

**Terence McPherson**  
**MCPS Strategic Planning Forum**  
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I would first like to thank the members of the Board of Education for allowing public testimony and opinion on such an important aspect of our educational system. My name is Terence McPherson, and I am the current president of the Montgomery County Region of the Maryland Association of Student Councils, traditionally referred to as MCR, the county-level, high school student government organization. As one of the few students here, I am making it my responsibility to directly represent the needs and desires of high schoolers across the county, so I would like to take some time to address what I understand to be the issues that are most important to the students. Throughout my time in high school, I have come to understand the importance of extracurricular, or rather co-curricular programs to the successful development of a student. Not everyone strives to be a chemist or Nobel-winning novelist, but everyone has an interest or passion that keeps them engaged and challenges them to succeed. As a result, it is very important that the teachers who sponsor these co-curricular programs are committed to progressing the goals of their organizations. According to the 2006-2007, the teachers' contract agreed upon by the MCEA and Board of Education only requires a activity sponsor to submit a notification that their activity has been completed at the end of the school year. It is therefore the principal's responsibility to evaluate the performance of all activity sponsors in the school. This is in addition to the principal's regular job of conducting teacher evaluations and ensuring the successful operation of the school in its entirety. Now I understand that it may be difficult for every school to implement a Co-Curricular Program Coordinator to assist the principal in this difficult task, but I think the Board of Education should definitely stress the importance of the successful implementation and operation of clubs and organizations within the school. These programs are the reason that a large percentage of students wake up in the morning prepared and excited to go to school, and although we already have an amazingly high graduation rate of 91.4% across the county, I think that this number can be increased if all schools have positive programs in place that can provide students with a way to challenge themselves and cultivate their personal interests.

Additionally, I would like to bring up the issue of class-size reduction in many high schools across the county. I think the Board of Education has done an excellent job in ensuring that every student has reasonable access to a teacher in order to assist them in any educational challenges they may face. According to the current Strategic Plan and Budget literature available, average class sizes have greatly been reduced compared to earlier years. On paper, this sounds great; however, if you visit the high schools, you will find a large number of over-crowded classes. I would just like to ask that the Board continue its efforts to give students a better learning environment and allow the teachers to help every student who needs it in order to truly realize the MCPS mission statement of guaranteeing "success for every student through excellence in teaching and learning."

As I draw to a close, I would like to once again thank the Board of Education for allowing me to speak on these important issues related to student education. This county has resources that other school systems can only dream of using and a group of dedicated individuals acting to guarantee that every student in its system is able to develop and reach their true potential. I would just like to make sure that we do not let our gains overlook the work that still needs to be done. Thank you very much.