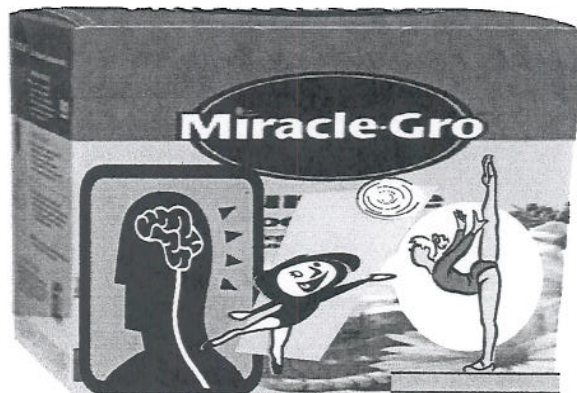


Oct. 11, 2007

MCPS Community Forum regarding strategic plan and FY2009 operating budget.
(Long version. Testimony edited to fit 3 minute limit.)

My name is Susan Loftus. I am a Silver Spring resident and I teach education that is physical at Burning Tree Elementary School. I've taught previously at Takoma Park Middle School and Einstein High School.

A decade ago, the prevailing belief in the scientific community was that people have a fixed number of brain cells. Research now shows that exercise grows new brain cells. Exercise also triggers the release of BDNF (brain-derived neurotrophic factor). This is a protein that is key in the storage and recall of information. Dr. John Ratey, associate professor at Harvard Medical School calls it, "Miracle-Gro for the brain."



I'm here tonight to ask the Superintendent and the Board of Education to consider putting money in the operating budget for some of this "Miracle-Gro." I'm asking you to consider increasing the Elementary P.E. teacher allocation by 3.0-6.0 in order to increase some preK-2 instructional minutes.

Prior to this school year, the MCPS recommended number of instructional minutes for 1st grade was 30 minutes, 2 times per week, for a total of 60 minutes. The 07-08 recommendation was changed to 1x per week for a total of 35-45 minutes. **The change from 60 to 45 minutes is 25% reduction in P.E. time!** In fairness, I will note that the Kindergarten recommendation did go up from 30 to 35 minutes per week. PreK students have always been scheduled for a paltry 20 minutes per week. (See attachment A.)

Please don't let the push for vigor and making AYP lead you to believe that there is just no time in the school day for more education that is physical. The educational titans Froebel, Piaget, Vygotsky, and Dewey all postulated that "Play is the work of children."

Increasing physical education really is not decreasing academic time. Good physical education is not just about raising heart rates and sweating.

Examples:

A. MCPS Kindergarten math curriculum: **position words** are used to identify location

- Please jump inside your hula hoop.
- Please jump outside your hula hoop.

- Show me how you can travel over, under, around, through, your hula hoop.

B. Math: Subtraction

- Using an underhand throw, try to get your bean bags inside the hula hoop
- Tell your buddy how many are inside, outside the hoop.
- How many bean bags did you start with? (example: 5)
- How many did not go in the hoop/ are outside the hoop? (Example: 2.)
- $5 - 2 = ?$ (Can find the answer by looking inside the hoop!)

C. MCPS Kindergarten math curriculum: **patterns** provide ways to organize information.

- Please make a pattern (AB, ABB, AAB) using two locomotor skills or ways of traveling.
- Choose from: walking, jumping, hopping, skipping, sliding. Play “follow the leader” with a buddy.
- Ask you buddy to tell what type of pattern you created. (AB, ABB, AAB)

D. MCPS Kindergarten math curriculum: **measurement**

- Place a cone as your starting point.
- Standing still with your feet together, take your best jump forward trying to go far. Mark the place you landed with a beanbag. (Have in hand when jumping.)
- Standing still with one foot in front of the other, take your best jump forward trying to go far. Mark the place you landed with a different color beanbag.
- Standing behind your cone, run to the starting point and take your best jump forward trying to go far. Mark the place you landed with a different color beanbag.
- Use a piece of yarn to measure the different lengths.
- Tell you buddy how the length of the jumps were different. Which jump was longest? Shortest? Can you explain why?

E. MCPS 2nd grade science unit: **Balancing and weighing**

- Gymnastics Unit: travel on balance beam

Don't you think a great way to learn about balance is to actually travel on a balance beam? Don't just read about it... Do it! Feel it!

It seems as though as a student progresses from grade to grade, learning is more and more geared to the strengths of the visual and auditory learners. Perhaps the achievement gaps we're all concerned about are caused, in part, by the diminishing kinesthetic instructional and assessment opportunities. Now we even have MCPS mandatory written tests in 1st and 2nd grade physical education.

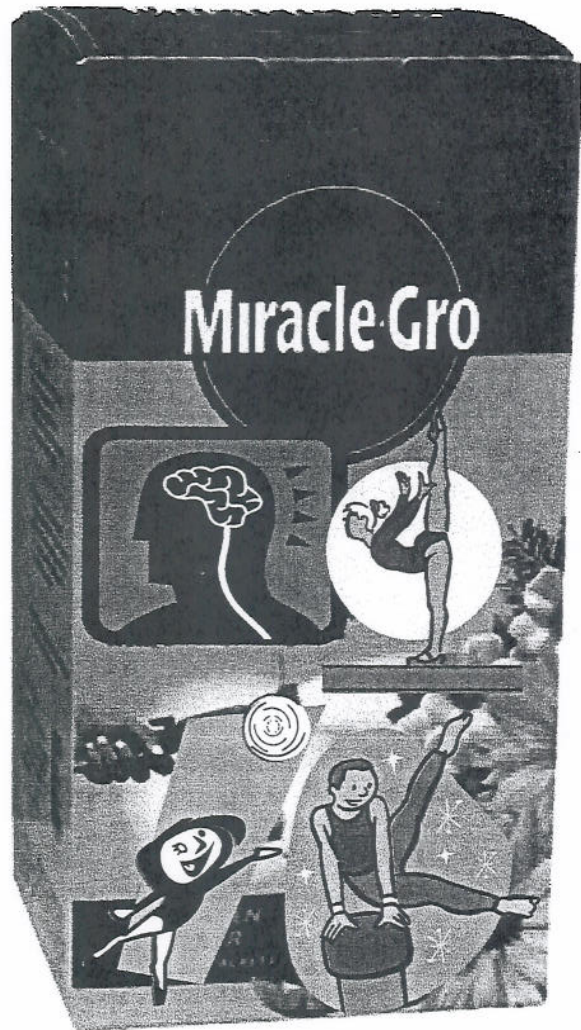
With more and more “seatwork,” in the primary grades, students are spending more time on their behinds. This may be what's leaving some children behind!

Please consider funding for a voluntary pilot program. For example, IF a principal would like to increase preK-2 physical education in her/his school to 90 minutes per week, (2 x 45 minutes or 3 x 30 minutes), s/he could request the additional allocation needed to do so. Let's start thinking outside the box. Please allow a handful of schools to have a program where students can have more time to learn math, language arts, and science while thinking on their feet.

I would welcome the opportunity to speak with BOE members and/or MCPS staff about this proposal.

Susan Loftus

Burning Tree Elementary School



Attachment A
LOFTUS 10/11/07

Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

September 16, 2002

2 → through 06-07

MEMORANDUM

To: Elementary School Principals
From: Judie Muntner, Associate Superintendent
Subject: Elementary Art, Music, and Physical Education Guidelines

The attached guidelines are provided for your information and use in implementing elementary art, instrumental and general music, and physical education programs. These revised guidelines take the same format as in previous years and are revised to help clarify situations that have changed due to negotiations and best practices.


Questions may be referred to:

- Ms. Terri McCauley Coordinator, Physical Education, 301-279-3387
- Ms. Joan Stoer Coordinator, Elementary Art, Dance, and Theatre, 301-279-3835
- Dr. Lillian Pallen Coordinator, General/Choral Music, 301-279-3833
- Mr. Rick Penix Coordinator, Instrumental Music, 301-279-3836

JM:jlb

Attachment

Copy to:
Mr. Bowers
Community Superintendents
Mr. Masood

Approved: 
James A. Williams, Deputy Superintendent

Attachment B

**CONSIDERATIONS IN DEVELOPING ELEMENTARY ART, MUSIC, AND
 PHYSICAL EDUCATION SCHEDULES
 2007-2008**

SCHEDULING ART, MUSIC, AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES AND TEACHERS

- According to MCPS Guidelines for Arts (General/Choral Music, Art) and Physical Education Programs in Elementary Schools, the recommended minutes of instruction per week for each grade are shown in the table below.

Grades	Art	Music General/Chorus	Physical Education
Pre K	25	20	20
K	35-45	35	35
1-2	40-50	35-45*	35-45*
3-4	45-55	35-45	35-45
5-6	50-60	45-50	45-50
Chorus		45-50**	

- * Some schools have scheduled two 30-minute blocks and may continue to do so if this meets their needs. A longer block of time once a week, however, is recommended to reduce transition time and address scheduling challenges.
- ** Schedule as part of the regular school day, not during lunch or recess.
- The following table illustrates the range of instructional minutes for specific teacher allocations:

Allocation	Range of Minutes
0.1	112-125
0.2	225-250
0.3	337-375
0.4	450-500
0.5	562-625
0.6	675-750
0.7	787-875
0.8	900-1,000
0.9	1,012-1,125
1.0	1,125-1,250

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL TIME (PLANNING, TRANSITION, TRAVEL)

- Art, music, and physical education teachers, as well as classroom teachers, are granted seven hours of planning time per normal week. Four hours and fifteen minutes (255 minutes) will be during the elementary teachers' student day.

I. ARTS, MUSIC, AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHER SCHEDULES

a. Schools are allocated the same amount of instructional time for art, general music and instrumental music, and physical education. However, the elementary art, general music and instrumental music, and physical education programs are distinct in nature and require instructional periods of different lengths. Because art instruction requires longer periods, the music and physical education schedule will differ in the following ways:

→ The allocation should provide sufficient time to implement twice weekly instruction for first grade music and physical education. Current educational practice supports short, frequent periods of music and physical education instruction for primary students as being developmentally appropriate.

The general/choral music schedule should include one chorus period (scheduled within the instructional school day, not recess) plus one ancillary class, such as a second chorus, Orff ensemble, or recorder class.

The physical education schedule should include adaptive physical education classes.

→ If time remains, second grades should be given priority for a second weekly physical education and music class to permit full utilization of the allocation.

Grade-level designations in the chart below include general education students and students assigned to self-contained special education classes.

INSTRUCTIONAL TIME GUIDELINES

ART

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Length of Class</u>
Pre-K-HS	25
K	35-45
1-2	40-50
3-4	45-55
5	50-60

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND GENERAL MUSIC

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Length of Class</u>
Pre-K-HS	20
K	30
1-2	30
3-4	35-45
5	45-50

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Length of Class</u>
4-5	30-45 ¹

¹When possible, instrumental music students should receive a second lesson (30-45 min.) in the same week.