

OCTOBER 2018 CURRICULUM COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair: Tammy Clark clark_9301@verizon.net
Subcommittee Chairs: Amanda Graver – Secondary
Rodney Peele - Elementary

Events:

October 10th meeting with OCIP - Tammy, Amanda & Rodney met with Scott Murphy, MCPS Director of Secondary Curriculum, Niki Hazel, MCPS Director of Elementary Curriculum, and Dr. Betty Collins, interim Associate Superintendent, Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs (OCIP). The Curriculum Committee meets with OCIP staff several times throughout the year in order to share issues being raised by parents and students concerning curriculum and instruction, and to learn of MCPS curriculum changes, updates and events.

The following issues were discussed:

- *Status of the Curriculum Selection Process:* We expressed continued concern regarding the selection process for the new K-8 curriculum. The RFP deadline has past and all the proposals are currently being evaluated with finalists being identified by mid November. The vendors (finalists) will then give demonstrations to the review committee. The review committee will give their feedback in December and the recommended vendor will be presented to the BOE and the January 2019 BOE meeting.
- *AP Course concerns:* We shared the concerns that members have raised regarding disparities between AP courses at various high schools. We want MCPS to provide more oversight at the county level as to the integrity of AP courses from school to school. Textbooks, resources and supports vary school by school, as does the assigning of instructors for AP courses. MCPS does not have a centralized way to designate or assign AP teachers. The principal at each high school is responsible for which teachers are responsible for teaching AP classes.

We also expressed a need to look at the correlation between AP scores and the grades of students in the courses. Scott Murphy explained that this conversation needs to include OSSI directors at each cluster level. This data review should be routine at the cluster level. We emphasized a need for this data at the aggregate level – across all of our high schools.

- *Free SAT day on April 9th, 2019* – All high schools will participate in the Free SAT day on April 9th. The free test will not include the essay portion. Some high schools will offer the test with the essay portion for a cost. We requested that the high schools which do offer the essay be identified and that students have an option to take the test at such

schools if a student wishes to include the essay part of the SAT. A student may request to take the ACT instead of the SAT and will be given a waiver to pay for the ACT.

- *MISA clarification* – Passing the Maryland Integrated Science Assessment (MISA) is a Maryland Department of Education graduation requirement beginning with the class of 2022. This year is the first full field test of the MISA, which is administered towards the end of junior year (after completing 3 years of science courses.) The state does not say how MCPS should integrate the subjects, only that the test covers topics from earth science, biology, chemistry and physics. There are different science course pathways available to students, and we raised concern over some ESOL students who may not begin taking a science course until their sophomore year, which would mean that the student would not be ready for the MISA their junior year. Scott explained that there are fall and January dates set for administering the MISA, if necessary.

Scott also explained that currently, AP or IB tests do not satisfy the science testing requirement for graduation. For example, the state testing requirement US government is satisfied by taking the AP Government test. This is not the case with the science testing. MCPS believes that students who take AP or IB science tests should meet the state testing requirement. MCPS would like help advocating for the state to accept the AP/IB tests.

- *New Reading Level Policy for grades 3-5* – We expressed concern over the communication to parents regarding the new reading level policy for the upper elementary grades. Niki Hazel has sent letters to all elementary principals which further clarifies the new reading level policy. All students are taught and graded on grade level reading materials. In the past, if a student were reading below grade level, they would be assessed on their performance at that level, which could have presented as a B or P on a report card. Now, all students are assessed and graded on their performance with grade level materials, which may result in lower grades on report cards. A student's reading lexile measure, as reported on the MAP-R tests, gives a more accurate reflection of the students reading ability. Resources regarding lexile measures need to be made available to parents so that they can best support their student.