



April 3, 2009

Ms. Shirley Brandman, President
Board of Education
Carver Educational Services Center, Rm 123
850 Hungerford Dr.
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Ms Brandman,

The Montgomery County Council of PTAs (MCCPTA) adopted the Resolution on Accelerated and Enriched Instruction on March 24, 2009. As you are aware, the Board of Education Policy Committee has added Policy IOA: Gifted and Talented Education to its 2009 work plan. As the Accelerated and Enriched Instruction Committee and others within MCPS work to offer suggestions to this policy, we feel it is important to clarify our expectations regarding the services which will be provided to every student who has the academic ability, motivation and interest in receiving additional academic challenges beyond that which is provided to similar aged peers.

Our members have taken the position that it is necessary to continue the global screening process which currently occurs in Grade 2 to identify students who need additional academic challenge. In addition, it is important to provide additional screenings throughout a student's elementary, middle and high school years. It is necessary to capture those students who are new to the system and students whose needs, motivations and interests develop over time.

MCCPTA requests that the school system actively support the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan for the Montgomery County Public Schools. Our Call to Action: Pursuit of Excellence states that MCPS is committed to supporting a strong and active parent community. MCCPTA therefore feels it is important to inform parents when their children need additional challenge and by detailing the programs, learning objectives, or the sequenced and systematic curriculum which will meet their needs. To make the most of these opportunities, students must also be guaranteed the opportunity to work in groups of students with similar academic abilities, motivation and interests.

MCCPTA also feels that it is important that the programs which are developed for students who need accelerated and enriched instruction are delivered consistently and with fidelity in every school across the county. To ensure this goal is met, MCPS must monitor the implementation and effectiveness of Accelerated and Enriched Instruction as

it is delivered in every school. By collecting, analyzing, monitoring and publishing key data points in Accelerated and Enriched instruction in grades K-12 in all core subject areas, MCPS and parents can determine where improvement still needs to be made.

MCCPTA has gone on record in the past with resolutions related to gifted and talented education (see attachments). All children deserve appropriate challenges to meet their educational needs. MCCPTA recognizes that parents want strong policies and regulations when it comes to defining the school system's approach to educating all children. Parents also want the implementation of both to be in a consistent manner, so as to not leave any child's potential unsupported in the classroom.

Each child needs appropriate services to address any needs that warrant additional academic challenges beyond that which is provided to similar aged peers. MCPS must provide the educational avenue for all children to reach their maximum academic potential. No children should be held back regardless of their ability. MCPS should not be complacent in this area. The school system must be proactive in supporting the ranges of abilities exhibited by all children in the school system. The classroom environment must cultivate each gift a child may have by making sure each child has access to a challenging curriculum and environment.

As the Accelerated and Enriched Instruction Committee and others within MCPS continue their work related to Policy IOA and Regulation IOA-RA, it is important to listen to the consistent underlying theme. Parents want to be heard and want their input valued when it comes to the revisions of both the policy and regulation on Gifted Education.

MCPS must support its own statements regarding parental involvement in the decision making process. Regulation ABC-RA Parent Involvement states that MCPS will solicit and consider parent comments and concerns, and makes use of parent talents while respecting the right of parents to serve as advocates. All parents deserve to have input when it comes to the education of their children. Value must be given to their suggestions and those same suggestions must be incorporated in the revisions of both the policy and regulation related to gifted education.

MCCPTA appreciates your taking the time to hear and consider our concerns. We look forward to continuing to work in a collaborative manner to support children in all educational settings across Montgomery County.

Sincerely,



Kay Romero, President, Montgomery County Council of PTAs

Cc. Ms. Patricia O'Neill, Vice President, Board of Education
Dr. Jerry Weast, Superintendent, MCPS
Mr. Marty Creel, Director, Department of Enriched and Innovative Programs



Resolution on Accelerated and Enriched Instruction
Approved by the MCCPTA Delegates
March 24, 2009

Whereas:

MCPS Strategic Plan states that “A high-quality education is the fundamental right of every child.”

MCCPTA believes that, to ensure that right, every child should be appropriately challenged in accordance with his or her academic ability, motivation and interests.

MCCPTA passed a *Resolution on Mathematics* on April 24, 2001, a *Resolution on Wider Use of the Methodologies Used in Magnet Programs* on January 24, 2006, and a *Resolution on Gifted and Talented Curriculum in Middle Schools* on April 25, 2006.

The MCPS Office of Accelerated and Enriched Instruction is working on recommended changes to *Policy IOA: Gifted and Talented Education* for the MCPS Board of Education’s consideration in 2009.

Therefore be it Resolved:

MCPS must identify students who need additional academic challenge beyond that which is provided to similar aged peers.

MCPS must continue to provide global screening for all students in grade 2 to identify students who need additional academic challenge.

MCPS must provide additional screenings throughout elementary school, middle school and high school to identify students who need additional academic challenge.

MCPS must inform parents when their children need additional academic challenge and must inform parents how MCPS will ensure that those needs are met.

MCPS must provide students who need additional academic challenge with instruction that is accelerated and enriched.

MCPS must ensure that accelerated and enriched instruction is delivered consistently and with fidelity in every school across the county.

MCPS must ensure that students are given the opportunity to work in groups of students with similar academic abilities, motivation, and interests.

MCPS must provide curriculum resources and professional development to teachers and administrators to ensure that students are provided with accelerated and enriched instruction in accordance with research-based best practices.

MCPS must monitor the implementation and effectiveness of accelerated and enriched instruction by collecting, analyzing, monitoring and publishing key data measuring student participation and performance in grades K-12 in all core subject areas.

Background Documents:

MCCPTA Resolution on Mathematics

Approved by the MCCPTA Executive Board on March 29, 2001 and Delegates Assembly on April 24, 2001

<http://mccpta.com/bulletins/MathResolution.html>

MCCPTA Resolution on Wider Use of the Methodologies Used in Magnet Program Approved by the MCCPTA Delegates on January 24, 2006

<http://www.mccpta.com/resolutions/magnetprograms012406.pdf>

MCCPTA Resolution on Gifted and Talented Curriculum in Middle Schools Approved by the MCCPTA Delegates on April 25, 2006

<http://www.mccpta.com/resolutions/gt042506.pdf>

MCPS Policy IOA - Gifted and Talented Education (Currently Under Review)

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/ioa.pdf>

MCPS Regulation- Gifted and Talented Education

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/ioara.pdf>



MCCPTA Resolution on Mathematics

Approved by the MCCPTA Executive Board, March 29, 2001 and Delegates Assembly, April 24, 2001

Whereas, the MCCPTA Ad Hoc Committee on the Math Audit has reviewed the Phi Delta Kappa Curriculum Math Audit of Mathematics Education presented in September 2000; and

Whereas, the MCCPTA Ad Hoc Committee on the Math Audit conducted a parent survey which showed overwhelming consensus on the need to increase parental involvement and awareness of math instruction in MCPS; and

Whereas, the MCCPTA Math Survey revealed that 71 percent of the survey respondents were satisfied with their child's progress in math and 29 percent were not; and

Whereas, the MCCPTA Math Survey revealed that 83 percent of the survey respondents' children are grouped by ability for math instruction, and 96 percent of survey respondents support this practice;

Therefore, be it resolved, that MCPS increase its efforts to involve parents in all aspects of math education including the development and implementation of the math curriculum;

And, that parents receive regular communication about the content and objectives of the math curriculum, with frequent updates about their child's progress using ISM or similar assessments capable of measuring student progress on, above, or below grade level;

Be it further resolved, that the revision of the mathematics curriculum shall identify and remove low priority objectives from the current curriculum, allowing students and teachers more time for in depth mastery of essential skills;

And, that the revision shall focus on alignment with the Maryland Mathematics Content Standards, exemplary state standards such as the California math standards, and the best international math standards, and;

Be it resolved, that MCPS shall provide each child in grades 1-12 with a mathematics textbook, and developmentally appropriate math resources for pre-K and kindergarten students, and;

Be it further resolved, that MCPS will communicate to its teachers and administrators the need to form math groups by skill level, so that all students are challenged and receive the type and level of support they need, and that grouping will be based on assessments of students' current instructional needs in mathematics; it must allow them to move fluidly between groups; and it must provide intervention for low-achievers as well as acceleration for high-achievers; and

Be it further resolved, that MCPS shall emphasize mastery of basic math skills before moving on to more advanced math instruction, and;

Be it resolved, that our shared goal is to prepare all of our children for the challenges of an ever changing and competitive society.



The Montgomery County Council of Parent-Teacher Associations

**MCCPTA Resolution on
Wider Use of the Methodologies Used in Magnet Programs
Approved by the MCCPTA Delegates on January 24, 2006**

WHEREAS,

The teaching methodologies used in magnet programs, and in particular the use of sustained student inquiry into real-world matters, would benefit all students and have been shown to result in major boosts in achievement across all student groups and to correspond to both adult intellectual achievement and the way the human brain builds new knowledge.

MCCPTA RESOLVES,

That MCPS should establish and implement a plan, including adequate professional development for teachers, for ensuring that the pervasive use of sustained student inquiry into real-world matters through projects and other methodologies used in magnet programs for the highly gifted not be limited to the students selected for the limited seats in those programs but instead be provided to all students in MCPS.



**MCCPTA Resolution on
Gifted and Talented Curriculum in Middle Schools
Approved by the MCCPTA Delegates on April 25, 2006**

WHEREAS, a Montgomery County Public Schools (“MCPS”) Middle School Reform Steering Committee (the “Steering Committee”) has been charged to formulate a comprehensive plan (the “Plan”) that will produce a rigorous and challenging middle school education program that improves teaching and learning, promotes continuous improvement in all middle schools, and ensures that all students are prepared for rigorous high school standards; and

WHEREAS, Policy IOA, recognizing that gifted and talented students require instructional and curricular adjustments that can create a better match between their identified needs and the educational services they typically receive, provides that MCPS will prepare a scope and sequence of objectives and activities as well as materials that accelerate and enrich the regular curriculum in Pre-kindergarten-8, in mathematics, reading/language arts, science, and social studies; and

WHEREAS, the National Association for Gifted Children’s Pre-K-Grade 12 Gifted Program Standards (with which the components of the MCPS gifted and talented program are to be aligned) require as a minimum standard that instruction objectives and strategies provided to gifted learners must be systematically differentiated from those in the regular classroom; and

WHEREAS, Policy IFA requires that curricula promote continuity and cumulative acquisition and application of skills and knowledge and allow teachers and students to understand what is expected and required of them; and

WHEREAS, this Committee finds that the middle school MCPS Curriculum Guides provide extensions and enhancements for optional and periodic use in enriching gifted and talented education, but that such extensions and enhancements neither sequentially and systematically ground the acceleration of gifted and talented education, nor allow teachers and students to understand what is expected and required of them; and

WHEREAS, as a part of a multiyear plan for development of strong local gifted and talented programs, MCPS has determined to strengthen differentiation in the instructional guides;

BE IT RESOLVED, that this Committee recommends to the Steering Committee that there be included in the Plan the recommendation that MCPS add as soon as possible to the middle school Curriculum Guides sequenced and systematic higher level gifted and talented curricula, in mathematics, reading/language arts, science and social studies.