

## **MCCPTA Curriculum Committee Report**

***Please provide feedback***

***to committee co-chairs Ted Willard and Sharon Schulman at [twillard@aaas.org](mailto:twillard@aaas.org) and [sharon29@comcast.net](mailto:sharon29@comcast.net)***

The **MCCPTA Curriculum Committee** has three functions:

1. To initiate discussion of **curriculum issues** in the schools, bring these to the MCCPTA Delegates Assembly to consider possible action, and advocate to MCPS on curriculum issues that have been agreed on by the MCCPTA delegates.
2. To represent MCCPTA and all parents at four yearly **MCPS Curriculum Advisory Committee (CAC)** meetings. Twelve CAC subcommittees, each for a different subject area, meet simultaneously, as mandated by School Board policy, to review and provide feedback on curriculum as it is developed or revised.
3. To represent MCCPTA and all parents at four yearly **MCPS Curriculum Advisory Assemblies (CAA)**, as mandated by School Board policy that explain and provide feedback on curriculum issues that are not limited to a single subject area.

The following is a **report** on the first of the four **CAA** meetings. Please **send this report** out on your **school listservs**. Parents who read this should send their **questions and comments** to the MCCPTA Curriculum Committee co-chairs, Ted Willard and Sharon Schulman, at [twillard@aaas.org](mailto:twillard@aaas.org) and [sharon29@comcast.net](mailto:sharon29@comcast.net).

### **REPORTS TO MCCPTA CURRICULUM COMMITTEE ON MCPS CURRICULUM ADVISORY ASSEMBLY (CAA) MEETING - DECEMBER 19, 2007**

There were three items on the agenda: writing in MCPS, Elementary standards-based grading and reporting, and revision of regulation IKA-RA Grading and Reporting. The segment on **writing** focused on teaching goals. Maryland is eliminating constructed responses (essays) from High School Assessment (HSA) tests and there have been questions about how this will affect writing instruction. Writing is central to our lives, not only academically and in our jobs but also socially and personally. The MCPS writing curriculum is focused on preparing students for success on SAT, AP, IB, and college courses and assessments as well as in all the writing tasks of life. That said, there were questions about how much individual instruction and feedback students actually get in the time available. There were questions about the adequacy of grammar instruction, the lack of emphasis on handwriting, and several other issues with writing curriculum and instruction. None of the questions were answered at this meeting and no solutions were presented to the problems raised. Budgetary constraints, which are not the purview of this committee, may be a factor underlying all the problems with curriculum and its implementation.

A new computer system for **elementary grading and reporting** is expected to roll out in 2011/2012, the Pinnacle Grade Book. It will use a computer program to average grades on individual assessments to determine grade trends and final grades. For example, a student who begins a grading period with low grades but consistently improves would get a higher final grade than one whose grades randomly go up and down. This would give better grades to students who achieve mastery over time. The

ability to grade students at the elementary level by looking at trends rather than averages should be an improvement.

Regulation IKA-RA Grading and Reporting is being revised with a completion goal of May 2008. This regulation governs the determination of student grades in accordance with school board policy. It does not include homework, graduation requirements, grade point averages, or attendance, all of which are covered by other regulations. Various groups are reviewing the specific content and wording of draft versions of the IKA-RA. Numbered copies of various sections were distributed to the meeting participants who read them and wrote comments in small groups. The copies and comments were collected and staff will review the comments for inclusion in the final regulation.