

Middle School Reform

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) conducted a comprehensive review of its middle schools last year to gain a greater understanding of areas that needed improvement in order to help every student achieve at the highest levels. The findings of the review are being used during the 2005–06 school year to develop an action plan to move our comprehensive reform in the middle schools forward and build on the strengths of our K-5 Early Success Performance Plan.

As a first step, MCPS included several improvement initiatives in its FY 2006 budget to advance the reform. Many of these efforts involve gathering more detailed data about what students know and are able to do so that appropriate instructional supports and services can be provided.

The comprehensive reform plan for middle schools will be built on four key components:

- Professional development for staff to enable them to successfully implement the middle school curriculum and assessments.
- Diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments to assess, measure, and monitor student performance (MAP-R, SDRT-4, curriculum-based assessments).
- A process to monitor the implementation of the curriculum.
- Additional support for students who need extra assistance to achieve.

How are we moving forward in the 2005–2006 school year?

1. During summer 2005, all reading teachers in grades 6, 7, and 8 will be fully trained in the curriculum revisions that have occurred in the last three years.
2. All school leadership teams are being trained in the research-based *Reading Next* program, which will strengthen the literacy components (fluency, vocabulary development, and comprehension) across all content areas.
3. For the first time, MCPS will implement the standardized MAP-R reading assessment for all students in grades 6, 7, and 8 in January and May to provide more detailed data on each student. In FY 2007, this reading assessment that helps teachers differentiate instruction based on students' needs will be conducted three times.
4. The Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test–4th edition (SDRT-4) also will be used in all middle schools for the first time at the beginning of the year to analyze the reading skills of students who are not proficient in reading on state and local tests and have demonstrated a need for extra reading assistance. Information from this assessment will enable staff to better target reading instruction to students based

on their individual needs. It will also be administered in the spring of 2006.

5. MCPS is expanding its “Read 180” and “Corrective Reading” intervention programs to help struggling students improve their reading skills. “Read 180” will be in 11 middle schools and “Corrective Reading” will be implemented in three schools.
6. MCPS is expanding its extended year summer program from 14 days to 19 days and will serve about 140 students per middle school. These students will review the previous year’s work to reinforce the learned material and get a jump start on the material for the new school year.
7. The extended day program will continue to offer intensive reading and math support after school for those students identified as in need of the extra assistance. This program also has expanded from three classes per middle school to six classes in order to provide services to more students.
8. All middle schools will implement the College Ed program and administer the Preliminary SAT Scoring Service (PSSS), which are designed to support our long-term SAT plan. The goal of these initiatives is to encourage middle school students to begin the college planning process early and to enroll in and understand the value of taking more rigorous and challenging courses.