

Overview:

With the start of the new school year, my recurring mantra is -- “look for the source!” MCPS is a HUGE system and we know there are variances from one school to another. I really believe parents can be very helpful in creating more parity among our schools through our conversations with one another. Sometimes variation surprises us in the implementation of a standardized policy (e.g., who needs to go through volunteer training?). We are also surprised when we see this in the variations related to access (e.g., a school creating a prerequisite or alternate delivery approaches for courses that aren’t consistent with MCPS course bulletin materials). As parents continue to share information and seek out “sources” – I think we can be part of the solution!

As your VP of Educational Issues, my aim this year is to help you inform your communities about issues that are being discussed and give you the source material so you can dive into the details, if you are inclined!

It’s been a busy month with lots of moving pieces! Enjoy!

September Meetings:

- 9/6 – MCCPTA Executive Committee and BOD Meeting
- 9/16 – MCCPTA Training
- 9/18 – Meeting with Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs (OCIP)
- 9/26 – MCCPTA Delegates Assembly
- 9/27 – GTAMC/GCC Social-Emotional Lecture

September Activity Summary:

- **Math (Secondary):** Continued conversations with MCPS staff to understand the implications surrounding the requirement of students taking 4 years of math IN HIGH SCHOOL, starting with the class of 2018. <http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/Testing/GradRegFAQ051517.pdf>
 - Are parents aware of the impacts (particularly parents of students that struggle in math in Algebra 1 in 8th grade) of the “non-trivial algebra” outlined in the “regular admission” entrance requirements of 12 of the MD state-funded universities.
 - <http://www.usmd.edu/regents/bylaws/SectionIII/> -- scroll down to the appropriate bylaw titled “Policy on Undergraduate Admissions”
 - *“Must include Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II. Students who complete Algebra II prior to their final year must complete the four year mathematics requirement by taking a course or courses that utilize non-trivial algebra.”*
- **Math (Elementary):** Engaged in conversations with parents via email and e-lists, and then with OSSI Directors, on concerns related to co-locating two math courses in a single time block. Encouraging parents to understand why this might be occurring and if it is deemed necessary (e.g., too few students to fill a class), what safeguards are being implemented to ensure both groups of students in both courses are being taught the full course even though they may not have the full time-block allotted.
- **Elementary School Report Card:** Participated in interview on ES Report Cards with Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/report-cards-p-is-for-perplexing-traditional-grades-make-a-comeback/2017/09/17/65a1a2ce-9725-11e7-82e4-f1076f6d6152_story.html?utm_term=.3b960a73d78a
- **Gifted and Talented Students:** Attended events sponsored by MCCPTA GCC and GTAMC on the social-emotional needs of gifted and talented students. Prepared some resource documents to assist GT Liaisons in Magruder Cluster in framing conversations with schools about available options.
- **CTE Report:** Followed Career and Technology Education (CTE) report delivered to BOE on September 12th, 2017, that includes recommendations for how to better prepare our students for the current economic climate (spoiler alert – “college prep” may not be enough in our new economy!) <http://www.boarddocs.com/mabemc/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=AM6RZC6E4CAE>

- Equal Opportunity Schools:** Followed this report, delivered to BOE on September 12th! EOS is designed to support schools in improving the participation of underrepresented populations in AP/IB courses. EOS was piloted in 4 of our high schools last year (Northwest, Magruder, Springbrook, and Wheaton). Enrollment for 2017-18 AP/IB classes increased 40% among students of color and low-income student in AP/IB courses. Note: these 4 schools have only accomplished enrollment increases. Actual performance data in AP courses/exams will not be available until July 2018 but BOE members articulated very clearly, the importance of SUPPORT for these students. Six more high schools will be engaging in EOS in 2017-18 (Blake, Clarksburg, Giathersburg, Kennedy, Northwood, Watkins Mill), increasing the enrollment of underrepresented students in AP/IB for 2018-19 school year.
<http://www.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=ANLNGA5103D4>
- School Calendar:** Participated in focus group on school calendar. Provided materials to MCCPTA e-lists on calendar challenges as outlined during September 19th BOE Policy Management Meeting.
<http://www.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=AQRPDU61D7CD>
 Also participated in interview with Bethesda Beat on behalf of MCCPTA --
<http://www.bethesdamagazine.com/Bethesda-Beat/2017/School-Board-to-Weigh-Cutting-Spring-Break-Academic-Days-in-2018-2019-Calendar/>
- MCPS Program Evaluation Plan.** This plan was presented September 20th --
<http://www.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=AQYND857D466> This plan will create a more strategic approach to closing the achievement gap and is designed to achieve growth for all students. If OSA is true to their intent, we should be able to see stratification identifying the gains of students that begin below, at, and above standards. This is very different than simply looking at the percentage of students that meet a threshold! Seven studies currently underway:

 1. **A Study of MCPS Higher Education Partnerships** This study examines the current partnerships between MCPS and higher education institutions and if/how they address the system's needs
 2. **An Evaluation of Bilingual Assessment Team Redesign** The purpose is to help improve the redesigned process for language dominance assessment and special education determination of ESOL recipients
 3. **An Evaluation of the Kennedy Cluster Watkins Mill Cluster Project** This is a continuation of a multi-year evaluation of services provided to MCPS students and their families by multiple government agencies 18 Current Projects
 4. **Implementation and Outcome Evaluations of Ready Common Core and i-Ready** The goals are: a) examine implementation fidelity and b) to compare student achievement in project schools with achievement of students in matched schools
 5. **Implementation and Outcome Evaluations of Teacher Induction, Retention, & Advancement (TIRA).** (Grant-Funded) To evaluate the impact of multi-faceted induction program on new teachers in Title I schools in terms of self efficacy and retention
 6. **A study of Teacher Recruitment & Retention in MCPS** The goals are to provide a situational analysis of: a) factors driving teacher preparation programs and consequential teacher shortage at the national, state, and regional levels and b) factors related to recruitment & retention of teachers
 7. **Bell Study** MCPS is obligated to do an executive study on the study by a funding source.
- Evidence of Learning:** On September 25, 2017, Dr. Smith outlined classroom/student-focused work and renewed emphasis on learning. This establishes the baseline for our students going forward.
<http://www.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=AMGNAN555428> MCPS, and Dr. Smith in particular, believes in data-driven leadership. It is important that parents engage in this conversation so we know how we are doing and where there are opportunities for improving. We are doing well – but, we can do better.
- MCCPTA Trainings:** Presented in two sessions at the MCCPTA fall training event on September 16th – one on Curriculum and one on Data <http://www.mccpta.org/training-1.html> Both presentations are available on the MCCPTA site under the “Parents.”