

MCCPTA Gifted Child Committee

Gifted Education: The What, When, Where and How for
Highly Able Learners in MCPS

**Originally presented via Zoom on 1/6/21. Revised and updated for
distribution on 2/8/21. Information in this presentation is subject to change.*

Who We Are

- The MCCPTA Gifted Child Committee (GCC) is a standing committee that reports into the VP of Educational Issues within the Montgomery County Council of PTAs.
- Each year a GCC Chair and Vice Chair are appointed to work with local PTA GT Liaisons, parents and MCPS staff to advocate for MCPS GT students.
- If you are interested in becoming a PTA GT Liaison for your school and/or a member of our standing committee, if you just want to be included in our email list, or need advocacy support, please email us at gifted@mccpta.org. Also, stand tuned for the launch of our MCCPTA Gifted Child Committee FB page in March '21.

Policies and Regulations You Need to Know About

- MCPS Board of Education Policy: Gifted and Talented Education
 - [MCPS Policy IOA Gifted and Talented Education](#)
 - Read this policy and ask your Principal to show your their plan for meeting the needs of the GT students in each grade
 - “It’s built into the standard curriculum” is not an appropriate answer.
 - Parents aren’t able to distinguish what’s on grade level and what’s accelerated or enriched for GT students so they can’t tell if their child is TRULY receiving appropriate enrichment
 - Ask your Principal to have teachers identify enrichment by marking it as such (this especially applies to elementary school)
- Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)
 - COMAR (Code of Maryland Regulations)
 - [COMAR 13A.04.07.03](#) lays out the minimum GT education standards for all school districts in MD

How Students were Identified as GT *Prior to COVID*

- **2nd grade** annual global screening test each spring (includes parent voice)
 - No screening test administered in spring of 2020
 - Students are GT tagged but entirely up to school leadership team and teachers as to what enrichment will be provided in 3rd grade.
- **3rd grade** universal screening each fall
 - MAP, PARCC, grades are part of the data that is reviewed to determine which students will be invited to take CogAT.
 - Invited to take CogAT and automatically considered for ELC (if available at home school) and CES programs
 - No formal application process; no teacher or parent recommendations
- **5th grade** annual universal screening each fall
 - Invited to take CogAT and automatically considered for Humanities magnet, MathSci magnet and local magnet expansion courses (Inquiries into Global Humanities and/or accelerated math path)
 - No formal application process; no teacher or parent recommendations
- **8th grade** universal screening each fall
 - Invited to take CogAT and apply to test-in programs and non test-in regional programs via centralized app
- Outside testing

Application Program Updates During COVID

- MCPS plans to screen all 2nd and 3rd graders for GT status this year
- 3rd Graders: Universal review based on previous MAP scores and grades in 2nd and 3rd. Those identified will be placed in lottery and then randomly selected for CES seats. No CogAT test this year.
- The CES Parent Presentation aired on the [MCPS Website](#) on, January 13, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. (English), 7:00 p.m. (Spanish)
- Look for program and enrichment information on [AEI section](#) of MCPS website
- Go to the [DCCAPS section](#) of the MCPS website for information about programs, magnet field studies, BoE memorandums and reports
- 5th Graders: Universal review based on previous MAP scores and grades. No CogAT test this year. All centrally identified 5th graders will be placed into a lottery. Those who aren't randomly selected for middle school magnets will be placed into one or two magnet expansion courses at their local school.
 - Inquiries into Global Humanities (6-8)
 - 6th grade IM/AIM using 2.0 curriculum, 7th Algebra using Learn Zillion curriculum, 8th grade Honors Geometry using 2.0 curriculum
- 8th graders invited to apply to high school programs. Deadline was November 6.
 - No CogAT, teacher recommendations or PARCC. Grades, MAP and short essay. Late January notification.

Future of Application & Test-in Programs?

While MCPS representatives have said they cannot talk about the application process beyond this year, they did make the following statements in public litigation filings as relates to middle school magnet programs.

- “Depending on the data MCPS gathers based on its use of the lottery this year, MCPS may maintain the lottery in future years.”
- “MCPS cannot definitively predict what screening and selection process MCPS will employ in upcoming years, including in the fall of 2021. MCPS also cannot predict when or even if MCPS will resume using the CogAT.”
- “This uncertainty stems from a variety of sources. MCPS cannot predict when the pandemic will abate. MCPS also cannot predict COVID-19's effect on students' academic progress in 2021. Nor does MCPS know what lessons it will learn when it operates the new process for the first time. MCPS routinely reevaluates the screening and selection process for the middle school magnet programs, learning lessons from prior years. As such, MCPS expects that it may need to revise the screening and selection process for the fall of 2021 and subsequent years.”

[//drive.google.com/file/d/1BiVtIxAlXSVuKG1XaCtEpeDxlogujuZV/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BiVtIxAlXSVuKG1XaCtEpeDxlogujuZV/view?usp=sharing)

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DcA7pm3bl6mSY4Gw4ogZkqoH5fd4J3DL/view?usp=sharing>

What's Available for GT Students?

- **Elementary**

- Grades 4 & 5: Centers for Enriched Studies--rigorous language arts and writing curriculum plus compacted math. Student cohorts are in all classes together.
- Grades 4 & 5: Enriched Literacy Curriculum (ELC) at 43 of 130+ local schools
- Grades K-5: BA Enrichment Guide should be used by all teachers for GT students-- language arts focused
- Compacted Math 4/5 and 5/6 at all schools
- Coming soon...Eureka math enrichment for K-5 (Tiered model)

- **Middle School**

- Humanities (EMS and MLK) or MathSci (TPMS or RCMS) magnets
- Magnet expansion courses at local schools (includes Inquiries into Global Humanities grades 6-8, AIM for 6th, Algebra 1 for 7th, Honors Geometry for 8th)

- **High School**

- Test-in magnets: SMACS, Humanities, Global Ecology, RMHS IB, Regional IBs (Kennedy, Springbrook, Watkins Mill)
- Local IB Diploma programs, AP courses, Signature programs, CAP programs, Dual Enrollment, Middle College, Early College, Edison, etc.

- **GT/LD (2e) information:** [Twice Exceptional](#)

Elementary CES and ELC

- Unofficial List of Elementary School GT Resources
 - List your home school here and tell us if your student has used any of these resources in class.
- Centers for Enriched Studies (CES) for 4th & 5th
 - 9 regional and 4 local test-in centers
- Enriched Literacy Curriculum (ELC)
 - “Pilot” in its 4th year that is meant to mimic CES language arts curriculum for highly able centrally identified students within their homeschools
 - In 43 out of 130+ schools; no immediate plans to expand
- These programs use William and Mary, Jacob’s Ladder and, Lucy Calkins curriculum as opposed to Benchmark Advance

Elementary Language Arts

- Benchmark Advance is used for everyone other than CES and ELC
 - All BA GT learners should be receiving enriched instruction through the Benchmark Advance Enrichment Guide provided by AEI and accessible to teachers via online password protected area. Make sure your school is using it across K-5.
 - At this time, MCPS cannot tell who is USING it and how often
 - William and Mary curriculum and Jacobs Ladder are components of the Enrichment Guide.
- Small group instruction for EVERYONE
 - High level readers should meet at least once/week for teacher led small group instruction during distance learning. At least twice/week when in person full-time school resumes.
 - some teachers are doing student led Literature Circles in breakout rooms with teacher “drop-ins”.
 - Some teachers are hosting teacher-led small group instruction.
- YOU must be the detective and ADVOCATE

Elementary Math

- ALL elementary students use Eureka Math curriculum (including CES)
- Compacted Math changed over to Eureka in April '20
 - Compacted 4/5 for identified 4th graders; compacted 5/6 for identified 5th graders
- Math Enrichment K-5
 - AEI and Curriculum are creating a Eureka Enrichment guide
 - Four Tier Math Model coming second semester to inform enrichment:
 - Tier 1: Problem selection & assignment
 - Tier 2: Increasing complexity & ambiguity
 - Tier 3: Personalized, independent projects & supplements (in design)
 - Tier 4: Course advancement
 - No small groups. Whole group lessons with problem sets, projects and supplements that are honed to individual needs. Teachers are receiving training. Students will also be in collaborative groups as part of the learning experience (to work on a problem, discuss a concept, etc.)

Middle School Magnets

- Humanities at Eastern MS and MLK MS
 - Three interdisciplinary Humanities magnet courses: English, Social Studies, Media (Media counts as an elective) each year
 - In addition to the Humanities Media elective, a Humanities Literature elective (which equates to a double English period) is offered to EMS 6th grade Humanities magnet students in lieu of foreign language, orchestra, etc. in 6th grade
 - MLK Humanities students do NOT have access to the additional Literature elective and MUST take foreign language all 3 years. Therefore, they CANNOT take orchestra, band, chorus or art electives at any time during middle school
 - Applied IM (AIM) math in 6th grade. Math path then follows the same accelerated math path available to high-performing math students throughout the county; 7th (Algebra 1) and 8th (Honors Geometry).
- MathSci at Takoma Park MS and Clemente MS
 - Three interdisciplinary MathSci magnet courses: Math, Science, Computer Science (Computer Science counts as an elective) each year. (*TPMS has 8 period block schedule to allow for additional elective, Clemente does not).
 - Global Humanities course 6th-8th which is offered to high-performing students throughout the county (as indicated by individual MAP R, PARCC, CogAT, etc. data).
- These are county programs **hosted** by the schools that house them. The programs are supposed to mirror each other (i.e., EMS/MLK and TPMS/RCMS)

Local Middle School Options

- Study Sync is used by all English teachers (except in Humanities Magnet programs)
- MCPS expects teachers to differentiate within classrooms to meet individual student needs
- Magnet expansion courses at each local middle school that are intended to mimic Humanities World Studies and MathSci Math
 - Inquiries into Global Humanities (grades 6-8)
 - Applied IM (grade 6); Algebra 1 (grade 7); Honors Geometry (grade 8). Algebra and Geometry count towards HS credit. They do not include magnet components.
 - No English, science, media or computer science expansion courses
- Learn Zillion is used by all Math teachers (except IM, Applied IM and Honors Geometry which currently remain curriculum 2.0)

High School Magnets

- These are test-in programs
- Richard Montgomery IB (countywide)
 - Culminates with IB Diploma and MCPS Diploma
- Regional IBs (new in 2020-2021 school year) at Watkins Mill, Springbrook and Kennedy
 - Culminates with IB Diploma
- Blair SMACS
 - Follows a 4 year course of study; culminates with certificate
- Poolesville Humanities, Global Ecology, SMACS
 - Each follows a 4 year course of study; culminates with certificate
- High school test-in and application program information can be found here:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1izVc33DSP0dEQklQwLB1_bs9bBP10AbHwfNHOjuCy7A/edit

Additional High School Options

- **AP courses offered at all high schools**
 - Teachers adopt College Board pre-approved Sample Syllabus or Unit Guides OR submit their own to College Board for approval
 - MCPS has online resources from College Board and tracks who accesses the resources to monitor whether teachers are on track.
- **CTE programs**
 - a wealth of career and technology programs around the county
- **Local IB Diploma programs at BCC, Seneca Valley, Einstein, Rockville**
 - also available to local WMHS, RMHS, JFK and Springbrook students
 - Challenging liberal arts course of studies and examinations culminating in IB Diploma for 11th and 12th
- **Dual Enrollment**
 - Students pay reduced MC tuition
- **Middle College**
 - Northwest, Northwood, Clarksburg
- **Early College**
 - Partnership with MC allows accepted students to earn their Associates degree and MCPS Diploma while attending MC fulltime in their 11th and 12th grade years.

High School During Distance Learning

- MCPS course load reduction option for secondary students was introduced on 1/27/21: [Course load reduction, credit/no credit options and withdrawals w/o penalty info](#)
- Many AP, IB and Magnet students are struggling with the autonomous workload and are worried about being prepared for AP and IB tests. Saturday School will be offered to all MCPS AP and IB students to assist with test prep. As of 2/10/21, MCPS has not released any details.
- Ask AP and IB teachers for resources; check IBO and College Board for up to date prep materials, pacing guides and test information.
- Revised Grading and Reporting document for secondary schools was distributed to teachers and staff in late November, 2020. See details here:

[Secondary Grading and Reporting Guidance During Virtual Learning \(2020-21 Only\)](#)

- AP and IB workload is governed by external requirements and not subject to graded assignment guidelines but assignment due date and deadline flexibility is expected
 - Climb the OTLS advocacy ladder if this isn't the case for your child
- Helpful AP presentation on 12/2/21 from Magruder HS can be found here: <https://www2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/magruderhs/ap/>

AP/IB Updates

- Course specific Saturday School (George B. Thomas) will be offered to AP students at central locations.
- Course specific AP Saturday sessions will also be offered at each local high school and will be a blend of course review and test preparation.
- Live online exam preparation will be offered through College Board in April (check their site)
- The IBO has already cut their content/curriculum, so students won't need to know as much as they have in past years. But for IB schools, if there are no paper or pencil test then internal assessments / scores will be used, so AEI / IB is working with schools to make sure those uploads are done. [IBO Updates](#)
- MCPS has key lead facilitators that either have graded for the IB or worked on the curriculum. They have been creating Canvas resources for teachers.
- 2020-21 College Board provides Scope and Sequence documents for teachers to follow. MCPS has told teachers to follow the scope and sequence and refrain from adding their own resources, moving units in different order, or adding other content.

[AP Course Pacing Guides and Updates](#)

MCPS: Who Does What?

- MCPS org chart can be found here:
<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/>
- **Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs**
 - PK-12 Curriculum department
 - develops, purchases and distributes PK-12 curricula. It also supports and trains teachers and staff on how to use the curricula to meet the needs of students.
 - College and Career Readiness and Districtwide Programs department
 - responsible for all special programs (Magnets, Choice, CTE, IB, AP, MC dual enrollment, middle and early college partnerships)
 - AEI within this department
- **School Support and Instruction**
 - Three Area Associate Superintendents
 - Directors of Learning, Achievement and Administration
 - Principals
 - They are supposed to make sure students are getting access to the curriculum, enrichment, etc. that the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs puts forth.
 - Need to advocate to teacher then Principal, then Directors and Area Associate Superintendents if Principal is not giving your child what s/he needs
 - Principals are given lots of autonomy

Local MCPS Resources: where to go for answers

- Elementary
 - GT Liaison (typically the Assistant Principal or a resource teacher). Every elementary school has a staff member who is responsible for their school's GT testing and GT identified students.
- Middle School
 - AEIST (Accelerated and Enriched Instructional Support Teacher). Every middle school has a staff member who, in addition to their standard position, is responsible for ensuring the needs of GT students are being met. Learn more here:
<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/enriched/about/roles.aspx>
 - Magnet Coordinator
- High School
 - Program Coordinator (AP, IB, Magnet, Signature, etc.)
- Teacher, Principal, Area Director, Area Assoc. Superintendent

Local and County PTA Resources

- Your school's PTA feeds into the Montgomery County Council of PTAs (MCCPTA)
- Talk with your PTA President or your PTA's GT Liaison representative. If your PTA doesn't yet have a GT Liaison representative, consider becoming one. You'll become part of the broader MCCPTA Gifted Child Committee and will help shape our advocacy, learn about and communicate important GT information and discover what's happening at other schools around the county.
- Talk with your [MCCPTA Cluster Coordinator](#)/s. MCCPTA Cluster Coordinators are seasoned MCPS parents who work within each high school cluster and meet regularly with their cluster's Area Director to discuss challenges and solutions.
- Reach out to the Gifted Child Committee by emailing gifted@mccpta.org. Our FB page is coming soon...

MCPS Central Office Resources

- Accelerated and Enriched Instruction (AEI) team
 - Part of the District wide Programs team within the Curriculum department
 - Develops program models, instructional guidelines, curriculum components, and professional development in differentiated instruction to support students who are identified GT or who have the motivation or potential to achieve at the highest levels
 - CES, ELC, middle school expansion courses and magnets and high school magnets
 - Holds monthly meetings with Magnet, AP and IB coordinators
 - Offers training and support opportunities for teachers
 - Support not enforcement; if your school is not providing what AEI and curriculum has told you exists, YOU must advocate within your school and then to your Area Director and Area Assoc. Superintendent. AEI is not the enforcement arm.
 - Kurshanna Dean, Supervisor of AEI
 - Libby Rogovoy, Coordinator AP/IB
 - Sarah Jackson, Instructional Specialist Spec Ed

Other GT Resources

- **County**

- MCCPTA Gifted Child Committee: gifted@mccpta.org and our new FB page
- Montgomery County Gifted and Talented Association: GTALetters@groups.io

- **State**

- Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)
Web resource for GT education and legislation: [Gifted & Talented](#)

- **National**

- SENG - Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted: <http://www.sengifted.org>
- Davidson Institute: www.davidsongifted.org/
- [Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth: Gifted and Talented Programs](#)
- [National Association for Gifted Children](#)

Advocacy Ladder

- Get comfortable advocating as an individual and with groups of parents. Form a parent listserv at your school and join the GCC email list by sending your request to gifted@mccpta.org.
- Start your advocacy at the school level: Teacher, Counselor/Resource Teacher, MCPS GT Liaison/AEIST, PTA GT Liaison, Program Coordinator and/or Principal
- Move on to your [MCCPTA Cluster Coordinator](#) and your Principal's boss. Every Principal reports to a Area Director of Learning, Achievement and Administration who reports to one of three Area Associate Superintendents.
- Find your Area Associate Superintendent and Director of Learning, Achievement and Administration here by clicking the Area Associate Superintendent Team Assignments link:
<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/clusteradmin/>
- Chief of Teaching, Learning and Schools oversees the Curriculum department AND the Schools (Area Associate Superintendents)
- At any time we encourage you to contact the Board of Education members. Find them here: <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/boe/>

Advocacy Talking Points

- **Overall:** Academic equity for GT students (eg., ELC should not only be within 43 schools, middle school magnets should mirror one another, enrichment should be spelled out AND enforced for all local schools), consistency, and accountability across schools/programs
- **Budget:** Need for the promised SSI Learning & Achievement Specialists for GT. Need for technology platforms to monitor use of enrichment resources. Professional development and assessments under COMAR--who will monitor this to ensure it's happening?
- **Elementary School:** Need for small Group Reading, Math enrichment, monitoring/oversight of actual use of Benchmark Advance Enrichment Guide/William & Mary/Lucy Calkins. Availability of ELC to ALL students who meet requirements. Looking ahead to needs of students who aren't selected in lottery--local GT programming MUST be equitable across schools.
- **Middle School:** Need for local expansion courses for English, Science, Computer Science for students who aren't selected in lottery. Magnet program consistency
- **High School:** Need for more instructional time for APs/IBs

More

Advocacy Talking Points

- **Need for transparency** on the CES and middle school magnet lottery process: (1) how are selections made for lottery pools; (2) are the selection criteria and standards sufficiently rigorous to capture the students who truly need and would thrive under advanced and enriched programming; (3) what is the process for appealing lottery pool omission; and (4) what is appeal process on final decision
- What is the **future of the selection process**?
- **Establishing meaningful goals and metrics for GT programs.** Two recent OSA reviews of the [middle school expansions courses](#) and the [ELC](#) used MAP scores in the 50th percentile and above as the criteria for success in the program. The analyses also only reported how many students exceed 3 and 4 on their PARCC scores, although 5 is the highest a student can obtain. The elementary school analysis only compared ELC to the CES programs, not to students receiving Benchmark Advance or other local school enrichment. The middle school analysis only compared students enrolled in local downcounty schools that had the Inquiries into Global Humanities and the Applied IM expansion courses to students in the Humanities and MathSci magnet programs (EMS, MLKMS, TPMS, RCMS). It did not compare either group to students who had no access to the expansion courses or magnet programs.

Note: The data used in the study was from in a year that Parkland/Argyle/Loiederman and Takoma Park did not have the Global Humanities course. Eastern did not have the AIM course. No upcounty middles schools had AIM or Global Humanities the year the data was pulled for the study.

Make a Difference

Join the MCCPTA Gifted Child Committee today by emailing gifted@mccpta.org

We'll be launching a MCCPTA Gifted Child Committee FB page in March 2021 so keep an eye out.