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BOE Community Forum Hearings
Albert Einstein High School

What Happens to a Dream Deferred? It Dries Up Like a Raisin in the Sun!

Priority over the past several years has been in recruiting very high achievers back into MCPS and to actively reward their capabilities and performance. Some levels of honors, AP, and/or IB courses are available at each and every MCPS school, from elementary through high school. This push has proved to be an extremely successful pathway for learning with the full support of MCPS. It has become universal in that it has opened the door for various other students who aspire to that pathway of learning. This commitment to success has been lauded from near and far.

However, every student does not fit into just one or two modes for learning. Students cannot demonstrate their best nor be their best, if they are forced into a pathway that doesn't work for them. We have forgotten that education is vast and that every student has the right to be nurtured and to learn in a safe and successful milieu. Instead of a bell curve, where there is a mound in the middle, reflecting majority student achievement, we have created a valley, where there is a dip in the middle as we push students to either end of the continuum. There MUST be other pathways to address the needs of our students with fluidity for advancement.

If we truly believe the statement, "Success for every student", then we must develop alternative styles of learning and alternative pathways for student development and learning that are appropriate. To my knowledge, one of our own, posted this statement at the top of a flyer promoting AEHS' first study circle,

“Imagine a school where racial and ethnic differences are not barriers to success”.

These students desire to and can be successful. Parents desire, want, and aid in this success for their children as well. In these "difficult economic times", we must now, with all deliberate speed, institute complete and comprehensive collaborative learning programs that will support all of our students.

Black/African-American and Hispanic/Latino and other scholars have identified, researched, piloted, and documented strategies that work in the education of diverse groups; especially teen males. Our own MCPS scholars and experts have sat on many a task force for many years attempting to do the same. Yet, MCPS had adopted a fragmented, band-aid approach for these student groups and question why failure still remains. Our own MCPS Office of Professional Development has developed a fabulous

2-day training course related to cultural sensitivity, ethnic cultural norms and practice and non-costly strategies to promote learning. Positive videotapes of successful teachers' teaching strategies are shared on-line. You have provided us with most of the resources we need.

How do we "Raise the Bar"? We "all" take these efforts seriously and make our students our priority over the next several years as we have done with our high achievers. We provide mandatory quality in-services, we provide challenging yet successful experiences for each student; beginning where they are! We do not demean or browbeat our students or their parents. Benign neglect will not enhance their performance either. This is not a racial issue as much as it is an issue of "options" appropriate to learning.

At our school, we have no technology or trade courses/programs that are complete and available to students to partake. Interestingly, at predominantly high academic schools there are 3-4 programs. This is not success for every student! Our community recognizes these programs as crucial alternative pathway programs for academic and vocational success.

The AEHS family has made a 110% commitment to support all students. Our enrollment reflects 41.4% Hispanic, 23.8% African-American, 22.6 % white, and 11.7% Asian. We have 90% highly qualified teachers. Our extremely capable administrators, staff, parents, students and community partners have collaborated and worked above and beyond the call of duty to develop individual and group strategies and options for our students. We could not have progressed as far as we have nor been as comprehensive as we are without this hard work, mutual support and frequent collaboration. We could realize our dream if we were to become a pilot program, over the next few years, beginning in the school year 2009-2010, but we would need a little extra help from you.

I have taken the liberty to chart just a few of the ideas and strategies that groups have identified and that have been developed and implemented thus far. I have also noted items in the MCPS column that would be needed. As noted on the chart, this graphic was developed to reflect a lot of information concisely and within the allotted timeframe. It should not be interpreted as all inclusive and has not been approved by any official source of AEHS.

In these tough economic times, this project would be cost saving because it could enhance the success of about 50% of our students.

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Please help us to realize our dream and to demonstrate that MCPS is committed to the success of all students. Thank you for your utmost consideration!

Wanda F. Watson

Attachments: AEHS Strategic Plan

(+) DRAFT
AEHS STRATEGIC PLAN

Pathway Component		Teachers	Counselors	PT parents	SA students	Comm Prog.	MCPS (need)
Academic Supports (examples)	A D M I N	*unisex class *class goals *outdoor/movement	*monthly progress reports *face-face discussion with student	*fundraising *officers/members * Black/Af-Am & Hisp/Latino parent groups *parent support group (counseling) *NAACP Parent's Council	*peer tutoring *peer mentoring *after-school activities	*after-school tutoring and mentoring	
Technology/ Career-Counseling	I S T R A T E G Y * S I P	*multi-modal teaching strategies *technology teachers	*counselor guidance *career counseling ctr.	*parent support group (counseling)			*3 tech (>) courses/ instructor (1) to meet tech requirement & (2) to satisfy language requirement *classes 2,3,4 for Hospitality Management *classes for landscape design or printing, graphics, electronic media or biomedical sciences

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Pathway Component		Teachers	Counselors	PT parents	SA students	Com- m- unity	MCPS (need)
Male Role Models	A D M I N	*instructors interested in learning strategies and teaching diverse students		*PTSA male parents/ community volunteers *parent support group (counseling)	*after-school activities	YMCA Iden- tity Other after-school activi- ties	Recruiting male teachers committed to diversity
Personal-Social, Positive Self-Esteem	I S T R A T I O N * S I P	*positive behavior management	*reinforcing self-organization *reinforcing worth and acknowledge *mental health	*parent support group (counseling)	*after-school activities	YMCA Iden- tity LASU Other after-school activi- ties	*sensitivity Training for all stakeholders and students reinforced through study circles *minimum of one full-time career counselor *partnership with Johns Hopkins counseling department or Montgomery College “Boys to Men” Mentoring Program
Project Coordinator						?	?
Board	X	X	X	X	X	X	

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