

APPROVED
9-2009

Rockville, Maryland
March 23, 2009

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on March 23, 2009, at 6:10 p.m.

Present: Ms. Shirley Brandman, President
in the Chair
Mr. Christopher Barclay
Ms. Laura Berthiaume
Dr. Judy Docca
Mr. Philip Kauffman
Ms. Quratul-Ann Malik
Mrs. Nancy Navarro
Mrs. Patricia O'Neill
Dr. Jerry Weast, Secretary/Treasurer

Absent: None

or () indicates student vote does not count. Four votes needed for adoption.

RESOLUTION NO. 157-09 Re: **RESOLUTION FOR CLOSED SESSION**

On recommendation of the superintendent and on motion of Mr. Barclay seconded by Ms. Malik, the following resolution was adopted unanimously:

WHEREAS, The Board of Education of Montgomery County is authorized by the *State Government Article* of the *Annotated Code of Maryland* to conduct certain meetings or portions of its meetings in closed sessions; now therefore be it

Resolved, That the Board of Education of Montgomery County conduct a closed session on March 23, 2009, in Room 120 from 5:30 to 6:00 p.m. to acquit its administrative functions, which is outside the purview of the Open Meetings Act under Section 10-503(a) of the *State Government Article*; and be it further

Resolved, That this closed session continue until the completion of business.

Re: **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

RESOLUTION NO. 158-09 Re: **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

On recommendation of the superintendent and on motion of Mrs. O'Neill seconded by

Ms. Malik, the following resolution was adopted unanimously:

Resolved, That the Board of Education approve its March 23, 2009, agenda, and amend the order of items to move Items of Legislation to after Board/Superintendent Comments.

RESOLUTION NO. 159-09 Re: **MONTH OF THE YOUNG CHILD**

On recommendation of the superintendent and on motion of Mrs. O'Neill seconded by Mr. Barclay, the following resolution was adopted unanimously:

WHEREAS, Children's experiences from birth through the first five years of life, in the home, child-care setting, Montgomery County Public Schools, and the community are critical in forming the foundation for their future success as lifelong learners; and

WHEREAS, The Maryland Model for School Readiness data for incoming Montgomery County kindergarten students show consistent increases in children's school readiness across all developmental domains; and

WHEREAS, Montgomery County Public Schools' kindergarten data show that a record 93 percent of kindergarten students are able to read simple text and reached or exceeded the text benchmark reading level in 2008; and

WHEREAS, Research shows that, when necessary supports and services are provided, all young children can achieve at high levels; and

WHEREAS, Montgomery County's early childhood stakeholders have convened an Early Care and Education Congress Steering Committee to provide opportunities for collaboration and dissemination of information about issues and services that support young children and their families; and

WHEREAS, The Montgomery County Council has established a Universal Preschool Implementation Work Group to develop a plan for implementing universal prekindergarten programs for 4-year-old children that will prepare more young children for kindergarten and future school success; and

WHEREAS, Montgomery County recognizes that every county resident has a vested interest in the healthy development and education of all of the county's children; and

WHEREAS, The Montgomery County Board of Education; the Montgomery County Executive; the Montgomery County Council; the Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families; Montgomery County Public Schools; and early childhood stakeholders will join together on April 1, 2009, at Montgomery Knolls Elementary School to proclaim the Month of the Young Child; now therefore be it

Resolved, That the Board of Education endorses the joint proclamation and supports April 2009 as the Month of the Young Child in Montgomery County Public Schools.

RESOLUTION NO. 160-09 Re: **ARAB AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH**

On recommendation of the superintendent and on motion of Mrs. O'Neill seconded by Dr. Docca, the following resolution was adopted unanimously:

WHEREAS, Since the first Arab immigrants came to these shores more than a century ago, men and women of Arab descent have shared with us the rich history and traditions of Arab culture; and

WHEREAS, Arab Americans constitute an ethnicity made up of several waves of immigrants from the Arabic-speaking countries of southwestern Asia and North Africa; and

WHEREAS, For decades, Arab Americans have made valuable contributions to virtually every aspect of American life—including science, medicine, education, business, culture, and government; and

WHEREAS, Montgomery County is home to a thriving Arab American population whose valued presence has added to the rich cultural mosaic of our community; now therefore be it

Resolved, That, on behalf of the superintendent of schools, staff members, students, and parents of Montgomery County Public Schools, the members of the Board of Education hereby declare April 2009 to be observed as Arab American Heritage Month.

RESOLUTION NO. 161-09 Re: **NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH**

On recommendation of the superintendent and on motion of Mrs. O'Neill seconded by Mr. Barclay, the following resolution was adopted unanimously:

WHEREAS, April has been designated National Autism Awareness Month by the Autism Society of America; and

WHEREAS, Autism is a variable neurodevelopmental disability that affects the normal development of the brain and presents specific challenges to the development of language, social skills, and learning; and

WHEREAS, Autism typically affects individuals throughout their lifespan; and

WHEREAS, Autism is a spectrum disorder and each student with Autism Spectrum Disorder presents a unique profile of strengths and challenges; and

WHEREAS, Autism continues to be the fastest-growing developmental disability in the world, now occurring at a rate of 6.7 per 1,000 births; and

WHEREAS, The goal of National Autism Awareness Month is to inform our community about the exceptional and varied profiles of individuals with autism; and

WHEREAS, By this recognition, Montgomery County Public Schools reaffirms its commitment to continually assessing and providing a comprehensive range of services to all its students challenged by autism; and

WHEREAS, Montgomery County Public Schools is currently responsible for the education of approximately 1,308 students with autism; and

WHEREAS, The education that Montgomery County Public Schools provides for today's children with autism will be reflected in their success as adult members of our society; and

WHEREAS, Montgomery County Public Schools recognizes that partnerships between families, schools, and other community resources are critical to preparing students with autism for adult life; now therefore be it

Resolved, That the Montgomery County Board of Education applauds the combined efforts of staff members, families, and the many other individuals who actively contribute to the growth of our students with autism.

RESOLUTION NO. 162-09 Re: **NATIONAL STUDENT LEADERSHIP WEEK**

On recommendation of the superintendent and on motion of Ms. Malik seconded by Mrs. O'Neill, the following resolution was adopted unanimously:

WHEREAS, The Montgomery County Board of Education has a continuing commitment, with the support of school administrators and faculty, parents, and community members, to encourage students to develop habits of good citizenship and to help ensure the successful education of emerging student leaders; and

WHEREAS, Student leaders exert a positive influence on their peers, modeling good character and scholarship in and out of the classroom, and serve as change agents to improve the overall climate and academic performance of their schools; and

WHEREAS, The Montgomery County Board of Education encourages our youth to participate in leadership positions to provide students with early and vital experience in exercising a voice in matters of common concern, reconciling diverse interests, and making a sustained commitment to serve in our communities; and

WHEREAS, In April 2009, student leadership activities include the Montgomery County

Region of the Maryland Association of Student Councils and the Montgomery County Junior Councils officer elections, the student voter registration drive, the election of the student member of the Board of Education, and National Student Leadership Week; and

WHEREAS, To provide recognition for this outstanding service by our youth and to encourage others to become involved in youth leadership; and

WHEREAS, National Student Leadership Week is a time when schools across our nation recognize student leaders for stepping into leadership positions as well as for their accomplishments, efforts, and service, with this year's national theme of "Step Up! Go Green"; now therefore be it

Resolved, That the Montgomery County Board of Education hereby joins with the superintendent of schools in recognizing the week of April 12–18, 2009, as National Student Leadership Week in Montgomery County Public Schools; and be it further

Resolved, That the Montgomery County Board of Education commends student leaders for their efforts and achievements on behalf of Montgomery County Public Schools and urges citizens to seek opportunities to recognize student leaders in our schools and support their training and activities as they prepare themselves for their future stations as leaders of our cities, states, and nation.

Re: **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The following people testified before the Board of Education:

	<u>Person</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1.	Rockzana Flores	Middle School Magnet
2.	Sabrina Flores	Bibliography Styles
3.	Bill Sherman	Eastern Middle School
4.	Benjamin Laurenson	Eastern Middle School
5.	Ruth Chapman	Eastern Middle School
6.	Elise Girard	Eastern Middle School
7.	Katie Holmes	Eastern Middle School
8.	Maeve White	Eastern Middle School
9.	Bob Astrove	Learning Centers
10.	Max Fowler	Eastern Middle School
11.	Mark Hornyak	Eastern Middle School
12.	Dr. Judy Harvilchuck	Eastern Middle School
13.	Rachel Tichner	Eastern Middle School

Mr. Barclay suggested that the community should receive the memorandum on the *Eastern Middle School Schedule Decision*.

Re: BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Mr. Kauffman congratulated William H. Farquhar Middle School on its 40th anniversary. There were many staff and parents from the community who have had a connection with Farquhar since its beginning in 1969. Also, he congratulated Springbrook High School for winning the 4A Boys Basketball Championship, with girls at Paint Branch and Blake high schools as runners up.

Ms. Berthiaume commented that she represented the Board at the Companies Caring Breakfast, sponsored by Interfaith Works, which was formerly Community Ministries. She was delighted to come across the Walter Johnson High School's minority scholars Poetry Slam, and it was an amazing event with impressive poets. Finally, MCPS sent several teams to the Black Saga competition at Towson, where students won scholarships.

Ms. Malik stated that she had the opportunity to interview and meet three of the nominees for Montgomery County Teacher of the Year, and it was a great opportunity to visit teachers in their classrooms.

Mr. Barclay noted that he would speak on two general themes—the arts and college prep. It is spring theater season, and he encouraged everyone to attend a performance. Second, it is time for high school students to think about a career or college. High schools are sponsoring workshops for students, and it is important for students and their parents to attend to gather information.

Ms. Navarro commented that she spoke to a group of parents at Parkland Middle School, and the Latino parents were actively engaged in the education of their children. Also, she was a panelist at a women's leadership conference at John F. Kennedy High School, and it was completely organized by students. Finally, she attended a Community Teachers Institute, where the speaker was Dr. Michael Eric Dyson.

Mrs. O'Neill noted that MSAs are given in the middle schools, and she thanked the parents for sending their children ready to be tested. She attended the Public Safety Awards luncheon, where there many heroes in Montgomery County were recognized. The Board recently met with the Magruder and Quince Orchard clusters, and the Board attended music programs and a culinary dinner and viewed artwork.

Dr. Weast commented on Montgomery County's own Thomas Friedman , New York Times journalist and one of his favorite authors, who heaped praise on the employees of Montgomery County Public Schools in his March 18 column, as he was writing about the economic crisis and the government bailout of AIG. Here's what Friedman had to say. "The school teachers here, who make on average \$67,000 a year, recently voted to voluntarily give up their 5 percent raise that was contractually agreed to for next year, saving our school system \$89 million so programs and teachers would not have to be terminated."

Once again, he expressed his appreciation to all of our employees for the selflessness and dedication to students they showed when they voted to forgo their cost-of-living increases. Dr. Weast stated that hundreds of students in Grades 6 through 12 participated in the Montgomery County Science Fair. The fair filled the Reckord Armory Building on the campus of the University of Maryland, College Park, and students competed for more than \$45,000 in cash prizes, and several high-school-level projects were selected to compete in the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair, to be held in May in Reno, Nevada. Finally, MCPS was pleased and honored to be part of First Lady Michelle Obama's inspired celebration of Women's History Month. Women leaders in a range of fields, including the first female four-star general, the first female African American astronaut, and a host of stars in the arts and entertainment industry, were dispatched to a number of high schools throughout the region. These remarkable women spoke to students about their individual path to success and encouraged students to dream big, persevere when the going gets tough, and have faith in their abilities. Students at Albert Einstein and Bethesda-Chevy Chase high schools were fortunate to be among those who had an opportunity to participate in this unique and inspiring event.

Ms. Brandman stated that Dr. Docca and she attended the History Day, sponsored by the Montgomery County Historical Society, and the projects were varied and intriguing. All Board members have been working on the budget, and there is uncertainty in Annapolis.

RESOLUTION NO. 163-09 Re: **ITEM OF LEGISLATION**

On recommendation of the superintendent and on motion of Mrs. O'Neill seconded by Mr. Kauffman, the following resolution was adopted unanimously:

Resolved, That the Board of Education supports, with amendment to include additional stakeholders, including legislators, superintendents, and school board members, **HB 1549 – Education Funding – Thornton Formula – Evaluation**, which would require the Maryland State Department of Education to conduct a comprehensive study of the formulas for state aid to education, specifically referencing the calculation of net taxable income. The final report and recommendations are due by October 1, 2009.

RESOLUTION NO. 164-09 Re: **ITEM OF LEGISLATION**

On recommendation of the superintendent and on motion of Mrs. O'Neill seconded by Ms. Berthiaume, the following resolution was adopted unanimously:

Resolved, That the Board of Education opposes **SB 1032 – Funding Formula to Expand K-12 Online Education**, which would seek to require the Maryland State Board of Education to set the fees for each online course offered by the Maryland Virtual Learning Opportunities (MVLO) program; the local boards of education, with jurisdiction over the schools with enrollees in the MVLO program, would be required to reimburse the MVLO

Fund with an amount equivalent to a percentage of state-targeted aid.

RESOLUTION NO. 165-09 Re: **ITEM OF LEGISLATION**

On recommendation of the superintendent and on motion of Mrs. O'Neill seconded by Dr. Docca, the following resolution was adopted unanimously:

Resolved, That the Board of Education opposes **HB 1543 Education – Public Schools – Virtual Schools**, which would define a “virtual school” as an independent public school that uses technology to deliver a significant portion of instruction via the Internet in a virtual setting; it establishes that virtual schools would be subject to the same federal and state rules as existing public schools, use a curriculum that meets county standards, and be held accountable to the same measures that apply to all public schools in Maryland; and LEAs would be responsible for providing students with access to computers and Internet services.

RESOLUTION NO. 166-09 Re: **ITEM OF LEGISLATION**

On recommendation of the superintendent and on motion of Mrs. O'Neill seconded by Ms. Berthiaume, the following resolution was adopted unanimously by members present:

Resolved, That the Board of Education opposes **HB 1558 – Student Stigma Act**, which would recommend changing references from “emotional disturbance” to “emotional or behavioral disability”; and the proposed change in terminology for this disability code could have the unintended consequence of affecting the policies and practices of Individualized Education Program teams throughout the state of Maryland.

RESOLUTION NO. 167-09 Re: **ITEM OF LEGISLATION**

On recommendation of the superintendent and on motion of Mrs. O'Neill seconded by Mr. Kauffman, the following resolution was adopted unanimously:

Resolved, That the Board of Education supports, with amendments, **HB 1264 – Gwendolyn Britt Student Health and Fitness Act**, which would require each local school system to develop and implement an annual physical fitness measurement program; establish baseline student data on the health-related components of physical fitness; assist students with the development of personal fitness plans; encourage appropriate interventions for students identified as having unhealthy levels of physical fitness; and encourage partnerships with health agencies to address student health-related issues.

RESOLUTION NO. 168-09 Re: **ITEM OF LEGISLATION**

On recommendation of the superintendent and on motion of Mrs. O'Neill seconded by

Mr. Barclay, the following resolution was adopted unanimously:

Resolved, That the Board of Education supports **HB 1396 – Higher Education – Student Financial Assistance – Dually Enrolled Students**, which would expand the definition of part-time student to include those who are dually enrolled in a secondary school and an institution of higher education, and then authorizes institutions of higher education to use up to 10 percent of its part-time grant money for students who are dually enrolled.

RESOLUTION NO. 169-09 Re: **CONTRACTS OF \$25,000 OR MORE**

On recommendation of the superintendent and on motion of Mrs. O'Neill seconded by Mr. Kauffman, the following resolution was adopted unanimously: #

WHEREAS, Funds have been budgeted for the purchase of equipment, supplies, and contractual services; now therefore be it

Resolved, That, having been duly advertised, the following contracts will be awarded to the low bidders meeting specifications, as shown below:

GSS-MU-08- 492A-HF/ 001B8900505	Poly Liner Bags	
	<u>Awardees</u>	
	Calico Industries, Inc.	\$ 50,000
	W.W. Grainger, Inc.	<u>110,000</u>
	Total	\$160,000
85070 00622AA	Towing, Transport, and Recovery of Vehicles—Extension	
	<u>Awardee</u>	
	Automotive Support Services, Inc.	\$ 90,000
4030.5	Piano Tuning and Maintenance	
	<u>Awardees</u> (See note)	
	Clark Piano Tuning*	
	Max Mitler	
	Rich Amelang Piano Service	
	Winzer Piano Service	
	Total	\$ 25,000
4060.4	Modular Computer Furniture—Extension	

	<u>Awardees</u>	
	Douron, Inc.*	\$ 161,680
	Glover Equipment, Inc.	78,706
	Spectrum Industries, Inc.	<u>3,596</u>
	Total	\$ 243,982
4119.3	Science Lab Tables	
	<u>Awardee</u>	
	Diversified Educational Systems	\$ 60,000
4123.2	Library Furniture—Extension	
	<u>Awardees</u>	
	Demco, Inc.	\$ 2,634
	Douron, Inc.*	48,911
	Glover Equipment, Inc.	<u>11,498</u>
	Total	\$ 63,043
7124.2	Transportation Services for MCPS Students—Extension	
	<u>Awardees</u> (See note)	
	Blue Star Group, Inc.	
	Regency Cab, Inc.	
	Total	\$ 200,000
7147.2	Purchase of New Tires—Extension	
	<u>Awardee</u>	
	Service Tire Truck Center	\$ 550,000
9117.3	Fresh Produce—Extension	
	<u>Awardee</u>	
	Lancaster Foods, Inc.	\$ 900,000
9346.4	Portable Classroom Wood Canopy and Decking at Various Locations—Extension**	
	<u>Awardee</u>	
	D. L. Brown Construction	\$ 83,900
9672.1	Re-roofing at Grosvenor Center**	

<u>Awardee</u>	
R. D. Bean, Inc.	\$ 71,895
TOTAL PROCUREMENT CONTRACTS OVER \$25,000	\$2,447,820

* Denotes Minority-, Female-, or Disabled-owned Business

** Planned Life-cycle Asset Replacement Bid (PLAR)

Note: Contract amounts will be based on individual requirements.

RESOLUTION NO. 170-09 Re: **CONTRACT EXTENSION OF BID NO. 7094.3,
AFTERMARKET AUTOMOTIVE PARTS**

On recommendation of the superintendent and on motion of Mrs. O'Neill seconded by Mr. Kauffman, the following resolution was adopted unanimously:#

WHEREAS, The vendors that have been awarded contracts for aftermarket automotive parts have agreed to extend the contracts for FY 2010; now therefore be it

Resolved, That the Board of Education extend the contract for aftermarket automotive parts through FY 2010 for Montgomery County Public Schools, for a total amount of \$2,900,104; and be it further

Resolved, That, having been duly advertised, the following contracts will be awarded to the low bidders meeting specifications, as shown below:

7093.3 Aftermarket Automotive Parts—Extension

<u>Awardees</u>	
Academy Ford Sales*	\$ 20,000
American Bus Sales and Service	350,000
Arrow Auto Parts	124,000
Delcoline, Inc.	110,000
Harco Auto Electric and Parts	59,705
JG Parks and Sons	547,700
Johnson and Towers, Inc.	160,000
K&M Supply, Inc.	174,625
K. Neal International Trucks, Inc.*	987,480
Keller Acquisition Company	9,000
Looper Servicenter, Inc.	54,360
Northern Virginia Supply, Inc.	246,234
Ourisman's Rockmont Chevrolet	15,000
R&S Auto and Truck Spring Works, Inc.	19,500
School Bus Parts Company	<u>22,500</u>

Total \$2,900,104

* Denotes Minority-, Female-, or Disabled-owned Business

RESOLUTION NO. 171-09 Re: **AWARD OF CONTRACT—PREPURCHASE OF HEATING, VENTILATION, AND AIR CONDITIONING EQUIPMENT FOR ARGYLE MIDDLE SCHOOL**

On recommendation of the superintendent and on motion of Mrs. O'Neill seconded by Mr. Kauffman, the following resolution was adopted unanimously:#

WHEREAS, A project is currently in design for the second phase of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning improvements at Argyle Middle School, to be completed during summer 2009; and

WHEREAS, The prepurchase of the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning equipment by the Department of Facilities Management would ensure that, once the project design is complete and the contract awarded, the equipment will be available for immediate installation; and

WHEREAS, The following bids were received on March 6, 2009, for the prepurchase of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning equipment for Argyle Middle School:

<u>Vendor</u>	<u>Amount</u>
AC Quest	\$114,350
Parklawn Associates, Inc.	132,250
Havtech	148,938

and

WHEREAS, The bid submitted by AC Quest was deemed to be unresponsive and Parklawn Associates, Inc., is the second lowest bidder; and

WHEREAS, Based on the equipment specifications and delivery time outlined in the request for proposals, Parklawn Associates, Inc., was determined to provide the best value; and

WHEREAS, The proposal is within the staff estimates; now therefore be it

Resolved, That a contract be awarded to Parklawn Associates, Inc., in the amount of

\$132,250 for the prepurchase of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning equipment for Argyle Middle School, in accordance with specifications prepared by Building Dynamics, LLC

RESOLUTION NO. 172-09 Re: **RICHARD MONTGOMERY HIGH SCHOOL—
GRANT OF STORMWATER MANAGEMENT
EASEMENT AND STORMWATER
MANAGEMENT INSPECTION AND
MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT**

On recommendation of the superintendent and on motion of Mrs. O'Neill seconded by Mr. Kauffman, the following resolution was adopted unanimously: #

WHEREAS, The mayor and Council of Rockville (City) have requested an easement for inspection and maintenance of a stormwater management facility beneath the artificial turf field at Richard Montgomery High School, located at 250 Richard Montgomery Drive in Rockville; and

WHEREAS, The proposed easement, which is 96,500 square feet, will provide rights to the city for inspection and maintenance of an underground stormwater quality and quantity control structure; and

WHEREAS, The proposed easement will not affect any land that could be used for school programming or recreational activities; and

WHEREAS, All construction was undertaken by the Board of Education in connection with the installation of the artificial turf field, with the city being granted the right to inspect and maintain; now therefore be it

Resolved, That the president and secretary of the Board of Education be authorized to execute a Stormwater Management Easement and Stormwater Management Inspection and Maintenance Agreement with the mayor and Council of Rockville, granting inspection and maintenance rights on 96,500 square feet of land at Richard Montgomery High School.

Re: **LITERACY EDUCATION**

Present at the table for tonight discussion are Mr. Erick J. Lang, associate superintendent, Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs; Ms. Betsy Brown, director, Department of Curriculum and Instruction; Mrs. Sophie I. Kowzun, supervisor, Elementary Reading Language Arts; Mr. James P. Fliakas, acting supervisor, Secondary English Language Arts; Dr. Debra S. Munk, principal, Rockville High School; and Ms. Kathryn C. Williams, reading specialist, Oakland Terrace Elementary School.

Literacy encompasses the reciprocal skills of reading and writing and directly relates to the ability to synthesize, evaluate, and convey complex information. To achieve college and career readiness, students must reach a high level of communication and critical thinking skills. Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Pre-K 2 English language arts curriculum is designed as a cohesive, articulated progression of skills, processes, and concepts backmapped from college standards for literacy. The reform effort introduced with the Early Success initiative in 2000 has resulted in improvements in literacy across all grades and student groups. However, the district continues to face challenges related to implementation of and understanding among stakeholders about literacy curriculum and instruction.

Reading instruction in MCPS is founded on the principle that reading is an interactive process for understanding text, which develops across all grade levels, is effective when strategic and fluent, and requires motivation. In the early grades, instruction focuses on phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Students read fiction and nonfiction works and receive direct instruction in guided reading groups and whole-class lessons. In Grade 3, instruction focuses on fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. In Grade 6, most students take a reading course that emphasizes exposition to prepare them for the demands of secondary courses. After Grade 6, students continue to build reading skills in English classes, where they learn to analyze literature and expository text. *Our Call to Action: Pursuit of Excellence*, the MCPS strategic plan, has identified reading on grade level by the end of Grade 2 and reading proficiency on the MSA in Grades 3 as performance targets.

English language arts teachers in MCPS are expected to provide direct instruction in writing regularly in elementary grades. Students are expected to write often at all grade levels and they are expected to write in multi-paragraph form by Grade 3. Writing instruction in MCPS reflects the philosophy that writing makes thinking visible. The program recognizes the recursive nature of writing, requiring individuals to organize and revise their thinking in multiple drafts. Students learn to consider word choice, sentence structure, and language conventions such as grammar and spelling as they write. Instruction also emphasizes awareness among students that writing has varied purposes, audiences, and forms. At all grade levels, students develop writing skills as their teachers instruct, model, coach, assess, and provide feedback related to the required components of the Pre-K–2 writing program.

Teachers of fine arts, foreign languages, health, physical education, science, social studies, mathematics, and technology support literacy by using methods that help students comprehend text. They build students' understanding of essential concepts and vocabulary and they assist students in the application of reading strategies. While students *learn to write* in their English language arts classes, they *write to learn* in their content classes. Students may complete science lab reports, physical fitness logs, artists notebooks, or dialectic history journals. In MCPS, students are expected to write often in all classes in many forms and degrees of formality. Students also receive direct literacy instruction in

content classes, as appropriate. In social studies, for example, students read primary and secondary sources to gather evidence and express evidence-supported generalizations and opinions. Developing these skills begins in elementary grades and continues through middle and high school, culminating in AP and IB courses where students respond to document-based questions.

Literacy in MCPS is assessed during instruction using classroom or district formative assessments. Districtwide reading assessments are used to monitor progress by individual students, classes, schools, and the district. Formal assessment of reading begins in the early grades with the MCPS Assessment Program–Primary Reading (MCPSAP-PR), administered by kindergarten teachers, using customized software on a handheld device. In Grade 3, students' reading skills are assessed using a computer-adapted and individualized test, Measures of Academic Progress–Reading (MAP-R). Data from the MCPSAP-PR and MAP-R are available online. Student performance on the MSA in reading also is available online. Reading benchmarks have been established by OCIP and OSA staff in collaboration with school-based staff members to determine success toward meeting system targets in reading through Grade 2. A work group currently is meeting to establish reading benchmarks for Grade 3.

OCIP and school-based staff members have developed writing assessments for Grade 1 and will complete development of additional assessments for Grades 4 and 5 for implementation during school year 2009–2010, as part of the elementary standards-based grading and reporting initiative. Writing assessments are in place for Grade 6 and data can be entered and are available to staff members for analysis online. Writing performance is monitored through the use of writing assessments.

Students may accelerate by reading increasingly more challenging text or writing increasingly more complex compositions. Elementary teachers work with all students at the earliest text levels to build literal and interpretive comprehension skills, which students may demonstrate in oral or written responses. They assess students' facility at specific text levels and present more challenging texts to students who demonstrate they can decode more difficult words and understand more advanced vocabulary and syntax. Advanced literacy instruction is provided to elementary students through the William and Mary and Junior Great Books programs in all schools. Secondary teachers build all students' skills to manage texts with complex language and content and they teach strategies for critically analyzing literature and exposition. Secondary advanced instruction is formalized through advanced level, Honors, AP, and IB classes.

In all grades, teachers shape students' writing performance by providing explicit instruction and strong writing models and allowing ample opportunity for practice. Teachers coach students through the writing process using rubrics to guide student efforts (Attachment F). Teachers use rubrics to provide students feedback on their writing and students record their progress and set individual writing goals. As teachers determine student readiness,

they present more challenging writing assignments and focus on more complex aspects of writing.

Teachers differentiate instruction in the classroom to challenge and support all students. They teach students in flexible groups according to their needs, reviewing and extending instruction as appropriate. For students whose literacy skills continue to lag, schools provide formal intervention programs in addition to core instruction, based on diagnostic information. OCIP and OSESS staff have identified reading-intervention programs for students in general and special education, Grade 2. Elementary schools may choose programs such as high-interest libraries, skill-based texts, and computer programs. At the secondary level, *READ 180*, a computer-assisted intervention program focusing on vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, is used in 61 secondary schools for students in both general and special education settings and for students receiving English for Speakers of Other Languages services, levels 2 and above. OCIP also has designed decision trees to aid secondary school staff in guiding placement of students based on data.

During core instruction in the classroom, teachers are encouraged to employ Universal Design for Learning (UDL) alternative formats and tools to make curriculum and materials accessible to all students. Staff members in OCIP, OSESS, and OOD are collaborating to raise awareness among school-based and central services staff about UDL; and to develop and disseminate accessible instructional resources and assessments, identify technology and software that will help students access content areas or demonstrate skill and understanding, and provide professional development on UDL strategies. Staff members in OSESS have identified software and strategies that assist students in literacy specifically, and OCIP is incorporating them into curriculum resources in all content areas.

As a result of providing standards-based curriculum resources, assessments, professional development, and a monitoring system that allows staff members to make decisions based on student performance, we have seen increases in literacy skills across levels and student groups. Specifically, student performance data show the following between 2006 and 2008:

1. The percentage of students scoring proficient and advanced on the MSA in reading has increased for all student groups in Grade 3 .
2. The percentage of students scoring proficient or above on the MAP-R has increased for most student groups in Grade 6 .
3. The percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the HSA in English has increased by 13 to 20 points for Hispanic and African American students, and for students receiving Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS) and special education services.
4. MCPS students' performance on the writing or critical reading subtest of the SAT compares favorably with state and national percentages.
5. The percentage of students scoring 550 or higher on the writing subtest of the SAT has increased for African American students and students receiving FARMS

services since 2006.

6. The percentage of students scoring a 3 or higher on AP examinations that include writing and critical reading components compares favorably with state and national percentages.
7. The percentage of students scoring a 3 or higher on the AP English Language and Composition examination has increased for African American students and students receiving FARMS and special education services.

District efforts to improve literacy skills of all students are achieving the intended results, but we still face challenges in meeting our goals for students to be fully literate at key milestones in their academic careers. Implementation of literacy curriculum and assessments remains somewhat uneven in MCPS, due in part to staff mobility. As a tight budget forces position cuts, continued focus on job-embedded training by staff development teachers, reading specialists, Accelerated and Enriched Instruction literacy coaches, and resource teachers becomes even more critical in sustaining strong literacy instruction. Other challenges include the following:

1. Competing priorities: the MSA and HSAs do not assess student writing, while the SAT, ACT, and AP/IB examinations assess student writing
2. College and career requirements for high levels of literacy
3. Misperception that the BCR component on the MSA in reading assesses student writing

Staff members in OCIP, OSESS, OOD, OCTO, and OSP continue to focus on building the capacity of staff members and administrators to ensure consistent implementation of literacy curriculum and assessments. Work is ongoing to communicate the imperatives that teachers have the tools to accelerate and intervene in reading and writing, and that teachers have time to teach writing and possess the resources and expectation to do so. It is regularly communicated that the MCPS approach to teaching grammar, spelling, and handwriting reflects best practices. The implications of different literacy expectations on state and national assessments are shared with teachers and school leaders.

In addition, the following actions are continuing, in progress, or recommended.

Continuing Actions

1. Provide regular professional development and support on curriculum implementation.
2. Build on the schoolwide literacy plans previously developed in secondary schools.

In-progress Actions

1. Conduct communication campaign about the MCPS English Language Arts program.
2. Provide information and support to principals on monitoring effective writing instruction.

3. Clarify with all audiences the purpose of BCRs to assess reading, not writing.
4. Complete the reading benchmarks for students in Grade 3 .
5. Develop universally accessible instructional and assessment resources.

Recommended Action

1. Explore the feasibility of conducting range-finding sessions with teachers and administrators to develop writing benchmarks for students in Grades 3–10.

Literacy education in MCPS is built on a cohesive curriculum backmapped from college levels, resources to support acceleration and intervention, assessments to guide instruction, and an online monitoring system. Professional development and communication promote consistent implementation as well as understanding of the program design and rationale. Generally, students in MCPS perform well on assessments requiring literacy skills. While much is in place to provide a strong literacy program in MCPS, we have more work to do to ensure continued improvements in student achievement, sustained implementation, and stakeholder buy-in.

Re: **DISCUSSION**

Mr. Barclay pointed out the advance area of the MSA where there is a 30-point difference between African American and White students. He wanted to hear about the work that is going to be done to push underrepresented populations into the advanced category at higher rates to ensure that those students have the skills needed for success.

Ms. Berthiaume wanted to focus on backmapping and whether the system has chosen the appropriate items to backmap from, such as the SAT, IB, and AP exams. The SAT is largely vocabulary and reading comprehension, but no test of grammar, spelling, creative writing, or contrast or compare. Backmapping from the IB or AP seems inappropriate since there is no scoring for grammar, punctuation, and spelling. These tests are looking for content knowledge. In terms of research skills and writing a college-level paper, why does the system not backmap from college or work readiness. Staff explained that many Advanced Placement exams require a high level of literacy and the ability of students to read several documents, synthesize the information, and write a paper taking a stance, develop an argument, and organize ideas.

Ms. Berthiaume asked when the system teaches children to spell. Staff replied that the school system teaches spelling in kindergarten, using phonic skills. High-frequency words are reinforced in kindergarten, and spelling is taught throughout elementary school. The focus on word meaning and word parts begin in fourth grade.

Mr. Barclay inquired about assessments that help students, and he said he was concerned about kids who should spell better but not discourage their from writing. Staff replied that there is direct application in writing in content areas. In terms of teaching mechanics, there is direct instruction on spelling, but outside the lesson on writing. The teacher conferences

with the student to review the writing to focus on the lesson taught as well as other areas where the student needs improvement.

Mr. Barclay stated that one of his concerns was the ambiguity, since writing well is married to reading well. If a student struggles with reading, he or she will not be exposed to superior writing. Staff replied that teachers must continue to put strong models in front of students.

Mr. Kauffman noted that the MCPS teaching of grammar, spelling, and handwriting reflects best practices. Is it a question of educating the community that the school system teaches these skills? Are there measurements or data available? Staff replied that grammar, spelling, and handwriting are not taught today the way it was taught to the students' parents. It has changed based on research that shows professionals how students learn language arts.

Mrs. O'Neill stated that vocabulary is a lifelong acquisition, and it has never been more important for students to read and write. The information age demands good reading and writing, and student will need to make their livelihoods in the information age.

Ms. Navarro thought a Board work session could have a dialogue and focus on instructional practices, how they have changed over time, and what drove the system to change those practices. The work session would also address the issue of time as a resource, because it comes up often in conversations regarding implementation of the curriculum.

Ms. Berthiaume asked the following questions:

1. At what point does the system ask students to do research in the library to produce a five-page or longer paper that is footnoted and has a bibliography?
2. In the memorandum, the statement is made, "Advanced literacy instruction is provided to elementary students through *William and Mary* and *Junior Great Books* in all schools." How does the system measure implementation and gather data points?
3. In the memorandum, the statement is made, "Teachers differentiate instruction in the classroom to challenge and support all students." How is this measured? Can the Board get the data on the measurement?
4. One of the recommended actions is to "develop writing benchmarks for students in Grades 3–10." Does that mean that the system does not have writing benchmarks?
5. What exactly is the system doing to help students develop vocabulary at the elementary-school level? Is the system using curriculum like *Wordly Wise*? Is the system asking students to look at word meaning, antonyms, synonyms, and the use of vocabulary words in a sentence?
6. What employee-screening techniques are used when hiring teachers and paraeducators to ensure that our personnel working directly with our children are themselves able to spell and apply the rules of punctuation and grammar?

Mr. Kauffman asked about the cost of *Read 180*. how effectiveness is gauged, and he also requested any statistics on students completing *Read 180*. Answers to these questions could help the Board determine if this is an investment worth keeping. Staff stated that there is an evaluation and feedback that will be available in the next two months.

Ms. Brandman requested literacy data for students entering high school. Please include how many are reading on and above and below grade level, and please indicate what grade level (e.g., Grade 9 student reading at a Grade 5 level). Please provide this information for each individual high school. Please also describe what interventions are available to support their learning.

RESOLUTION NO. 173-09 Re: **CLOSED SESSIONS RESOLUTION**

On recommendation of the superintendent and on motion of Mr. O'Neill seconded by Ms. Navarro, the following resolution was adopted unanimously:

WHEREAS, The Board of Education of Montgomery County is authorized by the *State Government Article* of the *Annotated Code of Maryland* to conduct certain meetings or portions of its meetings in closed sessions; now therefore be it

Resolved, That the Board of Education of Montgomery County conduct closed sessions on Tuesday, April 14, 2009, in Room 120 of the Carver Educational Services Center to meet from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. to discuss personnel matters, as permitted under Section 10-508(a)(1) of the *State Government Article*; consult with counsel to obtain legal advice, as permitted by Section 10-508(a)(7) of the *State Government Article*; review and adjudicate appeals in its quasi-judicial capacity; and discuss matters of an administrative function outside the purview of the Open Meetings Act (Section 10-503(a) of the *State Government Article*); and be it further

Resolved, That such meetings shall continue in closed session until the completion of business.

RESOLUTION NO. 174-09 Re: **REPORT OF CLOSED SESSION**

On recommendation of the superintendent and on motion of Mrs. O'Neill seconded by Ms. Navarro, the following resolution was adopted unanimously:

On March 10, 2009, by unanimous vote, the Board of Education voted to conduct closed sessions, as permitted under *State Government Article* Section 10-501, *et seq.*, of the *Annotated Code of Maryland*.

The Montgomery County Board of Education met in a closed session on March 10, 2009, from 9:05 to 9:55 a.m. and met for lunch from 1:10 to 2:15 p.m. in Room 120 of the Carver

Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, and

- 7. Reviewed legal advice under Section 10-508(a)(7) of the *State Government Article* and considered Appeal 2009-2, with a subsequent vote in open session in its quasi-judicial capacity outside the purview of the *Open Meetings Act* (Section 10-503(a) of the *State Government Article*).
- 8. Discussed the Human Resources Monthly Report, with a subsequent vote in open session, as permitted under Section 10-508(a)(1) of the *State Government Article* regarding procedures for closed session.
- 9. Discussed an administrative function (scheduling for discussion of budget strategy and bid protest) outside the purview of the *Open Meetings Act* (Section 10-503(a) of the *State Government Article*).

In attendance at portions of the closed session were Christopher Barclay, Steve Bedford, Laura Berthiaume, Larry Bowers, Shirley Brandman, Judy Docca, Brian Edwards, Roland Ikheloa, Phil Kauffman, Suzann King, Frieda Lacey, Erick Lang, Quratul-Ann Malik, Susan Marks, Pat O'Neill, Glenda Rose, Laura Steinberg, and Jerry Weast.

Re: **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

RESOLUTION NO. 175-09

Re: **ADJOURNMENT**

On recommendation of the superintendent and on motion of Mrs. O'Neill seconded by Ms. Berthiaume, the following resolution was adopted unanimously:

Resolved, That the Board of Education adjourn its meeting of March 23, 2009, at 9:00 p.m.

PRESIDENT

SECRETARY

JDW:gr

MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION SUMMARY SHEET

March 23, 2009

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