

**November Meetings/Conference Calls:**

- 11/1 – Call with MCPS clarifying Maryland Public Information Act Request
- 11/1 – MCCPTA BOD Meeting
- 11/8 – Call with Montgomery County Council -- Education Staff
- 11/13 – “College and Career Pathways Planning” Meeting with MCPS (scheduled for January 11)
- 11/20 – Meeting with OCIP and OSSI – Focus on Elementary Schools
- 11/20 – MCCPTA “Mixer” with State Delegates
- 11/27 – MCCPTA Advocacy Priorities
- 11/28 – MCCPTA Delegates Assembly

**November Activity Summary:**

- **High School – Revised Chemistry Course:** The adoption of Next Generation Science Standards includes some changes in the course curriculum. Of particular interest is what has occurred with Chemistry. After hearing from a parent and then checking in with a few other chemistry teachers, we asked OCIP to host a conversation to include Central Office, parents, current Honors Chemistry teachers and AP Chemistry teachers (that have the highest AP exam mean scores as reported by OSA) to talk about any “gaps” that exist between the new chemistry curriculum and the starting point of the AP Chemistry course. At present, chemistry teachers still don’t have Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 course plans, but several teachers have expressed concern that the new curriculum might not have the student as prepared for the AP chemistry course as they were under the prior curriculum. We’d like to address this concern in the early spring so appropriate summer work can be assigned to bridge the gap for next year’s AP Chemistry students (and then, of course, work to remedy the gap for future students).
- **School Improvement Plans (SIP):** This is an area where it seems we may have a very uneven approach within MCPS. Some PTA Presidents have been intimately involved in their school’s SIP – having been involved during the summer and taken a seat at the table in discussing strategies to improve the school. Other PTA Presidents have no idea what the SIP is because a Principal may have asked a few select parents (not necessarily involved with the PTA) if they want to be included and if those selected parents aren’t interested in participating, there may be no parent involvement in the development! And of course, it seems most others fall somewhere in between. Each school is required to create a SIP each year. Every fall, it is sent to OSSI for review and approval. Right about now, the approved plans are in the hands of the school. Some schools then take those plans and share widely with the school community – holding a meeting with parents (or delivering the plan at a PTA meeting). Other schools might not. Some schools post the SIP to the website. Others don’t. If you want to be involved in the school’s SIP, according to the MCPS website, parents just need to contact the school. If you are unsure about the parent involvement in your school’s SIP or you want to review, please contact the school. <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/departments/decps/title1/Parent-Involvement-in-SIP-Process.pdf>
- **Climate Surveys:** As sent out through the Delegates list, Office of Shared Accountability (OSA) has posted the results for public review. Parents can access both the parent survey and the staff survey through this link. <http://sharedaccountability.mcpsmd.org/SurveyResults/content.php> I encourage our parents will look at the full survey, review the percentage of staff that responded, and consider the entire survey as *one* part of the School Improvement Plan discussions you might be engaging in with your school’s leadership team!
- **MPIA Request:** As mentioned in last month’s report, we have asked MCPS for clarifying information – both system-wide but also on a high school by high school basis – clarifying what areas are creating the dynamic where approximately half our MCPS graduates are not meeting the eligibility requirements outlined by the Board of Regents for the University System of Maryland. By raising this conversation

now – well in advance of selecting next year’s schedules – MCCPTA wants to create awareness among parents and engage in a conversation about pathways students are taking.

- **Math (Secondary):** Continued conversations with MCPS staff, questioning “one size” programming – requiring all students in certain schools to be on the accelerated pathway. MCPS has stated in the math curriculum brochure – *“It is anticipated that these courses (Math 7 and Math 8) will phase out over time as more students reach proficiency in grade-level standards.”*  
<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedfiles/curriculum/math/mathematics-program.pdf>.  
The decision to remove Math 7 and Math 8 as options are local school decisions and it is unclear what metric is being used to suggest “proficiency” and whether that is being used evenly across the school system. Intuitively, we would expect the courses would be phased out first in our highest performing middle schools with the fewest impacts – but, that isn’t the case. So, we are asking questions to bring more transparency to how these decisions are being made and ensuring all students have viable pathways.
- **Math (Elementary):** Continued a conversation with OSSI about the criteria being used from school to school in determining who is eligible/invited to participate in the Compacted Math opportunities. Again, these are local level decisions and some parents are not very well informed about how those decisions are being made and sometimes, how the classes are structured. Also raised concerns about “late bloomers” that may not have been identified in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade but what provisions/opportunities are available when a student demonstrates ability/need to participate in the accelerated course in 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade.
- **College and Career Pathways:** Worked with MCPS and the MCCPTA Curriculum Committee to design a dynamic meeting on January 11<sup>th</sup> (snow date – January 17) at Gaithersburg High School specifically for 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders and their parents. This focuses on information that can help parents assist students in mapping out a pathway that optimizes the opportunities available across the county and aligns with the student’s interests.
- **Elementary School Report Cards:** Worked with OCIP to create an opportunity for representative parents to participate in a feedback meeting on the report card – specifically focused on how MCPS can improve the communications going forward. As of 12/1, only half the clusters are represented. Ideally, we will have 2-3 individuals from each cluster participating in the feedback session on Wednesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>.