

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

July 17, 2019

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jack R. Smith, Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Countywide International Baccalaureate Program at Richard Montgomery High School (06-11-19-01-B)

During Public Comments, Board members requested the following information:

Question B

Ms. Silvestre would like to better understand why there will not be a countywide International Baccalaureate program at Richard Montgomery High School.

Response

The International Baccalaureate (IB) program is a well-known and internationally regarded program. There is a rigorous authorization process that schools must adhere to in order to receive accreditation from the IB Organization. These authorizations are recertified through a rigorous process every five years. There are thousands of IB schools across the globe, all held to the same international standards. While IB often is compared to Advanced Placement, IB stands out because of the international reach and the standardization of the programs when authorized. Our students take the same IB exams as they do throughout the world and earn the same IB Diploma. All of our teachers travel outside of Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) to attend professional development sanctioned by IB, joining teachers throughout the country as well as other countries. There continues to be growth in interest in the IB in MCPS as indicated by the more than 1,000 students applying to the IB program at Richard Montgomery High School each year.

For the foreseeable future, Richard Montgomery High School will remain a countywide application program. However, in the long-term, the possibility exists that all four IB application programs will be offered as regional sites for students in a specified geographic region. Driving factors for this approach include—

- Identical IB programs are critical: feedback from the parents/guardians and the school community have been consistent—when expanding programs, ensure that all four IB

programs have identical application processes, are consistently implemented, and have similar structures to avoid the perception that any of the programs are inferior to each other. This is our opportunity to leverage the strong practices that exist in all of our IB schools, and make more abundant the limited number of seats available.

- Transportation costs: additionally, moving from a countywide model to a regional model will help relieve (over time) transportation costs to support the increased transportation needs for the regional models.

We are continuing the process of gathering additional feedback from the community about regional and countywide IB models. We will report back to the Board in early September with additional details and timelines about this transition.

If you have any questions about this information, please contact Mrs. Niki T. Hazel, associate superintendent for curriculum and instructional programs, Office of the Chief Academic Officer, at 240-740-3970.

JRS:MVN:NTH:smw

Copy to:

Executive Staff
Mrs. Franklin
Dr. Lewis
Mr. Murphy
Ms. Webb