FAQs from 2018 Parent Information Meetings

1. **Can you tell me more about the student essay in the testing?** The student essay is a brief non-scored response written by the student at the time of testing. The writing prompt may be about a favorite teacher or class and is to be completed in ten minutes. The committee will read it to be additive to the student file.

2. **What is the name of the test being used? What is the CogAT test about?** The name of the test is the CogAT. It is an online test that includes three batteries that contain verbal, nonverbal and quantitative reasoning questions. Within each battery is three subtests that are timed tests. Students take the test using a Chromebook and receive 10 minutes each to complete a subtest. There are a few practice questions students complete with the test examiner, and then students complete each section of the test individually. There is a running timer on the test for each student and when 10 minutes have passed, the test will close. Students may skip questions and then return to answer them. The number of questions range from 10 – 18 questions per section. Students who have testing accommodation plans will receive their accommodations as appropriate for this test.

3. **If I am not attending my home elementary school, do I have to go there to test?** MCPS students who are testing will test in the elementary school they are currently attending. This includes students who are attending a different school for a special program or on a Change of School Assignment.

4. **How do private school students access this program?** Private school students who live in Montgomery County may participate in this process. Parents must pre-enroll in MCPS to get their Grade 5 child a student ID and then complete the application for private school parents. Students MUST have a six digit MCPS student ID to take the test. Contact the Division of Consortia Choice and Application Program Services at 240.740.2540.

5. **What are the criteria used in the review process?** Multiple measures are examined for students during the review process. These measures include, but are not limited to report card grades, external assessments (e.g., PARCC, CogAt), and student services received (e.g., FARMS, Special Education). A student's academic peer group at their home school is also considered during the review process.

6. **What is the universal screening process again?** Universal screening is a process where a central review of all Grade 5 students is conducted for enrichment and acceleration instructional needs. Students will participate in further review, which includes taking an above grade level assessment when identified during the universal screening process. A parent may request their child participate in the review and take the test if their child is not identified. It is not necessary to take the test to be considered for local enrichment and acceleration.

7. **Is there a test prep booklet for this test?**

   There is not a test prep booklet.

8. **Will the upcounty middle schools receive the two new courses that the other twenty schools received?**

   It is anticipated that all upcounty middle schools will implement one or both of the new courses next year for Grade 6.

9. **Has the program itself changed as a result of the new screening process for the Science, math, computer science program?** We still have many top math students in our new sixth grade class, and we are seeing a greater diversity in ability. This is an important opportunity for highly-able students to be able to step up into a more rigorous curriculum. What has changed is not the rigor of the program or our expectations of students. What has changed is instruction and what the teachers need to do. Our teachers are expected to provide supports and scaffolding to help all magnet students attain the level of mastery of students working at a high level in mathematics.

10. **Is this parent information meeting taped to see in the future?**
    The video presentation is here at this link:
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPjUFAcT3CE&feature=youtu.be