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**ACTION REQUESTED: July 31, 2008**

Office of School Performance  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Rockville, Maryland

June 20, 2008

MEMORANDUM

To: High School Principals  
From: Stephen L. Bedford, Chief School Performance Officer  
Subject: ACTION—Commencement Locations for June 2009

The purpose of this memorandum is to clarify the information used to begin planning for the June 2009 commencement ceremonies and to determine the process for identifying dates and venues of commencement ceremonies for the 2008–2009 school year. Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Constitution Hall remains the primary Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) graduation site, with the Comcast Center as an optional, partially subsidized, possibility for schools with the largest graduation classes in the MCPS.

For the second year, all costs charged by DAR Constitution Hall for graduations at that venue will be paid for in full by MCPS. All DAR Constitution Hall expenses will be managed by the Office of School Performance in conjunction with the Office of the Chief Operating Officer. Services for recording commencement ceremonies also are available by the MCPS Instructional Television when a commencement is held at DAR Constitutional Hall, as well as services of translators coordinated by the Translation Unit.

The FY 2009 budget allows MCPS to subsidize \$29,000 of the venue cost for a Comcast Center graduation by the four schools with the largest graduation classes. Although unconfirmed until a final contract is signed, the school contribution for the use of the Comcast Center in FY 2009 is estimated at \$13,000, depending on the number of graduations per day. Based on the projected size of Grade 12 classes (including projected Grade 12 special education students), the following schools would qualify for a subsidized graduation at the Comcast Center:

- Montgomery Blair High School
- Winston Churchill High School
- Sherwood High School
- Thomas S. Wootton High School

Principals at these four high schools are expected to use their established stakeholder feedback processes to determine whether or not to hold their commencement ceremony at the Comcast Center. Stakeholders for this process would include both the parents and the students of the graduating class. Information regarding the financial liability to the school may be a part of this decision. The venue decision based on stakeholder feedback must be e-mailed to Ms. Patricia G. Wade, graduation coordinator, Office of School Performance, on or before July 31, 2008.

If any of the four high schools with the largest graduating classes elect **not** to use the Comcast Center, this option will be offered to other schools with graduating classes projected above 500 in order of the size of the schools' projected graduating classes. If there are additional available Comcast Center graduation times, other schools may use the Comcast Center—and MCPS will fund \$6,000 of the expense. The school assumes the additional cost of the commencement ceremony. Principals should seek stakeholder input and communicate interest to use the Comcast Center, to Ms. Wade on or before July 31, 2008.

If a school does not have one of the four largest graduating classes and elects to use a venue other than DAR Constitution Hall, MCPS will fund up to \$6,000 of the expense. Any cost above that amount will be the school's responsibility and should be considered as part of the decision-making process. Principals considering this choice should seek stakeholder input and communicate this interest to Ms. Wade on or before July 31, 2008. These schools may use DAR Constitution Hall at no cost to the individual school.

A lottery for the order of selection of graduation dates and times will be held with the high school principals and representatives from the Montgomery County Association of Administrative and Supervisory Personnel at a mutually agreed to time. The selection of dates for commencement ceremonies is done in the assigned order, although consideration is required to ensure availability of the community superintendent.


If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Stephen L. Bedford, chief school performance officer.


SLB:cdp

Copy to:

Executive Staff  
Directors of School Performance  
Ms. Wade  
Dr. Newman

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

  
Larry A. Bowers, Chief Operating Officer

  
Frieda K. Lacey, Deputy Superintendent of Schools