**MCCPTA Vice President for Education report to MCCPTA Delegates Assembly [September 28 meeting]**

By Rodney Peele

*Updates since Delegates Assembly report (9/28) in italics*

**Activities (since Aug. 1)**

MCPS IB/AP Coordinator interviews (Aug. 12)

Free State PTSA Annual Meeting (Aug. 13)

MCCPTA Executive Committee (Aug. 19)

MCCPTA Gifted Education Committee meeting (Sept. 2)

Julius West MS Back to School Night (Sept. 2)

MCPS Social Studies Curriculum Focus Group (Sept. 8)

Richard Montgomery HS Back to School Night (Sept. 9)

Parkland MS PTSA Meeting (Sept. 14)

MCPS Regulation KLA-RA Review Team (Sept. 20)

Richard Montgomery HS PTA (Sept. 21)

MCPS HS Choice Programs (Sept. 22)

Richard Montgomery HS IB 101 (Sept. 23)

MCPS Curriculum Advisory Assembly (Sept. 27)

MCPS Regulation KLA-RA Review Team (Sept. 28)

*MCCPTA Executive Committee and MCPS Interim Superintendent (Sept. 29)*

*MCCPTA Executive Committee (Oct. 6)*

*MCPS magnet application and identification feedback (Oct. 6)*

*MCCPTA Executive Committee (Oct. 12)*

**Information:**

Committees seek volunteers:

* Curriculum (chair Michelle Gluck) [curriculum@mccpta.org](mailto:curriculum@mccpta.org).
* Special Education (chair Stephanie Frumkin) [SpecialEd@mccpta.org](mailto:SpecialEd@mccpta.org).
* Gifted Education (chair Audra Dove) [Gifted@mccpta.org](mailto:Gifted@mccpta.org).
* ESOL (chair Jay Guan) [ESOL@mccpta.org](mailto:ESOL@mccpta.org).
* Academic Calendar Ad Hoc (chair Francesco Paganini) at [fpaganini@yahoo.com](mailto:fpaganini@yahoo.com).
* Safe Tech (chair Gail Ravnitzky Silberglied)

Standardized Testing:

* SAT/PSAT: MCPS schools are offering SAT/PSAT testing for 10th, 11th or 12th graders on Wednesday Oct. 13.
* SAT participation by seniors nationally declined from 2.2 million in 2020 to 1.5 million in 2021, while the percent relying on school-day testing (rather than traditional weekend testing) increased from 43% (2019) to 49% (2020) to 62% (2021). Weekend test takers had higher scores (1158 to 999).
* PSAT participation declined nationally from 3.76 million in 2020 to 1.85 million in 2021.
* Mean SAT scores increased from 1051 for Class of 2020 to 1060 for Class of 2021.

Graduation requirements – tests

* Students enrolled in English (grade 10), Algebra I, Biology (or Life Science), or Government are required to take an Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) examination for the corresponding subject for graduation. (As recently as 2017-18, students needed to pass these examinations to graduate.)
* *If students passed the English, Algebra I, Government or Science course in 2019-2020, the graduation test requirement was waived.*
* Students who passed one of those courses (other than government) last school year (2020-21) are taking shorter/abbreviated versions of those tests this fall, unless an exception or waiver applies.
* Students enrolled this year in an ELA 10, Algebra I, Biology (or Life Science), or Government course will be required to take (not pass) the current MCAP assessments for graduation. Students must pass the respective course.
* Students enrolling in those 4 courses next year will be required to take the assessments and the scores will count for the student’s grade in the respective course.

Graduation requirements – health

* MSDE increased the required health education credits for HS graduation from 0.5 to 1.0, beginning with students entering 9th grade this fall (expected graduation in 2025). MCPS has not announced how/when it will transition students, such as when students might take a second semester of health, or when/whether the current semester course will be revised into a year-long course.

Graduation requirements – physical education

* MSDE requires HS students take 0.5 credits of physical education, but MCPS requires 1.0 credits to graduate. MCCPTA representatives provided feedback to MCPS on potential revisions to the PE graduation credit requirement, including whether or not to reduce the MCPS PE requirement, or to reduce the number of credits needed in other electives. We expect this topic to go to Board of Education in late October.

Social Studies curriculum

* MCCPTA representatives participated in MCPS focus groups on future ES social studies curricula. MCPS considering purchase of new social studies resources and/or curriculum in 2022 to better meet MCPS vision and MSDE frameworks.

MCPS complaint/appeals process:

* At the instruction of MCPS leadership after advocacy by MCCPTA, MCPS staff initiated a Review Team for Regulation KLA-RA on complaints and appeals from the public. We anticipate an overhaul of the public complaint process to be recommended to the Board of Education in October.

George B. Thomas Learning Academy Online:

* Kicked off Sept. 25
* Held Saturday mornings 8:30-11 a.m.
* Cost: $85/semester ($40 for FARMS)

Evidence of Learning:

* MCPS shared data with the Board of Education on 2020-21 performance data for grades 2, 5, 8, and 11. Not surprisingly, performance dropped last year after more than one year of all-virtual classes. Disadvantaged populations and ES students saw the largest performance declines, as was predicted. MCPS promised school improvements, focused instruction in literary and math at the ES level, acceleration (moving forward with grade level content and filling in missing gaps later), and high-dosage tutoring.

Memo: <https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/C72KVH53B5A4/$file/Evidence%20of%20Learning%20210921.pdf>

Data:

<https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/C74J22499CF6/$file/Evidence%20of%20Learning%20210921%20PPT.pdf>

Choice Programs:

* <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/specialprograms/>
* *MCPS recently announced that, due to the pandemic, aptitude testing (such as the CogAT) will not be part of the identification and admissions process for the second straight year. MCCPTA raised concerns that this would disadvantage underserved populations due to removal of the aptitude data point and overreliance on the remaining achievement (MAP) data points.*
* HS application information is available October 1. Presentation and FAQs available at the link above. Program-by-program open houses available in October, and applications due November 5. *Selection measures will include the application (including student essay), MAP scores, and report cards.*
* MS identification/selection process to begin this fall, following universal screening of all rising 6th graders. Selection m*easures will include MAP-R, MAP-M, reading level and report cards. Student performance on standardized tests will be compared to students from the same school. All students who meet certain, undisclosed level of performance will be guaranteed magnet or local accelerated courses, with students selected to the magnet programs by lottery.*
* ES identification/selection process to begin this winter.
* GT Identification: MCPS sent updated notification letters to families of rising 3rd graders at the end of August. See <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/enriched/> and the August 2021 update.

Grading and Reporting:

* As shared on MCCPTA list serves, MCPS updated guidance for grading and reporting for secondary schools (middle and high schools) in the last couple of years, and made additional, temporary revisions last year when students were all attending classes virtually. Now that students are back in school buildings on pre-pandemic schedules, MCPS updated its guidance again. The guidance states that MCPS is returning to pre-pandemic grading policies, but also made some revisions based on the experience from the last school year and ongoing stakeholder input (including MCCPTA). The new 2021-22 guidance is available here:

<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/grading/report-cards-secondary.aspx>

* Student-friendlier philosophy and guiding principles, but it’s not clear any MCPS secondary school shared the new guidance with students or families.
* Improved consistency across the teaching team (within a school), particularly with grading, assessments/assignments, weighting and reassessments, but still lacks uniformity across schools and the county.
* District assessments, including ESOL assessments, are no longer 10% of the grade (continuing a change made after the first marking period last fall), but those scores should still be accessible on ParentVue.
* Recommended number range for homework and graded assignments, including an expectation that exceeding the recommended number range requires consultation with school leadership on student workloads, but not clear these decisions have been shared with students and families. AP, IB, and double-period courses appear to be frequently granted permission to issue more assignments than the MCPS recommended range.
* MCPS recommends using interim reports and end of marking period as deadline benchmarks (recall the temporary "end of marking period" deadline last year) but schools appear to be business-as-usual with individual teachers or departments setting deadlines and due dates.
* An updated “Z” grade policy – making a “Z” appear as a 50% score instead of zero (0) for assignments that can still be turned in late (with up to a letter grade reduction) – but causing confusion in gradebook. A “Z” can be changed to zero (with parental advance notice) once the assignment can no longer be submitted, but there must be two-way communication with parents before a zero (0) is entered in a gradebook, indicating it is too late to turn in.