



March 25, 2010

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Betsy Brown, Director,
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Dear Mr. Lang and Ms. Brown,

On March 23, 2010, the Montgomery County Council of PTAs (MCCPTA) adopted the following positions related to the MCPS produced feedback materials for the MCPS Foreign Language Workgroup.

MCCPTA has four representatives on this work group. They are: Jackie Suzich, Gloria Salas-Kos, Jennifer Pories and Johanna Walk. The MCCPTA Delegates on February 23, 2010 charged the MCCPTA workgroup representatives with drafting a list of concerns regarding the feedback materials for the MCPS Foreign Language Workgroup. Those concerns were presented at the March 23, 2010 MCCPTA Delegates Assembly for review. The adopted feedback is attached.

Sincerely,

Kay Romero, President
Montgomery County Council of PTAs

cc: Board of Education



**MCCPTA FOREIGN LANGUAGE WORKGROUP (FLW) MEMBERS
LIST OF CONCERNS WITH THE MCPS FLW DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS
AS APPROVED BY THE MCCPTA DELEGATES
MARCH 23, 2010**

- 1. Members of the FLW did not receive, review, or approve the final Draft Recommendations document before it went out to other groups for review, although our names were listed as preparers.**
- 2. After all FLW meetings through October 1, 2009, MCPS workgroup staff provided workgroup members with a summary of the meeting and action steps to be taken. After the final meeting on October 29, 2009, there was no further communication with the workgroup. In January, upon our request for such information we were informed by MCPS staff that the Draft Recommendations were being presented to select groups chosen for feedback, most of whom were MCPS related committees. MCPS staff felt that these groups were representative of the population. Their plan was to summarize the feedback from these groups and present it to senior staff at MCPS for review without the FLW partaking in the process again. It was only upon the resolute letter sent by Kay Romero, President of the MCCPTA to MCPS staff insisting upon our receiving and having an opportunity to review the Draft Recommendations that we were given access to the document. In fact, it was only after that time that an e-mail similar to prior FLW meeting summaries was sent out to all workgroup members summarizing the meeting of October 29.**
- 3. We were told throughout the process that all stakeholders would have an opportunity to comment on our work product before it was completed similar to other MCPS workgroups like the Math Workgroup, not just a handful of MCPS selected groups. Many parents were disturbed that they were not given an opportunity to review and comment on the FLW Draft Recommendations.**
- 4. Deliverables (including the “List of Shared Interests”, “Description of Desired State” and the “Gap Analysis”) containing important information reflecting the thought process of the FLW were excluded from the Draft Recommendations submitted for feedback.**
- 5. The Draft Recommendations list by itself is too general and simple to be a meaningful document.**

6. Reviewers of the Draft Recommendations were asked to select their top three choices. How can this be accomplished with such general statements and when so many of the recommendations are interdependent?

7. Overarching Draft Recommendation #1 should be amended to include #2-16 as follows:

“Develop a strategic plan for the foreign language program considering/including input and feedback from stakeholders now, a process for decision making that includes ongoing stakeholder feedback and input, the Draft Recommendations #3-16, research, benchmarking, review of system resources and systematic parent communications.”

8. Draft Recommendations should include a provision that the maximum number of languages offered by MCPS is determined based upon those that can be adequately supported.

9. Student proficiency in foreign language and cultural competence are not addressed in the Draft Recommendations. Sample language to add:

“Establish and develop a foreign language program that prepares students to be linguistically and culturally competent, and enables students to achieve a high level of proficiency.”

10. Amend Draft Recommendation #4 as follows to make it clear and unambiguous to stakeholders:

“Develop , implement, and monitor clearly described pathways of progress for all foreign language students from elementary through high school, such that once a student begins the study of a language they have access to (through scheduling and articulation to middle/high school) continuing the advancement of such studies.”

11. Expand Draft Recommendation #8 to state :

“Introduce foreign language programs in elementary schools county-wide as part of the regular curriculum to ensure access to and equity in early foreign language opportunities.”

12. Exposure to language was covered in revised Draft Recommendation # 8 above.

13. Scheduling is addressed in Draft Recommendation #16 and Amended Draft Recommendation #4 above.

14. With regard to Heritage Speakers add the following:

“Provide a unique program of study for those students who have developed a proficiency in a language (supported by MCPS including French, Chinese, and Spanish) because it is their first language, or it is spoken extensively in their home (“heritage speakers”). These programs should present students with equivalent learning opportunities in foreign language while their curricula may differ.”