

Gifted Child Committee Report

February 2018

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EVENTS:

02/01 Kim participated in MCCPTA BOD meeting.

02/19 GCC published a message entitled "Urgent message on Magnet program admission". Based on the available information, we encouraged families with highly able students to file appeals to MCPS Magnet decisions.

02/21 Kim and Lang participated in 2018 Celebrating Gifted and Talented Education in Maryland Awards. A few from Montgomery County were recognized

Outstanding Educator- Gifted & Talented Program Coordinator

Meredith Casper Montgomery County Public Schools

Maryland Coalition for Gifted & Talented Education (MCGATE) Essay Contest

Dhruv Pai, 8th grade 3rd place middle school Takoma Park Middle School
Michael Yin, 12th grade 1st place high school Montgomery Blair High School
Lillian Zhou, 9th grade 2nd place high school Montgomery Blair High School
Valerie Wang, 10th grade 3rd place high school Richard Montgomery High School

Outstanding Student Accomplishment in Gifted & Talented Education

Brielle Anderson Chevy Chase Elementary School

Outstanding Educator in Gifted & Talented Education- Teacher as Leader

Robert Hines Richard Montgomery High School
Sarah Jackson Northwood High School
Kristen Loughney Northwood High School
Julie Quintana Chevy Chase Elementary School
Cheryl Sellitti Cold Spring Elementary School
Bret Williams-Caison Silver Spring International Middle School

Full Text of GCC 02/19 Message

Dear GT Liaisons,

This year, as many of you are aware, MCPS conducted a pilot program changing the Eastern/Takoma Park magnet application and selection process. MCPS screened the entire 5th grade population of the down county magnet feeder schools, and identified 4000 "potentially qualified" students to test for admission to the 200 spaces in the EMS and TPMS magnet programs. (By contrast, in previous years, approximately 800 students self-selected to test for those spaces.) One of the new selection criteria evaluated whether each student has the "availability of a peer group at the local middle school," as reflected in the evaluation and test results of a much larger number of students at each middle school than was available in earlier years.

Over the last few days, it has come to our attention that, a number of students in the 99th percentile in all of the CogAT categories (Verbal, Quantitative, Nonverbal, and Composite) are being denied entrance - and are not even eligible for the wait pool -- because MCPS believes that the presence of large numbers of academic peers in their local schools will result in their needs being met at those schools. In addition, early indicators suggest that large numbers of very high performing students currently attending one of in the Centers for Enriched Studies (particularly in Barnsley CES, Chevy Chase CES, and Cold Spring CES as we learned for now) are not being offered placement in the magnets, even though those students have completed an elementary curriculum that places them well above the MCPS curriculum offered in local middle schools.

The MCCPTA Gifted Child Committee (GCC) has been working for the last few days to better understand this concern. As we navigate these issues, **we encourage the following actions on the part of parents throughout the down county**. Please pass this information on to parents in your communities that may be affected by these developments.

APPEAL: For students in the top percentiles, we encourage parents to consider filing an appeal to the decision, following the process outlined in the admission decision letter. We further suggest sending a copy of the appeal to both the Board of Education members (boe@mcpsmd.org), Dr. Smith, and us. Since the appeal calls for "new" or unknown information, we suggest you inform the magnet coordinators that contrary to what they apparently were told, your local school does not group students by ability or offer accelerated curriculum yet. Ask that your student's need for rigor and challenge be reconsidered in light of this reality.

Please note, we do not think the appeal effort will increase the seats at the magnet, nor do we believe this effort will result in students being added to the wait pool or the class. However, we think this is a critical step to bring BOE members the awareness of the caliber of student that is being denied entrance to the magnet programs and the fallacy of the reasoning for it.

ADVOCATE: Families of all children denied entrance to the magnets that attended one of the Centers for Enriched Studies AND families of any other students that scored in the top percentiles in the CogAT and were rejected from the magnets are encouraged to make inquiries to both the MCPS central office and local home middle schools into the following questions:

1. Will the MCPS central office officially identify these highly able students and inform local middle schools that these students were denied admission because a peer group exists at the middle school?
2. How will the master schedule be used this spring at the local middle schools to ensure the "substantial cohort of highly able students" are grouped together in core courses and group projects?
3. What local school curriculum offerings are planned for the 2018-2019 school year to offer the peer group cohort the rigor and challenge they would have been offered in the magnet programs?
4. What supports and evaluations will be in place to ensure that these highly able students will be served successfully in the local middle schools?

MCCPTA GCC will continue to advocate directly on behalf of all highly able students within MCPS, raising these same concerns. We encourage our GT liaisons to share any information gathered on specific middle school plans on our GTliaison listserv so we can learn from each other and move quickly to ensure that highly able students' needs are met during the 2018-19 school year.

Kim Testa, Iris Masucci, and Lang Lin
Gifted Child Committee, MCCPTA

ADVOCACY:

GT Liaison in Every PTA

Each PTA is strongly encouraged to identify a volunteer to serve as its GT Liaison for the 2016-2017 school year. The GT Liaison plays a vital role in advocating for the needs of highly able learners by providing a critical link among the school community, the MCCPTA GCC, and MCPS. Once a PTA has identified a GT Liaison for this year, please email that person's name, school, and contact information to Iris Masucci, Vice Chair of the MCCPTA Gifted Child Committee, at ri@robertandiris.com.

Math 7 and Math8

11 middle schools will not be offering Math 7 (and possibly Math 8) at all next year, in favor of putting all students in the compacted IM class followed by Algebra I without regard to assessment data from Math 6. We are hearing several parent concerns if these courses will not be offered to those students who are not ready for the compacted IM math class.

Math 4/5 and 5/6

Math 4/5 and 5/6 identification system will no longer be run out of Carver/AEI but will be "opened up" for local school decisions. Delivery method will be up to the principal. Delivery by way of differentiated instruction in an on-grade-level classroom will be allowed. One example is College Gardens ES.

Math 4/5 and Math 4 are two distinct curricula with only a few weeks' content overlapping at the beginning of a school year. For schools with sufficient students for an independent Math 4/5 class, a best practice known today is to deliver Math 4/5 and Math 4 in separate classrooms.

Advanced English in Middle Schools

An update meeting was held between OCIP (Office of Curriculum & Instructional Programs) and OSSI (Office of School Support & Improvement) to learn more about the current state of Advanced English as it relates to the MCPS system expectations. A collaborative meeting has been scheduled to review school strengths and needs and work together toward next steps. Parent-identified schools with differentiation skills needs will be shared with OSSI.

Middle schools were asked to complete an action template which responds to the school's action steps in the following areas: communication, school structures, professional learning and instructional delivery. From here, there are supposed to be ongoing conversations, support, and monitoring from the directors in their ongoing work with principals and schools.

AEI and OCIP will be working with OSSI to hear about their findings and see where support is needed.