

MCCPTA

Educational Issues Training

Common Core State Standards

<http://www.corestandards.org/>

Why is MCPS doing this?

- To compete in the global economy and prepare students for college and career readiness.
- The landscape is changing for the 21st century and we must adapt (for example, we now have immediate answers in our pockets through our cell phones)
- Maryland has adopted the CCSS so all public school districts will be tested on CCSS.
- Standards will be consistent across states.
- Note: National PTA supports CCSS.

About CCSS

- Developed in summer of 2009 by the Council of Chief State School Officers and National Governor's Association. It is funded by a federal grant of \$185 million and is managed by Achieve, Inc. an independent, bipartisan, non-profit education reform organization based in Washington, D.C.
- Not a "National Curriculum. CCSS is a clear set of shared goals and expectations for what knowledge and skills will help our students succeed.
- Does NOT include acceleration recommendations or framework. (MCPS designed from scratch and received an independent review. The reviewer gave the acceleration components high marks.)
- Received multiple rounds of feedback from many stakeholders, including MCPS
- Also included public and professional comment period
- Aligned with college and work expectations
- Internationally benchmarked but was built upon strengths and lessons of current state standards, based on evidence and research
- State led
- PARCC (Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for Colleges and Careers) is the Consortium we are using, along with 25 other states. There is a second consortium (SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium) that includes most of the other states in the U.S.
- The MCPS BOE adopted the K-5 standards in 2010. Secondary standards were presented to the BOE on September 26 and are pending final approval. Shows "what" to learn, not "how" to teach. Local teachers, principals, superintendents and others will decide how the standards are to be met.
- MCPS says that we are well positioned, while other districts are not. However, there will be some changes. Math is considered more rigorous and comparable with international benchmarks.

Assessments

Will replace MSAs in 2014/15. More problem and writing based and more emphasis on formative assessments. PARCC is designing the assessments for states and is not ready to administer yet so MCPS must figure out what to do. At first, "through tests" were going to be a requirement, but now this has changed to an option for districts. Now only summative tests will be given (one at end of both semesters?) There may be a gap or overlap in assessments given NCLB is still being enforced, although President Obama has offered an option for states to be approved for a waiver. There are many

conditions however, such as states must spend at least the same as the prior year on education to be approved.

Curriculum 2.0

What is it?

For elementary grades: blending core content area of subjects: reading, math, information literacy, health, the arts, science, social studies and physical education—our students will receive a more comprehensive, challenging and engaging learning experience.

- Was implemented last year in kindergarten
- Focus on teaching to the “whole child,” engages students in subjects and nurturing is an emphasis.
- Most schools (119) are implementing grades K-2 this school year (2011/12) although 2nd grade is optional this year.
- Plan is for it to be rolled out to a new grade each year.

Aligned with Common Core State Standards:

- Internationally driven
- Defines what students are expected to learn in English and Math at every grade level
- Shows teachers what to teach, not how to teach.

About Math

- Curriculum 2.0 is more rigorous than last year’s curriculum so some who received acceleration will not need acceleration this year.
- The U.S. ranked 25th in the world in math, so the CCSS upgrades what is currently being taught in U.S. schools and incorporates content from other more successful countries.
- The Consortia adapted the CCSS curricula to take the best of what other countries are teaching.
- College and career readiness-teaching children to have critical thinking skills. Focus on number concepts and foundation skills in elementary school.

Some concepts are reordered and taught in different grades. For example, some content in Math 2 will be taught in grade 1. Fewer math topics of the six strands of math (number, algebra, geometry, measurement, statistics and probability) will be taught. No more “spiral” type teaching where topics are introduced and the reintroduced without going deeply. Now students will be able to demonstrate multifaceted understanding of concepts.

Example of critical thinking:

$$1 \frac{1}{2} \div \frac{1}{2} = \frac{3}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} = 3$$

Write this problem as a questions without using symbols.

How many halves are in one and one half?

For students who need acceleration: Depth will be taught without skipping content. Students who need it will get enrichment. If consistently showing a deep mastery of skills, a few students in each grade may be recommended for acceleration. AP Calculus is the preferred highest level of math for college admissions.

Universal Design for learning is what is used for struggling students. Provides strategies for teachers to use.

MCPS website information on Curriculum 2.0:
<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/2.0/>

Grading and Assessments

State Testing

NCLB still is in place and MSDE is planning to apply for a waiver in February, 2012.

CCSS testing will not be effective until the 201/15 year, although some pilot testing may be given before then.

In the interim before the state testing begins, MCPS will benchmark with the nation by using MAP-R, MAP-M and MAP-P tests. These tests will be less time consuming. Each test takes about 45-50 minutes.

K-5 Standards Based Grading

There are 25 pilot schools using the standards based report card. The following are changes in Grades 1 and 2 compared to last year with the standards based grading:

- Mathematics, reading, and writing Measurement Topics align with the Common Core State Standards. Unit tests will no longer be given.
- Social studies, science, and music Measurement Topics align with state standards.
- ESOL Measurement Topics align with the new World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Standards.
- Fewer measurement topics than last year. Writing measurement topics have been added.
- Letter symbols will show proficiency levels on measurement topics:
 - ES= Exceeds Standard
 - P= Proficient
 - I= In Progress
 - N= Not Yet
- Teachers have .5 as scoring option (fore example 3.5 is same as P+.

Non-pilot schools will continue to receive letter grades. Expect to see a standards based report card for all schools in grades K-5 by the 2014/15 school year.

MCPS will be creating assessments for all elementary schools this year. By 2014/15 all schools will be implementing the state assessments.

Secondary Grading

89.5 is an A, 79.5 is a B, etc...

Reteach/ Reassess opportunities

Homework can only count for up to 10%

Edline - teachers' contract says teachers can take up 2 weeks to update.

Final Exams count 25% of grade for the semester.

These grading practices are prohibited:

- Awarding extra credit and/or bonus points;
- Forcing grades into a normal frequency distribution or any other kind of curve that compares students in relation to others;
- Establishing rating scales that compare students in relation to others (sliding scales are not permitted);
- Assigning a grade lower than 50 percent to a task/assessment. However, if a student does no work on the task/assessment, the teacher will assign a zero. If a teacher determines the student did not attempt to meet the basic requirements of the task/assessment or the student engaged in academic dishonesty, the teacher may assign a zero.
- Deadline and due date can be the same. So students can get a 0 on homework if only a day late.

Advice to parents: If a teacher doesn't follow these rules, point it out. If the teacher continues to disregard policy or regulations, contact the principal (or grading and reporting representative at the school.) The principal should be ensuring that the grading policy and regulations are being implemented.

MCPS website information on Grading and Reporting:

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/grading/>

Parent Concerns/ Questions Emerging

Technology

- If all the state testing will be done on computer, MCPS doesn't have enough computers to do this- schools have one computer lab, but what we really need is a computer or tablet for each student. Where will the funds come from to do this?
- MCPS doesn't have a massive database to collect data from all schools.
- Many schools are still not equipped with Promethian Boards.

School Budgets are Shrinking

- Race to the Top has spurred substantial overhauls of the k-12 curriculum, which is costly for schools to implement in tough economic times as budgets are being reduced. How will our schools be able to accomplish the goals?
- Race to the Top Funds will be gone in a couple years. How will our state and district continue without the extra funding?
- Operational expenses will likely be expensive to administer the new state tests. Who will pay?

Lack of Knowledge

- Do our local and state legislators understand what is happening with the CCSS? Do they understand that many changes are occurring that put a strain on MCPS staff and budget?
- So far, MCPS doesn't know who is going to manage the tests. The tests will need to be redeveloped each year, but who will do this?
- Textbook companies are taking old textbooks and putting the CCSS stamp on it and this is not meet the CCSS.

Lack of Parent Information

- Parents want access to curriculum and are not able to do so yet. This makes it difficult for parents to help their children at home.

Acceleration Issues

- Parents of students who need acceleration are concerned that the CCSS will not identify their students for acceleration opportunities. They are also concerned that some high school math courses (Geometry and Algebra 2) may not be offered in middle school. (CCSS recommends no acceleration until 6th grade, although MCPS has already anticipated the concerns of GT parents and have incorporated enrichment opportunities and acceleration into the curriculum.) There is also concern that teachers have not been given enough resources for enrichment.
- How will the Magnet Programs deal with CCSS? Can they continue with their current curricula?
- The CCSS does not provide guidance on how to address acceleration. Acceleration is discouraged by CCSS for math up to 6th grade.

Issues Related to a Struggling Student

- Struggling students who may not have a solid understanding of a topic may fail as lessons move forward.
- How will Special Ed students deal with CCSS? Will accommodations be made if a student is not able to use the technology provided?
- How will MCPS address the needs of ESOL students who are coming into the system from other countries that do not have the standards?

Lack of Professional Development

- Dr. Starr's transition team report mentions professional development as a big need. We are hearing that teachers need a lot more training, especially with differentiation in a classroom.
- More teacher training will be taking place this school year. All team leaders will get face to face training. MCPS is also looking into online training modules.

Curriculum and Grading Concerns

- For Language Arts/ Reading, will our students gain solid grammar knowledge which an area that many feel is lacking with the current curricula? Will there also be substantially more writing instead of simple BCRs?
- Parents are complaining about the many changes through the years with the new standards based grading symbols.
- Keyboarding will need to be more emphasized if students take tests online.
- The secondary CCSS provides little opportunity for cross-curricular connections. Teachers work in isolation within their discipline,
- Specific expectations should be provided for editing by teachers, teaching of vocabulary.
- Need a framework of skill building at the secondary level.
- More emphasis on formative testing with the summative being tested by the State which will not be part of the grade-will this be better for students?