



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org

MARYLAND

August 2011



Dear MCPS Families:

I am excited to tell you about some important upgrades to the curriculum in our kindergarten and first grade classes this fall, and in second grade classes at several elementary schools.

For the past two years, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has been testing some significant enhancements to the elementary school curriculum. You may have heard about this upgraded curriculum—the Elementary Integrated Curriculum or EIC. There are so many improvements to the curriculum that we are simplifying the name and calling it MCPS Curriculum 2.0, reflecting the way upgrades in technology changes often are described.

Although our existing MCPS curriculum has been strong and effective, we believe Curriculum 2.0 will be even better at engaging students and teachers. Curriculum 2.0 upgrades are based on a strong body of research and intensify the focus on teaching the whole child and on the critical and creative thinking skills that are so important to being successful both in school and in life.

Parents have been asking for more instruction in the arts, sciences and social studies. These topics have been crowded out at times over the past decade because more attention has been given to reading and math due to federal accountability mandates. Curriculum 2.0 will provide more instructional focus on the arts, information literacy, science, social studies and physical education. By blending these subjects with the core content areas of reading, writing, and mathematics, students will receive instruction across all subjects in the early grades. In addition, research has shown that well-rounded students are more successful students.

At the same time, math, reading *and* writing will be strengthened significantly by being based upon new internationally driven standards, also called the Common Core State Standards. These standards, adopted by Maryland last year, describe the content that students must learn at each grade level and are structured to help students in the United States compete favorably with students around the world. MCPS incorporated these new internationally driven standards into Curriculum 2.0 to ensure that all subject areas are taught and to ensure a renewed focus on teaching the whole child.

In short, Curriculum 2.0 is designed to do an even better job of teaching MCPS students the academic, creative and critical thinking skills that build confidence and success and prepare children for a lifetime of learning.

After implementation of the curriculum in kindergarten and first grade this year, we will roll out Curriculum 2.0 to each new elementary grade one year at a time. As you learn more about our improved curriculum, I'm sure you will have some questions. There will be a number of opportunities to discuss the new curriculum and learn more about it when school opens this fall. We also will have regular updates on our website to keep parents informed. Please visit www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/2.0/ often and give us your feedback. If you have immediate questions about how it is working in your child's school, please contact the principal at your child's school.

Sincerely,

Joshua P. Starr, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools