

Overview:

From an "Educational Issues" perspective, it is an exciting time for MCPS. The Superintendent now has a year behind him so a number of ideas he shared in past, including a budget he helped create for the coming school year, will result in the roll out of a number of new ideas and initiatives across the county.

This summer, I attended all six Area Meetings and participated in early education, curriculum, special education, and technology discussions with MCPS staff. The following are recurring discussion points from the summer followed by items that MCCPTA that seem to be "bubbling up" as items we will want to follow.

Summer Activities

- **Math:** Critical questions followed up on this summer --
 - **Middle School** – What is the data supporting the elimination of on-level math classes (creating IM for All in 7th grade and/or Algebra 1 for All in 8th grade in 16/41 middle schools).
 - **High School** – What is the trajectory/transition plan to high school for students that may not master Algebra 1 in 8th grade as demonstrated through requirement to pass PARCC test (though they may have a C or better)? Do we have a viable transition/4 year pathway, defined in all high schools?
- **Distance Learning:** Worked with OSSI and OTC to create a World Language distance learning pilot between two middle schools. PTA Presidents of both middle schools will be watching this closely and capturing "best practices/lessons learned" with the aim for more opportunities in more courses in the future (rather than students having to commute to other schools).
- **MYMCPS:** Following rollout of the parent portal to MCPS very closely. Edline has been taken down. Secondary schools will have access in September. Rollout for elementary schools will be on a rolling basis with all schools having access by end of year. This portal will provide more data points to parents AND include parent access to the curriculum/resources. <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/mymcps-classroom/>
- **Elementary School Report Card:** New elementary school report card is posted in multiple languages. MCPS is looking for MCCPTA to assist in rolling out new report card to parents. Clarifying Comments are already starting to roll in so MCCPTA will work with MCPS to create a way to capture feedback for consideration in the next iteration. <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/grading/report-cards.aspx>
- **Early Childhood Education:** This summer we solicited individuals to participate in this new subcommittee (currently within the curriculum committee). We have four volunteers so far. This group will focus on the county's consideration of Universal pre-k rollout (as presented by Dr. Jack Smith and Councilmember Rice on August 23). Highlights from the evening's events -- <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rice/>
- **Special Education:** Working with Central Office, reviewing how MCPS is clustering special education programs and asking about the rationale for some of our highest impact schools being selected to house some of the most resource-intensive programs. (Provided testimony on behalf of middle school with BOE on August 31.)
- **G/T Eligibility:** Following discussions with OSSI regarding how schools are meeting needs of students that are determined "eligible" for G/T. MCPS has been working for the last year to see how William and Mary/Junior Great Books/Jacob's Ladder opportunities are being implemented. A new writing piece is also being introduced at elementary school levels this year. MCCPTA will be asking how students that have been identified through InView actually having their needs met?

Additional Educational Items Underway for MCCPTA in 2017-18

- **CTE Subcommittee:** Career and Technology Education (CTE) was reviewed by an outside consultant. Recommendations coming out are expected to be widespread. Will look to solicit volunteers to participate in this subcommittee discussion group. Expect the consultants report to include recommendations related to opportunities at Edison.
- **Differentiation:** County-wide, we will be engaging in discussions on how differentiation is being implemented, particularly in middle schools that only offer "Advanced English" and "Advanced Social Studies." How are those schools effectively differentiating in heterogeneous classes? Recently, issue of how Compacted Math is being taught in elementary schools. Some schools do not have a stand-alone

CM class but rather, they are accelerating students within the heterogeneous classroom. We should compare data to determine most effective approach.

- **Evidence of Learning:** MCPS plans related to EOL includes the multiple measures for success. MCCPTA has participated in some preliminary discussion. We should follow this closely and provide input to MCPS. Recent passage of [The More Learning, Less Testing Act](#)— (passed the House (139–0) and Senate (47–0) without a single no vote) —limits mandated testing to 2.2% of the school year, except in eighth grade, when the limit is at 2.3%. This will affect last year’s rollout of RQAs. The following links help frame MCPS approach for middle and high school:
 - High School:
http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/departments/sharedaccountability/testing/HS_EvidenceofLearningTimeline.pdf
 - Middle School:
http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/departments/sharedaccountability/testing/MS_EvidenceofLearningTimeline.pdf
- **Resource Guides:** It is clear from summer Area Meetings, MCCPTA could provide a tremendous service to MCPS parents by creating some resource guides/FAQs of some sort for parents to navigate MCPS labyrinth of resources.
- **Multicultural Outreach:** Building on Area Meeting momentum, look for opportunities to engage broader cross-section of families that are traditionally not highly engaged in student achievement discussions.
- **Student Improvement Plans (SIP):** Many of our most active MCCPTA folks weren’t aware of the SIPs that are required to be developed for each school, every year. This year, we may want to highlight this engagement process so parents know where to find their school’s plan and how to engage in future development.
- **Office of Shared Accountability:** This office has a PLETHORA of great information that would help tremendously in advocacy efforts – if only people knew it existed! MCCPTA may want to engage Dr. Wilson to participate in a Delegates Assembly or perhaps that is just a piece of a resource guide but, our Superintendent is very data driven. MCCPTA leaders should continue to review the data MCPS is using to make policy decisions. How can we engage and further the conversation?
<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/sharedaccountability/reports/>
- **County Council Items:** An issue recently brought to my attention – there is currently language before the Council considering banning “wild animal” entertainment which can affect educational programs currently being conducted in our schools.
- **Substitute Teacher Shortage** – This concern was raised by the RM cluster last year during testimony season. MCCPTA should stay on top of this issue and encourage our PTAs to check in with the Principals periodically over the next few months to see how the current pool of substitutes are working out for our schools. <http://www.nbcwashington.com/investigations/DC-Area-School-Districts-Start-Year-With-Shortage-of-Substitute-Teachers-441446653.html>
- **2017 PARCC Results --**
<http://reportcard.msde.maryland.gov/ParccOverview.aspx?PV=74:10:15:AAAA:1:N:0:13:1:1:0:1:1:1:3>
This link will take you to overall performance data from May 2017 testing. Using the tabs at the top, you can click on school and make your way to your schools’ performance. Individual student reports will be sent to home addresses. Two specific issues to keep on MCCPTA horizon that are inter-related:
 - There is an outside review of 2.0 occurring this year that will look at both the written curriculum and the delivery (with a focus on how well MCPS aligns with Common Core, the basis of PARCC testing). MCCPTA Curriculum committee will be following this closely and keeping everyone apprised. The report (along with recommendations) is anticipated to go to the BOE in spring 2018.
 - PARCC test scores are tied to high school graduation. Maryland Board of Education voted last year to make a “3 or higher” on the 1-5 scale a passing score HOWEVER, discussions are underway about testing alternatives to achieve a diploma (especially since “passing” PARCC is to change in the 2019-20 to a “4 or higher”). More on this soon!