

1 Related Entries: ABA, ABC, ABC-RA, ACA, ACA-RA, AEB, GEG-RA,  
2 IFA, IFA-RA, IKA, IKA-RA, IOA, IOA-RA, IOB,  
3 IOD, IOD-RA, ~~ISA, ISB-RA~~, JEA-RA

4 Responsible Office: Chief Academic Officer

5  
6

7 Framework and Structure of  
8 Early Childhood and Elementary Education

9  
10

11 A. PURPOSE

12  
13

14 To affirm the **Montgomery County** Board of Education's  
15 commitment to ~~producing a challenging and comprehensive~~  
16 ~~educational program for eligible students in early childhood~~  
17 ~~and students in elementary programs that will promotinge the~~  
18 intellectual, social, emotional, and physical growth and  
19 development of ~~students~~ **children** in their early learning  
20 years **through high quality, developmentally appropriate,**  
21 **challenging, and comprehensive early childhood and elementary**  
22 **programs**

23  
24

25 **To establish a framework for early childhood and elementary**  
26 **education, in partnership with parents/guardians and**  
27 **collaboration with community stakeholders, that allows each**  
28 **child to establish a solid foundation for learning through**  
**high quality early childhood experiences and attain key**  
**educational and developmental milestones in each successive**

29 **grade as they progress from elementary grades, to prepare**  
30 **them for middle and high school, then -**  
31 ~~To emphasize, in partnership with parents, families, and~~  
32 ~~community stakeholders, the importance of building a solid~~  
33 ~~foundation for a lifetime of academic and personal~~  
34 ~~achievements.~~

35  
36 **To provide early identification and intervention strategies**  
37 **for identified students to promote student success**

38  
39 **To set expectations for early childhood and elementary**  
40 **education that includes evidence-based, developmentally**  
41 **appropriate curriculum and instructional practices in a**  
42 **supportive and culturally proficient learning environment,**  
43 **through family and community involvement, staff development,**  
44 **and collaboration with community early childhood education**  
45 **programs**

46  
47 B. ISSUE

48  
49 **A strong and growing body of evidence shows that successful**  
50 **programs during the early childhood and elementary school**  
51 **years leads to high levels of school success in later years.**  
52 **The Board is committed to effectively utilizing county,**  
53 **state, and federal resources, along with community partners,**  
54 **to establish a continuum of essential services needed by young**  
55 **children and their families in order to identify children in**  
56 **need of services and facilitate student development,**

57 transition, placement, and program continuity at each stage  
58 of a child's development, from home, child care, or preschool  
59 to prekindergarten (pre-K), as appropriate, and from one  
60 elementary grade to another.

61  
62 The Board collaborates with public and private agencies  
63 across Montgomery County to support children in the early  
64 years from birth to five years and prepare them for elementary  
65 school success ~~In accordance with as set forth in the~~  
66 ~~Montgomery County early childhood initiative, *Children's*~~  
67 ~~*Agenda*, Early Care and Education Strategic Plan.~~ Montgomery  
68 County Public Schools (MCPS) collaborates with public and  
69 private agencies such as the Collaboration Council for  
70 Children, Youth, and Families and its affiliated agencies

71  
72 Among these community partners, Montgomery County Public  
73 Schools' (MCPS') role in the meeting the educational needs of  
74 Montgomery County's diverse young learners is to provide pre-  
75 K and special education services for younger children who  
76 meet eligibility criteria pursuant to state and federal laws.  
77 Head Start and pre-K programs offer high-quality educational  
78 experiences to income-eligible children in order to prepare  
79 them with the foundational knowledge and skills necessary for  
80 school success in kindergarten and beyond. In addition,  
81 Judith P. Hoyer Early Child Care and Family Education Centers,  
82 or "Judy Centers," are state grant- and locally-funded early  
83 childhood and family learning centers which provide  
84 comprehensive early childhood services for children birth

85 through age five.

86

87 MCPS also provides a variety of screening and special  
88 education services to children, from birth to eight years,  
89 through home and school-based programs and other area and  
90 central programs. Services are provided to children with a  
91 wide range of needs, including, but not limited to,  
92 speech/language, auditory, vision, orthopedic, and  
93 developmental delays.

94

95 The Board affirms the importance of the early childhood  
96 education program for students in pre-K and kindergarten  
97 through Grade 3, and the important academic milestones for  
98 academic readiness that mark the transition from Grade 3 to  
99 the upper elementary grades.

100

101 ~~The~~ Young children's unique developmental stages and  
102 characteristics ~~of early childhood and elementary students~~  
103 must guide the implementation of the **early childhood and**  
104 **elementary** programs ~~for them~~. Young children's thinking,  
105 learning styles, and view of the world are qualitatively  
106 different from older children and adults.

107

108 Although young children share similarities as a group, they  
109 differ remarkably from one another, and appropriate  
110 programming will be flexible enough to accommodate each one.  
111 Family background, language, culture, gender, personality,  
112 learning styles, interests, and abilities contribute to a

113 child's individuality. Most children pass through the same  
114 sequence of developmental stages, but the pace of development  
115 varies from child to child. Moreover, development often does  
116 not proceed evenly. The cognitive, physical, social, and  
117 emotional levels of maturity may vary within the individual  
118 child.

119  
120 ~~Montgomery County is a diverse community with an equally~~  
121 ~~diverse early childhood and elementary school population that~~  
122 ~~presents a variety of educational needs. To address some of~~  
123 ~~these needs, prekindergarten programs are provided to~~  
124 ~~families who meet eligibility criteria, pursuant to state and~~  
125 ~~federal laws.~~

126  
127 The following elements are necessary for establishing and  
128 maintaining a rigorous instructional program that meets the  
129 needs of early childhood and elementary students:

130 ~~To ensure success for every student in MCPS, an early~~  
131 ~~childhood and elementary school program must include a~~  
132 comprehensive curriculum and related assessments; a rigorous,  
133 differentiated instructional program; **opportunities for**  
134 **purposeful play;** ~~highly qualified~~**certified** and committed  
135 staff and leadership; a collaborative yet flexible  
136 organizational structure; and, ~~a~~ fully engaged ~~parental~~  
137 **parents/guardians** and ~~stakeholder~~ community **stakeholders.**

138  
139 C. POSITION

140

141 1. School Culture

142

143 **Each MCPS elementary school will** ~~to~~ develop a culture  
144 that promotes **children's physical,** intellectual,  
145 **linguistic, emotional and social** development; personal  
146 integrity; self-confidence; social responsibility;  
147 mutual respect among all students; as well as  
148 motivation, and an eagerness to learn and excel, **as**  
149 ~~schools will do the following:~~

150

151 a) ~~Provide an inviting, stimulating, and supportive~~  
152 ~~environment that~~ **Encourages the natural curiosity**  
153 **and creativity of all young learners** ~~students to~~  
154 **actively explore, discover, and construct knowledge**  
155 **through intellectually challenging experiences,**  
156 **and interactions with an inviting, stimulating, and**  
157 **supportive learning environment that -**

158

159 (1) **encourages active engagement in learning**  
160 **through self-selection of materials and self-**  
161 **direction as appropriate** ~~actively engage in~~  
162 ~~learning and pursue intellectual challenges.,~~

163

164 (2) **encourages constructive risk-taking and use**  
165 **mistakes as instructional tools, and**

166

167 (3) **provides young children with a continuum of**  
168 **time in which to learn.**

- 169
- 170           b)    Maintain a well-managed, safe, and nurturing
- 171                    environment that encourages positive relationships
- 172                    among students and between adults and students.
- 173
- 174           **c)    Provide daily activities for purposeful play and**
- 175                    **gross motor physical development, through age-**
- 176                    **appropriate classroom and play spaces.**
- 177
- 178           **d)    Use the outdoors and other opportunities outside**
- 179                    **the classroom as important environments for**
- 180                    **learning, on the playground, neighborhood walks,**
- 181                    **and field trips.**
- 182
- 183           **e)    Recognize that parents/guardians are their child's**
- 184                    **first teachers, and welcome and acknowledge the**
- 185                    **unique contributions of parents/guardians and**
- 186                    **families to the child's growth and development.**
- 187
- 188           **ef)   In alignment with Board Policy ACA,**
- 189                    *Nondiscrimination, Equity, and Cultural*
- 190                    *Proficiency,* foster mutual understanding, respect,
- 191                    and cultural competence among students and staff
- 192                    **without** regard to an individual's actual or
- 193                    perceived personal characteristics as defined in
- 194                    Policy ACA.
- 195
- 196           **dg)   Provide a system of standards and expectations that**

197 promote personal responsibility, integrity, and  
198 citizenship.

199  
200 h) View discipline as a developmental process, in  
201 alignment with Board Policy JGA, *Student*  
202 *Discipline*, respond to inappropriate student  
203 behavior in a timely and age-appropriate way that  
204 supports personal growth and learning opportunities  
205 for students, and administer school discipline in  
206 a way that keeps students within their regular  
207 school program to the greatest extent possible.

208  
209 i) Promote readiness, smooth transitions and progress  
210 of children from one grade level to another by  
211 encouraging teachers and other staff members to  
212 share pertinent information about each child's  
213 needs, learning styles, and attainment of  
214 developmental milestones.

215  
216 ej) Facilitate communication in the languages spoken in  
217 the community, whenever feasible.

218  
219 ~~fk) Engage parents in meaningful ways that~~ **Assist**  
220 **children to make the transition from home, family**  
221 **child care or child care centers, and preschool**  
222 **into the MCPS elementary program; support the** ~~each~~  
223 ~~child's~~ development and academic achievement; and  
224 **facilitate the critical partnership of families and**



225 **schools in** ~~emphasize the necessity of long-range~~  
226 ~~educational planning for and attaining the long-~~  
227 **range educational goals for each student.**

228  
229 g1) Work to ensure that school programs and activities  
230 reflect the diversity of the school population and  
231 provide equitable access to all academic programs  
232 and school activities.

233  
234 2. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

235  
236 MCPS's approach to curriculum, instruction, and  
237 assessment will **meet the unique needs of each young**  
238 **learner while setting high expectations** ~~ensure a high~~  
239 ~~level of challenge for all students. and meet the unique~~  
240 ~~needs of the young learner. Teachers welcome and plan~~  
241 **for students' wide range of abilities, developmental**  
242 **levels, interests, backgrounds, learning styles and**  
243 **experiences, and provide manageable challenges to**  
244 **promote early successes that promote early successes**  
245 **that foster self-esteem.**

246  
247 a) Student achievement depends on the implementation  
248 and provision of a consistent curriculum that  
249 addresses the needs of the whole child. The early  
250 childhood/**and** elementary school ~~approach to~~  
251 curriculum will be consistent with **Board** Policy  
252 IFA, *Curriculum*, and **MCPS** Regulation IFA-RA,

253 Curriculum, and will include the following:

254  
255 (1) The written curriculum, as presented in the  
256 curriculum framework and in the curriculum  
257 guides.

258  
259 (2) The taught curriculum, including  
260 reading/language arts, math, social studies,  
261 science, art, music, and physical education,  
262 as implemented by teachers with students.

263  
264 (3) The learned curriculum, as demonstrated by  
265 assessments of student performance.

266  
267 (4) The ongoing professional development needed to  
268 ensure consistent implementation, monitoring,  
269 and supervision.

270  
271 (5) The monitoring of curriculum implementation by  
272 teachers, administrators, and central  
273 services staff.

274  
275 b) Instructional practices will incorporate a variety  
276 of methods, strategies, and resources, ~~such as~~  
277 ~~technology,~~ that encourage students to be active  
278 and engaged learners. Such practices will align  
279 with relevant Board policies and MCPS regulations,  
280 including, but not limited to, Board policies IKA,

281 *Grading and Reporting; IOA, Gifted and Talented*  
282 *Education; IOD, Education of English Language*  
283 *Learners; and IOB, Education of Students with*  
284 *Disabilities; and MCPS Regulation IHB-RA, School*  
285 *Academic Grouping Practices.*

286

287 (1) Technology will be integrated into the  
288 curriculum as well as instruction and  
289 assessment to build or strengthen students'  
290 interest and skills in the use of technology.

291

292 (~~2~~) Programmatic and instructional decisions will  
293 be based on the analysis of student  
294 performance data in relation to established  
295 standards.

296

297 (~~3~~) Differentiated instructional practices will  
298 include acceleration, supports for improving  
299 student performance, enrichment, and other  
300 strategies as needed to help students to meet  
301 their academic potential. Such practices will  
302 address learning styles as well as physical,  
303 social, and emotional differences among  
304 students.

305

306 (~~4~~) In both the planning and implementation of  
307 instruction, early childhood and elementary  
308 ~~schools~~ **programs** will utilize the unique

309 skills of **staff members in all—general**  
310 **education, special education, education of**  
311 ~~English for Speakers of Other Languages~~  
312 **learners (ESOL), special education, and other**  
313 ~~staff members~~ **disciplines and supports**  
314 **integral to the comprehensive educational**  
315 **program.**

316  
317 (54) Instructional practices should -

- 318
- 319 (a) **adapt materials and equipment, when**  
320 **necessary to meet the developmental needs**  
321 **of a student,**
  - 322
  - 323 (b) **emphasize the use of hands-on activities,**  
324 **children's life experiences, concrete**  
325 **materials, and manipulatives,**
  - 326
  - 327 (c) **give children choices and the opportunity**  
328 **to initiate activities,**
  - 329
  - 330 (d) **recognize play (both planned and**  
331 **spontaneous) as a valuable means for**  
332 **children to learn and develop,**
  - 333
  - 334 (e) **assure that opportunities are provided**  
335 **that help children develop initiative,**  
336 **responsibility, confidence, and**

337 **independence,**

338  
339 **(f)** provide leadership opportunities for  
340 students, **and** ~~and promote interaction and~~  
341 ~~oral language development between and~~  
342 ~~among students.~~

343  
344 **(g)** **create a language-rich environment that**  
345 **builds literacy and infuses all learning**  
346 **tasks and activities with opportunities**  
347 **for students to understand and use**  
348 **language with adults and peers.**

349  
350 c) Assessment

351  
352 ~~As explained in Board Policy IKA, *Grading and*~~  
353 ~~*Reporting,* sets forth assessment practices are as~~  
354 ~~an important **essential** aspect of the instructional~~  
355 ~~cycle.~~

356  
357 (1) Teachers use pre-assessments, formative  
358 assessments, and summative assessments to  
359 communicate achievement to parents/guardians  
360 and students; plan and deliver instruction to  
361 meet learning goals; provide prompt  
362 appropriate interventions; provide timely  
363 feedback to students on their performance; and  
364 offer additional opportunities for students to

365 learn and demonstrate learning.

366

367 (2) A comprehensive assessment program, which is  
368 aligned with county, state, and national  
369 standards, includes the following:

370

371 (a) Representation of a student's  
372 performance on a variety of measures over  
373 time.

374

375 (b) An opportunity for students to  
376 demonstrate proficiency through a  
377 variety of methods.

378

379 (c) Meaningful feedback on student  
380 achievement to students and  
381 parents/guardians.

382

383 (d) Clear and timely communication to  
384 parents/guardians and students as to the  
385 grading criteria.

386

387 (e) Consistency within and among schools.

388

389 (3) Reteaching and reassessment enhances student  
390 learning and provides focused instruction to  
391 meet individual student needs.

392

393 3. Organizational Structure

394

395 a) The organizational structure of a high-achieving  
396 early childhood ~~and~~ elementary school program -

397

398 (1) **effectively utilizes county, state, and**  
399 **federal resources to establish a continuum of**  
400 **essential services needed by young children**  
401 **and their families, in close communication and**  
402 **collaboration with community child care**  
403 **providers, partner agencies, and other**  
404 **community service providers,**

405

406 (2) ~~will~~ **optimizes** time for learning, and

407

408

409 (3) **identifies children in need of services and**  
410 ~~Organizational structures should facilitates~~  
411 ~~student transition, placement, and program~~  
412 ~~continuity at each level.~~ **each stage of a**  
413 **child's development, from home, child care, or**  
414 **preschool to pre-K, as appropriate, and from**  
415 **one elementary grade to another. opportunities**  
416 ~~to build positive relationships among~~  
417 ~~students, staff, parents and community~~  
418 ~~members.~~

419

420 b) Effective, flexible, and collaborative

421 organizational structures shall include ~~the~~  
422 following:

423  
424 (1) a) ~~public~~ **public understanding of the importance**  
425 **and availability of quality early childhood**  
426 **programs and services and effective outreach**  
427 **to families of students eligible for early**  
428 **intervention services and programming,**

429  
430 ~~(1)~~ (2) ~~o~~ **opportunities for MCPS teachers to**  
431 **collaborate across grade-level teams and**  
432 **subject areas, and communicate among special**  
433 **education and general education program**  
434 **staff,**

435  
436 ~~(2)~~ (3) ~~b)~~ **opportunities for staff to meet with**  
437 **parents/guardians to discuss student**  
438 **progress,**

439  
440 ~~i.)~~ (4) ~~e)~~ **Effective identification, intervention and**  
441 **enrichment programs,**

442  
443 ~~ii.)~~ (5) ~~d)~~ **Adequate time for instruction in all**  
444 **curricular areas,**

445  
446 ~~iii.)~~ (6) ~~e)~~ **A comprehensive education program that**  
447 **prepares students to attain key educational**  
448 **and developmental milestones in each**



449 successive grade as they progress from the  
450 elementary grades ~~progress through elementary~~  
451 ~~school~~ through middle and high school.

452  
453 c) Class sizes and student-adult ratios are assigned  
454 to the elementary classes with full recognition of  
455 the importance of young children's need to have  
456 easy and frequent access to an adult for -

457  
458 (1) supporting cognitive or emotional  
459 development,

460  
461 (2) promoting adult-to-child and child-to-child  
462 interaction,

463  
464 (3) individual and small group learning  
465 experiences, and

466  
467 (4) differentiated support for highest needs  
468 schools.

469  
470 4. Leadership and ~~Planning~~ Professional Development

471  
472 ~~The MCPS professional growth systems include regular and~~  
473 ~~systematic opportunities for all a~~Administrators,  
474 teachers, and support services staff ~~to~~ increase their  
475 knowledge, skills, and capacity to continuously improve  
476 the teaching and learning process. At the school level,

477 there must be processes in place for ~~the following:~~

478

479 a) ~~M~~monitoring and communicating the school or  
480 classroom's vision, mission, goals, and action  
481 plans~~;~~,

482

483 b) ~~W~~working with stakeholders to help create a vision  
484 and implement strategies that will support a high-  
485 performing organization focused on continuous  
486 improvement~~;~~,

487

488 c) ~~I~~dentifying potential leaders to participate in  
489 professional growth opportunities designed to  
490 enhance the teaching and learning process~~;~~ **and**

491

492 d) ~~B~~uilding internal capacities that strengthen the  
493 school staff's ability to meet its vision, goals,  
494 and action plans and to establish high expectations  
495 for all learners.

496

497

498 5. Parent/guardian and Community Engagement and  
499 Communication

500

501 Consistent with Board Policy ABA, *Community Involvement*;  
502 Policy ABC, *Parent and Family Involvement*; and MCPS  
503 Regulation ABC-RA, *Parent and Family Involvement*,  
504 parents/guardians and community members are critical

505 partners in the social and intellectual development of  
506 students. **The interrelatedness of the roles of family**  
507 **and school requires a partnership involving**  
508 **communication and shared decision-making.** This  
509 partnership promotes ~~the following:-~~

510  
511 a) **communication and outreach that assist families and**  
512 **children in the transition of children from home,**  
513 **child care, family day care, or preschool, as**  
514 **appropriate, into and through the MCPS elementary**  
515 **program,**

516  
517 b) ~~Opportunities~~ for families to increase their  
518 children's ability to succeed in school and in  
519 life~~-,~~

520  
521 b) ~~F~~requent two-way communication between families  
522 and schools to provide information and solicit  
523 feedback regarding an individual child's progress,  
524 as well as local school and systemwide policies,  
525 regulations, programs and practices~~-,~~

526  
527 c) ~~C~~ollaboration with stakeholders within the  
528 community such as local businesses, community  
529 organizations, institutions of higher education,  
530 and other agencies such as libraries to support  
531 early academic achievement~~-, and~~

532

533 d) ~~V~~varied opportunities for families and community  
534 members to be involved in student and school  
535 programs, projects, activities, and events.

536

537 6. Human Resources **and Professional Development**

538

539 **MCPS recruits, employs, and retains** ~~It is critical that~~  
540 early childhood and elementary school staff **members who**  
541 possess the knowledge, skills, and content expertise  
542 required to meet the needs of all ~~students~~**young**  
543 **children.** ~~Practices to recruit, attract, and retain~~  
544 ~~highly qualified teachers must be implemented to address~~  
545 ~~academic performance and the individual needs of~~  
546 ~~schools. Such needs may include, but are not limited to,~~  
547 ~~Free and Reduced-Price Meals System participation,~~  
548 ~~mobility, students with disabilities, and English~~  
549 ~~language learners.~~

550

551 a) **Staff members are -**

552

553 (1) **knowledgeable about the developmental**  
554 **characteristics of young children,**

555

556 (2) **committed to the concept that all children can**  
557 **learn and succeed, and**

558

559 (3) **skilled at developing positive relationships**  
560 **with students and parents/guardians and**

561                   engaging them in the learning process.

562

563           b)    Staff members communicate high expectations for all  
564           students.

565

566           c)    In alignment with Board Policy ACA,  
567           *Nondiscrimination, Equity, and Cultural*  
568           *Proficiency*, MCPS will take positive steps to  
569           eliminate structural and institutional barriers to  
570           recruiting, hiring, retaining, and promoting a  
571           diverse workforce.

572

573           d)    Staff selection considers the individual needs of  
574           each school.

575   ~~At each early childhood and elementary school, staff~~  
576   ~~will do the following:~~

577   ~~a)    Be highly qualified in core academic subjects and~~  
578   ~~able to balance content with instructional methods.~~

579   ~~b)    Communicate high expectations for all students.~~

580   ~~c)    Create opportunities for professional learning~~  
581   ~~communities to improve teaching and learning.~~

582   ~~d)    Be knowledgeable about the developmental~~  
583   ~~characteristics of early childhood and elementary~~  
584   ~~students, with an emphasis on literacy, and~~  
585   ~~committed to the concept that all students can~~  
586   ~~learn and succeed.~~

587   ~~e)    Develop relationships with students that will~~  
588   ~~engage them in the learning process.~~

589 ~~f) Reflect, to the extent possible, the diversity of~~  
590 ~~the MCPS student population.~~

591  
592 **e) e) Ongoing** ~~Providing~~ professional development for  
593 school staff **and administrators -**

594  
595 **(1)** ~~to deepens~~ their knowledge of **early childhood**  
596 **development, curricular** content, ~~skills,~~  
597 ~~the~~**appropriate** uses of technology,  
598 ~~differentiation~~ and the delivery **and**  
599 **differentiation** of instruction, ~~and~~

600  
601 **(2)** ~~f) Providing~~ professional development for  
602 ~~school staff on~~ **provides** effective strategies  
603 for communicating with and engaging all  
604 parents/**guardians** to promote increased  
605 student achievement.

606  
607 D. DESIRED OUTCOMES

608  
609 ~~A~~**High-quality, comprehensive** early childhood **and elementary**  
610 ~~programs and a comprehensive elementary school program that~~  
611 **allow each student to establish a solid foundation through**  
612 **challenging childhood and elementary experiences and to**  
613 **attain key educational and developmental milestones in each**  
614 **successive grade as they progress from elementary grades,**  
615 **through middle and high school, then onto a lifetime of**  
616 **academic and personal achievements**

617 ~~thoroughly prepares all students to succeed in middle and~~  
618 ~~high school.~~

619

620 E. REVIEW

621

622 This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the Board of  
623 Education policy review process.

624

625

626 *Policy History:* Adopted by Resolution No. 345-88, June 27, 1988;  
627 amended by Resolution No. 284-07, May 21, 2007; technical  
628 amendments by Resolution No. 319-17, June 26, 2017; **amended** .

629

630 Note. Prior to Resolution No. 345-88, this topic was governed by  
631 the following: K-8 Policy, adopted by Resolution No. 161-80,  
632 February 12, 1980; amended by Resolution No. 912b-83, November 8,  
633 1983; reformatted in accordance with Resolution No. 333-86, June  
634 12, 1986, and Resolution No. 458-86, August 12, 1986; rescinded by  
635 Resolution No. 345-88, June 27, 1988. **Tenets of Board policy IEF,**  
636 **Early Childhood Education, were incorporated by Resolution No.**  
637 **\_\_\_\_\_ amendments to this policy, and was rescinded upon adoption**  
638 **of amended Board Policy IEA on \_\_\_\_\_.**