Tilden Middle School and if the collocation is approved by the Board of Education in May 2015, the feasibility study also would determine the budget for the revitalization/expansion project for Rock Terrace School.

An observer asked if the neighborhood infrastructure would impact the possible collocation of the two schools. Mr. Adams explained that during the design process, MCPS would work with the utilities companies and county agencies to address and improve the utilities for the site. An observer also asked if the county was aware that elementary school students attend Tilden Middle School for the elementary school compacted math class. Ms. Szyfer explained that

MCPS was aware of the situation and that it would be addressed during the Roundtable process. An observer also asked how many students attend Rock Terrace School. Dr. Mason shared that the school would be planned for approximately 100 students. The enrollment has remained constant for the past few years and is projected to remain at this level.

The next meeting of the Roundtable will be held on January 5, 2015, in the Library Media Center at Rock Terrace School. At this meeting, the Roundtable members will participate in a design charrette to explore possible collocation concepts for Rock Terrace School and Tilden Middle School.