

**RM Cluster Report to MCCPTA Board**  
**April 2018**  
**Cluster coordinators – Monique Ashton, Rodney Peele, Mallika Sastry**  
**Area VP- Jennifer Young**

**RM Cluster Priorities:**

- Given the decision not to build the expansion of Richard Montgomery, our community is working to find interim solutions to deal with the overcrowding.
  - Address the lack of adequate science laboratory space, opportunities for hands on labs, and safety build-outs for labs.
  - Deal with the number of new and current placement of portables in a safe and ideal location, without reducing parking capacity.
  - Continue follow-up on the Crown Farm HS development process. Our cluster has requested that community roundtables be initiated.

A meeting is scheduled with BOE member Smondrowski on Monday, April 16 to discuss RMHS.

- Continue to advocate for the revitalization of Twinbrook Elementary.
- Continue to build and stand up the RMES#5. The cluster is working with Principal Dubois on standing up steering committee and eventual new PTA. A meeting is scheduled with the principal on Friday, April 20.
- Support our schools in the transition as several communities will be shifted to accommodate moves to the new elementary school.
- Continue to support JWMS on the public-private partnership with MSI to secure a turf field.

**Cluster Events and Happenings:**

- **Quadrennial Cluster Meetings:** The cluster is continuing to plan for the Cluster Meeting with the BOE in May. This month cluster coordinators are finalizing the agenda and soliciting questions to be asked during the forum from our cluster of schools.
- **School Safety:**
  - Our school PTAs have been continuing to provide parent forums on school safety.
  - Our cluster would like MCCPTA to consider advocating for strengthening of background checks and clearances among before and after school clubs. Parents must participate in trainings and in some cases fingerprinted for volunteer roles. There appears to be a loophole on what is required for clubs, especially with outside vendors. The request is to consider that:
    - ICB requires that those vendors who rent the school building conduct a criminal background check on instructors of school clubs and sports activities. The instructors should also complete the training that all volunteers are required to take.
    - PTAs should also consider asking that vendors have their instructors undergo a criminal background check.
- **Chinese Immersion and Language Instruction:** A meeting was held late March with the Foreign Language office to discuss improvements to be made to the Chinese Immersion language, including increased in-language instruction, testing, and supportive learning materials. Current plans shared by MCPS include: 1) All students in the new

school will have exposure to language instruction at some level through an expanded role of the Chinese Coordinator who will teach the classes 2) A second grade of Chinese immersion is being discussed as an addition and would include neighborhood children. This is a future plan and is still in discussion.

- **RMES#5 Naming:** The Board of Education met to decide upon the name of RMES#5. The name Bayard Rustin was selected on April 12, 2018. The parent naming committee recommended two names based on a survey of 700 parents, community forums, and neighborhood association feedback. The Board of Education decided not to move forward with the names recommended as part of the parent feedback process. Cluster leaders are seeking to find out more about the process. Lessons learned from the process:
  - It was not apparent that the board read the rationale for the names selected by the community based on comments made during the meeting.
  - In addition to following the process of the naming committee, direct advocacy to the Board may be needed. Our community was told to follow the process and funnel all recommendations through the MCPS survey and feedback forums. However, the Board commented on receiving direct emails to them. This comment is not on the name selected, but the process for the naming selection.
  - We recommend that CCs and AVPs pay special attention to the composition of the naming committee for a new school. MCPS has strict guidelines (Section II(B)(1)(b) of Regulation FAARA): the individuals selected to be on the naming committee should be residents from each of the boundary zones assigned to a new school and should be drawn from different neighborhoods within the service area of the new school. RM cluster found inconsistencies in the selection process and brought this to the attention of MCPS. MCPS was receptive to our request and corrected the inconsistencies in the selection process
- **Behavioral Health:** College Gardens hosted a cluster-wide e workshop on “Identifying and Treating Anxiety in Children” on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. The event was well attended and parents received specific tips to help support their children at home.