Selected Meetings/Calls/Events since last report

12/12/19	Superintendent's Budget Advisory Committee
1/16	MSDE GTAC Meeting
1/23	Border Study Community Meeting
1/30	Planning meeting for GT meeting (Niki Hazel, Audra, Evelyn)
1/30	AEI Feedback Council
2/13	Board of Directors Meeting
2/25	Delegates' Assembly

Upcoming

3/12	Board of Directors Meeting
3/24	Delegates' Assembly
4/16	Board of Directors Meeting
4/22	Curriculum Committee meeting with OCIP/OSSI
4/22	AEI Feedback Council Meeting
4/23	MSDE GTAC Meeting

Key Activities/Concerns

1) **Evaluation of "magnet expansion" classes in local schools still pending**

   As part of the "Choice Study Response" revision of the ES and MS magnet application programs, MCPS introduced three classes for local schools to offer students who met magnet admission criteria but were not offered, or did not accept, magnet placements. These classes are the Enriched Literacy Curriculum (ELC) in elementary school, and Humanities and "enhanced" IM in middle school. To date, MCPS has released demographic data on the cohorts offered admission into these programs, but no curriculum, achievement or assessment data to demonstrate what happens to these students once they get in, even though I've been asking for some time. The ELC is reportedly being evaluated this year (its third year of implementation) for a report to the BOE in July.

   We have been informed that the enhanced IM will be discontinued as there is not enough difference from the regular IM curriculum to make separate cohort classes meaningful. There are no plans that we know of for cohort math classes for the identified students in Grades 7 or 8. We have asked that MCPS consider replacing the failed math experiment with a cohort-based magnet level science class, but this idea has yet to gain any traction.

2) **New GT COMAR Developments**

While MCPS continues to exhibit undeserved complacency toward the requirements of the new GT COMAR, AEI has put considerable energy into providing opportunities for teachers to achieve the GT certification called for in the COMAR for teachers assigned to teach GT-identified students. We look forward to hearing more about the success of this initiative.

3) **Rollout of the new curriculum**

As was the case with Curriculum 2.0, the new curriculum MCPS has purchased does not include any Advanced/GT components and MCPS will have to create its own modifications for GT instruction. It is still unclear what will happen to the existing Enriched Literacy and alternative Math pathways. What is clear, however, is that as always, the pressure to deliver instruction in mixed ability classrooms in K-8 (and beyond) continues unabated.

At the January AEI meeting, we received not-for-distribution previews of MCPS plans for cluster grouping within a one-size-fits-all math pathway that strives to get most students through Algebra I by Grade 8. While the acknowledgement of the need for cluster grouping was encouraging, I was dismayed to see that the proposals for classroom planning proposes to group the highest and lowest achieving clusters in the same classroom, while grouping the middle clusters in various combinations in other classrooms. A teacher on the feedback committee noted that there is quite a lot of literature advocating against that structure – not because it holds the top students back (although it does) but because it is **demoralizing and counterproductive for the struggling students**. This comment went unacknowledged. I also noted the complete absence of data supporting the foundational premise that Algebra I by Grade 8 with a grade of C is a useful goal for struggling math students. My comment was met with a statement of "belief" that it's a good idea notwithstanding the majority sentiment to the contrary (Algebra I is still considered to be a high school credit class everywhere, including in the state of Maryland, and 60 percent of school districts consider it the on grade level class for Grade 9) and the aforementioned lack of supporting data.