

May Meetings/Conference Calls:

5/1 – Curriculum Review Board
5/9 -- Curriculum Discussion/PTA Start Up with Wheaton Cluster ES
5/10 – District Assessment Meeting
5/14 – Meeting with Dr. Navarro and Dr. Statham on student opportunities and concerns
5/14 – 30th Anniversary Special Education Awards event
5/17 – Accountability Model Stakeholder Group
6/2 -- Maryland State Department of Education, Principal Rubric Review/Feedback
6/4 – MCCPTA Training Event

May Activity Summary:

Curriculum Update/Survey – Several key meetings last month involved gearing up for the anticipated curriculum review. That effort has now been postponed. More information on this can be found on the website -- <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/curriculum-review.aspx> I provided comment to the Washington Post as an officer of MCCPTA, available at this link -- https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/potential-conflict-of-interest-derails-curriculum-rollout-in-md-school-system/2018/05/25/d28c96c2-5e9f-11e8-9ee3-49d6d4814c4c_story.html?utm_term=.73c798ae6b35

Course Choices: Last month included following up with MCPS upper management on some of the practices of our high schools where students are being denied placement in courses. A few examples – a group of rising 9th graders took the prerequisite tech course at their local middle school but were denied placement in the next computer science course in the series because the school’s requirement “you have to be in 10th grade.” Rising 9th and 10th graders are denied access to social science courses that the school’s course bulletin states is for 11th and 12th graders (even though the MCPS course bulletin shows it is available for 9th – 10th – 11th -12th with no prerequisites).

Summer Packets: I raised this concern last month with OCIP because with students in two different high schools, I was stunned by the difference in what each high school puts out as “summer assignments.” One daughter had a packet for most every course; the other had zero (not even a summer reading assignment). MCPS gives full discretion to the school on whether to post summer assignments – most are “optional” and will do little to bridge any gaps in understanding but can help students practice already mastered skills. Last summer, since my second daughter had none, I went on a quest to see if there were any packets on other high schools’ sites (picture jaw open). We aren’t “systematic” in this area yet but I’ll be looking at the various school posting this summer – I hope you do too!

School “Research”: Another area I’m scratching at is reports that schools are trying some things (sometimes referenced as research and at other times called experimenting) that makes me wonder “who is authorizing this?” We’ve had a few instances shared and we are asking MCPS upper management to provide some guidelines on required permission/review/disclosure where students are being used to support research for graduate-level studies, trying out theories, etc. We don’t want to thwart innovation but rather want to ensure that the work is being well documented and can be replicated (or remediated) if needed.

District Committee on Assessments: As part of the “More Learning, Less Testing Act of 2017”, this group is looking at the legislation and working through specific components to ensure any district assessments have clear objectives and are tied to student learning. The gentle reader can follow this work at this site -- <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/boe/community/assessments.aspx>

Accountability Models: In May, several stakeholder groups met with the new OSSI leadership to discuss the coming changes with regard to the implementation of ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act). The aim is to have high expectations for all students in all schools. To pull directly from Dr. Smith's memo to the BOE:

An MCPS School Accountability Model must:

- Set a clear expectation that schools maintain high levels of achievement for all students; not just some, stretching students to meet and exceed the most rigorous of standards.
- Communicate whether schools are meeting those expectations for all students, especially for those students identified as being historically underserved.
- Celebrate schools that show progress and/or meet or exceed expectations for all students as well as those schools demonstrating accelerated progress toward that goal.
- Deploy targeted resources and differentiated supports to schools that do not meet these expectations in order to help them improve.

[https://www.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/AYCS3X6CDF48/\\$file/School%20Accountability%20Model%20.pdf](https://www.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/AYCS3X6CDF48/$file/School%20Accountability%20Model%20.pdf)

Watch for this to be a hot topic next fall!

Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) Rubric: In early June, Tracie Potts and I attended a meeting with Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to discuss the changes to the PSEL (in other words, the principal) evaluation tool that is being deployed in the 2018-19 school year. It was interesting to learn that in the State of Maryland, 98% of the principals are rated as either "effective" or "highly effective" leaving only 2% in either "developing" or "ineffective" categories. Hmm... MSDE intends to have some parent sessions during the next year so parents have a better understanding of what they can anticipate from the principals. The rubric is very detailed and encompasses the following standards:

- Standard 1: Mission, Vision, and Core Values
- Standard 2: Ethics and Professional Norms
- Standard 3: Equity and Cultural Responsiveness
- Standard 4: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
- Standard 5: Community of Care and Support for Students
- Standard 6: Professional Capacity of School Personnel
- Standard 7: Professional Community for Teachers and Staff
- Standard 8: Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community
- Standard 9: Operations and Management
- Standard 10: School Improvement

Coming Soon – Grades: I was contacted by the Washington Post again asking if parents have seen an effect on the grades since the elimination of the final exams. Those of us with high school students know that when a student gets a C one quarter and a B the next, those two grades equal a B (regardless of the actual percentage of either grade). Is that a form of grade inflation? Watch your WaPo columns for the next few weeks and see where this leads us!