

REGULATION

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Related Entries: IFB, IFB-RA, IGP-RA, IIB, IIB-RA

Responsible Office: Deputy Superintendent of Schools

Curriculum

A. PURPOSE

To delineate a process for curriculum development, implementation, monitoring, and review and to ensure systematic alignment among the written, taught, and learned (assessed) curriculum

B. BACKGROUND

The curriculum contains the Board of Education's prescribed element of programs and courses, and is fundamental to the mission and goals of MCPS. There must be a systemic ongoing program of curriculum review and development.

C. DEFINITIONS

1. *Curriculum* is the total instructional experience of students as detailed in the written curriculum, delivered in the taught curriculum, and measured in the learned (assessed) curriculum.
2. *Core Curriculum* includes the required sequence of instruction in Prekindergarten through Grade 8 in Arts Education, Health Education, Mathematics, Physical Education, Reading/Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies at each grade level and Category 1 courses in Grades 9-12 which must be offered and given in each high school regardless of course enrollment. Core curriculum also includes the course of instruction for Fundamental Life Skills.
3. *Non-Core Curriculum* includes classes beyond the required course of instruction in Grades pre-K through 8; Category 2 courses in Grades 9-12, which must be offered and given in high schools when enrollment reaches 15 or greater; and other courses not defined as core courses.
4. *Curriculum Framework* contains the scope and sequence of indicators for selected course or grade/subject. It defines what students must know and be able to do by

the end of a course or in a specific subject and grade, and informs development of the scope and sequence of units and formative assessments.

5. *Curriculum Blueprint* (outlines or matrices) organizes indicators into instructional units. It informs development of instructional guides.
6. *Curriculum Guide*, also referred to as an instructional guide, provides detailed and specific information to teachers implementing the curriculum, developed for each course or subject/grade.
7. *Written Curriculum* details what students are expected to know and be able to do by the end of a specific course or grade/subject. The written curriculum includes the framework, blueprint/outline, and instructional guide.
8. *Taught Curriculum* denotes how teachers implement the written curriculum, including instructional strategies.
9. *Learned (Assessed) Curriculum* denotes what students know and are able to do before, during, and after instruction, as measured on pre-assessments, formative assessments, bodies of evidence and end-of-unit assessments, including final evaluation activities and semester exams, as appropriate.
10. *Externally-developed Curriculum or Program* is developed by an outside organization. Its use in MCPS may significantly alter, add to, or replace MCPS curriculum and may include Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, published programs, curriculum developed by private and/or non-profit organizations, online courses, or distance learning.
11. *Instructional Materials* are print and non-print items that are designed to impart information to the learner in the teaching/learning process. Instructional materials may be consumable and expendable and include such items as charts, kits, textbooks, magazines, newspapers, pictures, recordings, slides, transparencies, videos, video discs, workbooks, and electronic resources such as software, CD-ROMs, and online services.
12. *Curriculum Advisory Committee* is composed of representatives from stakeholder groups and represents the socioeconomic, linguistic, and cultural diversity of MCPS. It provides input, feedback, and advisement on content specific curriculum, instruction, and assessment issues.
13. *Curriculum Advisory Assembly Committee* is composed of members from all Curriculum Advisory Committees and others designated by the associate

superintendent. It is the primary vehicle for providing input, feedback, and advisement on general curriculum, assessment, and instructional issues.

14. *Pilot* is an early, limited implementation of proposed curriculum to determine strengths and suitability for wider implementation and to identify necessary changes.
15. *Field Test* is an early implementation of curriculum on a wide scale to meet state and federal mandates while identifying necessary changes.
16. *Body of Evidence* is a collection of tasks designed to assess student understanding or application of concepts or skills addressed instructionally as outlined in the MCPS curriculum. This collection may be used to determine a student's grade for the marking period.

D. PROCEDURES

Curriculum is fundamental to the mission of MCPS. Consequently, it shall be regularly evaluated and revised to the level of the best models available.

1. Timeline for Curriculum Development

- a. The deputy superintendent of schools will establish a timeline for curriculum development, implementation, monitoring, and review.
- b. The Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs (OCIP) will formally review core content areas on a five-year cycle, with at least one area reported to the Board of Education every year.
- c. Curriculum development is ongoing. OCIP will determine and implement minor modifications needed in frameworks, blueprints, assessments, guides, reporting practices, and support materials based on results of ongoing evaluation, changes in standards and assessments, and input of stakeholders.

2. Stakeholder Involvement

Curriculum development is a partnership among all stakeholders, including members of the Board of Education; central services administrators; teachers; principals; support staff; parents; students; content area experts; and members of the community, business, and higher education. The deputy superintendent of schools will invite representative organizations to submit nominations for committee membership.

- a. Curriculum Advisory Committees for each discipline and student advocacy area will meet a minimum of four times annually to review, discuss, and advise regarding content specific curriculum development, implementation, monitoring, and review.
 - 1) Each Curriculum Advisory Committee will include stakeholders reflecting the diversity of interests in curriculum development, and representing the socioeconomic, cultural, and linguistic diversity of the county. Staff designated by the associate superintendent for curriculum and instruction will recruit and serve as chair person of the Curriculum Advisory Committee.
 - 2) Members' responsibilities will include representing constituents, providing input, seeking clarification on relevant issues, and communicating to the larger community. Documentation of constituent communication by the members may be requested.
 - 3) Curriculum Advisory Committees will examine instructional materials approved by Evaluation and Selection committees in accordance with Regulation IIB-RA: *Evaluation and Selection of Instructional Materials and Library Books*. Only MCPS staff may serve as members of both the Curriculum Advisory Committees and the subject area committees for purposes of information sharing and alignment of decisions.
- b. The Curriculum Advisory Assembly will meet a minimum of four times annually to review, discuss, and advise regarding general curriculum development, implementation, monitoring, and review.
 - 1) The committee will be composed of at least one MCPS staff representative and one parent/guardian representative from each of the Curriculum Advisory Committees, as well as representatives of groups designated by the associate superintendent for curriculum and instruction.
 - 2) Members' responsibilities include providing input, seeking clarification on relevant issues, and communicating with the larger community.
- c. At times of revision or initiation of new curriculum, additional feedback may be sought through public outreach efforts.

- d. The Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs will provide parent information regarding proposed curriculum changes and will provide updates on current curriculum development.

3. Development of the Written Curriculum

Development of the written curriculum varies for core and non-core curriculum and assessments. The review and approval process and final products will differ for core and non-core curriculum. Initial development of core curriculum must be approved by the Board and will result in fully developed instructional guides and assessments. Initial development of non-core curriculum may begin at the school level, and after Board recommendation to continue development, will result in a fully developed course outline and supplements.

a. Core Curriculum

Given the systemwide impact of core curriculum revisions, a comprehensive plan for development, implementation, monitoring, reporting, and review is required.

- 1) Core curriculum decisions, including but not limited to elimination or addition of programs and courses, extensive content alteration, and changes that adversely affect other courses or subjects shall require Board of Education approval.
- 2) Under direction of the superintendent or designee, development of core curriculum is initiated by the associate superintendent for curriculum and instruction and presented to the Board of Education for approval to proceed with a formal plan for curriculum development or revision.
- 3) Content area coordinators or supervisors submit a formal plan for curriculum development to the Curriculum Advisory Committee and appropriate Council on Teaching and Learning, for input, feedback, and advisement. A formal plan to develop core curriculum will include:
 - a) Course or subject area framework, including:
 - (1) Rationale (context for learning)
 - (2) Standards, indicators, or course/subject expectations

- b) Course or grade level blueprints/outlines, including:
 - (1) Enduring understandings and essential questions
 - (2) Course/grade level indicators organized in a meaningful manner for instruction, usually by unit
 - c) Initial list of required and recommended instructional resources, differentiated as appropriate
 - d) Plan for student assessment in collaboration with the Department of Shared Accountability
 - e) Plan for staff development in collaboration with the Office of Organizational Development
 - f) Proposed budget for curriculum development, instructional materials, staff development, and staffing
 - g) Description of relationship to and impact on existing content curriculum, effect on elementary time allotments and secondary course sequences, and nature of credit students may earn, as appropriate
 - h) Timeline for development including plans for guide and assessment development, field testing or piloting, staff development, materials selection and purchase, and countywide implementation
- 4) Content area coordinators or supervisors make appropriate changes based on stakeholder input and submit the revised plan for curriculum development to the associate superintendent for curriculum and instruction.
- 5) The associate superintendent for curriculum and instructional programs may consider a pilot/field test, based on input from the curriculum assembly.
- 6) The associate superintendent may collect broader input from the community through an informal public comment process, as needed.

- 7) The associate superintendent for curriculum and instruction will include progress of new or revised curriculum in the annual report to the Board of Education concerning curriculum implementation.

b. Non-Core Curriculum

Development of non-core curriculum is initiated by a principal, community superintendent, or other MCPS administrator through OCIP. Teachers may initiate non-core curriculum with the approval of the principal. Final approval of non-core curriculum rests with the Board of Education.

- 1) Non-core curriculum decisions, including but not limited to elimination or addition of programs and courses, significant content alteration, and changes that adversely affect other courses or subjects, shall require Board of Education approval.
- 2) Under the direction of a principal, community superintendent, or other MCPS administrator, school staff submit a preliminary proposal to the appropriate content supervisor/coordinator to determine quality of proposed curriculum, existence of similar or related programs, and alignment to standards and MCPS curriculum.
- 3) If appropriate, the content supervisor/coordinator will direct school staff to provide details as directed in the designated MCPS Form for Non-Core Curriculum Development, including the following elements:
 - a) Course title and description
 - b) Enduring understandings and essential questions
 - c) Alignment to standards and indicators
 - d) Syllabus
 - e) Methods of assessment
 - f) Course duration
 - g) Credits earned

- h) Course sequence and pre or co-requisite courses
 - i) Grade levels targeted
 - j) Instructional target of the course (e.g., honors, AP, ESOL)
 - k) Course designation (e.g., technology, certificate of merit, laboratory-based science)
 - l) Evaluation plan
 - m) Proposed instructional resources
- 4) Associate superintendent for curriculum and instruction will submit a request to develop and pilot non-core curriculum to the Board of Education for approval.
 - 5) During the period of pilot and development, initiating staff will develop and identify
 - a) Instructional sequence
 - b) Sample assessments
 - c) Approved instructional resources and materials
- c. Externally Developed Curriculum and Instructional Programs
- 1) As determined by the associate superintendent responsible for curriculum and instructional programs, use of externally developed curriculum or use of instructional materials that replace, add to, significantly alter, or adversely affect MCPS curriculum, shall be subject to Board of Education approval and follow the core or non-core curriculum development process as appropriate.
 - 2) Externally developed curriculum and instructional programs currently in use shall be reviewed at the discretion of the associate superintendent for curriculum and instruction.
 - 3) Nationally or internationally recognized curriculum, comparable to and including Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, middle years Pre-IB, and primary years Pre-IB, may be used in

place of MCPS curriculum, after review and approval using the process for non-core curriculum development.

d. Assessments

- 1) The MCPS assessment program will be developed as part of the process for curriculum development or revision.
- 2) The purpose of the MCPS assessment program is to
 - a) Evaluate student performance on the written and taught curriculum
 - b) Guide instruction
 - c) Provide data for differentiation
 - d) Guide curriculum revision
 - e) Predict student performance on state and national assessments
- 3) All curriculum guides will include models of pre-assessment examples of bodies of evidence and formative assessment that are standards-based and aligned with grade level or course expectations and state and national assessments.
- 4) Assessments developed externally and acquired as part of the assessment program will undergo review at the time of curriculum review, to determine reliability and validity.
- 5) Externally developed assessments must be reviewed and approved by the associate superintendent/designee for curriculum and instruction prior to use in MCPS schools.

e. Elements of Curriculum Guides (also referred to as Instructional Guides)

- 1) Information on the use and purpose of the guide, including connections to MCPS standards, resources, assessments, and monitoring
- 2) Models of effective instruction, which must include the following elements:

- a) Target indicators addressed in the lesson
 - b) Guidelines for pre-assessment
 - c) Instructional sequence
 - d) Models of differentiation to challenge and support all students
 - e) Formative assessment measures
 - f) Resources (included and recommended)
 - g) Research-based strategies
 - h) State assessment limits, as appropriate
- 3) End-of-unit assessments
 - 4) Concept maps
 - 5) Yearly outline
 - 6) Intervention and acceleration strategies
 - 7) Approved instructional materials and texts
 - 8) Resource lists
- f. Resources such as textbooks, software, electronic resources and other instructional materials shall be selected and approved based upon alignment with MCPS curriculum and system priorities using a uniform process. (Refer to IIB-RA: *Evaluation and Selection of Instructional Materials and Library Books*)

4. Implementation of the Taught Curriculum

- a. The taught curriculum shall be aligned with the written and assessed curriculum to support student academic success and maintain consistency within and among schools.
 - 1) Teachers, including those in day, night, Saturday, and summer school, and other extended learning opportunities will have a

personal copy of current curriculum guides for assigned grade levels or courses.

- 2) Teachers will use the prescriptive elements of curriculum guides, which may include enduring understandings, essential questions, assessed standards, indicators or objectives, focus statements, assessments, and required sequencing and pacing, as the basis for instruction.
 - 3) Teachers will use descriptive elements of curriculum guides, which may include lessons, background information, and student resources as models for instruction.
 - 4) Teachers will create mastery objectives based on MCPS grade level or course expectations that communicate to the students:
 - a) What they are expected to know and do
 - b) How the students will demonstrate what they know and can do
 - 5) Teachers will develop instructional plans focusing on indicators outlined in curriculum guides.
 - 6) Teachers will use the various assessments as directed in curriculum guides.
- b. Professional development, to support implementing new curricula, will be offered to all relevant school-based administrators and central services staff.
 - c. Central services staff, principals, and other school-based instructional team leaders (e.g., resource teachers, reading specialists, staff development teachers) shall work with teachers to maintain consistent implementation of written, taught, and assessed curriculum and shall monitor student performance as measured by formal assessments.
 - d. Instructional delivery of all programs serving MCPS students shall be integrated with and aligned to the systemwide curriculum.
 - e. School-based and central services instructional leadership shall work with teachers to ensure appropriate use of approved instructional materials and

texts as delineated in MCPS curriculum documents (refer to IIB-RA: *Evaluation and Selection of Instructional Materials and Library Books*).

- f. All topics taught in courses or subjects shall be relevant to curriculum as outlined in MCPS documents and as required in state and MCPS regulations to ensure a balanced and sensitive presentation and respectful, appropriate inclusion of multiple perspectives, particularly in the case of topics of controversy.
- g. New or revised curriculum will be implemented only when adequate funding for staff development and instructional materials is available.
- h. The Office of Organizational Development shall collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders to design and deliver professional development to prepare staff members to teach the written curriculum effectively and shall include methodologies to ensure staff members have appropriate discipline-specific knowledge, skills, strategies, and practices required for effective instruction and assessment.

5. Monitoring the Learned Curriculum

- a. Teachers will use a variety of assessment approaches to create a body of evidence and monitor student learning of written and taught curriculum, including pre-assessment, formative assessment, and end-of-unit assessments.
- b. Assessment shall be ongoing to
 - 1) Determine patterns of student achievement systemwide
 - 2) Determine individual student performance and progress for the purpose of continuous and flexible regrouping of students for instruction
 - 3) Adjust instruction as needed
- c. The Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs will work with resource teachers, interdisciplinary resource teachers, reading specialists, staff development teachers, consulting teachers, media specialists, other instructional leaders and administrators to develop a variety of methods to collect and analyze evidence of student learning to inform instructional and programmatic decisions.

- d. The Office of School Performance and the Office of Information and Organizational Systems shall work with principals to organize and interpret assessment results to monitor student learning and to ensure congruence of instruction and assessment with curriculum.
 - e. Principals and school leadership staff shall establish collaborative structures to assist teachers with implementation and monitoring, including but not limited to group scoring and standard-setting using rubrics (i.e., range-finding, monitoring tools, peer observation and consultation, and program review).
 - f. Central services staff shall maintain a systematic process and electronic information management system to facilitate the assessment of student performance and shall collect, organize, analyze, and report results to administrators, teachers, parents/guardians, and students.
 - g. Based on monitoring and assessment, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, the Office of Organizational Development shall evaluate the effectiveness of staff development efforts to identify teacher, administrator, and student needs related to
 - 1) Implementing written and taught curriculum
 - 2) Designing, administering, and interpreting assessments
 - 3) Reporting on student progress towards meeting standards
 - h. Professional development shall be modified based on qualitative and quantitative evidence of improved teacher practices implementing MCPS curriculum and contributing to increased student achievement
6. Review of the Entire Curriculum
- a. The associate superintendent for curriculum and instruction will review each content area curriculum on a cycle of every five years, with at least one area reported to the Board of Education every year.
 - b. The primary purpose of five-year curriculum review is to evaluate congruence among written, taught, and learned (assessed) curriculum. Review may include:
 - 1) Benchmarking state, national, and international standards, curriculum documents, and practices, when appropriate

- 2) Benchmarking standards, curriculum documents, and practices of local and similar jurisdictions
 - 3) Reviewing state, national, and international assessments
 - 4) Reviewing current MCPS implementation practices and assessments and analyzing benchmarks to identify areas in MCPS standards, curriculum documents, and practices that require updating
 - 5) Additional stakeholder input, feedback, and recommendations may be sought and considered during the curriculum review process
- c. For externally developed curriculum, the review must include the following considerations: alignment with comparable MCPS curriculum and achievement of students as compared to students in comparable MCPS curriculum.
- d. Independent reviewers of curriculum shall be contracted under the following conditions:
- 1) When MCPS lacks the internal expertise
 - 2) When investment of staff time would significantly impair ability to fulfill core duties
 - 3) When funding sources are sufficient
- e. Independent reviewers of curriculum shall meet the following criteria:
- 1) National recognition in content area of review
 - 2) Academic credentials
 - 3) Successful experience working with similarly situated school systems
 - 4) Capacity of the organization to complete the task

Regulation History: New Regulation, October 22, 2003; revised September 20, 2005.