
Colonel Zadok Magruder High School

Office of the Principal

July 31, 2010

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Daily attendance in high school is critical for student achievement and to demonstrate mastery of material. In order to ensure that (or encourage) students attend all their classes each day, MCPS will introduce new attendance procedures starting with the 2010-2011 school year. Instead of students losing course credit for unlawful absences, these absences will be considered discipline infractions that can result in nonacademic consequences, such as detention.

The loss of credit procedure that was in place in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) high schools prior to 2010-2011 has been eliminated. The latest review of the current loss of credit procedure was conducted over an 18-month period from September, 2008 to March, 2010 by a work group comprised of teachers, administrators, central services staff, parents, and students. After a thorough review of the student achievement and attendance data, attendance policies of neighboring jurisdictions, and discussions with a wide variety of stakeholders, the work group concluded that the loss of credit procedure should be eliminated so that the grades of all students reflect only their academic achievement, as stipulated by the Grading and Reporting Policy (IKA).

The leadership teams of each high school will establish a process to encourage and monitor regular daily attendance, provide interventions as necessary, and reward improved and excellent attendance. A committee made up of central services and school-based staff will facilitate the sharing of successful practices and support the monitoring of attendance trends throughout the school year.

It is important for students to make up missed work regardless of the status of their absence. However, teachers may deny students the opportunity to earn credit for missed work or assessments in accordance with the process approved by the principal and the school's leadership team.

Maryland state law defines lawful absences as:

- certified illness of the student,
- state emergency,
- hazardous weather conditions,
- lack of authorized transportation
- physical and mental incapacity,
- court summons,
- religious holiday,
- work or activity accepted by school authorities, and
- death in the immediate family.