

## **MCCPTA Curriculum Committee Report**

***Please provide feedback***

***to committee co-chairs Ted Willard and Sharon Schulman at [twillard@aaas.org](mailto:twillard@aaas.org) and [sharon29@comcast.net](mailto:sharon29@comcast.net)***

The **MCCPTA Curriculum Committee** has three functions:

1. To initiate discussion of **curriculum issues** in the schools, bring these to the MCCPTA Delegates Assembly to consider possible action, and advocate to MCPS on curriculum issues that have been agreed on by the MCCPTA delegates.
2. To represent MCCPTA and all parents at four yearly **MCPS Curriculum Advisory Committee (CAC)** meetings. Twelve CAC subcommittees, each for a different subject area, meet simultaneously, as mandated by School Board policy, to review and provide feedback on curriculum as it is developed or revised.
3. To represent MCCPTA and all parents at four yearly **MCPS Curriculum Advisory Assemblies (CAA)**, as mandated by School Board policy that explain and provide feedback on curriculum issues that are not limited to a single subject area.

The following is a **report** on the first of the four **CAA** meetings. Please **send this report** out on your **school listservs**. Parents who read this should send their **questions and comments** to the MCCPTA Curriculum Committee co-chairs, Ted Willard and Sharon Schulman, at [twillard@aaas.org](mailto:twillard@aaas.org) and [sharon29@comcast.net](mailto:sharon29@comcast.net).

### **REPORTS TO MCCPTA CURRICULUM COMMITTEE ON MCPS CURRICULUM ADVISORY ASSEMBLY (CAA) MEETING - NOVEMBER 5, 2007**

There were three items on the agenda: kindergarten curriculum revision, mathematics resource guide, and guidelines for advance instruction. The kindergarten curriculum is being completely rewritten and initial feedback was provided last year at the CAA on issues that should be addressed during the rewrite. The goal is to produce a curriculum to be implemented in 2008/2009 that will focus on creative, critical thinking through integration of subject areas, small groups for reading and math, use of technology (by teachers), and in accordance with state guidelines and research on early childhood development. A priority is providing an integrated curriculum, rather than multiple curricula (math, social studies, language arts, science, music, etc.) for teachers with a flexible schedule that can be adapted to meet class needs. The new curriculum gives teachers freedom, but a lot of written support that is especially useful for new teachers. Currently, about 68% of kindergarteners come to MCPS fully ready for school. By the end of kindergarten, 90% are now reading so we are already closing the gap on readiness once the children are in school. A draft daily lesson plan for the 1st marking period has been written, funding has been allocated, and teacher training planned. Two daily lesson plans were distributed at the meeting for review and feedback and the presenters demonstrated intended teaching techniques. The lesson plans identified thinking skills, daily routines, and detailed progression through material on math, reading, science, writing, and social studies using books, pictures, songs, common objects, etc. including opportunities for group and individual activities.

MCPS is planning to produce written resource guides for parents in each subject area, beginning with mathematics. A draft guide for Math 6 (Math A) was distributed that includes a course description, layout, and timeframe; content emphases; a list of learning goals; assessment levels; progression to the next courses; and a list of common questions that the guide will address. This was an improvement over a previous version of the brochure and incorporated many suggestions made by parents who had reviewed that version earlier. Participants gave feedback on each part of the draft. MCPS would like to have the math brochure finished in time for students and parents to use it in choosing math classes for next year. More needs to be done to make it accessible to the average parent. Specific math and education terms are used and they plan to include a glossary, which is not yet available. Frequently asked questions are listed at the end of the brochure, but the answers weren't provided at the meeting. Examples of math concepts would clarify the explanations provided.

Guidelines for advanced instruction are being written. Participants were given three sets of draft guidelines, one each for English, science, and social studies for grade 8. Each included a listing of enduring understanding, essential questions, and common tasks in the overview; pre-assessment and assessment differentiation; process, content, and product differentiation plus optional extension for each lesson session; and summative assessment with assessment differentiation. The basic guides are intended for advanced instruction and the differentiation goes beyond that level. Participants were asked to read the guides and introductory material and to email their feedback to MCPS. Participants raised numerous issues about advanced instruction including pushing students too hard and too fast, ability grouping, subject depth, and sufficient challenge for advanced students. None of these issues were dealt with at the meeting.