

# PRIORITIES FOR THE 2016-2017 SCHOOL YEAR

## WHY MUST WE ACT?



OUR CORE VALUES OF LEARNING, RELATIONSHIPS, RESPECT, EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY compel us to act and unite us around our goal – Academic Excellence for ALL. Our present levels of student performance show us that many students meet or exceed rigorous standards of learning excellence; however, there are other groups of students who do not have the learning opportunities or reach the learning levels needed to complete their MCPS education ready to be successful in college, career, and community. These learning disparities fall most heavily on Black/African American students, Hispanic/Latino students, and students impacted by poverty. As our student population continues to grow, our capacity to ensure the success of these children will define our own success.

In the 2016-2017 school year, we must focus on ensuring that all of our struggling learners receive the same level of excellence in teaching and learning provided to our successful students. We must act now to create a school system where academic success is not predictable by race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, language, or disability. Our commitment to equity in no way lessens our commitment to excellence. To be clear, our focus is to raise to excellence those students who have not yet achieved at their highest potential. The moral imperative that every child deserves nothing less than our best each and every day demands that we embrace the challenge before us and come together with a renewed purpose.

## WHAT MUST WE DO?

### IMPROVE TEACHING AND LEARNING TO PROVIDE A STRONG ACADEMIC PROGRAM

MCPS HAS HIGH EXPECTATIONS for all students, which means providing access to a rigorous curriculum and culturally proficient instruction that prepares them for college, career, and life.

#### To do this we will:

- IMPROVE the teaching and learning of literacy and mathematics to ensure that all students not only have a solid foundation across all content areas but also possess the critical and creative thinking skills necessary to be college and career ready.
- ENSURE opportunity to learn through support and interventions for learners at the earliest sign of struggle to maintain the pathway to readiness and rigor.
- IMPLEMENT a student- and child-centered approach that addresses the needs of students to improve performance and outcomes for all students.
- PROVIDE a variety of learning opportunities based on the identified needs and myriad interests of students.
- CREATE 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environments that foster creativity, engagement, collaboration, problem-solving and critical thinking.

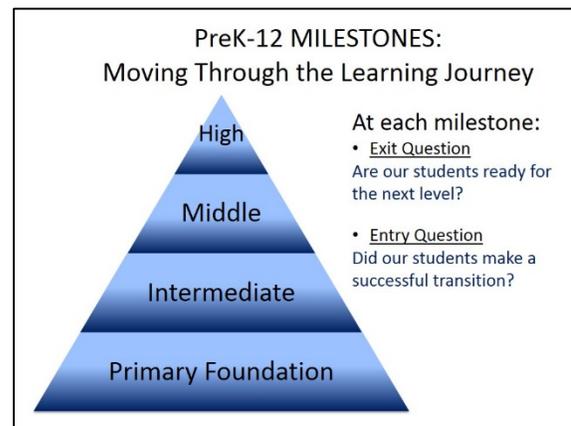
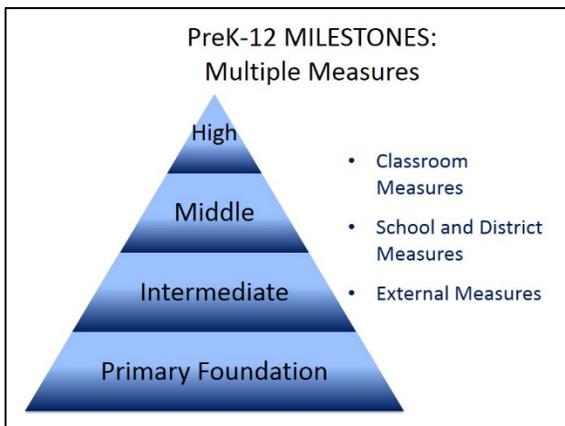
## HOW WILL WE DO THIS?

### I. FOCUS ON LEARNING, RESULTS, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

WE ARE STRENGTHENING our accountability framework to provide more clarity about the multiple indicators necessary to measure student performance as we work to prepare our students for success in college, career, and life. Specific data will be used to hold each of us accountable for student, school, and systemwide performance in meeting our goal of Academic Excellence for All. We are committed to using these data measures to create and execute plans for schools, student subgroups, and individual students that do not meet system targets. Simultaneously, we will have plans to ensure every student is challenged, demonstrates progress, and achieves at his or her highest potential. Our commitment will include plans and metrics for those strategies that will be employed when students, schools and the system do not meet milestone measures.

#### To do this we will:

- INTENSIFY our central office and school focus on data-driven monitoring and analysis of student performance to guide improvement efforts and reduce variability in outcomes across schools and classrooms within schools, and ensure outcomes are not predictable by race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or disability.
- ENSURE a rigorous K-12 STEM curriculum that prepares our students to be competitive in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century workforce.
- DEVELOP an assessment framework to provide timely data to students, their families, and staff to enable schools to monitor student progress and improve student learning.
- IMPROVE the timeliness and quality of interventions, programs, and partnerships to scaffold support necessary to accelerate students' learning and maximize their potential to keep them on track for graduation and postsecondary success.
- USE performance data to allocate resources and central services support to schools based on the needs of students and areas of lower-than-expected student performance.
- MONITOR investment of resources and effectiveness of programs and adjust accordingly to ensure that MCPS is using resources effectively to achieve the system goal of Academic Excellence for All.
- IMPLEMENT central services measures to monitor the effectiveness of supports to schools, particularly schools that do not meet milestone measures.



## **II. FOCUS ON HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT**

WE MUST INVEST IN AND SHAPE a workforce that reflects and embraces the diversity of our community. Such a workforce must be highly qualified and hold the collective belief that all students can learn at high levels. All employees regardless of role must possess the ability to help MCPS achieve our goal of Academic Excellence for All. It is essential that all employees see themselves as part of the outcomes for students. We each play a role. Our approach must be comprehensive and must span across the human capital continuum of attracting, recruiting, mentoring, developing, recognizing, and retaining highly effective employees.

### **To do this we will:**

- PROMOTE HUMAN CAPITAL processes that staff schools, offices and all parts of the system with highly effective employees committed to the values of MCPS.
- IMPLEMENT all components of the diversity hiring initiative to ensure our workforce is of the highest quality and reflective of the community we serve.
- DEVELOP a comprehensive systemwide plan for professional development that identifies priorities and professional learning expectations for all staff.
- ALIGN systemic efforts to improve the skills and capabilities of the workforce that is responsible for ensuring students have the skills and knowledge needed to be college and career ready.
- BUILD a positive, supportive culture of trust and respect that is based on collaboration and strong relationships to improve school and system performance.
- ENSURE all staff are culturally proficient and possess the skills, knowledge, and beliefs about social emotional learning and mental health of students to create a learning environment that is student-centered and meets the individual and diverse needs of students.

## **III. FOCUS ON COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND ENGAGEMENT**

MCPS IS COMMITTED TO WORKING WITH ITS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERS to support and engage families in order to improve the academic achievement of all students. We know that for students to be successful we need to have families and communities as essential partners. They are the co-creators to help us build stronger learning environments for our students and ensure all students recognize and fulfill their potential for successful futures.

### **To do this we will:**

- IN PARTNERSHIP with families and communities, use programs to provide greater access to opportunities that will result in students being college and career ready, implement additional academic support to students, and foster relationships that keep students engaged in school and on track for graduation.
- SUSTAIN AND EXPAND existing partnerships that meet the in-school and out-of-school needs of students and families.
- REMOVE cultural or linguistic barriers that may prevent families from engaging with their children's education in partnership.
- FACILITATE TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION with parents, students, employees, and community members using a wide array of tools to engage and communicate information.

#### **IV. FOCUS ON OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE**

WE KNOW THAT GREAT TEACHING is supported and enabled by excellent operational systems. Our efforts to provide all students with an education that prepares them for their future must be built on a strong foundation of world-class operations. Every office and department will strive to understand and anticipate student and school needs. We work to ensure excellent service so that schools have the resources and supports needed to deliver on the promise of excellence and equity for all students.

##### **To do this we will:**

- **USE STRATEGIC PLANNING AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PROCESSES** to build and maintain excellent services to schools, ensuring efficient and timely operations; secure and modern facilities; and nurturing, 21st century learning environments.
- **USE DATA** to evaluate programs and services and guide improvement efforts throughout the organization.
- **ENGAGE COLLABORATIVELY AND RESPECTFULLY** with all schools, recognizing that they are our primary customers.
- **ALIGN WORK ACROSS CENTRAL SERVICES OFFICES** to strengthen collaboration and coordination to serve schools and ensure they have the support and resources necessary to meet the needs of students.
- **ENSURE RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS AND SUPPORT TO SCHOOLS AND OFFICES** are aligned to our strategic priorities and are distributed efficiently and effectively based on enrollment, student need, and the values of our community.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS has the talent, the resources, and the community support necessary to achieve Academic Excellence for All students. The active engagement and involvement of all our staff is critical to our success. Our collective unwavering focus on excellence in our students' learning will ensure a high-quality education for every student. We recognize the urgency of the work ahead. Our success requires unity in action and purpose built on our acknowledgement and agreement that all employees are essential to a successful learning environment. As a result we must foster a positive, supportive culture of trust and respect based on collaboration and strong relationships to improve school and system performance. We are committed to our pursuit of academic excellence for all students through this culture of collaboration and respect. Together, we will achieve our goal of Academic Excellence for All.