

Grading and Reporting Update

September 2008

MCPS' Board of Education meeting held September 22nd featured an update on the Implementation of Policy IKA, Grading and Reporting.

Dr. Weast commented that the old (traditional) method of grading and reporting ("G/R") utilized a grading system that often compared students to one another within a class and also from class to class within a school. Weast reports that MCPS has now set the goal at college preparedness with an eye on what "trajectory" path students need to be from kindergarten on through graduation. This trajectory includes knowing where kindergarteners need to be achieving in order to stay on that path and to achieve college preparedness at graduation.

The Office of Curriculum and Instruction ("OCIP") reported that it plans to collect feedback to see how [standards-based] electronic gradebooks are working this year and to further refine the processes. At this point, 24 MCPS elementary schools are field testing standards-based report cards ("SBRCs") in 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades. When the teachers enter standards-based grades, those grades are being tied to a date. Betsy Brown, OCIP's Director of Instruction and Achievement, answered a question as to who provided input on the decision to move the grades to 4/3/2/1 (with 4 being the highest) in 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades, she responded that teachers, parents and staff had arrived at that decision.

OCIP also reported that on the SBRCs, with above-grade level reporting, students will work at above-grade levels and grades will be reported on the same 4/3/2/1 rubric (versus A/B/C/D/E if working at a 4th or 5th grade level, for instance). The 1st and 2nd grade report cards provide a **reading grade graph**, depicting 1) above; 2) at or 3) below grade level and just how far at, above or below grade level the student demonstrated mastery of the curriculum. That same reading graph however does not appear on the 3rd grade SBRC. **Math** standards-based grade reporting, where differentiated instruction occurs (at or below grade level) will be depicted by both measuring the student's knowledge of the on-grade-level curriculum as well as measuring in a different column, the student's performance on above-grade-level curriculum. Report cards for **ESOL** students may be translated (at the parent's request) into 1 of 5 top languages utilized around the County. The yellow Emergency cards offer parents an option of languages for printed materials (including report cards). "NEP" may be denoted during a student's first two years where a student is not English proficient. Students with **IEPs** receive adjusted instruction and assessments. SBRC for students with IEPs *may* reflect that a student's performance has been adjusted up to two grade levels below the current grade level.

Board of Ed Vice President, Shirley Brandman, questioned why no reading graph appears on 3rd grade SBRC, although it appears on 1st and 2nd grade report cards.

Comments were offered by members of the Spark Matsunaga ES Community, currently field-testing 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade SBRC, including Principal Judy Brubaker (no complaints really at all relating to standards-based grading and report cards; parent and past PTA President, Claudia Phelps, Staff

Development Teacher, JoAnn Kress and 1st Grade Team Leader, Stephanie Fushea. General comments include that it's important to carry forward field testing to 4th graders in 2009 (and 5th graders in 2010). Matsunaga is one of the top 50 school in the State of Maryland (advanced on AYP scores). Dr. Weast commented that it's also important to ensure that the MCPS budget will support this (staff and electronics/technology) throughout the implementation.

Shirley Brandman questioned whether 4/3/2/1 grades would carry forward to the 4th and 5th grade SBRCs. Betsy Brown says it's been recommended that those marks do carry forward into 4th and 5th grade. [Parents and other stakeholders may begin to discuss what grade marks may be used and how those would impact students in MCPS middle and high school.]

Further comments were offered on the secondary level by Allison Lorena, Principal of Loiderman MS, Heather Yohanick, Staff Development Teacher, Loiderman MS, Carol Working, Principal at Quince Orchard HS and Colleen Kelly, Gradebook Super User and Pinnacle Advisor at Quince Orchard HS. Comments included that Loiderman has a homeroom period called ASK (Academic Support for Kids), during which students can read or meet with teachers to relearn or reassess. Ms. Yohanick wants a formal communication piece to be shared with staff, parents and students as to the meaning of and what's included in "formative assessments" and "summative assessments." Ms. Working sent communications over Edline regarding the grade weights and the meaning of special grades X, Z and 0. Ms. Kelly remarked that parents love Edline.

BOE Member Mr. Barclay commented that some teachers really use Edline, while others don't post information or grades as often. He questioned how we [as parents] can encourage students to advocate for themselves when course and student grade information is not posted. He also noted that the ASK period offered at Loiderman MS is working and it is very helpful to have it everyday. Mr. Barclay questions whether the OARS tools are allowing teachers more time to teach.

The next meeting of the Grading and Reporting Committee will feature a presentation by the MCPS Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs on the standards-based report cards currently being field tested in 24 elementary schools (1st, 2nd and 3rd grades). The meeting will be held on Monday, October 6, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in Carver Conference Room 127. Please RSVP to Beth Kennington bkenn@starpower.net if you are able to attend. This will be a good opportunity to gain some understanding of the new grade reporting system before its county-wide implementation.

Join the MCCPTA Grading and Reporting Committee listserv by sending an e-mail to MCCPTAGradingAndReporting-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Provide your name, school name(s) and PTA position.