

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Wood Acres Elementary School**

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*Office of the Principal*

August 2011

Dear Parent or Guardian:

This letter contains important information about your child's instructional program in Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2, with a special focus on mathematics. As mentioned in Dr. Joshua P. Starr, superintendent of schools' letter, we are excited to implement the first major series of upgrades to the elementary curriculum since 2002. The Elementary Integrated Curriculum (EIC) will be implemented in Kindergarten and Grade 1 for the 2011–2012 school year. We've chosen to pilot the EIC in Grade 2 as well. The EIC has so many improvements we have started calling it MCPS Curriculum 2.0, in the same way upgrades are announced for technology products. To learn more about the overall Curriculum 2.0 upgrades visit: <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/integrated/> after the site is updated on August 5, 2011.

**Math Upgrades**

The math, reading, and writing portions of the MCPS Curriculum 2.0 are based on new internationally-driven standards in reading, writing, and math. The standards, detailed lists of content students must learn at each grade level, were developed by a consortium of 48 states to help U.S. students compete favorably with top-ranking nations. The result is **fewer, clearer, and higher** educational standards that prepare all students for college and careers. To learn more about these standards visit: <http://www.corestandards.org/>.

The new standards require students to develop a deeper level of understanding in mathematics. Memorizing or repeating formulas will always be part of learning mathematics, but it will not be sufficient in order to demonstrate deep understanding. Students will be expected to show understanding, computation, application, reasoning, and engagement in a mathematics concept to be ready to move on to a new topic. This type of learning is essential to building a strong foundation in mathematics at the elementary level that leads to success in advanced mathematics courses at the secondary school level.

In addition, the new standards are more challenging at each grade level. For example, many of the standards now in Grade 1 were previously instructed in Grade 2 or higher or were not instructed in the prior Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) curriculum. Therefore, the previous practice of grade skipping acceleration in mathematics will not be necessary for most students. Almost all of our students will be working at the challenging grade level standards this year and not in the next grade level up. We will continue to group students for mathematics instruction in a way that most benefits each child.

To ensure that the needs of students who require more challenge are met, MCPS has developed enrichment and acceleration within the grade level curriculum that goes beyond the requirements

of new standards. Students who have consistently demonstrated proficiency of a mathematics concept will be able to enrich their understanding of a grade-level topic or accelerate to a higher-level topic. This will support students who excel in mathematics to be challenged, while building a strong foundation without the gaps created by grade skipping.

The EIC also was designed to help students who struggle to understand mathematics by incorporating principles of Universal Design for Learning. Just as buildings and sidewalks have been upgraded over the last few decades to provide access to people with all types of mobility, curriculum can be upgraded to allow multiple ways for students to learn a concept and show their understanding. The EIC shows teachers multiple ways a concept can be learned and assessed and allows them to share their ideas on how to help all students.

Please note that students in Grades 3–5 will continue with the current MCPS mathematics program as last year. The changes in mathematics will roll up with the expansion of the EIC by grade level each year. These changes are a tremendous opportunity for us to help your child build a strong foundation in mathematics that will last a lifetime and open the doors to advanced mathematics courses at the secondary school level. If you would like more information, MCPS has provided a video that details the major changes in mathematics at <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/integrated/math/>. This site will be updated throughout the year as new information is available.

If you have further questions please feel free to contact me. Working together we will do what is best for your child.

Sincerely,

Marita Sherburne  
Principal