

POLICY

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Related Entries: ACA, ACB, ACC, GEG, JEE, JEE-RA

Responsible Office: Superintendent of Schools

Quality Integrated Education

A. PURPOSE

1. The Board of Education's primary responsibility is to provide the opportunity for each student to obtain a high quality education and to encourage each student to work toward that objective to the maximum of his or her abilities.
2. The Board of Education is committed to the proposition that education is most effective in a diverse, integrated setting, and that therefore a major purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for actions designed to promote diversity so that the isolation of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups is avoided and the full benefits of integration are achieved.
3. Another important goal of the Board is to ensure that all students and staff have experiences and develop greater skills and increased sensitivity in working with others of diverse backgrounds so that they may function well as members of this pluralistic democratic society. The Board will continue to adhere to its commitment to racial and ethnic diversity in staffing in all schools.
4. This policy statement sets forth a design for achieving the combination of these two related goals – quality education and integrated education – while operating the schools as economically as possible.

B. ISSUE

The student population in the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has become increasingly diverse. Further, the numbers of students who require specialized assistance because they lack English or adequate educational preparation have increased dramatically. The school system must respond to the needs of these children, and must do so in a setting which does not isolate them, stereotype them, or fail to educate them effectively. The education of these students is a great challenge, one to which the school system must respond with creativity, with determination

and with carefully crafted educational strategies that will meet every student's need for success. The integrated settings in which this must occur must not be left to chance, but must be created and supported by MCPS.

Quality educational opportunities for children cannot be dependent on either racial or ethnic backgrounds or on family, or on socioeconomic status. Intensive support is necessary, however, for students whose opportunities have been limited by background or experience. Providing a quality education where there is evidence of educational disadvantage requires additional effort on the part of the school system.

Among the many factors influencing students' academic achievement, some are more directly under the control of the school system and others are more directly related to family and community conditions. The latter may include parental support for education and learning, economic resources, individual talents, community demographic conditions affecting mobility, employment opportunities, or cultural resources. The factors more directly under control of the schools include varieties of teaching strategies, application of appropriate classroom technologies, staff training, staff preparation, professional renewal, classroom support personnel, and other administrative and material resources.

Integrated schooling has inherent educational value from the standpoint of education's role in a democratic society. The survival and vigor of democracy depends upon an educated citizenry with shared concerns about the welfare of society, its members, and the democratic principles that govern it. Diversity brings different viewpoints and experiences to classroom discussions and thereby enhances the educational process. It also fosters racial and cultural understanding which is particularly important in a racially and culturally diverse society such as ours. In addition, research shows that integrated education expands postsecondary opportunities for diverse populations.

This school system is fortunate to have the pluralism brought by the African American, American Indian, Asian American, Hispanic, and White communities in our county and by the multi-ethnic groups within each. Some factors contributing to this diversity in the schools are under the control of the administration and other, more powerful, factors are due to community demographic conditions. The school system's diversity reflects the increasing pluralism of the U.S. society and emphasizes the broader need for international awareness and cooperation. Diversity is thus a valuable resource for teaching students to become citizens in a multi-racial/multi-ethnic world.

Therefore, a policy that supports quality education for integration of all students will have a positive effect on our students who will live and work together in a culturally diverse society.

C. POSITION

It is the position of the Board of Education that there is a logical analytic approach to decisions that need to be taken to achieve the goals of this policy. This approach is detailed in the section and concludes with a range of possible actions which might be taken to enhance diversity in the schools.

1. Supporting Academic Achievement**a) Identifying Schools**

The method for identification of schools most in need of support to improve academic achievement and for allocating supplementary resources to support quality education involves the following factors.

(1) Educational load, which may include:

- a) Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS)
- b) Students older than grade age
- c) Internal mobility
- d) External mobility
- e) Students with limited English proficiency
- f) Other factors which may correlate with school achievement levels

(2) Academic Achievement Levels

Staff will utilize the following indicators of academic achievement levels and may use others as it examines the levels of academic achievement in schools throughout the county: MCPS Criterion Referenced Tests, MSPAP results, and the percentage of students who qualify for Algebra I in ninth grade.

(3) Analysis of schools

Staff will analyze school needs based on educational load and achievement levels, among other appropriate factors.

b) Strengthening Schools

Based on the analysis described above, the need for action will be identified and recommended to the Board, and appropriate resources should be allocated to

assist those schools in delivering educational services that reinforce the academic opportunities for students there.

2. Supporting Diversity

a) Identifying Schools

Staff will assess annually the “diversity profile” of each school, which should take into account the following factors:

(1) Composition

The extent to which the school differs from the school system’s overall composition with respect to each of the four major racial/ethnic groups.

(2) Rate of Change

The rate of change in those four racial/ethnic compositions within the school over the past several years, using four years as the initial factor.

(3) Analysis of Schools

Based on the diversity profile and such other factors as are appropriate, the staff will prioritize the school’s need for administrative attention based on these factors.

b) Strengthening Schools

(1) The Board of Education is committed to taking reasonable measures to enhance the diversity of the student enrollments within each school. Such measures include, but are not limited to:

(a) Monitoring and regulating all interschool transfer requests from parents pursuant to the transfer policy

(b) Planning for balanced school populations when facility space needs require change in service areas, including consideration of socioeconomic diversity

- (c) Considering acquisition of school sites that have potential to maintain or improve diversity, including socioeconomic diversity
 - (d) Pairing, clustering, and creating consortia of schools
 - (e) Implementing magnet and special programs
- (2) The Board of Education will direct the superintendent to take measures to implement program strategies for increasing the opportunities for students to develop multicultural understanding and appreciation through the interaction with others of different races and ethnic groups. Such program alternatives can include, but are not limited to:
- (a) Curricular or extracurricular offerings
 - (b) Joint school activities
 - (c) Other activities designed to help students function in a multi-racial/multi-ethnic society
- (3) The Board of Education will direct the superintendent to implement one or more of such remedies in schools whose profiles warrant a need for increased diversity or for preserving diversity in the student body.

D. DESIRED OUTCOME

The Board of Education is committed to providing quality educational opportunities for all students regardless of background characteristics by providing an educational environment that enhances their educational success. The Board of Education is also committed to the provision of integrated settings for education that promote understanding of diversity, tolerance, and fair play, so that the tenets of a democratic society are reinforced by what students experience in school. Further, the Board of Education expects that the result of this policy will be that resources are allocated to meet the challenges of educating a diverse population with steadily greater success.

E. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. The superintendent will recommend to the Board of Education, as appropriate, actions that implement this policy and his/her recommendations will be based on these three factors below:

- a) Staff will examine annually the various factors that correlate with achievement levels that represent a school's educational load
 - b) Staff will assess annually the diversity profile of each school
 - c) Based on the diversity profile and other factors that are appropriate, staff will prioritize the school's need for administrative attention
2. The Board will advise the Montgomery County Planning Board, County Council, county executive, and other appropriate state, county, and municipal agencies of any governmental policies or practices which have or could have a beneficial or adverse impact on maintaining quality integrated education in the schools. The public schools alone cannot assure quality integrated education for all students. Other agencies, both public and private, must assume leadership to bring about greater opportunities for all persons to become part of our community fabric.
 3. The Board commits itself to seek concerted action by all state, county, and municipal agencies and groups to help achieve the goals of this policy. It calls upon all citizens to join it in urging other agencies to work toward achieving quality integrated education in all public schools.

F. REVIEW AND REPORTING

1. The superintendent will present the Board of Education with an annual report that defines each school's educational load and diversity profile, reports progress toward achieving the desired outcomes of this policy, and contains appropriate recommendations for further actions designed to achieve those outcomes.
2. This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis in accordance with the Board of Education's policy review process.

Policy History: Adopted by Resolution No. 837-83, October 10, 1983; amended by Resolution No. 401-93, May 17, 1993.