Public Education Leadership Project
at Harvard University

A JOINT INITIATIVE OF
THE HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
AND HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL

PEL-043
AUGUST 29, 2006

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Race, Accountability, and the Achievement Gap (A)

During an off-site professional development retreat in July 2005, the senior leadership team of Maryland's Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) decided to take a hard look at the issue of race and the district's student achievement gap. Though the discrepancy in MCPS student performance between minority and white students had narrowed in some areas, African-American and Hispanic students continued to underperform white students across all grade levels. Realizing that MCPS's existing strategy might have some limitations, several team members expressed concerns that MCPS needed to seriously address issues of race and act deliberately to remove institutionalized barriers that inhibited or discouraged minorities from reaching their full potential. Upon returning from the week-long retreat, the leadership team moved swiftly to collaborate with other administrators on the topics discussed. Word spread fast that race and institutional barriers had become a high priority.

With a renewed focus on the achievement gap, African-American Deputy Superintendent Frieda Lacey perused fall 2004 10th-grade PSAT participation numbers, paying particular attention to African-Americans and Hispanics. She was disappointed to discover that the participation of some minority groups dipped below 70% in several high schools, although the district had communicated a 100% PSAT participation goal to principals since 2001 (see **Exhibit 1** for PSAT participation figures). Lacey knew that staff had long documented and shared with principals the research that PSAT participation correlated with higher SAT scores. Knowing this, white Superintendent Jerry Weast aimed for 100% PSAT participation in 10th grade to maximize SAT scores and to identify high-performing students who had not enrolled in any advanced courses.

Lacey's concern for African-American and Hispanic students went well beyond the PSAT. If schools were not meeting participation targets, which were relatively easy to meet when compared to meeting test-performance targets, she wondered what other district efforts had been compromised, especially with regards to African-American and Hispanic students. Moreover, she considered how their mixed race leadership team could effectively tackle what some deemed to be highly sensitive issues that made many people uncomfortable when spoken about openly.

Professors Karen L. Mapp and David A. Thomas and Research Associate Tonika Cheek Clayton prepared this case. PELP cases are developed solely as the basis for class discussion. Cases are not intended to serve as endorsements, sources of primary data, or illustrations of effective or ineffective management.

Historical Background

Montgomery County Demographics

Bordering the northwest side of Washington, D.C., Montgomery County was home to almost 1 million people of varied ethnicities by 2005.[1] As the total populace rose steadily over a 30-year period, the once mostly white suburban population gradually shifted from 95% to 65% white between 1970 and 2005.[2] As more African-American, Asian, and Hispanic families moved within county borders, neighborhoods generally became more racially integrated, although migration patterns showed that African-Americans and Hispanics tended to settle in geographical clusters close to the D.C. border.[3] Concurrently, the county's minority student population rose at an even higher rate because minority families averaged more children per household (see **Exhibit 2** for MCPS demographic trends).[4]

Race Relations in MCPS

Often acknowledged as a county comprising affluent, progressive-minded people, Montgomery County had long wrestled with issues of race, particularly with the county's school system. In the early years before desegregation, Montgomery County administered two separate school systems, one for African-American students and another for white students. Schools for African-Americans received less county funding relative to white schools and had to contend with inferior facilities, reading materials, and teacher compensation.[5] A former MCPS African-American student recalled his elementary school experience during segregation: "We had to be bused around on the back roads and go to an old school. . . . Our books had all been marked up, pages torn out, by kids who used the books first in the new school on the front roads."[6]

Just one month following the landmark U.S. Supreme Court *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954, the MCPS Board of Education voted to appoint a committee of African-American and white school administrators to develop an integration implementation plan. By 1961, a slight majority of MCPS schools were desegregated using student transfer and busing tactics during a tumultuous period in which foes and supporters of integration publicly battled over the speed at which MCPS integrated its schools. The Montgomery County chapter of the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) repeatedly admonished the then MCPS Board and administration for deliberately moving slowly to perpetuate inequities between whites and blacks. At the same time, local white dissenters of integration protested the haste with which the district moved to integrate.

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[1] "Montgomery County at a Glance," Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning—Research and Technology Center, February 2005.

[2] "Montgomery County Population by Race and Ethnicity, 1970–2000," Montgomery County Park and Planning website, http://www.mc-mncppc.org/research/data_library/population/po8b.shtm, accessed May 11, 2006.

[3] David Snyder, "Neighborhoods More Integrated, Study Says," *The Washington Post*, July 4, 2002.

[4] "Montgomery County Population by Race and Ethnicity, 1970–2000," Montgomery County Park and Planning website, http://www.mc-mncppc.org/research/data_library/population/po8b.shtm, accessed May 11, 2006.

[5] Nina Clarke and Lillian Brown, *History of the Black Public Schools of Montgomery County, Maryland, 1872–1961* (New York: Vantage Press, 1978).

[6] Sharon Moloney, "Growing up black," *The Cincinnati Post*, February 10, 1996.

By 1980, the minority populations of African-Americans, Hispanics, and Asians had doubled over a decade of steady population growth. Newly elected board members who had campaigned to eliminate "forced busing" and "social engineering" successfully removed some busing plans, disbanded the board's minority relations committee, and abolished a mandatory course on black culture for MCPS teachers.[7,8] The board's subsequent controversial decision to close several largely integrated schools sparked a community debate and a challenge before the Maryland State Board of Education. Opponents successfully argued that the closings were "deliberate attempts to re-segregate the schools along the D.C. city line and protect certain high majority areas of the county from integration."[9] In response, the state intervened and ordered a stay on the board's contentious plans, which included redrawing enrollment boundary lines and removing special education programs from select integrated schools.[10] Subsequently, MCPS sought to integrate schools in other ways, including the use of race-based admissions and the creation of magnet programs in schools with large minority populations.

As the numbers of minority students increased, more discourse on the achievement gap and race emerged when high-profile issues surfaced. Magnet programs soon fell under criticism by minority leaders because while they served the purpose of drawing white students to schools with majority nonwhite populations, few African-Americans and Hispanics actually participated in the advanced academic programs. During the 1988 MCPS Board elections, each candidate was asked to describe the district's biggest deficiency in the education of multicultural students and how he or she would improve it. Incumbent board member Blair Ewing answered:

> The most serious problem the school system faces in the education of its multicultural student body is the lack of comprehensive and effective strategies for the successful education of minority students, in particular black and Hispanic students. Although progress has been made over the past five years, there is still no clearly identifiable set of strategies being systematically pursued throughout the school system, and no method for ensuring success for these students. What is needed is a set of approaches or strategies which can be applied, carefully tested and replicated if measurement shows them effective. Smaller class sizes with teachers playing continuous supportive roles for children in the first four to six grades is a strategy I strongly support. Further research is needed into the causes and sources of minority student achievement problems. That has not been done and needs to be. [11]

The dialogue on race and district policy resurfaced in 1998 when disgruntled parents filed a federal lawsuit against MCPS upon learning that their child could not transfer schools because the transfer violated a school policy developed in 1980 to prevent racial segregation.[12] MCPS was later forced to abandon its practice of using race as a determining factor for school admissions after a federal court declared the practice unconstitutional.

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[7] Ben Franklin, "Minority Parents Fight Maryland School Panel," *The New York Times*, March 1, 1982.

[8] "Marian Greenblatt, Ex-School Official in Md., Dies," Obituaries, *The Washington Post*, May 2, 1988.

[9] Ben Franklin, "Minority Parents Fight Maryland School Panel," *The New York Times*, March 1, 1982.

[10] Ben Franklin, "Maryland Orders Stay of County School Plan," *The New York Times*, August 7, 1982.

[11] "Voters' Guide Weekly: Montgomery County Board of Education," *The Washington Post*, November 3, 1988.

[12] Susan Ferrechio, "Schools appeal for return of race-based admissions," *The Washington Times*, November 3, 1999.

Success for Every Student

Despite MCPS's struggles to address minority student performance, the district was still hailed as "one of the premiere school systems in the nation" when the board commissioned Yale University Professor Edmund Gordon to research the minority student achievement gap in 1990.[13] In his report titled "A Study of Minority Student Achievement in MCPS," Gordon noted that MCPS administrators and the community were concerned because "ethnic minority group students" were scoring approximately one standard deviation lower than "ethnic majority group students."[14] Specifically, the board wanted a comprehensive audit of the district's plan for addressing minority achievement, acknowledging that the existing plan had shown no evidence of progress.

In response to the board's request, Gordon's research team interviewed staff at all levels of MCPS, conducted classroom observations, administered surveys, and compiled quantitative data from a multitude of sources to deduce findings and develop recommendations. The findings indicated that the existing plan needed "several more elements for the improvement of minority student achievement and that those elements present were insufficiently comprehensive, insufficiently distributed, and inconsistently implemented."[15] Additionally, sub-studies conducted by the researchers found that minorities tended to be overrepresented in special education and underrepresented in higher-level courses.[16] Also, the report stated that "it was widely perceived that teachers and other school staff members tended to have low expectations of minority students and tended to invest less effort in the academic support and challenge of minority students" (see **Exhibit 3** for summary of report findings and recommendations).[17]

The following year, newly appointed African-American Superintendent Paul Vance used Gordon's findings with his administration to develop "Success for Every Student (SFES): a plan to improve the achievement of low to average achieving students with special and critical emphasis on the needs of low to average achieving African American, American Indian, Asian American, and Hispanic students"[18] (see **Exhibit 4** for SFES plan highlights). Early drafts of the SFES plan specifically singled out two groups with the subheading of the report ending, ". . . with special emphasis on the needs of low to average achieving African Americans and Hispanic students."[19] However, the board voted to remove the emphasis on African-Americans and Hispanics and broaden it to include all minority groups. Looking back on the board meeting in which the decision was made, one white administrator who was present remarked, "After the vote went through, the room felt as though the momentum to close the achievement gap died in that instant." Nevertheless, the board approved SFES, and Vance's administration implemented the plan's reform initiatives from spring of SY92 to the end of SY99 (see **Exhibit 5** for select performance indicators for school years 1991, 1995, and 2000).[20]

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[13] Edmund Gordon, "A Study of Minority Student Achievement in Montgomery County Public Schools," November 16, 1990.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] "Success for Every Student," adopted by the board of education, January 6, 1992.

[19] Copy of "Success for Every Student," draft, October 1991.

[20] SY is a PELP convention that denotes "school year." For example, SY05 refers to the 2004–2005 school year.

Raise the Bar, Close the Gap

Almost 10 years after Gordon's report, a new MCPS Board of Education appointed Weast with a mandate for reform. By 1999, MCPS's white student population had shrunk from 62% in 1990 to 52%, while the overall student population grew by 21%.[21] Recognizing the growing trend of minority students, Weast sought to build a sense of urgency in the community to support district reform efforts to address the achievement gap.

To highlight the high correlation between low-performing schools and schools with largely minority populations, MCPS administrators created a map that geographically divided the district into two zones, red and green, based on socioeconomic indicators. Red represented "highly impacted" areas, and green represented affluent areas with relatively low demographic diversity (see **Exhibit 6** for zone maps and figures).[22] The maps served as a starting point for communicating issues to stakeholders and for determining how the district should differentiate resources and management across schools. Using the maps and data to galvanize support from various community stakeholders, union leaders, and board members, the administration produced and widely distributed "A Call to Action: Raising the Bar, Closing the Gap" in November 1999, which expressed a new vision and plan for improving overall student achievement while striving to eliminate the achievement gap.

Weast decided to begin reforms at the elementary school level after reviewing an internal research report indicating that "the relationship between Grade 3 academic scores and high school honors course-taking was equally strong for all four major racial/ethnic groups in MCPS."[23] While instituting elementary school reforms, Weast directed high schools to focus on student outcomes on select targets, such as the SAT and Advanced Placement (AP) exams, and to maximize the number of students who graduated ready to compete in college without remediation. Weast remarked on how setting high targets for high schools would create an internal demand for high-quality students within MCPS:

> People realized that schools needed to change how they identified and prepared students for higher-level courses. We broke that barrier in high school by opening up courses to student choice and using the PSAT to identify students who would have been overlooked, many of them African-American and Hispanic. It shined a light on students who were unprepared coming out of middle school.
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> We knew that if we did this right, we could push the capacity for higher achievement, grade by grade, and shut down the argument that children would not be ready. We erased the perception right away when our first group of kindergarten students reached first grade already able to read. Someone termed them "Jerry's kids," and now these students are coming in waves toward middle school. Folks are rushing to fix things now before "Jerry's kids" come.[24]

In the first wave of reforms, administrators revamped specific components in all schools by changing the curriculum and hiring staff development teachers (see **Exhibit 7** for a timeline of key

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[21] "Annual Report on the Systemwide Outcome Measures, Success for Every Student Plan," MCPS, December 1995.

[22] "Highly impacted" was an MCPS term used to define schools with significantly higher poverty, increased mobility, more students learning English as a second language, and disproportionately more African-Americans and Hispanics.

[23] "Early Preparation and Supports in High School for Honors Course Participation," Honors/Advanced Placement Polices Practices and Enrollment, Appendix C4, Work Group Report, July 1999.

[24] "Jerry's kids" labels the first cohort of kindergartners affected by reforms under the Weast administration. During SY05, Jerry's kids were in the fifth grade.

reforms under Weast). Other initiatives, such as all-day kindergarten, reduced class sizes, and targeted professional development courses, started in the 60 most highly impacted elementary schools, called the "focus schools." Focus schools also gained access to additional financial and instructional resources depending upon the student population needs for differentiated instruction. Finally, initiatives like the Baldrige Initiative in Education started with the first group of schools volunteering to participate.[25] MCPS planned to eventually roll out most reforms to all schools over a defined period of time.

Under Weast's leadership, MCPS also pushed to facilitate data-driven decision making for administrators and teachers. As a result, the percentage of MCPS staff that used technology to maintain student data rose from 10% in SY00 to 98% in SY02.[26] By 2005, MCPS had spent a significant portion of the budget modernizing its technological infrastructure under the Department of Shared Accountability with intentions to ensure that technological resources were updated and equitable across schools. To help teachers more efficiently use data to improve instruction and learning in classrooms, the department created a host of technological tools used to monitor students' mastery of curriculum. With the online Instructional Management System (IMS), MCPS documented a detailed account of each student's academic history, including test scores and academic interventions, to help teachers tailor instruction to the individual child. By the summer of 2005, all elementary and middle schools had access to IMS, and the system was set to roll out to high schools beginning in SY07. At that point, all MCPS students would have an online academic record that would follow them from school to school.

In 2005, after six years as superintendent, Weast generally garnered widespread support from most board members, union leaders, and community leaders. Under his leadership, the Montgomery County Council increased the MCPS budget by $100 million each year for six consecutive years, which reinforced his political power. However, tension between the MCPS administration and minority board leaders gradually increased as time wore on. Newly elected minority board members questioned the pace of reform implementation and the effectiveness of initiatives to help African-Americans and Hispanics achieve academically. While many stakeholders perceived the performance results from reform efforts under Weast to be tremendous progress, others felt as though not enough had changed for minority students since his arrival.

MCPS Leadership and Organizational Structure

Community Superintendents

In his first year as superintendent, Weast made a major organizational change by hiring six community superintendents to oversee principals, following a six-year period in which principals had minimal supervision (see **Exhibit 8** for organizational structure and race of senior administrators). In the new role, community superintendents frequently visited schools and analyzed student achievement data to monitor school performance and evaluate principal performance. One white administrator described the previous structure:

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[25] Baldrige in Education Initiative uses the Malcolm Baldrige Education Criteria for Performance Excellence, administered by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, as a framework for restructuring education and improving student performance.

[26] MCPS website, http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/technology/, accessed May 9, 2006.

> Before there were community superintendents, there were directors of school administration who had very little authority. Principals ran the district. And that was a by-product of a huge fight that began in the mid-1990s over budget cuts. Principals wanted to get rid of their overseers and the associate superintendents who ran areas with huge staffs. So as part of budget cutting, the previous superintendent cut them out. And for six years, schools had no supervision whatsoever with the exception of these directors of school administration.

Under the new model, each community superintendent managed a geographic region of approximately four clusters. A cluster included one high school and roughly all of the high school's feeder middle and elementary schools. Community superintendents participated in executive leadership meetings and played a significant role in implementing and monitoring strategic initiatives at the school level. They reported directly to white Chief Performance Officer Don Kress, who reported to Lacey. Understanding that each geographic region assigned to community superintendents presented different challenges, Kress gave community superintendents freedom to tailor their management of principals to their assigned region. For example, although all community superintendents led monthly meetings with their respective group of principals, the content of the meetings across community superintendents varied depending on what topics they deemed relevant to their schools' issues. At the end of SY05, five of the community superintendents were white and one was African-American (see **Exhibit 9** for MCPS employee and student demographics).

Staff Development Teachers

Another structural change made under Weast's leadership was the addition of a staff development teacher in every school. To accompany the stream of reforms being pushed out to schools, MCPS leadership created the staff development role solely to provide professional development support to teachers. Although principals selected and hired staff development teachers, the central office provided training and monitored schools' use of the position to make sure that the original intent of the role was preserved. Additionally, the district assigned two instructional specialists to each community superintendent specifically to support staff development teachers.

Twice a year, staff development teachers received anonymous feedback from teachers, which was used by principals when evaluating their effectiveness. They supported as few as 30 teachers in some elementary schools to slightly over 200 teachers at some high schools. Feedback data showed that approximately 50% of teachers had never requested training options offered by the staff development teacher. Of the teachers who had, higher numbers of elementary school teachers reported satisfaction with their training when compared to middle school and high school teachers. The racial breakdown of staff development teachers was 82% white, 14% African-American, 2% Hispanic, and 2% Asian.

Targeting the Achievement Gap

The Data

By 2005, MCPS had amassed an extensive collection of demographic and performance data detailing student performance and the achievement gap. Demographic projections for the minority-dominated district showed the white student population shrinking to even lower percentages as the existing wave of elementary school students moved through the school system. To monitor student performance and the success of the district's reform efforts, MCPS collected and evaluated data

disaggregated by minority subgroups over a wide variety of data indicators from grades K-12 (see **Exhibit 5** to compare select SY05 results with those of previous years).

Weast's administration had realized the most progress in narrowing the achievement gap with student performance gains in elementary school reading- and math-proficiency levels, particularly in kindergarten (see **Exhibit 10** for elementary school performance data). The latest data indicated that 81% of kindergarteners could read a level-three text with 90% or higher accuracy, up from 59% in SY02, the first year of Weast's kindergarten reforms.[27] Seventy-one percent of African-American and 69% of Hispanic kindergarteners could read at that level, up from 52% and 42%, respectively, in SY02. Additionally, the first cohort of students affected by Weast's initial kindergarten reforms had consistently scored higher each year on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) and Maryland State Assessment (MSA) standardized tests as they moved through the school system, with each subsequent cohort attaining mostly comparable achievement scores.

Nevertheless, the breakdown of test scores by ethnicity on the CTBS and MSA exams showed that African-American and Hispanic students still performed at substantially lower levels than their white and Asian counterparts. Standardized test scores within each subgroup had been improving incrementally over the years, similarly across green and red zones, although ethnic subgroups in the red zone appeared to be improving at a slightly faster rate than their green zone ethnic peers. Other areas of concern were the relatively low numbers of African-American and Hispanic students identified as gifted and talented (GT) and the high number of African-American males identified for special education (see **Exhibit 11** for GT figures).

To assess the gap in middle and high schools, MCPS tracked an array of indicators, including MSA scores, enrollment in advanced courses, SAT and PSAT data, high school assessment exams, and suspension rates (see **Exhibit 12** for select secondary performance figures). Although SAT participation numbers for African-Americans and Hispanics had increased since Weast's arrival, scores for those students remained flat even though the district's average SAT score steadily climbed to over 1100. Furthermore, African-American students were four times more likely to be suspended than white students. The graduation rate for Hispanic students had dropped by six percentage points to 82% since 2000, while the overall graduation rate for the county remained steady at 91%. Additionally, a disproportionate amount of African-American and Hispanic students attended two-year vocational/college prep junior colleges instead of matriculating into four-year colleges upon graduation.

Is Race an Issue?

Opinions on why the achievement gap existed and what MCPS should do about it varied within and across stakeholders. Another point of contention amongst many people in MCPS was whether or not race had anything to do with the achievement gap. White supervisor of MCPS diversity training Donna Graves commented on why MCPS needed to address issues of race:

> I think the central issue is that we don't want to talk about race. Most of us as white, mainstream Americans have been taught to be color-blind. So we assume that everybody's like us. And when we put interventions in place for a student of color based on our own white, middle-class perspectives, and the intervention doesn't work, we then unconsciously or sometimes consciously say, "Well see, we did this fabulous intervention and it didn't work. It

[27] The kindergarten benchmark is book level three or early emergent texts that typically have large print and spacing, a simple story line with familiar content, introduction of dialogue, and supportive illustrations. Children learn to read high-frequency site words while reading simple stories for meaning.

must be the kids." It's not done in a malicious or intentional way, but it happens in classrooms every day.

This is very difficult work because teachers tend to deny, defend, or shut down when you bring up issues of race. They've chosen this profession because they want to help children, but what is not understood is that despite our good intention, our teaching practices don't always have a positive impact on the student.

An African-American teacher commented on why there was an achievement gap in MCPS:

I don't think it's a racial thing. It's a clash between inner-city thinking and suburban expectations. Most of our African-American students have left the inner cities and come to the suburbs because parents want to buy homes. They come to county schools where the environments are not predominantly black, and so they have to compete in a more rigid program. The expectations are higher, and they're not going to walk out of class, say what they want to say, disrupt the learning process, and get away with it. We would have parent conferences and do intervention programs with them. If that's not working, then we'd sit and have a serious conversation.

We're also struggling because of the lack of parent support. We often call home. Phone numbers are disconnected. You try to send a letter home, the child intercepts the letter and the parent never receives it.

A white teacher commented on the connection between race and the achievement gap:

I think there's a small achievement gap in terms of race, but I think it mostly comes from a student's incoming background knowledge. From what I see, there are definitely high- and low-performing kids across all races. And it's not necessarily tied to race but to socioeconomic status and how much support kids get at home.

This school is so great because it's so diverse and there isn't a focus on the races. The focus is on each individual kid and just making sure that every kid gets the resources that they need in order to succeed. And it would kind of be unfair to say let's focus in on the African-Americans and make sure all the resources go to them.

A white principal commented on why MCPS needed to address issues of race openly:

By not talking about it, we've ended up with *de facto* segregation. If you live in a community where parents want their kids to always achieve better than those other kids, and those other kids look African-American and Latino, then you have to talk about race. In some school systems where I've been we've fought about it. And actually that was better than not talking about it. Everybody had to move off their comfort zone and wrestle with things they were very uncomfortable with. So I choose to just be embarrassed about it and move with the embarrassment. If we don't talk about it, we'll never see other pieces that we think we know.

A white teacher remarked on the perception of racism in MCPS: "I think there is racism in disguise. I think we like to say that we're color-blind, but the reality is we're continually targeting these children. Why don't we just say we're trying to raise achievement? Why do we have to preface it with race? I want all my students to succeed. I don't just want the minority students to succeed."

Reexamining District Policies and Procedures

Over the years, the board and MCPS administration had revisited district policies and practices to evaluate effects on minority subgroups. By SY05, grading and reporting processes, advanced course enrollment, and GT identification had all been altered in some form to specifically address issues of equity or access.

Grading and reporting policy In SY99, MCPS administrators discovered that grading scales varied widely across schools on countywide semester exams. For example, all algebra students took a countywide semester exam that accounted for 25% of the student's overall grade. Although the same test was administered to every student, individual schools determined the exam's grading scale. While a score of 66 earned an "A" on the exam at minority-dominated Albert Einstein High School, the same score earned a "D" at predominantly white Damascus High School.[28] Baffled administrators and board members publicly committed to equalizing grading and reporting activities across schools and started a collaborative effort to resolve the situation with parents, teachers, and administrators. Outraged by the different standards imposed on students, minority parents vocalized frustrations that schools like Einstein set low expectations for minority students and offered relatively low-quality instruction, thereby hurting minority students' readiness for college.[29] In SY00, MCPS implemented the first standardized grading scales for Algebra I and geometry final exams.

Managing teachers' interests to preserve judgment over student ability and parental concerns of inconsistency in grading across schools, Weast formed a workgroup representing multiple stakeholders to examine grading practices and propose plans to make all grading systems equitable. Under the new policy approved by the board in March 2003, teachers had to grade students solely on how well the students met academic standards. Teachers would eventually be able to account for effort, participation, and extra credit separately in another mark.[30]

AP/honors course enrollment[31] In Weast's first year, his administration changed the AP and honors course enrollment procedures due to concerns that teachers were less likely to recommend qualified minority students for advanced courses. Under the new procedures, all students could self-select into any AP or honors course, although capacity constraints could limit enrollment numbers. Previously, students required a teacher's recommendation for consideration. A white principal commented on the revised procedure, "Removing the recommendation requirement was one of the biggest pieces making it possible to move more minorities into AP and honors courses. From my perspective, the teacher recommendation generally applied a downward pressure against students. Not in all cases, but probably more often than not."

While many people supported the shift to open enrollment, some teachers and students complained that advanced courses were becoming "watered down" and that teachers had to "dumb

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[28] Manuel Perez-Rivas, "Montgomery Math Tests Criticized as Too Variable," *The Washington Post*, April 11, 1999.

[29] Manuel Perez-Rivas, "Latinos Unidos in Montgomery; Immigrants Speaking Up Over Schools," *The Washington Post*, September 5, 1999.

[30] Lori Aratani, "Montgomery Eases In New Grading System; Teachers Won't Mark Participation Yet," *The Washington Post*, June 15, 2005.

[31] Advanced placement (AP) courses are those for which a College Board Advanced Placement examination exists. A qualifying score on an AP exam may give the student college credit or advanced standing in a subject in many colleges. Honors courses provide expectations and opportunities for students to work independently at an accelerated pace, to engage in more rigorous and complex content and processes, and to develop authentic projects that reflect students' understanding of key concepts. Definitions provided by MCPS.

down" the curriculum for unqualified students. However, AP results from Bethesda Chevy-Chase High School (BCC) suggested that the policy did not affect the rigor or quality of AP instruction. At BCC, 91% of all students, 78% of African-Americans, and 79% of Hispanics took at least one AP or honors course. Although the total number of African-American and Hispanic students in AP courses jumped from 178 when the policy changed to 373 in SY05, AP exam scores still averaged the same. White BCC Principal Sean Bulson observed that their results confirmed that they were not diluting their curriculum and that "the students were rising to the challenge."

Gifted and talented identification (GT) In spring of 2005, MCPS revised the global screening process for identifying gifted and talented students in grade two with the intent of giving minority students more opportunities to demonstrate intellectual strengths. The new process increased the number of standard assessments used to identify students from one to two and realigned local norms used with the original standardized assessment. Under the new criteria, students could be identified as GT if they met the standard for one of the two standardized tests plus one other criterion. If neither assessment was met, the student could still be identified if standards were established in three of the following: parent nominations, MCPS staff nominations, teacher checklists, reading and mathematics instructional levels, or student performance data. Despite MCPS's efforts, the combined percentage of African-Americans and Hispanics identified as GT decreased slightly after the new global screening process was implemented in SY05 (see **Exhibit 11**).

Building Capability

To provide targeted professional development opportunities for administrators and school staff striving to close the achievement gap, Weast's administration created a Diversity Training and Development (DTD) department and a Professional Learning Communities Institute (PLCI).

Diversity Training and Development The primary goal of DTD was to "develop, implement, and evaluate data-driven and research-based diversity training and development to school office and staff." White Associate Superintendent of the Office of Organizational Development (OOD) Darlene Merry commented on her decision to hire Donna Graves to spearhead DTD:

> There were people who wondered why I did not select a minority candidate for this position, but I knew from the beginning that Donna was the right person to lead this effort. She has always demonstrated a deep passion for cultural competence, and she has inspired me to understand my own belief systems and how this affects the work that I do. Donna has a great deal of credibility with staff and the community, which she has earned over her 32 years working at MCPS. She is the one who has taught us to not be color-blind but instead to understand ourselves so that we can understand others. She has challenged us to talk about race so that we can understand it and build equitable classrooms for all students.

Early on, Graves operated alone without staff or a budget while researching other diversity training programs and reading literature to inform her knowledge of diversity development. In Graves's "Plan for Systemic Diversity Training and Development," she noted:

> There is consensus in the research that staff development designed to ensure excellence and equity in education must be centered on teacher understanding of the powerful force culture exerts on teaching and learning. . . . First, staff must develop the awareness, knowledge, and understanding of their own culture and the beliefs, values, and assumptions that frame the educational practice of individuals and institutions. . . . Second, staff must increase their knowledge and understanding of the cultures of their students. . . . Third, educators must be

able to use their knowledge and understanding of culture to create culturally sensitive learning environments and to deliver culturally responsive instruction.[32]

By the summer of 2005, DTD had grown to include three diversity specialists plus Graves and had begun work on three expressed key actions: to provide MCPS staff members with diversity awareness training, to build capacity of OOD staff, and to provide support and development for select schools and offices.

To promote diversity awareness, DTD developed a website, coordinated multicultural courses, and produced technology-based awareness training. On the diversity training website, users could receive monthly e-mail tips for communicating high expectations for students. Also, the website offered up-to-date information from articles and research on teaching strategies for closing the achievement gap and facilitating diversity teamwork. DTD had also assumed responsibility for two long-standing district human relations courses, *Ethnic Groups in America* and *Education that is Multicultural,* to satisfy the MCPS Board of Education requirement that all MCPS professional staff complete at least two courses on multiculturalism. Collaborating with MCPS's Instructional Television department, DTD endeavored to produce media-based training for all MCPS staff, with hopes of increasing awareness of bias and stereotyping observed in schools and the workplace.

DTD aimed to build the capacity of all OOD staff members because OOD provided the majority of professional development training throughout the district, mainly to staff development teachers. By training all OOD staffers, DTD hoped to embed cultural competency into every training session—not just diversity training—offered to administrators, teachers, and other district staff. Also, DTD had the capability to provide ongoing support to a limited number of schools if the schools committed to diversity training for one year.

Despite the high "relevance" and "satisfaction with training" ratings given by participants of the group's diversity training sessions, DTD employees worried that they were "preaching to the choir." They believed in the effectiveness of the sessions' content, but they were concerned that staff development teachers, teachers, and principals who needed diversity training the most did not seek it out. One African-American administrator remarked:

> I don't think MCPS has truly committed to take some very serious steps to ensure that students of color, students of poverty, and students with disabilities get the support they need to be successful in schools. It's not consistent in the work that we do. There are some community superintendents who have taken diversity training seriously and have really done a good job in reaching their principals, but it doesn't go throughout. And only a few schools have made a commitment to work on diversity training.

All participation in diversity training sessions by school-level staff was voluntary, and most sessions were restricted to staff development teachers who could bring along only one other person from their school. While some felt that portions of these diversity trainings should be mandatory for teachers, others warned that a top-down strategy could backfire. Merry noted that "in the past when the district required some school staff to take *The Skillful Teacher* training, teachers resisted, and the effectiveness of the training was compromised. Training has always been most effective when teachers and whole schools elected to participate on their own. Building commitment, not compliance, has become a hallmark of our work." A white staff development teacher commented on the district's diversity training offerings:

[32] "MCPS Office of Staff Development Plan for Systemic Diversity Training and Development," draft, June 1, 2004.

> I've attended pretty much all of them I can get my hands on. I find that the diversity team does a superb job with the materials they offer. One concern I have is that a lot of trainings are not open to teachers. I understand that there are limited resources and that we're supposed to take the information back and share it with teachers. But it would be much better if there were other ways to more efficiently get the trainings out to all staff.

Professional Learning Communities Institute Separately from DTD, MCPS administrators designed PLCI to help elementary schools develop high-performing teams that could effectively improve student achievement. In an effort to share effective practices from three high-performing MCPS elementary schools, two of which were highly impacted focus schools, an internal research team wrote case studies on Broad Acres, Ronald McNair, and Viers Mill elementary schools to be used as content for PLCI. Jamie Virga, principal of highly impacted Viers Mill Elementary, which went on to win a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Award from the U.S. Department of Education, was selected to lead the program.

Using the case study teaching method, PLCI convened participants from 11 elementary schools each year to study the processes, strategies, beliefs, practices, and tools that schools in the case studies used to increase and sustain student achievement. The institute then allowed participants time to reflect on their own school situation and apply their learning in developing a customized school plan. African-American Deputy Superintendent John Q. Porter remarked on the success of Broad Acres Elementary and why the district chose to highlight its success during PLCI:

> I think the greatest symbol and really the tipping point for us was what happened with Broad Acres. When your most impacted school, 99% minority and approximately 90% FARMS [free and reduced-price meals system], becomes one of your highest-performing schools, it's hard for any other school to say that minorities can't do well. So at that point, the conversation started to change because we realized then that it was an issue of expectations, and if we didn't have high expectations then we had a problem.

School-Based Initiatives To Close the Gap

While district administrators and the MCPS Board worked to implement districtwide policies and practices that would lead to equitable outcomes, some principals and other school staff employed their own strategies to narrow the achievement gap. Using guidance from community superintendents and professional development opportunities from the district, school administrators sought different ways to make rigorous courses available for more minority students and to effectively support those students who elected to take more challenging courses. Catering to their unique student populations and challenges, MCPS schools varied widely in their attempts to help African-American and Hispanic students achieve at higher levels.

Broadening Access to Advanced Classes

In SY03, white Principal Ursula Hermann of Westland Middle School, an affluent green-zone school with a 64% white student population, moved all eighth graders into English GT classes and eliminated the eighth grade on-level English curriculum. She described the scenario that led to her decision:

> We were developing the master schedule, and our assistant principal said, "You know, we have 15 English sections, and 12 of them are for GT." Since we had been observing a rise in what we refer to as "*de facto* segregation" between on-level and GT classes, we looked at the

demographics of on-level classes. What we discovered was that the composition of those classes was primarily our minority and special education students. So we just took a deep breath and said, "We can't do this."

After reaching an agreement with Westland's cluster high school principal and the community superintendent, Hermann officially dissolved the on-level classes and reenrolled all students in GT English, which put approximately five reassigned students in each class. She also called parents and interviewed reassigned students to make them aware of the situation and to find out what the school could do to support them. Responding to remarks from students saying, "I'm not as smart as those kids, I can't read as fast, I can't keep up," the school provided access to additional classes and an after-school learning lab that could assist them with English and writing. Hermann noted, "We had no more failures than we did when kids were in on-level classes. The kids rose to the occasion." Still, school administrators and teachers received pushback from a few parents who felt that the GT English courses had become less challenging. In one reported incident, parents questioned the rigor of the class because of the increased number of minorities in their child's class. Hermann commented on parental resistance:

> We had a number of very heated parent meetings with a number of parents pretty adamant about going back to having discrete on-level and GT classes. It was clear—they believed that students who had not been tracked for accelerated classes in the past would have a negative effect on their children's learning. These concerns may have been fueled by stereotypical thinking or by a simple fear of change. They do want equity, but they also want to ensure their kids are challenged. I agree with them—we want all of our kids challenged.
>
> What I've done in eighth-grade English, I haven't done in grades six and seven or in math, because the issue is so big. If I want my whole community to buy into it, I have to get them to truly understand that we are responsible for doing this with all students.

At Piney Branch Elementary School, a highly impacted grades three to five school comprising 42% African-American and 24% Hispanic students, the leadership team contemplated a different strategy to offer more minority students access to Math A (sixth-grade-level math). During the previous four years, the school's principal had directed third- and fourth-grade teachers to get more minority students ready for Math A by the fifth grade. In spring SY05, the leadership team evaluated students across seven fourth-grade sections, three of which were targeted for Math A. Teachers worried that a group of 17 minority students would not be ready enough to compete with other students. Instead of splitting the students up to join the other GT sections, the team considered creating a separate class that would meet longer and more frequently to adequately meet the needs of the students. To accommodate scheduling, the students would have to give up other parts of the fifth-grade curriculum, which would require parental consent. If all went as planned, the school would double the number of Math A sections from two to four, allowing 76 students, including 27 African-Americans and 12 Hispanics, to enroll in Math A or higher. A white school staff member described why Piney Branch pushed so hard for more minority students in higher-level math:

> We are two schools within one building—the majority school and the minority school. And in the last five years, we have been trying to build one community. I think it's more difficult for us because the kids don't arrive until third grade. Five years ago, the majority of white students would come from Takoma Park Elementary School coded GT, and most of the minority kids from Takoma Park or East Silver Spring Elementary had not qualified for GT. It took the right group of internal people with power who were ready to say, "There's something wrong with this picture." We had administrators who pushed hard for minority kids to go into advanced classes. And when you have that, things get moving.

Discussing Race Openly with Students

Under pressure to produce better student performance results on algebra high school assessments and MSA tests, the math team at Newport Mills Middle School began writing predictive assessment tests that they would administer three times a year (September, December, and February) to help them determine the areas in which students needed help. In an effort to motivate students to excel academically, the teachers explained the achievement gap to students in detail and developed a marketing strategy to encourage them to strive for higher test scores. Teachers Terri Bullock and Sally Moran described their strategy:

> We put up a picture of George W. Bush and told our students, "NCLB is the national law. We have to prove nationally that you are performing at your age level. So this test is going to tell you, your parents, and us what we need to do to make this happen."
>
> And we spoke openly with the kids about what groups they fell under, whether it was Latino, Hispanic, African-American, FARMS, ESOL, or another category. They understood and wanted to prove that just being a minority student did not mean they were stupid.

Categorizing by test results, the teachers placed students into three zones, red, yellow, or green. The red zone indicated that the student would not pass the state assessment exam if tested the next day, the yellow zone indicated that the student had a 50% chance of passing the exam, and the green zone indicated that the student would pass. In conjunction, the team developed the motto "Think Green" for the math department. Bullock commented on the success of the program:

> Outside my room in the hallways, we posted the kids' names that were moving up, and the students in the green zone were so proud. I had a Latino student who acted tough, was in trouble with the law, but was very smart. After one test he moved from the red to yellow zone. And I said to him, "Look, you made it to the yellow zone." And he said, "That sucks, I wanted to be in green." Behind his back I wanted to scream, "Yes!" I was so excited that even he, like all of the kids, just totally bought into the program.

By the end of SY05, 38% of African-Americans and 46% of Hispanics in Newport Mills Middle School had completed algebra by eighth grade compared with the MCPS averages of 24% and 23%, respectively. Enrollment projections for SY06 indicated that 51% of African-American and 55% of Hispanic eighth graders would enroll in algebra at Newport Mills.

Special Programs Targeting Minority Students

Some schools had designed special programs specifically for minority students who needed additional academic support. At Bethesda Chevy-Chase High School, where the combined enrollment comprised just 30% of African-American and Hispanic students, the principal secured community funding to start a four-week summer program targeting minorities to help prepare low-performing eighth graders for ninth-grade English and algebra. Collaborating with middle school counselors and administrators, BCC leadership looked at student grade point averages, enrollment in lower math courses, and recipients of reading support to identify between 60 and 100 students for the program. In Forest Oak Middle School, an after-school program called Career Cadets enabled teachers to work with 20–30 at-risk students two days a week for two hours on academics or social issues. Teachers involved in the program observed a decrease in the number of student referrals and an increase in grades of the students who participated in the program.

Managing Expectations

Expectations of minority students were another issue that repeatedly surfaced going back to the early days of racial integration in MCPS. While Asian-Americans in MCPS worried about the effects of high academic expectations on Asian student performance in math and science, African-Americans and Hispanics were concerned about teachers and administrators whose behavior and practices revealed low academic expectations of their children.[33] Even though MCPS had put out a consistent message that all students could learn, many still believed that low expectations of minority students were pervasive among administrators and teachers of all races. A white staff development teacher commented on the beliefs of teachers: "Everyone knows that the politically correct thing to say in Montgomery County is 'every child can learn.' The difference is between those who know the party line and those who believe it. I would say that about one-third believe it in action, one-third isn't sure, and another third don't believe it."

An African-American principal described a significant challenge facing MCPS:

> As we become more and more diverse and as "Jerry's kids" move up, they're going to encounter environments that won't be as receptive. I'm not saying that we're there yet as a school, but we're aware of where the challenges are. We're always wondering how our school's environment influences or harms our students. We really care about academics and about making kids and parents feel good. But I often wonder how our students will be received when they move on to other schools in the district. You can't change a school system until there are principals and people in place that have the same belief system and the right repertoire of skills. That's where we're stuck right now. The hard part is, how do you move people to the core beliefs that you want?

Next Steps

With two months to go before 10th graders took the fall 2005 PSAT in October, Lacey was determined to improve the participation numbers of African-Americans and Hispanics.

While figuring out the best way to mobilize PSAT participation efforts, Lacey reflected on the district's work to close the achievement gap. If it took this level of intervention to compel principals to push more students to take the PSAT, how much of an effort would it take from central office to ensure that other targeted achievement gap initiatives would be implemented at the school level? Did MCPS hold administrators, principals, and teachers accountable for the academic progress of minority students? Where should she begin looking to figure out how to dissect the situation surrounding the achievement gap? And most importantly, what should the executive team do to make a difference?

As she gathered her thoughts, she wondered what senior leadership needed to do to send administrators the right message to make this a priority.

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[33] Stephen Buckley, "Shrugging Off the Burden of a Brainy Image; Asian American Students Say Stereotype of 'Model Minority' Achievers is Unfair," *The Washington Post*, June 17, 1991.

Exhibit 1 Fall 2004 MCPS PSAT Participation Results

Percentage of MCPS Grade 10 Students

Who Took the PSAT in Fall 2004 by School and Demographic Group (Excluding Students Who Were Enrolled in ESOL[a] Levels 1 or 2, or a Life-skills or Community-based Special Education Program at the Time of Testing)

	% Took PSAT – Fall 2004						
High School	**Af. Am.**	**As. Am.**	**Hispanic**	**White**	**FARMS[b]**	**SPED[c]**	**LEP[d]**
MCPS (district-wide)	**80**	**93**	**76**	**91**	**79**	**71**	**73**
Bethesda Chevy-Chase	87	92	91	95	89	88	100
Blair	84	90	86	93	87	78	48
Blake	93	96	89	93	94	82	83
Churchill	92	99	100	98	94	91	
Damascus	67	100	70	87	81	69	
Einstein	85	100	85	93	87	69	94
Gaithersburg	84	93	75	90	86	73	74
Kennedy	88	94	71	96	86	66	71
Magruder	70	91	68	89	68	64	80
Northwest	81	91	71	90	78	75	
Paint Branch	77	93	72	84	79	46	89
Poolesville	80	88	100	94		83	
Quincy Orchard	74	89	59	89	62	60	68
Richard Montgomery	75	95	81	92	82	78	72
Rockville	71	90	67	90	76	78	77
Seneca Valley	84	94	79	91	87	73	100
Sherwood	75	88	87	92	69	75	42
Springbrook	86	93	70	94	76	79	58
W. Johnson	65	89	77	93	72	82	67
Watkins Mill	82	94	79	90	77	72	83
Wheaton	80	86	68	72	78	55	71
Whitman	80	90	86	95	78	85	42
Wootton	97	97	82	96	92	93	100

Source: Montgomery County Public Schools.

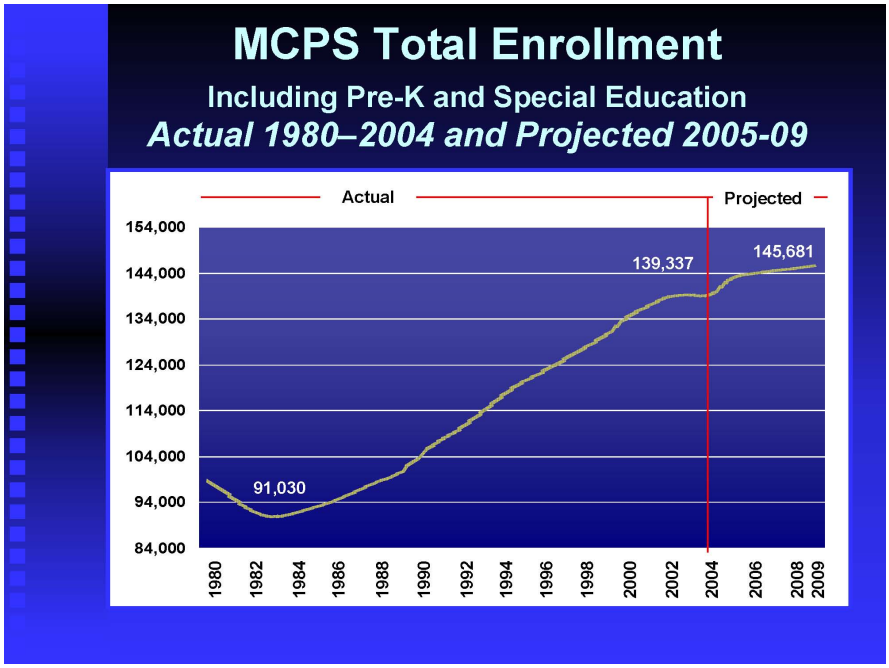
[a] Students participating in English for speakers of other languages classes.

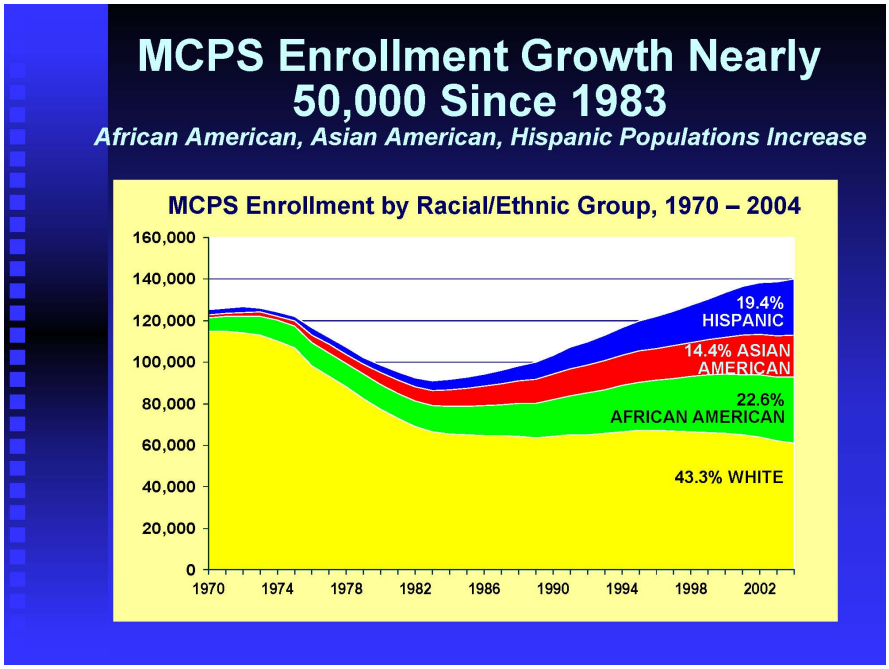
[b] The percentage of students participating in the free and reduced-price meals system.

[c] Students with disabilities.

[d] Students with limited English proficiency.

Exhibit 2 MCPS Demographic Trends (ending with 2004–2005 enrollment figures)





Source: MCPS.

Exhibit 3 Findings and Recommendations Excerpts from Edmund W. Gordon, "A Study of Minority Student Achievement," 1990

Findings

With respect to the specific charge as specified by the MCPS Board of Education, we find that:

1) the present Minority Student Achievement Plan includes several elements needed for the improvement of minority student achievement, but that those elements present are insufficiently comprehensive, insufficiently distributed, and inconsistently implemented;

2) the initiatives for each of the existing elements are unevenly planned, and in some instances, are unenthusiastically implemented and insufficiently communicated to staff and students;

3) the present measures of progress (e.g. accountability goals) are sophisticated and broadly accurate, but do not provide the character and quality of information concerning minority student achievement which are essential to inform program design and improvement; in addition, the present measures can contribute to a misleading picture of minority student achievement;

4) the organizational structure needed to support the Plan's implementation is not in place and functional; that it is widely perceived that there is no meaningful system of direction, support or accountability;

5) the entire organizational structure of the Minority Student Achievement Plan should enable active conceptual, moral and developmental leadership, on line resource and technical assistance and line authority for assessment and accountability;

6) the option to include recommendations has been exercised and they are included at the end of this report.

Recommendations

1) We recommend that priority attention be given to changes in some of the attitudes and behaviors of professional educators (administrators and teachers – majority and minority group member professionals) in regard to a) their expectations of minority students; b) their instructional behavior; and c) their support for the academic development of students;

2) We recommend that special attention be given to the need for changes in some of the characteristics and services of the schools and other educative institutions in regard to their functions, administrative management, component size, service delivery systems, students data management, resource availability, and resource deployment;

3) We recommend that attention be given to changes in attitudes, behaviors and conditions of the families and communities from which some minority group students come, since these attitudes, behaviors, and conditions relate to education and the support of academic achievement;

4) We recommend that attention be given to changing some of the attitudes and behaviors of minority students, themselves, in regard to academic learning and their participation in it;

5) We recommend that MCPS extend its concerns beyond the schools for which it is responsible and look at the community context in which these schools function in order to change some student perceptions of the expectations, models, opportunities, and rewards available in the larger community.

Source: Edmund W. Gordon, "A Study of Minority Achievement in Montgomery County Public Schools," Final Report, November 16, 1990.

Exhibit 4 Success for Every Student—Vision, Goals, and Outcomes in 1992

VISION
We, the people of Montgomery County, believe that a quality education is a fundamental right of every child. All children will receive the respect encouragement and opportunities they need to build the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be successful, contributing members of a changing global society.

GOAL 1 – Ensure Success for Every Student
Provide the services and environment each student needs for intellectual challenge and social and emotional development. Each student will be able to communicate effectively, obtain and use information, solve problems, and engage in active, life-long learning.

GOAL 2 – Provide an Effective Instructional Program
Teach all students a curriculum that describes what they should know and be able to do, includes the many perspectives of a pluralistic society, and establishes learning standards. Instruction must include a variety of teaching strategies and technologies, actively involve students, and result in their mastery of learning objectives.

GOAL 3 – Strengthen Productive Partnerships for Education
Secure commitment of the entire community to maintain quality education in Montgomery County by building partnerships of families, community, business, and staff that promote and support initiatives to help all children succeed.

GOAL 4 – Create a Positive Work Environment in a Self Renewing Organization
Develop a climate in which staff effectiveness and creativity are encouraged, respected, valued and supported to promote productivity and ownership for student success. Provide efficient and effective support and staff development for the instructional program.

OUTCOMES
A. Increase the percentage of students each year who meet the Maryland School Performance Program (MSPP) state standards so that within four years all racial groups in the system will meet the standards.
B. Increase the percentage of students each year who meet the MSPP state standards so that within four years all racial groups in each school will meet the standards.
C. Increase the percentage of students each year who meet the MSPP local standards so that within four years all racial groups in the system will meet the standards.
D. Increase the percentage of students each year who meet the MSPP local standards so that within four years all racial groups in each school will meet the standards.
E. Increase completion by African American and Hispanic students of the PreK-8 algebra mathematics program that prepares students for successful completion of Algebra I in grade nine.
F. Increase participation of African American and Hispanic students in Honors and Advanced courses.
G. Increase participation and improve performance of African American and Hispanic students on PSATs and SATs.
H. Eliminate disproportionate suspension rates of African American and Hispanic students in the system.
I. Eliminate disproportionate suspension rates of African American and Hispanic students in each school.
J. Eliminate disproportionate representation of African American students within special education programs.

Source: "Success for Every Student: a plan to improve the achievement of low to average achieving students, with special and critical emphasis on the needs of low to average achieving African American, American Indian, Asian American, and Hispanic students," adopted by the MCPS Board of Education, January 6, 1992.

Exhibit 5 Select MCPS Indicators: SY91, SY95, SY00, and SY05

	SY91	SY95	SY00	SY05
Total Enrollment	103,916	120,291	131,552	139,337
% African American	17%	19%	21%	23%
% Asian American	12%	13%	13%	14%
% Hispanic	9%	12%	15%	19%
% American Indian	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
% White	62%	57%	50%	43%
FARMS Enrollment	n/a	25,498	30,840	34,122
ESOL Enrollment	n/a	8,208	11,048	13,221
% Students Enrolled, Learning Disabled	4.4%	3.4%	4.5%	4.4%
% Af. Am. Males Enrolled	8.5%	7.1%	8.3%	7.8%
Graduation Rate	n/a	92%	92%	91%
African American	n/a	n/a	87%	89%
Hispanic	n/a	n/a	88%	82%
Suspension Rate	4.0%	5.4%	3.3%	4.6%
African American	9.5%	11.8%	6.5%	9.9%
Hispanic	5.2%	7.8%	3.7%	5.7%
SAT Number Tested	4,730	5,044	5,862	7,355
% African American	11%	14%	17%	19%
% Hispanic	5%	6%	7%	10%
Average SAT Score[a]	1080	1087	1093	1101
African American	909	940	915	917
Asian American	1107	1124	1125	1163
Hispanic	1024	996	960	942
White	1118	1137	1153	1174
AP/Honors Enrollment[b]	46%	53%	57%	66%
African American	25%	31%	35%	46%
Asian American	60%	68%	73%	82%
Hispanic	24%	28%	33%	45%
White	69%	60%	69%	79%
8th Grade Algebra 1 Completion[c]	n/a	n/a	43%	48%
African American	10%	11%	21%	24%
Asian American	43%	49%	61%	71%
Hispanic	10%	9%	16%	23%
White	32%	38%	55%	63%

Source: Montgomery County Public Schools.

[a] National average SAT score was 1028 in SY05—African American (864), Asian American (1091), Hispanic (922), White (1068).

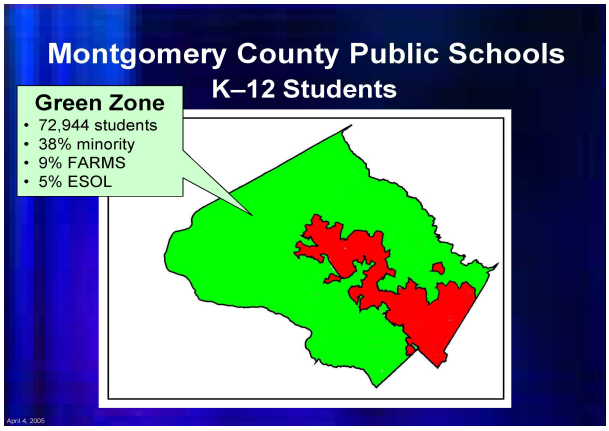
[b] AP/Honors enrollment data under SY00 is actual enrollment data for spring semester SY01.

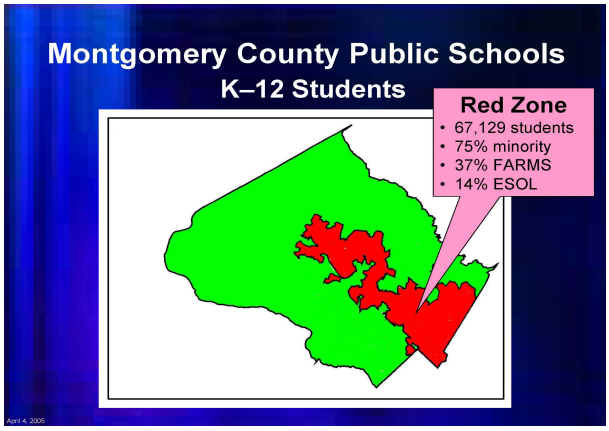
[c] National completion rate for Algebra 1 in Grade 8 was 25% in 2000, National Center for Educational Statistics, www.nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/mathematics, accessed June 16, 2006.

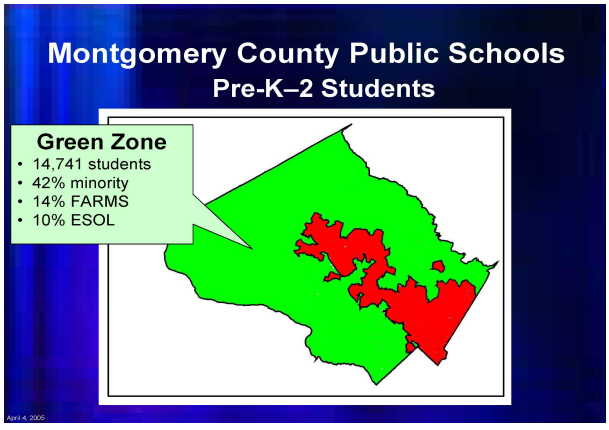
Exhibit 6 MCPS County Maps—Red/Green Zone Figures

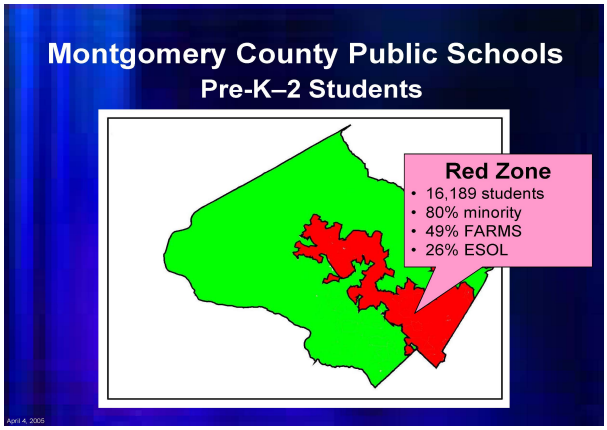
Schools/Enrollment[a]	Red Zone	Green Zone	Total
Elementary	60	65	125
Middle			36
High			24
Special or Alternative			6
Career/Technology Center			1
Pre-K – 12 Enrollment			
African American	21,814	9,818	31,632
American Indian	201	189	402
Asian American	8,350	11,968	20,318
Hispanic	20,614	6,495	27,109
White	16,150	44,462	60,612
FARMS	26,547	7,348	33,895
ESOL	9,575	3,558	13,133

[a]MCPS does not use red/green zone categorization for middle and high schools because students residing in both zones overlap widely in secondary schools. Enrollment numbers represent students residing in these areas as of January 2005. Some students attend schools outside their area. FARMs and ESOL numbers are based on current enrollment in programs.









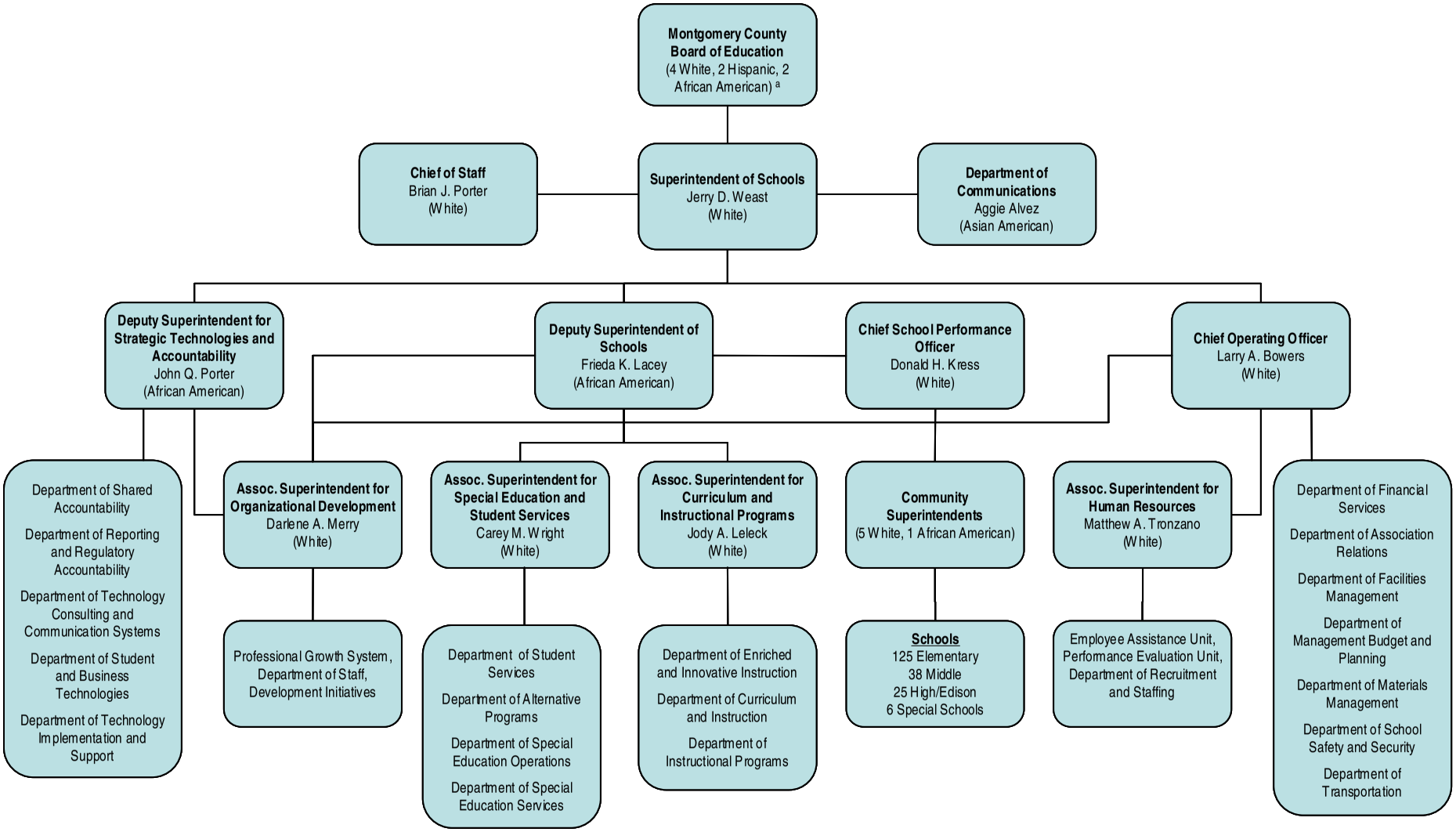
Source: Montgomery County Public Schools.

Exhibit 7 MCPS Reform Chronology under Superintendent Jerry Weast

1999	August	Weast hired as superintendent
1999	November	"Our Call to Action" report released to community
1999	November	Community superintendents hired
2000	January	Honors/AP Enrollment procedure changed
2000	January	Focus schools identified
2000	February	MCPS joins *Baldrige Initiative in Education*
2000	July	Kindergarten reform initiatives begin in focus schools
2000	July	Staff development teachers hired across all schools
2000	August	*Studying Skillful Teacher* course introduced
2001	July	Board institutes new curricular review policy
2002	February	Instructional Management System (IMS) launched at select elementary schools
2002	April	Graves hired to lead newly developed Diversity Training and Development group
2002	July	Math curricular limited to Harcourt and Everyday Mathematics district wide
2002	July	Daily reading and math requirements instituted across all schools in Grades 1–2
2003	March	Grading and reporting policy changed
2003	July	Daily reading and math requirements begin expansion to Grades 3–5
2004	July	Lacey promoted to Deputy Superintendent of Schools
2004	July	Diversity Training and Development Unit expanded
2004	September	A special focus is placed on recruiting and hiring minority candidates for leadership positions
2005	February	Gifted and Talented identification global screening process revised
2005	July	Professional Learning Communities Institute opens with 11 school teams
2005	July	Institutional barriers such as race identified as key area of focus for MCPS leadership

Source: Montgomery County Public Schools.

Exhibit 8 MCPS Organizational Chart (at end of SY05)



Source: Montgomery County Public Schools.

[a] Includes the African-American student member of the board of education. This yearly student-elected board position has some voting restrictions.

Exhibit 9 MCPS Student/Staff Demographic Figures

SY05 MCPS Overview

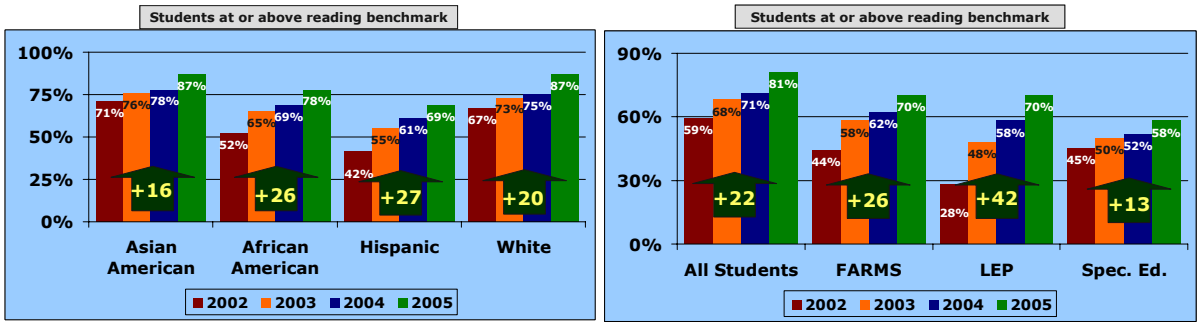
Student Demographics	
Number of students (K–12)	139,337
White	43.3%
African American	22.6%
Hispanic	19.4%
Asian American	14.4%
American Indian	0.3%
Students receiving free and reduced-price meals (FARMS)	23.7%
English-language learners (ESOL)	8.9%
Special education students (SPED)	11.9%
Administration and Staff	
Number of Administrators	685
White	63.9%
African American	29.6%
Hispanic	3.9%
Asian American	2.3%
American Indian	0.3%
Number of Principals	192
White	66.0%
African American	28.8%
Hispanic	3.1%
Asian American	1.6%
American Indian	0.5%
Total full-time employees (FTEs)	16,500

Teaching Staff	
Number of teachers	11,632
White	79.6%
African American	12.6%
Hispanic	3.9%
Asian American	3.7%
American Indian	0.3%
Number of staff development teachers	206
White	82.0%
African American	13.6%
Hispanic	2.4%
Asian American	1.9%
American Indian	0%

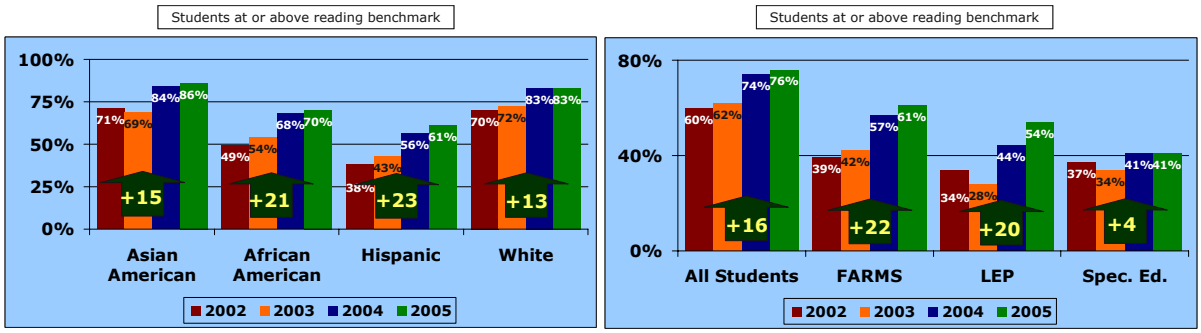
Source: Montgomery County Public Schools.

Exhibit 10a MCPS Reading Assessments—Kindergarten to Grade 2[a]

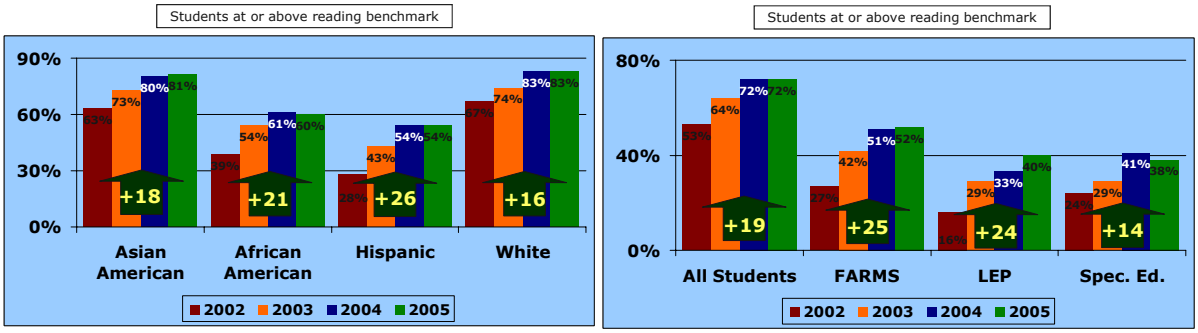
Kindergarten: Students at or above benchmark in reading, on MCPS assessment program



Grade 1: Students at or above benchmark in reading, on MCPS assessment program



Grade 2: Students at or above benchmark in reading, on MCPS assessment program



Source: Montgomery County Public Schools.

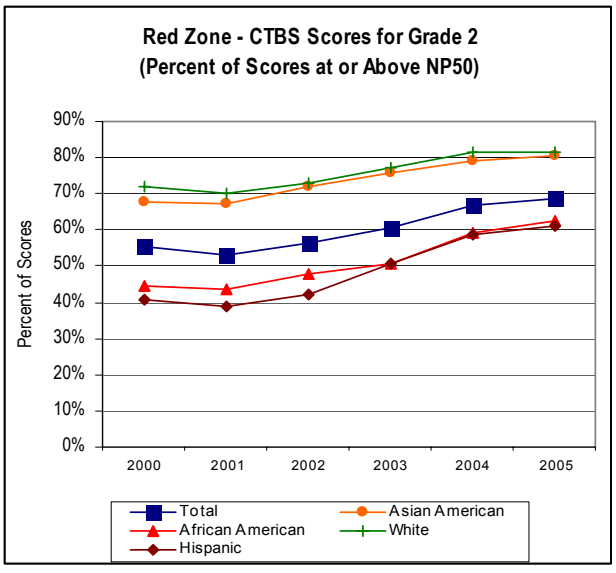
[a] The MCPS Assessment Primary Reading Program is a locally developed assessment that provides formative information to help teachers, schools, and the district monitor students' progress in reading, from pre-kindergarten through Grade 2. The stated goals of this assessment program are to provide continuous confirmation of the student's reading development and understanding of the student's oral reading fluency, accuracy, and comprehension.

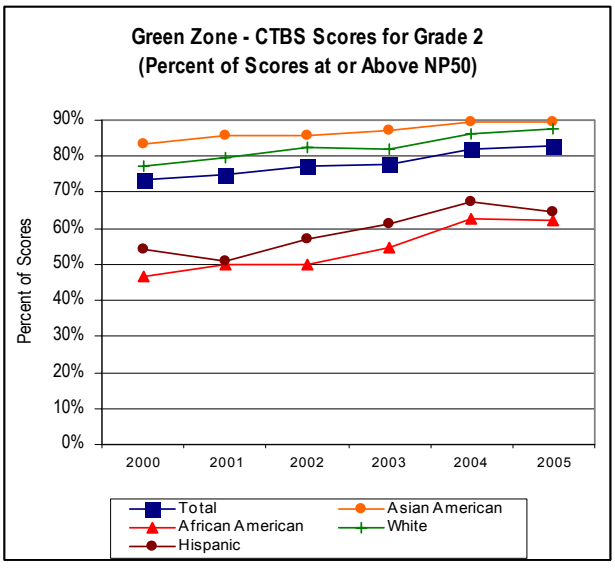
Benchmark performance targets have been established for three grade levels. For kindergarten, the benchmark is for students to be able to read a level 3 text with 90% or higher accuracy and attain a score of 2 out of 3 in oral retelling. For Grade 1, students must read a level 16 text with 90% higher accuracy and score 80% or higher on oral comprehension. The Grade 2 benchmark is for students to read a level M text with 90% or higher accuracy and score a 2 or 3 for written comprehension, which represents partial or essential understanding of the text.

Exhibit 10b Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) Scores for Grade 2[a]

CTBS Scores for Grade 2 (Percent of Scores at or Above NP50)

		Test Year					
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Red Zone 60 focus schools	Total	55.2%	53.1%	56.3%	60.4%	66.9%	68.6%
	American Indian	69.3%	56.2%	76.8%	51.8%	58.3%	62.9%
	Asian American	67.7%	67.2%	72.2%	75.7%	79.0%	80.3%
	African American	44.5%	43.4%	47.9%	50.8%	59.4%	62.6%
	White	72.0%	70.2%	73.1%	77.2%	81.7%	81.4%
	Hispanic	40.6%	38.8%	42.1%	50.6%	58.7%	61.0%
Green Zone	Total	73.3%	74.8%	77.2%	77.9%	82.0%	82.7%
	American Indian	75.4%	76.9%	81.5%	68.9%	62.7%	91.9%
	Asian American	83.6%	85.6%	85.6%	87.2%	89.5%	89.5%
	African American	46.6%	50.1%	49.8%	54.8%	62.6%	62.4%
	White	77.5%	79.8%	82.4%	82.2%	86.0%	87.8%
	Hispanic	54.2%	51.1%	56.9%	61.1%	67.5%	64.7%
County	Total	64.5%	64.0%	67.0%	69.6%	74.8%	76.0%
	American Indian	72.1%	64.9%	78.7%	60.6%	59.8%	76.1%
	Asian American	75.8%	76.6%	79.6%	82.5%	85.3%	85.8%
	African American	45.1%	45.4%	48.4%	52.0%	60.4%	62.6%
	White	75.9%	76.9%	79.8%	80.9%	84.9%	86.2%
	Hispanic	43.6%	41.1%	45.3%	52.8%	60.7%	61.9%





Source: Montgomery County Public Schools.

[a]The TerraNova CTBS measures basic reading, language, and mathematics skills and provides comparative information on the performance of students relative to the performance of students in the CTBS national norming samples. CTBS results are reported as national percentile ranks.

Exhibit 10c Maryland State Assessments (MSAs)—MCPS Grade 3 Results by Race

Grade 3 Trends by Race - % of Students at Advanced, Proficient or Basic

Source: http://mdreportcard.org.

Exhibit 10d Maryland State Assessments (MSAs)—MCPS Grade 5 Results by Race

Grade 5 Trends by Race - % of Students at Advanced, Proficient or Basic

Source: http://mdreportcard.org.

Exhibit 11 MCPS Gifted and Talented (GT) Identification Figures

Number and Percentage of Grade 2 Students Screened and Identified in 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 by Race/Ethnicity

	2003-2004				2004-2005			
	Screened		Identified		Screened		Identified	
	N	%	n	%	N	%	n	%
All Students	10,118		4,503	44.5	9,875		3,333	33.8
African American	2,127	21	519	11.5	2,196	22.2	411	12.3
American Indian	26	0.2	7	0.2	37	0.3	18	0.5
Asian American	1,544	15.3	887	19.7	1,568	15.9	710	21.3
Hispanic	2,101	20.8	625	13.9	2,079	21.1	354	10.6
White	4,320	42.7	2,465	54.7	3,995	40.5	1,840	55.2

Source: Montgomery County Public Schools.

Exhibit 12a Maryland State Assessments (MSAs)—MCPS Grade 8 Results

Grade 8 Trends by Race - % of Students at Advanced, Proficient or Basic

Source: http://mdreportcard.org.

Exhibit 12b MCPS AP/Honors Enrollment Figures

Percent of Students Enrolled in at Least one Honors/AP Course and Total Enrollment (All Schools)

	Percent Enrolled (Spring Semester)				Total Enrollment			
	SY01	**SY03**	**SY04**	**SY05**	**SY01**	**SY03**	**SY04**	**SY05**
All Students	57	64	65	66	37,921	41,110	42,495	43,702
African American	35	43	44	46	7,770	8,584	9,259	9,802
American Indian	57	60	57	55	95	95	99	113
Asian American	73	80	81	82	5,454	6,051	6,209	6,336
Hispanic	33	40	42	45	5,226	6,199	6,817	7,311
White	69	76	78	79	19,376	20,181	20,111	20,140
LEP	17	23	25	32	2,318	2,643	2,793	3,171
FARMS	26	34	36	38	5,107	5,804	6,301	6,724
SPED	15	19	20	20	4,259	4,638	4,771	5,001

2001 and 2005 Senior Cohorts AP Participation and Performance—Grouping Based on Elementary School of Home Address

			Number in Cohort	Number Taking an AP Test	Percent Taking an AP Test	Number with at Least One 3	Percent of Cohort w/ at Least One 3
2001	**Red Zone**	African American	1,199	150	13%	85	7%
	60 focus	Asian American	591	242	41%	191	32%
		Hispanic	757	115	15%	88	12%
		White	1,423	584	41%	481	34%
		Total	3,970	1,091	27%	845	21%
	Green Zone	African American	493	110	22%	76	15%
		Asian American	651	404	62%	357	55%
		Hispanic	321	91	28%	81	25%
		White	2,917	1,486	51%	1,267	43%
		Total	4,382	2,091	48%	1,781	41%
	MCPS	African American	1,692	260	15%	161	10%
		Asian American	1,242	646	52%	548	44%
		Hispanic	1,078	206	19%	169	16%
		White	4,340	2,070	48%	1,748	40%
		Total	8,352	3,182	38%	2,626	31%
2005	**Red Zone**	African American	1,283	360	28%	203	16%
	60 focus	Asian American	586	360	61%	266	45%
		Hispanic	845	295	35%	248	29%
		White	1,217	702	58%	567	47%
		Total	3,931	1,717	44%	1,284	33%
	Green Zone	African American	604	191	32%	122	20%
		Asian American	843	655	78%	554	66%
		Hispanic	355	163	46%	146	41%
		White	3,272	2,116	65%	1,825	56%
		Total	5,074	3,125	62%	2,647	52%
	MCPS	African American	1,887	551	29%	325	17%
		Asian American	1,429	1,015	71%	820	57%
		Hispanic	1,200	458	38%	394	33%
		White	4,489	2,818	63%	2,392	53%
		Total	9,005	4,842	54%	3,931	44%

Source: Montgomery County Public Schools.