



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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MARYLAND

December 8, 2011



Mrs. Jeanne Taylor
Special Education Chair
Montgomery County Council of
Parent Teacher Associations, Inc.
2096 Gaither Road, Suite 204
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Mrs. Taylor:

Thank you for your e-mail of November 15, 2011, regarding special education services in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). In your e-mail, you reference the *Transition Team Report* and the variability within and among schools, classrooms, and students. You mention that an example of variability exists in MCPS as it relates to the implementation of the special education hours-based staffing model in 31 middle schools instead of all middle schools in the county. You also discuss the need to address the variability that exists among staff members regarding the implementation of differentiated instruction for students with disabilities who are being served in their home schools in the general education environment.

Since my appointment as superintendent of schools and through the Listen and Learn sessions held throughout the county and the recent Special Education Advisory Committee meeting, I have been learning about special education services and practices in MCPS. I am familiar with the hours-based staffing model and I support it. This staffing model ensures an equitable distribution of staff members to address the needs of individual schools and students. I am pleased to report that beginning with the 2012–2013 school year, the remaining seven middle schools will transition to hours-based staffing. One of my goals is to ensure that all middle schools countywide have access to this staffing model.

One important area identified in the *Transition Team Report* is the need for additional professional development. I am in agreement and recognize the importance of ensuring that teachers have the skills necessary to provide differentiated instruction in diverse classrooms that include students with disabilities. The Office of Special Education and Student Services, in collaboration with the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs, has conducted required professional development annually since 2007, with an emphasis on differentiated instruction. I strongly believe that required professional development must continue to be a major focus of our school system. In order to achieve this goal, MCPS, in partnership with our employee associations, will continue to support and advocate for opportunities to ensure that teachers have the skills necessary to provide effective teaching and learning for all students.

Office of the Superintendent of Schools

850 Hungerford Drive, Room 122 ♦ Rockville, Maryland 20850 ♦ 301-279-3381

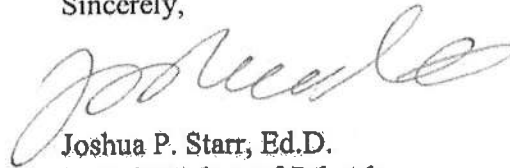
Mrs. Jeanne Taylor

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December 8, 2011

Thank you for your advocacy on behalf of students with disabilities, their families, and MCPS staff members.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Joshua P. Starr".

Joshua P. Starr, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

JPS:ra

Copy to:

Dr. Lacey
Mrs. Richardson
Ms. Mason
Ms. Tribble