

Mid-February- Mid March Meetings:

- 2/25 Testimony before BOE on “leveled” course offerings
- 2/26 Interview Panel – Associate Superintendent, Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs
- 2/27 Meeting with Office of the Chief Technology Officer on SIS
- 2/27 Meeting with BOE member, Karla Silvestre, on math trajectory
- 2/27 Attended Education Budget Forum at Lee Middle School
- 3/6 Call with Dr. Johnson on Local Accountability Model
- 3/7 District Assessment Meeting
- 3/11 Meeting with Dep Superintendent, Area Assoc Sups, and AVPs

Activity Summary:

- **Transitions/Course Selections** – In November 2018, February 2019, and again in March, the AVPs met with Deputy Superintendent (DAS) Statham and the Area Associate Superintendents to discuss several topics. OSSSI is in the process of reviewing with High Schools the current course offerings and the data that supports any decisions to eliminate on-level courses from the schools offerings. The DAS could not offer a timeframe for when the analysis would be complete.
- **Absenteeism vs. Attendance Rates** – I’ve continued to follow this concern with the since the MD Report Cards were issued. There is a big difference between what the State reports in the MD Report Card under “absenteeism” and what MCPS reports in the Student-at-a-Glance report under “attendance.” To the gentle reader, those might seem to be the same thing but alas, they are not. The Washington Post is still working on this story.
- **MISA Concerns** – SLIGHT UPDATE FROM LAST MONTH! For the last several months, I’ve been engaging in conversations with MCPS about the new high school science assessment being administered. For 2017-18 and 2018-19, students were able to “take” the assessment and meet the graduation requirements for science. Beginning in 2019-20, students must “pass” the assessment. Trouble is, as of this writing, we don’t know what “pass” is... so, we don’t know if our current science curriculum is sufficient to prepare students for this assessment. This is a “high stakes assessment” and I am concerned. This timing isn’t what the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) intended. They had some delays getting contracts in place. I’ve written to MSDE on behalf of MCCPTA to request they revise the COMAR to allow an additional year before “passing” is required since we won’t know cut scores for passing until the start of next school year (too late to make any substantive changes to any of our science courses, if needed). (See attached.)
- **MPIA Request** – March 13th, we received the response from MPIA request for the distribution of middle school students in the expansion courses intended for those students that met the magnet requirements but there was not sufficient space in the classes. (See attached.)
- **Student Information System (SIS)** – In January, MCCPTA was invited to send several representatives to attend vendor demonstrations for a new SIS. By way of background, the current system was originally built over 16 years ago and has a number of “auxiliary” pieces patched on, resulting in lots of different data sets, not necessarily connected. This new system will have far more functionality and eliminate many of the “can’t” statements we get related to data requests. The BOE will be voting on adoption of the new system on March 25th and implementation in 2020-21 school year. OCTO would like to meet with MCCPTA BOD and/or Delegates after the BOE adoption to provide a first look at the system selected.
- **Local Accountability Model Rollout** – While the MD Report Card gets to many items, MCPS would like to go deeper with a local accountability piece. How do our focus groups compare to our “test” group and are we making gains? BOD focus group meeting – Thursday, March 21.



February 20, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

As the Montgomery County Council of Parent-Teacher Associations (MCCPTA), we request your immediate attention to the COMAR outlining the assessments necessary to meet Maryland High School graduation requirements.

Specifically, we are concerned about the current requirement wherein students taking the Maryland Integrated Science Assessment (MISA) in 2019-20 school year (and after) must *pass* the assessment to meet the Maryland Graduation Requirements. Over the last few months, on behalf of our association of parents, teachers, and students, our leadership has been asking for clarification about what score is *passing* for this particular assessment. We are troubled to learn cut scores will not be available until after August 2019.

For a “high stakes test,” this timing is not adequate for teachers to support our students. Teachers use prior year results to identify areas that may require re-teaching and/or gaps in the current curriculum that may need attention. Of equal concern, at this time MSDE has not defined the Bridge option that will be available to students. This creates a tremendous amount of anxiety for students that for one reason or another may require alternate means to demonstrate proficiency. Currently, there is no firm date for when State-developed, Statewide Bridge scoring protocols will be released.

We believe we all want the same thing – to see our students successfully meet the challenges placed before them. But, with the delayed release of information from MSDE, we respectfully request the following provision be amended to include an additional year, 2019-2020, wherein *taking* the MISA will meet the graduation assessment requirement for science.

(3) For all students taking the Maryland Integrated Science Assessment in the 2017—2018 and 2018—2019 school years, taking the Maryland Integrated Science Assessment will meet the graduation assessment requirement for science.

On behalf of our organization and the students we serve, thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me for clarification at vpeducation@mccpta.org or by phone at 301.503.1044.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Cynthia Simonson", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Cynthia Simonson
MCCPTA, Vice President of Educational Issues

cc: MCCPTA Board of Directors



March 13, 2019



Ms. Cynthia Simonson
Ms. Lynne Harris
vpeducation@mccpta.org
president@mccpta.org

Dear Ms. Simonson and Ms. Harris:

I have received your Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA) request seeking information regarding Montgomery County Public Schools' (MCPS) processes for student placement in middle school enriched and accelerated courses in the 2018-2019 school year.

You specifically requested the following:

1. A copy of the letter(s) transmitted by MCPS to the middle school principals regarding the courses, inviting the students, and guidelines surrounding extending the opportunity to students who did not appear on the initial Office of Shared Accountability (OSA) lists;
2. Documents in chart form, by middle school, showing the number of students identified by OSA to participate, by enriched and accelerated course;
3. At the end of Quarter 1, the number of students enrolled in each of the expansion courses, by middle school.

I am responding to you on behalf of the superintendent of schools who, as official custodian of records for the school system, is responsible for replies under the Maryland Public Information Act, Title 4 of the General Provisions (GP) Articles.

It should be noted that it was not the Office of Shared Accountability (referenced in Item 2 of your request), but rather the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs (OCIP) that identified student eligibility for the enriched and accelerated courses.

Enclosed are responsive documents to your request, which include the following:

- Email sent to principals from OCIP dated March 6, 2018;
- March 6, 2018, email attachments, including: Frequently Asked Questions for Principals; and the February 28, 2018, memorandum regarding the Middle School Magnet Field Test Update;
- 2018 principal letter regarding enriched and accelerated programs; and
- 2018 back-to-school talking points.

Please also note that email headings have been redacted, given that their presence is a result of our gathering process, and they were not part of the original document. Further, the attachment entitled *Draft Communication to Parent Leaders* has been withheld in accordance with the "privileged or confidential by law" exception under GP § 4-301, which the common law deliberative process privilege, and the inter-agency and intra-agency communications exception under GP § 4-344, which allows a custodian to deny inspection of internal government documents containing confidential opinions, deliberations, advice or recommendations from one government employee to another for the purpose of assisting the latter official in the decision-making function. See Maryland

Public Information Act Manual Chapter 3. Disclosure of such documents would, in our view, discourage full and frank deliberations by MCPS decision makers and other Montgomery County agencies, which is contrary to the public interest.

In addition, please see the below table in response to your request (Items 2 and 3). It is important to note that these numbers are for current enrollment and may reflect both students who enrolled in MCPS after central recommendations were made and students who unenrolled after the recommendation process concluded. As noted below, some schools elected to open one or both courses to all students in the grade. However, these schools have grouped the students together who were centrally recommended when possible.

Students Enrolled in Enriched and Accelerated Courses as Part of a Field Test
for the 2018-19 School Year*

School of Enrollment	AIM-Centrally Recommended	AIM-Currently Enrolled	HIGH-Centrally Recommended	HIGH-Currently Enrolled
Benjamin Banneker Middle	51	42	61	50
Briggs Chaney Middle	33	24	21	24
Cabin John Middle	61	179	52	315
Col. E. Brooke Lee Middle	28	20	26	22
Earle B. Wood Middle	46	29	48	29
Francis Scott Key Middle	19	66	16	95
Herbert Hoover Middle	72	206	54	346
Julius West Middle	43	62	38	60
Newport Mill Middle	28	22	32	23
North Bethesda Middle	126	124	108	114
Robert Frost Middle	70	95	48	351
Rosa Parks Middle	63	56	65	59
Silver Creek Middle	22	31	38	45
Silver Spring International Middle	106	82	51	63
Sligo Middle	24	27	42	52
Thomas W. Pyle Middle	168	141	88	517
Tilden Middle	58	54	37	33
Westland Middle	70	92	59	59
William H. Farquhar Middle	20	28	28	17
White Oak Middle	21	83	17	23

*Enrollment as of February 4, 2019 (MP3)

AIM = Applied Investigations into Mathematics

HIGH = Historical Inquiry into Global Humanities

***School elected to enroll all students in the course.**

***School elected to enroll students recommended for IM into the AIM course.**

Further, it is important to consider the following information regarding the field test and future steps:

Feedback from principals has been positive about the benefits of these courses for students. Meanwhile, MCPS is learning from the field test about different implementation models and is providing much tighter guidance and expectations to schools as the districts plans for expansion next year.

As you may know, for the 2018-19 school year, MCPS implemented a field test of a new process for identifying more students who need enriched and accelerated instruction and for providing them access to such curriculum and instruction in their local schools. Leaders in the Office of the Chief Academic Officer and the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs (OCIP) provided guidance to middle school principals about the courses and the importance of keeping a cohort of identified students together as an academic peer group.

During this initial year of implementing the field test of new courses, individual principals made decisions for their schools with the best intentions for all students, based on their experiences and knowledge of instruction. In some cases, schools may have diverged from the program design farther than intended. In these cases, administrators in OCIP and in the Office of School Support and Improvement (OSSI) have intervened with individual principals, to further explore their rationale, approach, and the implications of their decisions. Adjustments have been made where possible and will continue during the school year.

MCPS leadership agrees that maintaining a cohort of students receiving enriched or accelerated curriculum is an important strategy to meet their needs. They also agree that removing grade level courses may decrease opportunities for students to receive instruction and curriculum at an appropriate level for them. One size does not fit all and we understand the importance of having options for meeting all students' needs.

For these reasons, MCPS is collaborating as we communicate expectations to principals this year to continue to modify practices where feasible and then again during the summer in preparation for the next school year. MCPS has firmer guidelines and clearer expectations for how these courses are to be implemented and will intervene as necessary with individual schools if the courses and grouping strategy are not being implemented as designed.

In regards to the enclosed information and documents, if you believe you have been wrongly denied a public record, you are entitled to seek judicial review of this decision pursuant to GP § 4-362. In addition, pursuant to GP § 4-1B-01 et seq., you also have the option to express any concerns about this decision to the Public Access Ombudsman.

With regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. G. Turner', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Derek G. Turner
Director

DGT:vem

Enclosures

Copy to:

Dr. Navarro
Dr. Statham
Mr. Civil

From: Murphy, Scott W
Sent: Tuesday, March 6, 2018 12:02 PM
Cc: Lang, Erick J; Williams, Darryl L; Webb, Lori-Christina; Franklin, Jeannie H; Casper, Meredith A; Dean, Kurshanna J; Tarasuk, Maria L; Minus, Eric L; Morris, Diane D; Thomas, Elizabeth L - Principal, Quince Orchard HS; Zarchin, Michael J
Subject: Middle School Magnet Field Test Update
Attachments: 180228 MS Magnet Field Test Update.pdf; FAQ For Principals.docx; Draft Communication to Parent Leaders 3.6.18.docx

MS Principals:

As follow-up to last week's discussion about the middle school magnet field test in the Eastern and Takoma Park catchment areas, attached includes:

- Memo to the Board of Education that provides additional information;
- Responses to Frequently Asked Questions ;
- Draft communication that will be sent to MCCPTA parent leaders (by MCPS) today.

Next Steps:

- Principals will receive information about cohort size and projected sections for the course(s) later this week.
- School communities will receive official communication regarding the new courses offered in their local school and criteria for student placement by the end of March.
- Notification of individual students placements will be sent in April.
- Please note that parents are being asked to not contact their local middle schools about individual student scheduling until student placements are sent, to allow time for schools to review data and plan for implementation before communicating with the parent community at large.
- Central services staff will be working to respond to feedback principals have provided, particularly about criteria for placement of additional students and communications to the parent community.
- More details and talking points are provided in the narrative below and in the attachments.

We will follow-up again with individual schools by the end of the week. In the meantime, thank you again for your feedback and support with this important new initiative in MCPS.

Additional Summary and Background:

As explained in the memo to the Board, there are preliminary results from the Middle School Magnet field test and instructional implications for programming. As you know, in response to the Metis Report, every Grade 5 student in the Takoma Park and Eastern Middle School catchment area was centrally reviewed for potential to access enriched and accelerated instruction. Based on the results, a significant number of students surfaced demonstrating the potential to thrive in an enriched and accelerated program. While some students were invited to attend the magnet, based on multiple data points, many more demonstrated an instructional need for enriched and accelerated programming. In order to support local schools in meeting student needs, identified students are recommended for enrollment in enriched and accelerated courses modeled after the instructional approaches and curriculum implemented in the Humanities and Communications and Math, Science, and Computer Science magnet programs.

Based on the results of the selection process, each of your schools will receive a significant cohort of students demonstrating an instructional need to access enriched and accelerated programming. The instructional need for some

of these students indicates a need for enriched and accelerated math instruction, while others demonstrate a need for enriched and accelerated humanities instruction. In some situations, a student may demonstrate a need for access to both.

Below you will find information about two enriched and accelerated courses, in which these students must be enrolled to meet their enriched and accelerated instructional need.

Course Descriptions

Applied Investigations into Mathematics (IM) 6

This course is designed to extend students' understanding of mathematical concepts aligned with Common Core State Standards (CCSS), accelerating the pace of instruction while diving deeper into concepts at an equal level of intensity. This is much more than an accelerated mathematics course as the program offers access to many academic competitions and the opportunity to conduct fieldwork. Students work with an academic cohort to conduct independent inquiries using mathematics, computer science, and the scientific process to solve real-world problems.

Historical Inquiry into Global Humanities 6

This course is built around the core Grade 6 social studies curriculum that includes historical content from early civilizations, the empires of Greece and Rome, the dynasties of China, and civilizations of the first millennium. Cohort students will go beyond this core however as they learn additional content, explore deeper connections to today, engage in investigative inquiry to strengthen their writing through Document Based Questions, and enhance their learning through relevant literature connections.

Based on the information gathered through the field test process, students will be recommended for participation in these courses. Additionally, students who opted out of the assessment will also be reviewed and may be recommended for the new courses. The intent of the field test is to determine how to provide enriched and accelerated instruction for highly able students from all neighborhoods and backgrounds, strengthen and support local schools in meeting the needs of highly able learners, move beyond the magnets as the only perceived venue where the needs of the highly able are met, and establish a sustainable model that appropriately balances homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping practices for the optimum educational experiences. As we move forward achieving all of these goals will require ongoing partnership and a willingness to evolve and adapt based on the lessons of practice. Although we know one equitable practice cannot erase all the inequities our students may face, universal screening and increased access provide a foundation for our continued pursuit of an equitable school system.

Your partnership in this endeavor is greatly appreciated.

Scott W. Murphy
Director
Department of Secondary Curriculum and Districtwide Programs
Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs
Montgomery County Public Schools
850 Hungerford Drive (CESC) Room 255
Rockville, MD 20850
(301) 279-3350
<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/office/>

Middle School Magnet Field Test—Frequently Asked Questions (for principals)
3/5/2018
DRAFT

How many students were considered?

Over 8,000 (8164) Grade 5 students were centrally reviewed. Approximately, 4,057 students moved forward in the assessment process for the Eastern and Takoma Park middle school magnets.

For students in field test schools, what does it mean that they will ALL be reviewed for the middle school selective magnet process?

All Grade 5 students, whose home address feeds into Eastern or Takoma Park middle schools magnet programs, were centrally reviewed using a variety of data. Students were considered for both themed programs. The review outcome could have resulted in the following outcomes:

- Academic needs can be met at her/his local middle school program with local enrichment (no test)
- Demonstrates the potential to thrive in a humanities and communication themed program
- Demonstrates the potential to thrive in a computer science, math and science themed program
- Demonstrates the potential to thrive in both magnet themed programs

What data was used to evaluate the students?

The review used a multiple measure process from both system and external measures. The data that was included: Grade 5 report card, school assessments: percentile ranks for the Measures of Adequate Progress in Reading and Math, state assessment: PARCC achievement levels for reading and math data*, instructional need, student services^, non-scored student questionnaire, and an outside assessment: Cognitive Test of Abilities Test (CogAT) full battery.

* PARCC is only used to see a pattern of performance of grade level indicators

^ services such as receiving special education services, English for Speakers of Other Languages, Section 504 accommodations plan and Free and Reduced-price Meals System

What is instructional need?

One of the criteria used was student instructional need, or the availability of an academic peer group within their local school. This is demonstrated when there is a cohort of 20 or more students in the same middle school with a comparable academic range for which serves as a peer group. Students who are high performing may or may not be invited to the program based on the availability of a peer group at their middle school.

How will middle schools program for large cohorts of highly able students?

There have always been middle schools with large cohorts of highly able learners. The universal screening process just provides a clearer picture of the instructional needs of students. Next school year, some middle schools will be selected to pilot courses designed to meet the needs of highly able students. The schools will be a cross section of schools with significant cohorts based

on data from the screening process, similar to the elementary model. For all middle schools in the catchment area, data will be shared with the schools and OCIP and OSSI will provide support and guidance on programming to meet the needs of highly able learners.

What was the communication process with parents in the catchment area?

Families of students in the catchment area received multiple communications about the process. After the universal screening, all families received a letter informing them if their child was selected for further assessment. These letters explained the field test process. There were informational meetings held in October where the process was explained and questions answered. Frequently asked questions have been posted on the website. Additionally, there has been ongoing outreach to parent leaders in the gifted and talented parent community so that they would be able to answer questions from their constituents. Follow-up communications to school communities about the course offerings will be sent before Spring Break, after principals have had an opportunity to review their school's cohort and enrollment projections.

As we consider new to MCPS students for course placement, what is the criteria?

Guidance and criteria will be sent from the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs. This will include students who opted out for testing as well as other data points to consider.

Can parents decline for their child to be in one or both (if applicable) of these courses?

Yes, parents may decline for their child to participate in one or both courses.

Will there be a sequenced grade 7 and grade 8 class for each accelerated and enriched course?

Yes. It is the intent to continue the program over their three years of middle school. In addition, courses are planned to expand to upcounty catchment areas in 2019–2020.

Why is grouping necessary? Is this grouping process tracking?

The middle school magnet field test evaluation revealed that all middle schools have cohorts of highly able students. Building off the magnet program philosophy, highly able students who have instructional opportunities together strengthen each other's learning. The opportunity for students to participate in one or two enriched and accelerated courses coupled with grouping will address the instructional needs of these students.

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

February 28, 2018

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jack R. Smith, Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Middle School Magnet Field Test Update

I am writing to update you on the selection process field test for the Takoma Park Middle School Mathematics, Science, and Computer Science Magnet and the Eastern Middle School Humanities and Communication Magnet, and to share preliminary data. I will provide the complete report at the conclusion of the magnet selection season, as has been the customary practice. The field test included an examination of the educational records of every Grade 5 student in the catchment area for the two magnet programs. This represented 80 elementary schools and approximately 8,164 students. This global review of our Grade 5 students offers valuable information for programming at the middle school level, well beyond magnet program placement. There were 4,057 students assessed using the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)¹ from the 80 schools. This is in stark contrast with prior practice when approximately 700 to 800 students applied to the two programs. In addition, an important consideration when selecting students to participate in the magnet programs was whether or not a student had an academic peer group at his or her home middle school.

Preliminary results reflect increases in selected Black or African American, Hispanic/Latino, and students receiving Free and Reduced-price Meals System services. Additionally, the vast majority of the 80 elementary schools in the field test have students selected for the magnet programs. This is significantly different from past years where students from a few elementary schools dominated the admission process. Overall, the gender balance in both programs improved, and the 4,057 assessed students are reflective of the student population of the catchment area. The process revealed a large number of highly able cohorts at a number of local middle schools. Given the universal nature of the process and the appreciable increase in student participation, staff anticipated that there would be a greater number of appeals as well as varied acceptance rates.

As with the elementary school expansion, the intent of the new middle school process is to build the infrastructure to meet the needs of highly able students in multiple locations and mitigate the perception that middle school students only receive enriched and accelerated instruction through a magnet program. Given there are a number of highly able cohorts remaining in their local middle schools, all schools in the catchment area will receive support and training on enriched and accelerated programming. It is important to note that the existence of these cohorts at local middle schools are not new this year; what is new is the explicit support provided for programming for highly able students.

¹ Parents/guardians of Grade 5 students will receive a detailed summary report for their child prepared by the publisher by March 2, 2018.

Building upon the magnet curriculum, staff in the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs is developing two enriched and accelerated courses for highly able cohorts in local middle schools in the catchment area for implementation in the 2018–2019 school year. Course descriptions follow.

Applied Investigations into Mathematics (IM) 6

This Grade 6 course is designed to extend students' understanding of mathematical concepts aligned with Common Core State Standards, accelerating the pace of instruction while diving deeper into concepts. This course offers access to academic competitions and the opportunity to conduct applied fieldwork. Students work with an academic cohort to conduct independent inquiries using mathematics, computer science, and the scientific process to solve real-world problems. Upon successful completion, students will matriculate to an accelerated and enriched Algebra 1 course in Grade 7 and Geometry in Grade 8.

Historical Inquiry into Global Humanities 6

This course is built around the core Grade 6 social studies curriculum that includes historical content from early civilizations, the empires of Greece and Rome, the dynasties of China, and civilizations of the first millennium. Cohort students will go beyond this core as they learn additional content, explore deeper connections to today's world, conduct research, engage in investigative inquiry to strengthen their writing through Document Based Questions modeled from Advanced Placement courses, and enhance their learning through relevant literature connections and expanded writing output.

Middle school principals will be notified of the student cohort assigned to the course or courses in early March 2018. For scheduling purposes, students identified in the highly able cohorts will be grouped together in sections of the course or courses. As seats are available, local school principals will identify additional students who demonstrate need for accelerated and enriched instruction for placement in the course or courses.

All middle schools in the catchment area will implement one or both courses in the coming school year, depending on the size of the cohort in mathematics and humanities, respectively, with the exception of Argyle, A. Mario Loiederman, and Parkland middle schools, the three Middle School Magnet Consortium (MSMC) schools. This is because MSMC schools are whole-school magnets with enrichment and acceleration opportunities embedded in the programs. Schools also will receive professional development, consultation on master scheduling, and focused support during implementation. The catchment area schools are: Benjamin Banneker, Briggs Chaney, William H. Farquhar, Robert Frost, Herbert Hoover, Cabin John, Francis Scott Key, Col. E. Brooke Lee, Newport Mill, Rosa M. Parks, North Bethesda, Thomas W. Pyle, Silver Creek, Silver Spring International, Sligo, Tilden, Julius West, Westland, Earle B. Wood, and White Oak middle schools. Currently, 16 of the 20 middle schools are scheduled to offer 2 courses, while 4 of the middle schools are slated to offer at least 1 course. Throughout the remainder of the school year, final course(s) and sections will be determined based on student enrollment and achievement data. In mid-March, schools will communicate with parents/guardians and their communities regarding the new course(s) for the 2018–2019 school year.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Erick J. Lang, associate superintendent for curriculum and instructional programs, Office of the Chief Academic Officer, at 301-279-3411.

JRS:MVN:ls1

Copy to:

Executive Staff

Mr. Ikheloa

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

April 2018

Dear Parent or Guardian of INSERT STUDENT NAME:

We are looking forward to having your family join our school community for the 2018-19 school year! Recently, parents of Grade 5 students received information about the middle school magnet selection results, which started with the Grade 5 universal review process in January 2018, for both magnet programs located at Eastern and Takoma Park Middle Schools. These processes and the student performance data collected yielded valuable information about your child's performance and their school peers. Based on this information, selected middle schools will implement one or two enriched and accelerated courses for identified Grade 6 students for school year 2018-2019. Courses and their descriptions are provided below.

It was determined that our school has a cohort of students demonstrating an instructional need to access enriched and accelerated instruction modeled after the instruction and curriculum implemented in either the Humanities and Communications Program (Eastern MS) , or the Mathematics, Science and Computer Science Program (Takoma Park MS), or both.

Your child has been identified to participate in the following course(s) for 2018-2019:

<<INSERT COURSE(S)>>

This course will replace the existing content class and is not an additional class. No action is required on your part as this schedule change will be made by our counseling team. If you have questions or would like to decline the course change, contact the school counseling team at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

Course Descriptions*

Applied Investigations into Mathematics 6

This course is designed to extend students' understanding of mathematical concepts aligned with Common Core State Standards, accelerating the pace of instruction while diving deeper into concepts at an equal level of intensity. This is much more than an accelerated mathematics course as the program offers access to many academic competitions and the opportunity to conduct fieldwork. Students work with an academic cohort to conduct independent inquiries using mathematics, computer science, and the scientific process to solve real-world problems.

Historical Inquiry into Global Humanities 6

This course is built around the core Grade 6 social studies curriculum that includes historical content from early civilizations, the empires of Greece and Rome, the dynasties of China, and civilizations of the first millennium. Cohort students will go beyond this core; however, as they learn additional content, explore deeper connections to today, engage in investigative inquiry to strengthen their writing through Document Based Questions, and enhance their learning through relevant literature connections.

More information about the courses will be shared at Back-to-School Night

Montgomery County Public Schools is committed to ensuring that your child, INSERT STUDENT NAME, will have access to enriched and accelerated instruction in <<INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL>> that will prepare your child for a lifetime of learning. If you have questions regarding the enriched and accelerated courses for next year, please contact me at **INSERT School Number**, via email at **INSERT principal/designee e-mail**, or Mrs. Kurshanna J. Dean, Supervisor, Division of Accelerated and Enriched Instruction at (240)740-3110 or via e-mail at Kurshanna_D_Dean@mcpsmd.org.

Sincerely,

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

INSERT
Principal

Back to School Talking Points

Background Information

- Multiple data points were used to identify students in the classes including MAP, PARCC, an external test called the CogAT, and grades.
- Courses will be designed for grades 7 and 8 over the next two years in math and social studies. We will build on learnings from Takoma Park, Eastern, Roberto Clemente and MLK to develop these courses.
- Unlike the Eastern and Takoma Magnet Programs, students have the opportunity at every grade level to be considered for the new courses.

Information about the courses: Applied IM 6 & Historical Inquiry into Global Humanities 6

- The courses are designed to provide students, who were exceeding grade level measures, classroom instruction that would encourage continued academic growth beyond simply meeting grade level expectations. The courses are based on the core curriculum, but within each unit, students may explore a particular topic more deeply, apply a concept to complex, real world challenges, or engage in tasks requiring extended writing, reading, problem solving and application.
- Many of the instructional approaches are modeled after instruction in the Takoma Park and Eastern Middle Schools magnet programs.
- Both courses: All math and social studies teachers have access to the course materials and may choose to use them.

Core Curriculum Key Points: Applied IM 6 & World Studies 6

- Enrichment is provided in all courses in order to meet the individual needs of students in a classroom. The existing core curriculum provides rigorous content and numerous opportunities for enrichment.
- Students in these classes will engage in many of the same types of activities as students in the enriched classes. In the core classes however, students may spend more time on a topic or concept, may focus on developing essential reading and writing skills, or may spiral their learning by revisiting prior concepts more thoroughly.