

Overview:

As your VP of Educational Issues, my aim is to help our parent community find the necessary resources/data to be able to ask questions of our schools to ensure “all means all” in every school. Who’s with me?

September/October Meetings:

9/12 – Executive Committee meeting with Dr. Smith
9/13 – MCCPTA Executive Committee and BOD Meeting
9/15 – MCCPTA Fall Training
9/20 – Brookings Institute Lecture
9/25 – MCCPTA Delegates Assembly
9/27 – Meeting with Kevin Lowndes, SPED Assoc Sup
10/1 – District Assessment Committee
10/4 – Phone Discussion with AEI
10/9 – Meeting with Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs (OCIP)

September/Mid-October Activity Summary:

- **Math (Secondary):** Continued conversations with MCPS staff on the guidance provided to schools surrounding course placement. I’m particularly concerned with the number of middle school students that did not pass the Algebra 1 PARCC (especially in our “Algebra for All” middle schools that do not offer Math 8 as an option) and whether the PARCC score is factored into 9th grade course placement (and/or how the requirement to pass PARCC and the options available is communicated to those affected families).
- **MCPS GPA/Grade Inflation:** Participated in interview with the Washington Post on concerns surrounding possible grading inflation accounting for the jump in A’s on report cards since the elimination of final exams.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/thousands-more-as-fill-report-cards-in-suburban-md-school-system/2018/09/22/9ddcc686-bce1-11e8-b7d2-0773aa1e33da_story.html?utm_term=.69b1a6d94b8c
- **Parent Access to SPED Evaluations:** Met with Kevin Lowndes (and other MCCPTA folks) to discuss MCPS practices surrounding parental access to psychologist’s evaluation. Presently, the full score reports are only available upon request. We are advocating to make these reports accessible to all parents, no request required, so these can be a tool to help parents better understand their students’ needs and how to best support them.
- **District Assessment Group Meeting:** Worked within a committee, discussing the 2018-19 assessments captured within Evidence of Learning. This group was formed by the BOE in response to the Maryland General Assembly’s passage of *More Learning, Less Testing Act of 2017*, setting limits on the amount of time students can be assessed. The work is being posted on this site.
<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/boe/community/assessments.aspx> A few key concerns: 1) how central office is using the assessments (will these be used to also identify needed professional development of teachers); 2) how will our student that take high school math courses in middle school be affected by the State Superintendent’s memo outlining the ESSA requirement of an assessment be administered in high school, even if they have already met the MD graduation requirement through the middle school assessment.
<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/boe/community/AccountabilityAssessMath.pdf>
- **Memos to BOE Between the Meetings:** Advocated for almost a year for the return of the “memos!” If you watch (or attend) a BOE meeting, there are often questions asked by the Board that staff respond “we’ll get that information to you.” Prior to last fall, those memos pertaining to whatever question was asked were available to the public – often reflecting information very valuable to the concerned advocate. That access was revoked last fall. With the help of Jill Ortman-Fouse (BOE) and Andy Zuckerman (COO), we now can see current year memos posted on the site. It isn’t “searchable” but at least it is available. Enjoy!
<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/boe/meetings/memorandum/>