

April 2017 CURRICULUM COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair: Tammy Clark clark_9301@verizon.net
Subcommittee Chairs: Amanda Graver – Elementary
Jamahl Johnson – Middle School
Cynthia Simonson – High School

Events:

March 20th – Tammy and Amanda attended the *NGSS Science Night*. The evening event was sponsored by MCPS and MCCPTA. The event was very well attended, with over 500 parents/students participating. The committee shared comments with OCIP during our March 27th meeting (see notes below.)

March 27th - Tammy, Amanda & Cynthia, along with Kim Testa from the GT Committee, met with Erick Lang, MCPS Associate Superintendent OCIP, Scott Murphy, MCPS Director of Secondary Curriculum, Niki Hazel, MCPS Director of Elementary Curriculum, and Ben OuYang, MCPS Director of Career Readiness and Innovative Programs. The Curriculum Committee meets with OCIP staff several times throughout the year in order to share issues being raised by parents and students concerning curriculum and instruction, and to learn of MCPS curriculum changes, updates and events.

The following issues were discussed:

Science Night debriefing: We shared our thoughts on MCPS Science Night. Everyone agreed that the event was very well attended. Many students attended, in particular elementary and middle school students. The purpose was to present information on the shift that is occurring with the adaptation of NGSS to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and how it is leading to changes in the high school science course sequence and the replacement of the Maryland School Assessment in science with the Maryland Integrated Science Assessment (MISA). There were also hands-on science activities during the general sessions and during the breakout sessions for elementary, middle and high school curriculum. Classroom teachers delivered the information in the breakout sessions and MCPS will put the slide show from the break out sessions on their website for parents to reference.

Committee members felt that there was little curriculum information shared, and there was much overlap between the information covered in the middle school and high school sessions. We discussed possible alternatives to how future Science Nights are held – parent information nights – arranged by central office, local school-based science nights, or possible quad-cluster regional events. Committee members expressed the need to continue with curriculum events that are designed and given by central office staff. Having MCPS county-wide parent information nights are necessary because of the variability from school to school.

MCPS is currently collecting and compiling feedback from parents and students. We asked that once the data is ready to please share it with us.

Erick Lang also clarified that the high school chemistry curriculum will be rolled out for 2017-18 school year and teachers will get trained over the summer.

Mathematics: Elementary level - we expressed that parents want to know how enriched and accelerated instruction is present in K-3 classrooms. Nicky Hazel explained that K-3 math curriculum includes enrichment, only. The accelerated math instruction is offered beginning in 4th grade with the Compact Math program. Enrichment is built into the sample tasks each week. Students who are ready for these tasks are to be taught the enriched lessons, not just given the task to do on their own. Enrichment tasks use resources that are aligned with the curriculum, but provide high order thinking and more rigorous questions. There will be training over the summer for primary grade teachers for how to administer the assessments.

Math assessments and reporting include E-MAT, MAP and report cards.

The parameters used to identify students for Compact Math were changed at the end of last year – it opened the program up to more students. In the 2015-16 school year, there were approximately 2000 4th graders in CM across the county. This year the number of 4th graders in CM is approximately 4000 – so the number almost doubled. With regards to how the students are performing, Nicky stated that overall, students in CM this year are performing well at grade level and meeting grade level benchmarks.

Nicky Hazel shared that an RFP was announce for a review of math, English/language arts review for K-8. Looking at how the curriculum is written, taught and assessed. MCPS wants to have an independent consultant to look at what is actually happening in the classrooms with regards to the instruction and assessments. MCPS is hoping to have this review performed in time for next fall.

Middle school level – Scott Murphy confirmed that 11 middles schools eliminated Math 7 for this school year. These schools only offer 7-IM, and in some cases a second period to support students who maybe struggling. We have requested information on the number of middle schools which are planning on removing on grade-level math (Math 7 & 8) for 2017-18.

Our meeting ran over, and we will continue with our concerns with math courses for middle and high school students. In particular, we are concerned with the push for all students to complete Algebra I by 8th grade, and the move towards removing on grade level Geometry and only offering Honors Geometry at some high schools.