

POLICY

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Related Entries: ACA, BMA, IGK-RA, IGK-RB, ISB-RA, JEE, JEE-RA
Responsible Office: Chief Academic Officer
Deputy Superintendent of School Support and Improvement

Career Readiness

A. PURPOSE

To provide a vision for pre-K-12 career readiness programming that is embedded in the instructional program and offers rigorous academic coursework with technical instruction and real-world work experiences for all students

To provide opportunities for students to acquire the skills needed to be prepared for the range of roles available in the 21st century economy, which values short-term, meaningful career credentials in addition to four-year college degrees

To align Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) career readiness programming with all state and federal requirements, and to prepare individuals for success in high skill, living wage occupations in current or emerging in-demand industry sectors

B. ISSUE

Opportunities for high-skill, living wage occupations in current or emerging in-demand industry sectors require that students are prepared to pursue education and training opportunities throughout their lifetimes.

In order to provide opportunities for students to match their skills with their aspirations, career readiness education at the elementary, middle, and high school levels offers a broad set of experiences that –

1. develop knowledge in core subjects, along with cognitive strategies and learning skills and techniques, such as goal setting, persistence, self-awareness, time management, collaborative learning, and self-efficacy,
2. expose students to a broad array of careers to inform the development of their career aspirations consistent with their interests,

3. encourage them to think strategically and creatively about what can and should be included in their school experiences, and
4. prepare them for the postsecondary education and training they will need to achieve their aspirations, and provide transition skills to access postsecondary opportunities.

C. POSITION

1. MCPS will cultivate a vision and strategy for career readiness that makes high-quality, professional career opportunities available to students and promotes authentic career and/or experiential opportunities through which students may earn stackable industry-recognized career credentials, certificates awarded by postsecondary institutions, and/or two-year or four-year college degrees, qualifying them for professions that require more than a high school diploma.
 - a) Career readiness education allows students the opportunity to earn industry-recognized career credentials while still in high school, including certifications and licensures, and postsecondary college credit.
 - b) Career readiness includes completion of a rigorous academic program en route to a career credential and/or professional skills as part of a college preparatory program.
 - c) Career readiness prepares and qualifies students for ongoing learning across their working lives to update and expand their skills, without need for remediation, to meet the demands of emerging roles and professions available in the 21st century economy.
2. Career readiness includes instruction in the core competencies needed for lifelong learning and career success that are applicable to any career path.
 - a) Throughout prekindergarten (preK)-12, students accumulate, as appropriate, foundational career readiness skills such as critical thinking, creative problem solving, oral and written communication, teamwork and collaboration, analyzing and evaluating conflicting viewpoints, global and intercultural fluency, leadership, time-management, goal setting, persistence, responsibility for one's own learning, organizing and constructing work products, and monitoring and confirming the precision and accuracy of the work they produce.
 - b) Throughout pre-K-12, students and families will receive multiple communications to ensure they are aware of the importance of career readiness, the portfolio of MCPS career readiness pathways, a broad array

of career opportunities, and the full range of industry-recognized career credentials and certifications available to them during and/or after their MCPS educational experience.

- c) Beginning in middle school, students are encouraged to think about and plan creatively and strategically for secondary school experiences that integrate career exploration and preparation alongside preparation for postsecondary education and training.
3. All MCPS students will have access to a variety of career readiness courses as part of a comprehensive high school instructional program or a specialized high school program exclusively or principally used for the provision of career readiness programming.
 - a) MCPS shall develop and expand postsecondary program offerings at times and in formats that are accessible for students, including students employed during the typical school day.
 - b) MCPS shall provide selected opportunities for students to access career pathway programs not available in their home schools, in accordance with student needs, capacity, and application and admission criteria that may vary by program.
 - c) MCPS shall regularly review career readiness education programs and identify and adopt strategies to remove barriers that result in lowered rates of access to, enrollment in, or success of the programs.
4. Teachers, counselors, and administrators will be provided professional learning opportunities regarding –
 - a) the regional labor market and related high skill, living wage, in-demand industry sectors and occupations, to help them understand the range of meaningful professional roles available to students after high school, and
 - b) MCPS career readiness options and opportunities for students, to assist students and parents/guardians to think creatively and strategically about MCPS experiences that integrate career exploration and preparation alongside preparation for postsecondary education and training.
5. MCPS will strive to recruit staff with firsthand experience in cutting-edge pathway industries to support students' career readiness education and support education programs for staff who are involved in the direct delivery of career education to ensure that such staff stay current with rigorous academic standards and all aspects of an industry.

6. MCPS will engage with students at all levels, and will conduct ongoing outreach to parents/guardians and other key stakeholders to increase understanding of –
 - a) economic shifts in the local and regional labor market and available career opportunities,
 - b) the value of career preparation alongside, and integrated into, college preparation, and
 - c) MCPS career readiness programs and school offerings to support informed decisions about high school and postsecondary options related to students' career interests.

7. Each high school shall have career counseling for students and their families to understand the MCPS career readiness programming and postsecondary education and training requirements that align with students' aspirations.
 - a) MCPS shall encourage all students to pursue their goals and interests, without regard to historical barriers or stereotypes. Access to and participation in career pathways should not be predictable by personal characteristics, as set forth in Montgomery County Board of Education Policy ACA, *Nondiscrimination, Equity, and Cultural Proficiency*. Students will be provided multiple opportunities to participate in challenging programs, enriching their perspectives and preparing them for meaningful and fulfilling work.
 - b) Students from families and communities historically under-represented in higher education or certain career pathways shall have opportunities to learn about required courses and assessments recommended in high school in order to maximize opportunities for admission to appropriate postsecondary programs.

8. MCPS high school Career and Technology Education (CTE) programs are aligned with the Career Cluster System of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).
 - a) These programs provide students with planned, sequential programs that build student competence in core academic subjects, along with professional skills needed for success in their careers.
 - (1) Students who participate in CTE programs are taught coherent and rigorous content aligned with the same challenging academic standards as are taught to all other students.

- (2) Each program consists of a sequence of relevant courses and a capstone experience, such as an internship or a college course.
 - (3) MCPS encourages work-based learning experiences, such as internships and apprenticeships, as part of career readiness pathways.
 - (4) Many programs lead to the attainment of industry/professional certification.
- b) In addition to the career clusters defined by MSDE, MCPS also may offer additional programs of study as industry need, student interest, staffing, and facilities allow.
9. MCPS actively consults with representatives of local workforce development agencies and a range of local or regional businesses or industries on an ongoing basis to allow input, where applicable, into the development and implementation of programs.
- a) Active partnerships promote alignment between the MCPS academic program, the identification of relevant standards, curriculum, current technology and equipment, and industry-recognized career credentials, as well as local employment opportunities and the economic development needs of the Washington metropolitan region and Montgomery County.
 - b) MCPS pursues partnerships and collaborative programs with businesses, government agencies, colleges and universities, and other community groups to identify and encourage opportunities for postsecondary and work-based learning. These include, but are not limited to, trades foundations.

D. DESIRED OUTCOME

All students will graduate with the core competencies, skills, and knowledge necessary to enroll, persist, and succeed in postsecondary education and training opportunities that prepare them for high skill living wage occupations in current or emerging in-demand industry sectors, consistent with their needs and interests.

E. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The superintendent of schools will develop regulations to implement this policy as needed.

F. REVIEW AND REPORTING

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the Board policy review process.

Related Sources:

Every Student Succeeds Act (P.L. 114-95); Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006) (P.L. 115-224); Maryland College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act of 2013 (SB740, 2013); *Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Career and Technology Education Programs*, §21-101 and §21-201-204; *Code of Maryland Regulations* 13A.04.02.01-.06; Montgomery County Board of Education Resolution No. 25-04

Policy History: Resolution No. 609-72, October 10, 1972, reformatted in accordance with Resolution 333-86, June 12, 1986, and Resolution No. 458-86, August 12, 1986, accepted by Resolution No. 518-86, September 22, 1986; reformatted March 1998; amended by Resolution No. 251-19, April 9, 2019.