MCCPTA Gifted Education Committee Report

October 2021

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**Selected Meetings/Calls/Events since last report**

8/31, 9/21 DEI Restorative Justice Practices (RJP) subcommittee meetings

9/8/21 MCPS Elementary Social Studies Focus Group

9/3, 9, 10/7 DEI Committee Meetings

9/13/21- Various meetings with MCPS math department in preparation for 10/1/21 upcoming zoom presentation

9/28/21 GEC introduction meeting w/ Dr. Debra Mugge (Acting Supervisor, AEI)

9/28/21 Delegates Assembly Meeting

10/4/21 Call with Dr. Bruce Reigel, MSDE Lead Specialist for Gifted and Talented Education

10/6/21 Criteria based selection process meeting with MCPS

10/11/21 Meeting with Montgomery Blair Magnet Foundation

10/11/21 Mitigation of Learning Loss Meeting

10/12/21 Special Ed Committee zoom presentation

**Upcoming (dates TBD)**

GT in MCPS community zoom presentation

GEC/GT Liaison Welcome zoom

Elementary ELA community zoom presentation

Math Options community zoom presentation

Twice Exceptionality community zoom presentation

**Key Activities/Concerns**

1. **Committee Name Change**

Formerly known as Gifted Child Committee, we are now named Gifted Education Committee.

1. **GT Liaison Recruitment**

GEC continues to recruit PT(S)A GT Liaisons in its effort to have representatives in every school. We are working on ways to bring on schools that typically have no representation on the committee.

1. **Community Outreach**

Ongoing management of email listserv for GT Liaisons and Gifted Education Committee. Created a Facebook page that we promote through local PTA Facebook pages and GT Liaisons. We currently have 283 FB members. We cross-promote on MCCPTA, Special Education, and ESOL Facebook pages, and MCCPTA list serve.

1. **Communicating Priorities for GT**

We are preparing to send AEI our list of longstanding and immediate concerns and questions. They include but are not limited to: inequity of local programming across elementary schools; lack of minimum requirements for delivery of GT programming and above grade level (AGL) enrichment across elementary and middle schools; lack of oversight, accountability, and measurements in the delivery of programming and AGL enrichment; urgency of minimum requirements, consistent and equitable local programming and AGL enrichment across schools as a result of second year using lottery and no CogAT.

1. **Criteria Based Selection Process 2021-2022***:* **GEC Committee Alert for Community**

MCPS recently announced that it will use the same selection process for high school and middle school criteria based magnet programs as it did last year. It has not yet released the criteria thresholds that will be used; however, it is likely the thresholds will be similar to last year’s (which can be found on the DCCAPS site). This year, like last, MCPS will not administer the cognitive abilities test (CogAT). MCPS will rely on achievement data such as MAP, grades (and likely MCAP) which we believe will not form an accurate picture of each child. Though no single measurement tool can identify high potential, achievement data points only measure the level of mastery a student has obtained in the skills they have been taught.

GEC’s first concern is the exclusion of the CogAT test. This ability test measures potential achievement and provides data points that may contribute to the identification of students whose achievement based performance (grades, MAP, MCAP) is marginal. For myriad reasons, not all GT students are high-achievers. We fear students will be missed because locally normed achievement data does not provide a robust enough picture.

GEC’s second concern is the large number of identified students who will be placed in the lottery pool but who will not be selected to attend a program. In particular, middle schoolers who remain in their home school will have limited opportunities to have their needs met. Though GEC did ask MCPS in early August to be included in discussions about selection process changes, we were not. After the selection process decision was made, MCPS did provide two meeting dates to capture stakeholder feedback in small groups.

We believe minimum requirements, oversight and accountability need to be implemented for ALL student programming and enrichment--not just GT--in order to ensure equitable access and opportunity.

**GEC created a public facing community alert (see pdf file “MCCPTA Gifted Education Committee Alert: Selection Process 10-14-21”) with links to MCPS data and reports surrounding the selection process. It will be distributed on the GEC FB page and on the GT Liaison listserv. Feel free to share it with your communities.**

1. **Additions to the Accelerated and Enriched Instruction (AEI) MCPS Website**

Through the AEI Feedback Council and other venues, GEC expressed to AEI the need for public-facing information about what resources and materials have been made available to schools in support of GT curricula and enrichment. As of September '21, AEI posted information specific to Benchmark Advance enrichment guidance. Sadly, the resources AEI provided to teachers are used at the sole discretion of schools/teachers. There are no minimum requirements for use (which we believe may be a violation of policy IOA). As we've mentioned before, OCIP (which AEI falls under) only provides guidance and support. They are not able to enforce. We anticipate the addition of Eureka Math enrichment guidance in the coming month. And we have asked for information to be posted regarding middle school acceleration and above grade level enrichment for English and science as noted in policy IOA.

1. **Math Options**

We have been corresponding with parents and collecting input via a Google Form regarding parents’ concerns regarding adjustments to the advanced math pathways in elementary and middle school. Because of omissions in content due to distance learning, MCPS has applied articulation criteria and guidance that resulted in fewer students enrolled in Compacted Math 4/5, Compacted 5/6 and Applied Investigations in Mathematics. The changes were a response to feedback from a Johns Hopkins study that the Curriculum 2.0 Compacted Math courses omitted too much foundational content, resulting in poorer outcomes for students later in the math pathway.

MCPS eliminated Investigations in Mathematics as a pathway option from Compacted 5/6. Depending on student readiness, after Compacted Math 5/6 a student will be placed in one of three 6th grade courses: Math 6, AMP6+, or Applied Investigations into Mathematics (AIM). IM6 is no longer a math course option. This change has caused confusion among some parents whose children took Compacted 5/6 but who were not placed in AIM. We are asking MCPS for greater transparency in the criteria used for 6th grade math course placement, including whether locally normed MAP-M scores are considered and how. We further have expressed concerns that the criteria for the DCCAPS lottery into the Takoma Park and Clemente science and math magnets appears to be less selective than the criteria used to place students in AIM at their local schools.

1. **GEC Community Zoom presentations in the works**

GEC is preparing the following community zooms; “GT in MCPS”, “Elementary ELA”, “Math Options in MCPS”. Once we have dates and times scheduled, we will advertise to the MCPS community.

1. **Ongoing advocacy for multi-year goals including advanced elementary literacy and middle school science and literacy coursework**

Continued advocacy and preparation of community information materials regarding expanded access to elementary and middle school advanced coursework.

1. **Departure of long-time AEI Supervisor, Kurshanna Dean**

Kurshanna Dean, former Supervisor of AEI and champion of identifying, nurturing, and supporting GT students in MCPS, has taken on a new role as an elementary administrator. GEC is grateful for the tremendous work she and her small and mighty team accomplished during her long tenure in AEI. Though we will very much miss working with her, we wish her much success in her new role. In August, Dr. Debra Mugge, recently retired WHS principal, was made Acting Supervisor of AEI.