

CHAPTER V: CROSS PROGRAM THEMES

Many themes cut across the usual curricular content areas. All are direct reflections of the major goals and the core values of the school system, and all reflect what the HCPSS wants for the children of Howard County. Some of the programs described herein present five-year annual objectives and strategies. Other programs present their first-year plan and acknowledge that if their objectives or strategies change during any of the remaining four implementation years, these changes will be reported within the annual *Bridge to Excellence* updates. All of the programs are outgrowths of Chapter III (What Do We Want for Our Children?) and Chapter IV (How Might We Provide It?), and they are all essential to the school system's program. The cross program themes are presented in alphabetical order and include:

- Achievement Equity
- Alternative Education Programs
- Career and Technology Education
- Education That Is Multicultural
- Educational Technologies
- Education for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- Fine Arts—Art and Music
- Full-day Kindergarten and Prekindergarten
- Gifted and Talented Education Program
- Homeless Education for Children and Youth
- Library Media
- Professional development
- Program Improvement Plans—Systemwide
- Safe Schools
- Special Education
- Student Services
- Technology.

ACHIEVEMENT EQUITY

The program described below offers a variety of strategies to meet the school system's goals. Any one strategy or a combination of strategies may be implemented in any Howard County Public School at some point during the school year. However, the data-driven needs of a school's student population and the school's school improvement plan for a specific year determine which strategies are operative at any given time.

Accelerating the performance of subgroups that are currently not meeting standards will require programs that use multiple approaches that address the problem on a number of different levels. The Howard County Public School System's Department of Student, Family, and Community Services will have primary responsibility for coordinating programs that will support closing achievement gaps. The office will offer programs for staff members, students, parents, as well as other community members.

Programs/Supports for Staff Members

- The school system will provide activities that promote interracial communication and understanding such as *Diversi-teas*.
- Professional development related to teacher expectations (TESA and GESA), differentiated instruction, assessment practices and use of data for grouping and instructional planning, and instruction that enables the academic success of diverse learners will be planned and provided on a regular basis with follow-up and monitoring.
- The Department of Student, Family, and Community Services will continue to work with administrators to analyze data and support efforts to close achievement gaps.
- The Department of Student, Family, and Community Services will offer leadership development that promotes safe and nurturing environments that honor diversity and commonality.
- Development of school-based teacher leaders with expertise in culturally responsive teaching and consultative skills will continue to be emphasized.

Programs/Supports for Students

- High schools will recruit additional African-American and Hispanic students to participate in extended-day, -week, and -year SAT preparation programs.
- Academic mentors will serve students in the elementary and middle schools. An academic mentor works with students who need extra guidance in successfully negotiating the school environment. The mentor assists students with organization and study skills; links students with school, community, and tutoring resources; communicates regularly with teachers and other staff to monitor progress and to determine student needs; and interacts with parents in support of students' achievements.
- The Rising Scholars Program, implemented by Academic Transition Assistants, is comprised of case managers for 30 to 40 students. The case managers concentrate their emphasis on Grades 9 and 12, the transitional grades. The Rising Scholars Program reviews academic transformation quarterly, and provides intervention and support services to help students select appropriate courses and to succeed in them. The case managers work with students on the high school level. The specific locations of the assistants are determined by student needs that are data driven.
- High schools will recruit students for SAT Prep courses to be taught during the school day.
- Arrangements will be made for all Grade 10 students to take the PSAT during school hours.
- Students will have individual conferences to discuss PSAT results.
- All students who are below grade level in reading and/or mathematics or who are not meeting the district and/or state standards will have a Student Support Plan for Acceleration.

Programs/Supports for Families and Community Members

Programs have been designed to engage parents as partners in the academic achievement of their students. These programs include:

- A lending-bank of learning materials (books, videos, computer software) for parents to borrow to support learning at home.
- A systemwide voice messaging system, which allows parents and community members to call and check on homework assignments, events, and cafeteria menu at a particular school. This sync-mail makes telephone calls to homes to deliver messages about upcoming school meetings and events.
- Community outreach programs stress the importance of PSAT/SAT with diverse stakeholders, which include parents, faith-based community groups such as NAACP and Conexiones.
- A collaborative effort with the Howard County Library staff increases the accessibility of SAT preparation software available on library computers.
- A cadre of interpreters and translators provides services to families who speak languages other than English. HCPSS seeks to ensure that oral and written communication is not a barrier for engaging families in school and extended-day, -week, and -year programs.
- A newsletter describes school events and will be available for families.

Extended-day, -week, -year Programs

Extended-day, -week, and -year programs are designed to accelerate achievement across the system. More time on task will be provided for students performing below grade level. The Key Results Area of student performance will be used to determine the effectiveness of these interventions in accelerating student achievement.

Extended-day Programs

- Community-based Learning Centers are placed strategically for elementary students. The centers are located in the community rooms and are open after school, Monday through Friday and on Saturday from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon. There are three sessions of approximately six to eight weeks in length. The centers are open to all students; however, priority is given to students who reside in the community. There are five centers located in low-income communities. Instruction and assistance with homework are provided.
- Education and Career Empowerment Centers, located in selected high schools, serve middle and high school students who are not meeting state and district standards in the High School Assessed courses: English I, Biology, Algebra I/Data Analysis and Probability, American Government and Geometry, Measurement and Reasoning. Empowerment Center staffs provide intervention and support services to help students select appropriate courses and to achieve academic success.
- Math tutors are placed at Tier I and Tier II elementary schools where there are a large number of students who are below grade level in mathematics.
- Resource materials and curriculum for both reading and mathematics will be provided for Parent Teacher Association sponsored and grant sponsored programs in the elementary, middle and high schools.
- Academic Intervention Programs will continue at eleven middle schools with one middle school serving as a regional site for the western section of Howard County.

Extended-week Programs

- Soliciting the support of National Honor Society members, bilingual tutors, community members, and faith-based organizations will ensure that the HCPSS will

provide tutoring services to a wide spectrum of students who are performing below grade level in reading and/or mathematics.

- The HCPSS will provide a Peer-Adult Before- and After-School Tutoring Program.
- Paid coordinators and tutors are provided for extended-week programs along with transportation.
- Currently in place are PTA-sponsored and grant-supported programs for elementary and middle school students at selected schools throughout the county.
- Three regional sites will provide extended-week services for high school students who are not scoring well on the High School Assessments.
- Black Student Achievement Programs have been established to address the diversity, cultural, and social needs of a group of elementary and secondary students who have a disproportionate number of students achieving below grade level in reading and/or mathematics.
- The Saturday Reading and Mathematics Academies have been established to provide tutoring and support for students who need extra time to learn curricular content.
- Extended-day or extended-week SAT prep classes at selected high schools using HCPSS videos, commercial test prep text, and software programs are offered by the school system.

Extended Year Programs

- Comprehensive Summer School will serve as a regional site for students in Grades K-12. The sites offer programs for acceleration and enrichment to students in elementary, middle, and high schools. The course offerings are designed to provide original and review credit in the high school program, while allowing students in elementary and middle schools the opportunity to review previous subjects and/or gain insights into enrichment offerings.
- The Secondary Summer Bridge Program is available systemwide for all HCPSS students. Articulation with staff from feeder schools to the Summer Bridge Program will be implemented. Cultural diversity issues will be addressed in hiring, instructional practices, and pedagogy.
- Preparation courses are being offered for the assessed high school courses: Algebra I/Data Analysis, Biology, American Government, and English I. Intense instruction for two weeks in mathematics and language arts will be presented just before the new school year begins.
- Academic Intervention Programs are offered to accelerate the achievement of students performing below grade level in reading and mathematics, and to prepare students for the Maryland Functional Tests. The HCPSS Student Support Plans for Acceleration will be the monitoring tool used to select the students who will be invited to participate in the Academic Intervention Programs.
- Gifted and Talented Institutes offer challenging academic courses aimed at accelerating student achievement, based on the HCPSS's essential curriculum, and aligned with curriculum objectives and assessments. The child-centered curriculum focuses on talent development and addresses the needs of advanced-level learners. These needs include academic, cognitive, cultural, emotional, environmental, social, family, physical, and learning style attributes.

Recognition Programs for Students and Families

- A Celebration of Excellence Program is held on a yearly basis for elementary students who score at the 85th percentile or above on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills.
- A Celebration of Excellence for middle school students is held on a yearly basis for students who pass the Maryland Functional math, reading, and writing tests and for the students who have a grade point of average of 3.0 or above.

All relevant data will be collected and analyzed by the Department of Student, Family, and Community Services to determine the effectiveness of each extended-day, -week, and -year intervention. Only those programs that make a difference in accelerating student achievement will be funded in future years.

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The program described below offers a variety of strategies to meet the school system's goals. Any one strategy or a combination of strategies may be implemented in any Howard County Public School at some point during the school year. However, the data-driven needs of a school's student population and the school's school improvement plan for a specific year determine which strategies are operative at any given time.

Alternative education includes the Evening School Program, the In-School Alternative Education Program, Maryland's Tomorrow, and Teen Parenting and Child Care. A presentation of each program follows.

Evening School Program

The Evening School program provides academic and behavioral support to students serving long-term suspensions and to students who have been expelled, but qualify for academic services (e.d., student with disabilities). Classes are held three nights per week and students receive instruction in the core subject areas of English, mathematics, science and social studies. There are also limited offerings in educational technology.

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objectives

- Improve students' academic skills and achievement.
- Improve students' classroom behavior.
- Improve students' self-concept and social skills.
- Foster a sense of responsibility for self and others.
- Develop and use problem-solving skills.
- Develop a sense of belonging and establish positive relationships with peers and adults.

Strategies

- Provide students with individual and small-group instruction and academic support needed to complete assigned work.
- Communicate regularly with the sending schools to ensure that students receive appropriate class and homework.
- Communicate regularly with parents regarding student achievement.
- Report students' grades and attendance to the sending schools so that accurate data can be communicated through students' report cards.
- Provide students with strategies to improve classroom behavior and achieve positive behavioral change.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004-2005

Third Year of Implementation: 2005-2006

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006-2007

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

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In-School Alternative Education Programs

The In-School Alternative Education Programs are located in 25 elementary, middle, and high schools. Each program provides students with a combination of academic support, behavioral change strategies and interventions, enhanced efforts at parent outreach, conflict resolution and anger management strategies, and case management services. These programs strive to provide students with the level of support needed so that they can remain in their home school rather than being removed to a separate alternative school setting.

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objectives

- Improve students' academic skills and achievement.
- Improve students' classroom behavior.
- Improve students' self-concept and social skills.
- Foster a sense of responsibility for self and others.
- Develop and use problem-solving skills and improve organizational and study skills.

- Develop personal goals related to achievement and personal development.
- Develop a sense of belonging and establish positive relationships with peers and adults.

Strategies

- Staffs provide in-class and pull-out academic support to enhance students' academic performances.
- Staffs provide students with strategies to improve classroom behavior and achieve positive behavioral change.
- Staffs provide anger management and conflict resolution skills to help students seek alternatives to verbal or physical conflicts.
- Staffs provide enhanced parent outreach activities designed to encourage parents' participation in their child's education.
- Staffs provide case management for participating students to ensure each has an appropriate support plan and that resources are available to implement the plan.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004-2005

Third Year of Implementation: 2005-2006

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006-2007

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

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Maryland's Tomorrow (Dropout Prevention) Program

The major goal of the Maryland's Tomorrow Program is the reduction and eventual elimination of the high school dropout rate.

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objective

Ninety-seven (97) percent of students participating in the Maryland's Tomorrow programs at Reservoir, Howard, Long Reach, Oakland Mills, and Wilde Lake High Schools will remain in school during the 2003-2004 school year.

Strategies

- Incoming 9th graders to the five high school named above who are judged to be at-risk for dropping out of school are invited to participate in the Maryland's Tomorrow (MT) program prior to the commencement of their 9th grade year.
- Students are provided with academic and behavioral support through the services of the MT facilitators. This support may be delivered in the general education classroom, in a pull-out setting, before school, and during after school programming.
- MT facilitators work with the students' general education teachers and parents to develop a plan of support.
- MT facilitators communicate with the parents of their students frequently. Information regarding academic performance, school behavior, and attendance are shared during these conversations.
- MT facilitators plan field trips and other activities designed to provide information to students regarding careers and postsecondary educational opportunities.
- MT facilitators administer a summer program for selected students that provides leadership training and paid internship opportunities.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004-2005

Third Year of Implementation: 2005-2006

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006-2007

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

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Teen Parenting and Childcare

The Teen Parenting and Child Care program provides young men and women who are or who are about to become parents with the opportunity to continue their education, learn about child development, and develop child-rearing skills. This program, located at Wilde Lake High School, also provides childcare services to enable teen parents to attend classes. An outreach component of this program provides similar supports to pregnant and parenting teens attending other Howard County high schools. Childcare is not available to students receiving outreach services.

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objectives

- Provide pregnant and parenting teens with individualized support and instruction to ensure academic success before and after delivery.
- Provide a nurturing and academically challenging environment.
- Facilitate interagency support and involvement designed to address students' needs in the areas of academic achievement, personal and career development, and mental and physical health.
- Develop and use problem-solving skills.
- Foster a sense of responsibility for self and others.
- Ensure that pregnant and parenting teens earn a high school diploma.

Strategies

- Provide in-class and pull-out academic support to enhance students' academic performances.
- Provide childcare for parenting students so that they can attend school full-time.
- Facilitate the delivery of health and social services to participating students.
- Teach problem-solving skills.
- Teach parenting skills that allow for the healthy development of teen parents and their children.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004-2005

Third Year of Implementation: 2005-2006

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006-2007

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

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CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

The program described below offers a variety of strategies to meet the school system's goals. Any one strategy or a combination of strategies may be implemented in any Howard County Public School at some point during the school year. However, the data-driven needs of a school's student population and the school's school improvement plan for a specific year determine which strategies are operative at any given time.

Overview

Career and Technology Education (CTE) is an on-going kindergarten through adult educational process, integrated within the instructional framework, that enables all students to:

- Identify aptitudes
- Meet rigorous local, state, and national academic standards
- Develop technical and workplace skills
- Pursue individual career goals
- Realize their potential
- Adapt and thrive in a diverse and changing world.

Students will complete comprehensive coursework at home, at school and, depending on student's completer, concentrator, or trades status, would choose a career pathway through one of the career connections programs:

- Technology Magnet Program
- Career Research and Development
- Technology Education
- Family and Consumer Science
- Academy of Finance.

Students have the option to choose a worksite placement through one of the pathways depending on post-secondary career goals and experience. Students would not be required to have a worksite placement unless they wanted a completer certificate. The Applications and Research Laboratory (ARL) would offer extended coursework for technology-related practicum skill experiences and worksite preparation. The ARL campus will also offer courses for all students in any career pathway for extension of skills, certification training. Currently the Technology Magnet Program offers career opportunities in biotechnology, communications (Data and visual), human services (health and hospitality/tourism), construction and manufacturing, and energy, power, and transportation.

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objectives

- CTE program facilitators and teachers will review and revise current curricula for new yearlong, seven-credit high school schedules.
- Program facilitators and teachers will coordinate the implementation of new CTE curricula model for all students.
- Career cluster pathways will be identified and current elective courses will be reorganized into a specific pathway, completer, or concentrator program.
- The school system will create a comprehensive marketing plan for CTE programs for students, parents, and business and community members.

Strategies

- Technology Magnet Program, Career Research and Design, Technology Education and Family and Consumer Science curricula will be reviewed and revised to meet post-secondary articulation, Federal and MSDE standards.
- Academy programs will be defined and identified for implementation in the high school program.
- Professional and staff development implementation for all instructors in CTE programs will be implemented.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004-2005

Objectives

- Newly revised CTE programs in each of the identified career clusters will be offered in all high schools.
- A CTE leadership advisory committee will be established to identify and approve current and proposed CTE programming including academy implementation.
- The ARL will begin to offer advanced and certification coursework for selected CTE program pathways for all high school students.
- The Technology Magnet Program will continue to offer selected cluster programs. Some cluster programs would not be offered through the Technology Magnet Program, but would be integrated into Technology Education and Family and Consumer Science programming.

Strategies

- Development of a four-year plan for students based on chosen career pathway.
- Students to enroll in Career Research and Design I in either ninth or tenth grade, which includes assessment of strengths and interests to help students focus in on a career major for high school.
- Morning -coursework at the ARL for all high schools students and afternoon-coursework for Technology Magnet Program students.
- CTE students in either program to access advanced and certification coursework offered at the ARL.
- Professional development implementation for all instructors in CTE programs.

Third Year of Implementation: 2005-2006

Objectives

- Evaluate and assess the implementation and integration of new CTE model.
- Review and revise curricula offered at both high school and ARL sites.

- Implement additional selected CTE programs at both high school and ARL sites.
- Convene CTE leadership advisory to assess and approve CTE programming.
- Convene business leader advisories to identify labor market needs and skills.

Strategies

- Collect aggregated data on student diversity enrolling and continuing in non-traditional and traditional career paths
- Collect data on post-secondary goals and plans
- Collect data on raised student achievement for students who are following a CTE pathway.
- Implement professional development for all instructors in CTE programs

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006-2007

Objectives

- Evaluate and assess the implementation and integration of new CTE model.
- Evaluate enrollment and retention in selected career cluster coursework.
- Review and revise curricula offered at both high school and ARL sites.

Strategies

- Collect aggregated data on student diversity enrolling and continuing in non-traditional and traditional career paths.
- Collect data on post-secondary goals and plans.
- Collect data on student achievement for students who are following a CTE pathway.
- Distribute and collect employer, student, and parent satisfaction survey data.
- Conduct longitudinal studies on CTE graduates.

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

Objectives

- Evaluation and assessment of implementation and integration of new CTE model
- Evaluate enrollment and retention in selected career cluster coursework
- Review and revision of curricula offered at both high school and Applications and Research Laboratory sites.

Strategies

- Collect aggregated data on student diversity enrolling in non-traditional and traditional career paths

- Collect data on post secondary goals and plans
- Collect data on raised student achievement for students who are following a CTE pathway.
- Distribute and collect employer, student, and parent satisfaction survey data
- Conduct longitudinal studies of CTE graduates
- Implement professional development for all instructors in CTE programs.

EDUCATION THAT IS MULTICULTURAL

The program described below offers a variety of strategies to meet the school system's goals. Any one strategy or a combination of strategies may be implemented in any Howard County Public School at some point during the school year. However, the data-driven needs of a school's student population and the school's school improvement plan for a specific year determine which strategies are operative at any given time.

The Education That is Multicultural (ETM) regulation (13A.04.05) is supported in the HCPSS through the school system's mission statement and the subsequent development of two goals used in the school improvement planning process. It is the mission of HCPSS to ensure excellence in teaching and learning so that each student will participate responsibly in a diverse and changing world. The first goal is for each student, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status or disability, to meet or exceed rigorous academic and performance standards. The second goal for HCPSS reflects the school system's philosophy that in order to assist students to live, learn, interact, work, and participate productively in a culturally pluralistic society, schools must build a supportive learning community. The *Comprehensive Plan for Accelerated School Improvement* is focused on increasing student achievement in *all* schools. The intent of the plan is to accelerate breakthrough improvement in student achievement for *all* student groups. To accomplish that goal, curriculum, instruction, professional development, and the selection of instructional resources are aligned with the ETM regulation.

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objectives

- To provide Prekindergarten through Grade 12 curriculum which enables students to demonstrate an understanding of and an appreciation for cultural groups in the United States as an integral part of education for a culturally pluralistic society. The curriculum shall enable students to apply these skills to fully participate in the democratic process of their community, state, nation, and world. The curriculum must include the following content:

- a. Emphasis on correcting the omissions and misrepresentations of African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, women and individuals with disabilities;
 - b. The history of cultural groups and their contributions in Maryland, in the United States, and in the world
 - c. Historic events, situations, conflicts, and interpretations from diverse perspectives
 - d. Political, social, and economic conditions which cultural groups have experienced and continue to experience in the United States
 - e. As appropriate, issues of racism, sexism, bias, and prejudice as these affect the behavior and experience of individuals and groups.
- To provide Prekindergarten through Grade 12 curriculum, which develops the valuing of cultural groups in the United States as an integral part of education for a culturally pluralistic society. The curriculum shall provide opportunity for students to demonstrate the following attitudes and actions:
 - a. Valuing one's heritage
 - b. Valuing the uniqueness of cultures other than one's own
 - c. Valuing the richness of cultural diversity and commonality
 - d. Respecting diverse cultural groups throughout the world
 - e. Awareness of sensitivity to individual differences within various cultural groups
 - f. Eliminating stereotypes related to race, ethnicity, region, religion, gender, socioeconomic status, age, and individuals with disabilities.
- To provide Prekindergarten through Grade 12 instruction which will enable students to develop an understanding of and appreciation for cultural groups as an integral part of education for a culturally pluralistic society. The instructional program shall:
 - a. Promote a school climate that reflects the diversity of community.
 - b. Promote a school climate in which different cultural linguistic patterns are respected.
 - c. Promote grouping of students to reflect cultural diversity.
 - d. Ensure that a student may not be denied access to equally rigorous academic instruction on the basis of cultural background.
 - e. Use instructional activities which recognize and appreciate students' cultural identity and learning styles.
 - f. Address racism, sexism, bias, discrimination and prejudice.
 - g. Use organizations promoting cultural and ethnic understanding.
 - h. Use instructional activities that promote an understanding of and a respect for a variety of ways of communicating, both verbal and nonverbal.
 - i. Use instructional materials which reinforce the concept of the United States as a pluralistic society within a globally interdependent world while recognizing our common ground as a nation.

- j. Incorporate multicultural instructional materials in all subject areas.
 - k. Provide opportunities for students to analyze and evaluate social issues and propose solutions to contemporary problems.
- Staff development experiences that prepare school system personnel to design, manage, implement, and evaluate multicultural education must include:
 - a. Activities which involve professional and support staff in exploring attitudes and feeling about their own cultural identity
 - b. Activities to identify instructional strategies, techniques, and materials appropriate for ETM
 - c. Training in assessing the prior knowledge, attitudes, abilities, and learning styles of students from varied backgrounds in order to develop multicultural instructional programs
 - d. Training to recognize and correct stereotyping, discrimination, bias, and prejudice
 - e. Training for fostering greater intergroup understanding
 - f. Training to recognize and correct the omission and misrepresentations of groups and individuals in curriculum and instruction
 - g. Training to recognize and correct inequitable participation in school activities by students and staff from different backgrounds
 - h. Training to identify human resources for ETM.
- To provide instructional resources which assist students in demonstrating an understanding of and appreciation for cultural groups. Selection of multicultural resources includes all of the following criteria:
 - a. Materials that avoid stereotyping, discrimination, bias, and prejudice
 - b. Materials that reflect the diverse experiences relating to cultural groups and individuals
 - c. Instructional materials in all content areas that represent society as multicultural
 - d. Human resources to help students demonstrate an understanding of cultural diversity

Strategies

- Conduct reviews and revisions of all curriculum guides to include an assessment of the alignment of the guides to the ETM regulation.
- Implement the Essential Curriculum.
- Increase the identification of women, African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, Native Americans and individuals with disabilities and their contributions in the fields of mathematics, science, and technology.
- Address the identified components of the first objective in social studies, science, language arts, art, music, and media at all grade levels, K-12, such that:

- a. Social studies/history/government courses include historical interpretations that incorporate multiple perspectives.
 - b. Multiethnic/multicultural books, materials and other resources are available at all levels in literature, art, music, and media.
- Provide materials and expertise from the staff at the Teacher Support Center - Multicultural Resource Center to all curriculum writing workshops.
 - Implement curriculum components on valuing the cultural heritage of individuals and groups through social studies, foreign language, language arts, health education, art and music.
 - Monitor elementary School Improvement Plan so that they reflect the implementation of curriculum materials and developmentally appropriate programs such as the Anti-Defamation League's *World of Difference*, the HCPSS *Diversity Toolbox*, the LABELS Project, and other MSDE approved resources.
 - Monitor secondary School Improvement Plan so that they reflect the implementation of curriculum materials and developmentally appropriate programs such as *Building Cultural Bridges*, *Flirting or Hurting*, *Facing History and Ourselves*, and other MSDE approved resources.
 - Promote a positive school climate at each school by identifying a schoolwide discipline approach in their School Improvement Plan that will include positive behavioral interventions and supports for all students.
 - Provide training and information with teaching and administrative staff on how to appropriately address cultural differences in students so that the disproportional number of African-American student suspensions is decreased.
 - Require all employees to have annual information sessions on policies related to Education That is Multicultural including procedures for staff to identify and respond to incidents of harassment, discrimination and violence.
 - Provide translated materials and resources on an ongoing basis through collaboration between the Office of Public Information, Equity Assurance, and ESOL.
 - Have the Equity Council, an advisory group to the Superintendent of Schools, identify and assists with the implementation of appropriate policy and procedures that value the cultural heritages of students and their families. The Equity Council also serves to assist the system to meet the needs of our rapidly changing demographics, especially in regard to race, ethnicity, and religion.
 - Provide selected school-based staff with annual supplemental training and resources to reduce cultural stereotyping, prejudice and bias while promoting resiliency and positive identity development with students.
 - Have the school system develop its own online, web-based course that meets the requirements for approval (3 credits) by MSDE as an Education That is Multicultural course.
 - Offer Study Circles, a nationally recognized, small group experience in race relations led by trained facilitators, yearly through the Professional Development Catalog to allow participants to explore their attitudes, feelings and actions towards persons of diverse cultural background.

- Provide ongoing professional development occurs through in-service training, activity based workshops, and CPD programs published in the Professional Development Catalog. These include, but are not limited, to:

The Culturally Inclusive Classroom
 Communicating Across Cultures
 Dealing with Name-calling in the Classroom
 Gender/Ethnic Expectations Student Achievement (GESA) workshops
 Dimensions of Learning
 Introduction and Use of Multicultural Resources
 Religion and the Schools
 Sexual Harassment: Definitions and Interventions
 Are You Being Discriminated Against? Know your rights and responsibilities.

- Have multicultural resources available to curriculum writing workshops, inservice training and other professional development activities.
- Translate materials into Chinese, Korean, Spanish, and Urdu to improve home/school communication with the largest number of non-English speaking families.
- Use results from the 2003 School Improvement Planning Survey to improve family outreach efforts beginning with the 2003-2004 school year School Improvement Plans. School improvement Teams will be able to develop strategies to:
 - a. Provide information to all families, not only to the few who attend workshops or meetings at the school building.
 - b. Enable families to share information about their family background, culture, talents, goals, and needs with the school community.
 - c. Obtain ideas from families to improve the design and content of communications such as newsletters and student progress reports.
 - d. Increase parent involvement from our diverse populations at school functions and activities.
 - e. Develop interactive school assignments that foster parent-student-school communication around high student achievement.
 - f. Utilize parents and community members to provide information on the impact of cultural stereotypes and prejudice on families, children and school success.
- The HCPSS *Comprehensive Plan for Accelerated School Improvement* identifies strategies to have each child, and all student groups, meet or exceed the rigorous performance standards that have been established. Trends and patterns data will show that, regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or gender, all students will be successful and achievement gaps will be eliminated by 2007.

- a. Beginning with the 2001-2002 school year, every child in Grades 1-5 performing below grade level in reading and mathematics had a Student Support Plan.
- b. Students in middle and high school were included in the monitoring process beginning in the 2002-2003 school year.
- c. Extended day, week, and year programs will continue for below level students for the purpose of accelerating achievement across the school system.
- d. The school improvement planning process has been redesigned to focus on the five Key Results Areas with specific indicators to determine *if we have done it well*. (The indicators under each of the Key Results Areas are presented in Chapter VI.)

Second Year of Implementation: 2004 -2005

Third Year of Implementation: 2005 -2006

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006 -2007

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

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EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES

The program described below offers a variety of strategies to meet the school system's goals. Any one strategy or a combination of strategies may be implemented in any Howard County Public School at some point during the school year. However, the data-driven needs of a school's student population and the school's school improvement plan for a specific year determine which strategies are operative at any given time.

Overview

The mission of the Office of Educational Technologies is to ensure dynamic and creative learning environments through the seamless integration of technology at all HCPSS schools. The Office of Educational Technologies provides technology support services to the instructional staff at all schools within the Howard County Public School System. The office support includes teacher training on the use of computer equipment, networks,

and applications. The focus of the training is on the integration of technology into the PreK-12 classrooms across all curricular areas. Two Educational Technology Resource teachers provide teachers at all elementary and middle schools with on-site, job embedded staff development opportunities.

At the high school level, the integration of technology across the curriculum continues in all subject areas. The Business and Computer Management Systems (BCMS) program is a high school curricular program with a focus on business and computer science. Students who participate in these courses receive a wide variety of technology instruction. An Instructional Facilitator provides support for high school teachers and the BCMS program.

A variety of programs highlight the integration of technology throughout the curriculum. Following is a brief description of some of these programs.

- Three teachers from every middle school were invited to attend four after school training sessions that focused on how to integrate technology into the middle school science classroom. In previous years, elementary teachers participated in similar workshops.
- Twenty-eight new computers were purchased this year for each of our high school science programs. These computers integrate technology into science instruction on a daily basis.
- Fifteen schools received laptops for each teacher. These laptops are used for data collection and instruction to enhance student achievement. The Educational Technology Resource teachers and the Instructional Facilitator provide monthly training sessions in each of the fifteen schools to facilitate the use of the laptops throughout the curriculum.
- A variety of online products have been purchased by the Howard County Public School System. These products provide equitable access for students to information during the school day and at home. Every school has unlimited access to *World Book Encyclopedia Online*. Elementary school students also have access to *SIRS Discoverer*. Middle school students have access to the *Gale Student Resource Center Jr.* High school students have access to the *Gale Student Resource Center Gold* and *Gale Opposing Viewpoints*. These products provide information that can be used in all subject areas in grades PreK-12.

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objectives

- Every teacher will have the skills to identify and integrate appropriate technology in their instruction.
- Every school will implement a technology component as part of their school improvement plan.
- All content areas will identify and integrate appropriate technology in their curriculum.

- Every teacher will have the skills to utilize technology as a teacher productivity tool.

Strategies

- Develop a set of minimum competencies.
- Provide staff development training on technology skills.
- Provide staff development training on appropriate integration skills in a variety of settings.
- Educational Technology staff will be members of the school SIT teams to support instructional technology.
- Work to develop an individualized technology plan for each school.
- Support the implementation of the SIT plan at each school.
- Develop technology staff development plan at each school.
- Collaborate with administrators.
- Collaborate and communicate with all curriculum offices.
- Unite content and technology experts in curriculum writing process.
- Incorporate technology into all curriculum staff development activities.
- Provide staff development training on the use of centralized data collection tools.
- Provide staff development training on the use of technology as a planning tool.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004-2005

Third Year of Implementation: 2005-2006

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006-2007

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

For the life cycle of the *Bridge to Excellence Comprehensive Master Plan*, the objectives and strategies will remain the same with appropriate modifications based on all available data sources and budget constraints. Therefore, any changes to the objectives and strategies during the second, third, fourth and fifth implementation years will be provided in the annual updates.

ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL) LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY PROGRAM

The program described below offers a variety of strategies to meet the school system's goals. Any one strategy or a combination of strategies may be implemented in any Howard County Public School at some point during the school year. However, the data-driven needs of a school's student population and the school's school improvement plan for a specific year determine which strategies are operative at any given time.

Overview

The Howard County English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program is an appropriate assistance program for meeting the needs of the Non-English Speaking (NEP) and Limited-English Speaking (LEP) students enrolled in HCPSS. Elementary and middle school students are served through a combination of self-contained classes, pullout classes and in-class assistance. High school students are served in ESOL self-contained programs available at six HCPSS high schools. Certified ESOL teachers and a team of instructional assistants staff the ESOL curricular programs. The intensity of the programs is based on a student's proficiency level, chronological age, and grade. The instructional program focuses on the four skill areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing within both social and academic contexts. The program concentrates on language development through content topics, including the development of learning strategies to promote academic success. Additional services in language development or content-area tutoring are also provided by instructional assistants who either work with students in their mainstream classes or through individualized pullout instruction. The ESOL program also supports a cadre of bilingual community outreach liaisons whose mission is to ensure that limited English proficient communities have equal access to all information and resources about the school system, services, policies, and academic activities. The bilingual community outreach liaisons partner with the schools to promote an environment that supports and reflects an understanding of and respect for cultural differences. This respect for cultural diversity begins with the moment students enroll in the HCPSS at the Office of International Student Services. The registration process, including an orientation to the HCPSS, is facilitated through the use of the registrant's native language, when necessary. In addition, the ESOL guidance counselor helps students develop awareness of academic, social, and career alternatives, assists in the resolution of conflicts arising from cross-cultural misunderstandings, and provides a cultural and educational bridge between the international student and the school community.

First Year of Implementation: 2003 – 2004

Objectives

- To increase the English proficiency of LEP children by providing high-quality language instruction educational programs that are based on scientifically based research, demonstrating effectiveness of the programs in increasing English proficiency and student academic achievement in the core academic subjects.
- To provide high-quality professional development to classroom teachers, principals, administrators, other school or community-based personnel.
- To provide community participation programs, family literacy services, and parent outreach and training activities to LEP children and their families.

Strategies

- Hire highly qualified staff to meet recommended guidelines for ESOL staffing and to implement new curricular initiatives.
- Revise ESOL curriculum for emergent and low-limited proficiency levels at the elementary and middle school to reflect content-based instruction that reinforces reading and writing skills.
- Enhance ESOL program for high-limited and advanced proficiency levels at the high school to include a collaborative teaching model based on the English 9 and American Government curriculum.
- Develop an intensified curricular program at the high school level for new immigrants with emergent English proficiency and/or interrupted instruction.
- Develop a non-credit Transition Math curriculum for LEP students who have interrupted instruction in mathematics at both the middle and high school levels.
- Design and implement an extended-day / mentor program to address the instructional needs of LEP students in language arts and mathematics.
- Expand the extended-year intervention initiatives in reading and mathematics at select SIU elementary schools to include rising pre-kindergarten and kindergarten LEP students.
- Expand the extended-year intervention initiatives in reading and mathematics at select SIU middle schools to include sessions that meet the specific needs of LEP students.
- Implement, monitor, and evaluate new curricula in select elementary, middle, and high schools.
- Acquire textbooks and instructional materials that match the objectives of the revised curricula.
- Translate mathematics textbook glossaries into four major languages: Chinese, Korean, Spanish, and Urdu.
- Make adjustments in language used on county mathematics assessments in order to make them more comprehensible to LEP students.
- Investigate appropriate technologies for increasing English language proficiency and literacy.
- Design a technology integration plan for increasing English language proficiency and literacy in language arts and mathematics.
- Provide sequential, theme-based training and job-embedded individualized professional development for non-tenured ESOL teachers, based on their needs.
- Provide bi-monthly training for ESOL teachers at the elementary and middle school in the use of strategies that reinforce literacy skill development through content-based instruction.
- Provide systematic, on-going training or job-embedded individualized training for ESOL teachers implementing new curricular initiatives, using a variety of delivery models.
- Provide systematic, on-going training or job-embedded individualized training for ESOL teachers and content-based teachers at the high school, who are involved in the collaborative teaching model, using a variety of delivery models.

- Provide systematic, on-going training or job-embedded training for ESOL instructional assistants in English language acquisition and literacy development, using a variety of delivery models.
- Provide mainstream classroom teachers and staff at SIU schools with on-going professional development in differentiating instruction for LEP students with a focus on reading or mathematics; explore a variety of delivery models for sustaining training over the course of the year.
- Provide newly hired staff with an introduction to the cultural diversity of the HCPSS at New Teacher Orientation in August.
- Provide training in differentiating instruction for LEP students for staff involved in the extended-year intervention programs in mathematics and reading.
- Provide staff at SIU schools with on-going professional development in cultural awareness and effective communication with LEP families; explore a variety of delivery models for sustaining training over the course of the year.
- Provide Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment staff with on-going professional development in differentiating instruction for LEP students, cultural awareness and effective communication with LEP families; explore a variety of delivery models for sustaining training over the course of the year.
- Provide training for ESOL teachers in the use of select software (e.g., Microsoft Office, Inspiration, Kid Pix).
- Increase ESOL Community Outreach Liaison staffing by 1.0 positions (increase to full time status a part time Spanish-speaking liaison and a part time Chinese-speaking liaison).
- Provide interpreters for parent / teacher conferences; extend the service to include all LEP parents, not just those who have students in the ESOL program.
- Provide certified interpreters for IEP meetings (Special Education) for all LEP parents.
- Provide interpreters for evening activities (e.g., 9th Grade Orientation, Back-to-School Night, Math Night, GT Orientation, Technology Magnet Orientation), using assistive-listening technology when appropriate.
- Identify and train qualified interpreters and translators.
- Provide countywide education seminars for top four language groups (Chinese, Korean, Spanish, and Urdu); explore and incorporate a variety of delivery models.
- Create videos in top four languages that relay important information about the educational process and how to assist children with their studies.
- Design and implement a bi-monthly 30-minute talk show on related school topics in both Korean and Spanish.
- Contract with an on-line service to provide a variety of school-related documents in many different languages.
- Promote LEP parents for participation on PTA councils, School Improvement Teams, and Advisory Councils.
- Provide a centralized registration process through the Office of International Student Services that facilitates communication in the registrant's native language.
- Provide an orientation to the HCPSS in the registrant's native language.
- Plan and implement programs of student counseling and referral services for LEP students and their families.

- Design and implement a family literacy program for the LEP community, using a variety of delivery models.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004 -2005

Third Year of Implementation: 2005 -2006

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006 -2007

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

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FINE ARTS

The program described below offers a variety of strategies to meet the school system's goals. Any one strategy or a combination of strategies may be implemented in any Howard County Public School at some point during the school year. However, the data-driven needs of a school's student population and the school's improvement plan for a specific year determine which strategies are operative at any given time.

Visual Arts

The Visual Art program exists at all instructional levels in Howard County under the leadership of an instructional facilitator for the visual arts and one full-time resource teacher. The art program is part of the general education program in grades one through eight. Students in grades one through five have art for approximately one hour per week; middle school students receive art instruction about one-fourth of the school year; and the high school art program is elective.

The *Visual Art K-12 Scope and Sequence* is in the process of being aligned with the current elementary, middle and high school art program guides. Current assessment initiatives are in various stages of development. The results of these assessments will determine directions for articulation between grade levels.

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objectives

- Teachers will develop assessments for students at the Grades 5 and 8 to provide articulation between elementary and middle school, and between middle and high school.

- High school teachers will finalize the development of the assessment for *Art I: Foundations of Studio Art*.

Strategies

- Conduct action research at the elementary and middle school level that focuses on narrative, perceptive and observational skills in drawing through a series of workshops with teachers.
- Conduct curriculum writing workshops with a team of high school teachers.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004-2005

Objectives

- Teachers will continue to develop assessments for students at Grades 5 and 8 to provide articulation between elementary and middle school, and between middle and high school.
- High school teachers will provide students in selected schools with exit assessments for the course *Art I: Foundations in Studio Art*.

Strategies

- Compile the results of the action research at the elementary and middle school level that focus on narrative, perceptive and observational skills in drawing.
- Provide training for high school teachers for implementing the assessment models in selected schools for *Art I: Foundations of Studio Art*.

Third Year of Implementation: 2005-2006

Objectives

- Teachers will finalize assessments for students at Grades 5 and 8.
- All students will participate in exit assessments for the course *Art I: Foundations in Studio Art*.

Strategies

- Select and refine assessment items at the Grades 5 and 8 to be developed into portfolio and test bank items.
- Provide training for all teachers for implementing the assessment models in all schools for *Art I: Foundations of Studio Art*.

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006-2007

Objectives

- Students in selected schools in Grades 5 and 8 will be assessed to determine comprehension of content and skills as determined by the MSDE ELO's for the Visual Arts.
- Teachers will establish benchmarks for the Visual Arts K-12 Program.
- All students will participate in exit assessments for the course, *Art I: Foundations of Studio Art*, to determine comprehension of content and skills as determined by the MSDE ELO's for the Visual Arts.

Strategies

- Provide training for teachers in the use of student assessments.
- Conduct workshops with teachers to evaluate the results of student assessments to determine benchmarks for the program.
- Implement the assessment models in selected schools for *Art I: Foundations of Studio Art*.

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

Objectives

- All students in Grades 5 and 8 will be assessed to determine individual comprehension of content and skills as determined by the MSDE ELO's and program needs.
- Teachers will utilize the established benchmarks for the refinement of the K-12 program.
- Teachers will develop a best practices model for all art courses at the high school level.

Strategies

- Continue to train all teachers.
- Train teachers in articulating with other instructional levels.
- Provide inservice training and dialogue opportunities for teachers at the high school level.

Music

The program described below offers a variety of strategies to meet the school system's goals. Any one strategy or a combination of strategies may be implemented in any Howard County Public School at some point during the school year. However, the data-driven needs of a school's student population and the school's school improvement plan for a specific year determine which strategies are operative at any given time.

HCPSS's music program prepares all students to meet the requirements of state and national music education standards. The program is organized to develop skills in four broad areas: perceiving and responding; historical, cultural, and social context; creative expression and production; and aesthetic criticism. All students in grades one through eight learn about music through an articulated curriculum based on the four broad areas of development. Secondary students may select from nonperformance, laboratory, and performance courses. All students participate in enrichment programs that extend the regular music curriculum.

The music program offers elective wind and percussion instrumental music instruction in grades four through twelve and elective string instruction in grades three through twelve. At all instructional levels emphasis is on the school system's goals of rigorous performance, challenging curriculum and assessments, and a stimulating learning environment. The music program supports the school system's belief that the unique and special abilities of each child must be developed.

In accordance with the school system's long-range plan for the fine arts, program, effectiveness is determined through collection and interpretation of data showing continuous improvement in:

- Numbers of students in advanced courses
- Numbers of students who qualify for the after school and Gifted and Talented ensembles
- Reduction in achievement gaps
- Increase in festival and adjudication ratings.

The music program, while considered a strong curricular area by the staff and community and an exemplary program model by other school systems, still has many needs that must be addressed in order to meet the Superintendent's goal of continuous improvement. As a natural element of the process, participation and assessment data must be collected on a systemwide basis in order to further guide the music program. As the school system moves toward full implementation of full-day kindergarten, the music program will need to develop a music curriculum component that meets the needs of the kindergarten student. Data show that over one-half of kindergarten students currently receive some

music instruction from a music specialist. However, a formal countywide curriculum for kindergarten needs to be created.

In the elementary school, teachers and administrators work together to create schedules that meet the needs of students. Data show that in some instances, students are receiving less than the prescribed amount of time for music instruction. In the band and strings program, data also reveal that scheduling of classes varies from school to school, according to available resources, facilities, teacher preference, and administrative philosophy. Scheduling guidelines/parameters need to be developed that will allow creative scheduling within each school that best meets the needs of both the curricular program and the students.

In the middle school, students are receiving music instruction in a variety of ways. Data show that not all middle school students receive general music. Additional data reveal that students receive music instruction in varying amounts of instructional time. There is a need to streamline the program so that students have equal access of programs and resources countywide.

In the high school, curriculum has been developed that aligns with state and national standards. Additional course offerings, such as Music Technology, Guitar II – IV, and Keyboard II – IV, need to have curriculum developed. Additionally, funding needs to be secured in order to provide the needed resources for these programs, especially in the area of technology. As demographic data reveal changes in student population, the music program will need to determine if all students continue to have the opportunities to participate in music course offerings.

At all levels, leadership capacity of the music staff needs to be developed. Teachers are currently engaging in a variety of leadership roles within the schools and within the music program, but the newly created Music Leadership Team will help formalize the leadership structure. Teachers need additional professional development opportunities in order to build a learning community

At the elementary level, each student in grades one through five receives general music instruction by a certified music teacher for sixty minutes per week. Students learn about and experience the elements of music in a sequential program. Additionally, third, fourth, and fifth grade students may choose to participate in a strings program that meets sixty minutes per week. In the fourth and fifth grades, students may choose to participate in a band program (woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments) that also meets sixty minutes per week.

At the middle school level, each child in grades six through eight, receives a music offering(s) each year. The traditional middle school scheduling model contains two related arts classes per grade level during the school day. Students in this model receive general music instruction every day for nine weeks. Additionally, students may choose to participate in choral, band, or strings offerings. Scheduling for these programs varies widely, but, in the traditional nine-period day, students are scheduled for full rehearsals

during an academic enrichment period. Students are also pulled from related arts classes once per week to attend sectional rehearsals.

At the high school level, students may choose to participate in music to obtain their fine arts credit or an elective credit in a variety of offerings – band(s), orchestra(s), choir(s), guitar, keyboard, music technology, or Music in Society. Most classes are performance-based and require commitment from students to participate in rehearsals and concerts held outside of school hours. Depending on the individual school, students may elect to participate in performance groups without earning a credit.

At this time, all offerings have curriculum guides that are based upon the National Standards for Music and the Maryland Essential Learner Outcomes. All course offerings meet or exceed COMAR requirements.

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objectives

- Develop leadership capacity within the music staff.
- Integrate music course offerings with school schedule model(s).
- Finalize and implement the Grade 5 General Music Assessments and Middle School General Music Assessments.
- Finalize and implement the *Instrumental Music, Grades 3 –12*, curriculum and assessment guide.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004-2005

Objectives

- Continue to develop leadership capacity within the music staff.
- Integrate music course offerings with school schedule model(s).
- Evaluate the Grade 5 General Music Assessments and Middle School General Music Assessments.
- Develop countywide assessments to be used by each level (elementary, middle, high) for the *Instrumental Music, Grades 3 – 12*, curriculum and assessment guide.
- Develop staffing a formula and parameters for kindergarten general music in anticipation of full-day kindergarten classes.
- Develop curriculum, resources, and assessments for kindergarten general music in anticipation of full-day kindergarten classes.

Third Year of Implementation: 2005-2006

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006-2007

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

Objectives

- Continue to develop leadership capacity within the music staff.
- Identify music course offerings that need to be added/deleted/revise in order to appeal to underrepresented student populations.
- Pilot countywide assessments to be used by each level (elementary, middle, high) for the *Instrumental Music, Grades 3 – 12*, curriculum and assessment guide.
- Pilot curriculum, resources, and assessments for kindergarten general music in anticipation of full-day kindergarten classes.

Strategies For All Five Implementation Years

- Continue to provide Music Leadership Team with opportunities to train others in leadership capacity.
- Continue to provide professional development opportunities, including workshops and in-service training, focusing on areas of need.
- Continue to provide funding for the Music Leadership Team to attend state and national conferences focusing on leadership.
- Music leadership will continue to analyze data to ensure music course offerings meet the needs of the students and program as well as COMAR regulations.
- Music leadership will engage community in determining needs.
- Music leadership will continue to serve alongside central office leadership and school-based administration in addressing challenges.
- Engage teachers, selected based upon interest, qualification, and need, to participate in summer workshops in order to analyze data and evaluate countywide assessments.
- Provide all staff professional development opportunities in order to ensure quality student preparation and consistent assessment delivery.
- Engage teachers, selected based upon interest, qualification, and need, to participate in summer workshops in order to create and develop initial documents.
- Provide all staff professional development opportunities in order to ensure understanding of the direction of the program.

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN AND PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

The objectives and strategies below outline the Howard County Public School System's plan for implementing full-day kindergarten and expanding the availability of pre-kindergarten programs as required by Maryland's Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act, Senate Bill 856. Requirements regarding early childhood are as follows:

- “Local school systems must implement full-day kindergarten programs by fiscal year 2008.”
- “Local school systems must make prekindergarten programs available for all (economically) “at risk” students by fiscal year 2008.”

While Howard County offers extended day kindergarten in eight (8) schools, there are currently no full-day kindergarten programs available. The proposed implementation plan reflects gradual implementation beginning in fiscal year 2005 until completion in fiscal year 2008. Full-day kindergarten will require major hiring of qualified teachers and support staff, intensive preparation of facilities to house the additional students in the program, and the purchase of furnishings and instructional materials for kindergarten classrooms. Staff training will be necessary as will be communications with County stakeholders.

The Extended Elementary Education Program (EEEP) prekindergarten is currently offered in seven schools on a half-day basis. To provide programs for the projected number of economically eligible prekindergarten students as mandated by BTE, Howard County not only has to adjust prekindergarten enrollment criteria to reflect income eligibility, but also must expand the program to more schools and sites to accommodate eligible students. Newly adopted EEEP criteria for enrollment includes an analysis of family income and maintains criteria as designated by former COMAR for prekindergarten. The EEEP prekindergarten has the capacity to serve approximately 160 students if a new site is established for the 2003-2004 school year. (Refer to Appendices II and JJ for the gradual implementation of full-day kindergarten and prekindergarten. Refer to Appendix KK for the staffing needs. Refer to Appendix LL for the systemwide communication plan. Refer to Appendix MM for the projected cost of classroom furnishings, instructional materials, and workshop and substitute wages for the full-day kindergarten and prekindergarten programs.)

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objectives

- Continue Extended Elementary Education Program (EEEP) prekindergarten at seven Title I schools (Dasher Green, Guildford, Laurel Woods, Phelps Luck, Running Brook, Swansfield, and Talbott Springs) using low-income as the first criteria.
- If funding is available, an additional Title I school will receive the EEEP prekindergarten program.
- Implementation of the full-day kindergarten will begin in the 2004-2005 school year.

Strategy

Fully implement the prekindergarten program at all sites with appropriate human and material resources.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004-2005

Objectives

- Implement full-day kindergarten in 10 schools with the highest FARMs rates.
- Implement prekindergarten program for economically eligible students at 2 additional school sites.
- Provide prekindergarten programs for economically eligible students at seven (7) Regional Early Childhood Center (RECC) programs.
- Hire approximately 30.5 additional early childhood teachers.
- Hire approximately 24 additional instructional assistants for kindergarten and prekindergarten classrooms.
- Provide 22 classroom spaces for implementing full-day kindergarten in 10 schools and 2 classroom spaces for prekindergarten.
- Provide bus transportation for additional prekindergarten students.
- Provide comprehensive communications to all county stakeholders regarding full-day kindergarten and prekindergarten.
- Provide instructional materials for new classroom spaces as well as materials for implementing the full-day kindergarten program and prekindergarten.
- Provide workshop wages for the professional development of teachers and assistants.

Third Year of Implementation: 2005-2006

Objectives

- Implement full-day kindergarten in 11 additional schools.
- Implement prekindergarten program for economically eligible students at 1 additional school site.
- Provide prekindergarten programs for economically eligible students at seven (7) Regional Early Childhood Center (RECC) programs.
- Hire approximately 50.5 additional early childhood teachers.
- Hire approximately 39 instructional assistants for kindergarten classrooms.
- Provide 43 classroom spaces for implementing full-day kindergarten in 11 schools and 1 classroom space for prekindergarten.
- Provide bus transportation for additional prekindergarten students.
- Provide comprehensive communications to all county stakeholders regarding full-day kindergarten and prekindergarten.
- Provide instructional materials for new classroom spaces as well as materials for implementing the full-day kindergarten program and prekindergarten program.
- Provide workshop wages for the professional development of teachers and assistants.

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006-2007

Objectives

- Implement full-day kindergarten in 12 additional schools.
- Hire approximately 32.5 additional early childhood teachers.
- Hire approximately 29 additional instructional assistants for kindergarten classrooms.
- Provide 27 classroom spaces for implementing full-day kindergarten in 12 schools.
- Provide bus transportation for prekindergarten students.
- Provide instructional materials for new classroom spaces as well as materials for implementing the full-day kindergarten program.
- Provide workshop wages for the professional development of teachers and assistants.

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

Objectives

- Implement full-day kindergarten in eight additional schools.
- Hire approximately 32.5 additional early childhood teachers.
- Hire approximately 27 additional instructional assistants for kindergarten classrooms.
- Provide 21 classroom spaces for implementing full-day kindergarten in 8 schools.
- Provide bus transportation for prekindergarten students.
- Provide instructional materials for new classroom spaces as well as materials for implementing the full-day kindergarten program.
- Provide workshop wages for the professional development of teachers and assistants.

Strategies For the Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Implementation Years

- Continue aggressive recruitment and hiring of early childhood certified teachers.
- Continue aggressive recruitment and hiring of highly qualified instructional assistants.
- Provide support system for instructional assistants to meet NCLB requirements for “highly qualified” status.
- Provide appropriate classroom space for schools implementing the prekindergarten and full-day kindergarten programs.
- Purchase buses for transporting prekindergarten students as needed.
- Purchase instructional materials and furniture for equipping new classroom spaces.
- Purchase instructional materials according to demands of the full-day program and prekindergarten program.

- Support professional development to take place above and beyond regular assigned hours by providing workshop wages for teachers and instructional assistants.

GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION PROGRAM

The program described below offers a variety of strategies to meet the school system's goals. Any one strategy or a combination of strategies may be implemented in any Howard County Public School at some point during the school year. However, the data-driven needs of a school's student population and the school's school improvement plan for a specific year determine which strategies are operative at any given time.

The gifted and talented education program builds on the HCPSS's *Comprehensive Plan for Accelerated School Improvement* to ensure that advanced level learners meet or exceed rigorous academic performance standards. The gifted and talented education program provides special services for students who have distinctive learning needs due to their individual capabilities. Advanced level programs are offered in academic areas, performing arts and visual arts.

The Howard County Gifted and Talented Education Program is based upon the Renzulli Schoolwide Enrichment Model. The schoolwide enrichment model and accelerated mathematics courses are offered at the elementary level. Middle Schools offer the schoolwide enrichment model with gifted and talented classes in English, mathematics, science, and social studies. After-school fine arts and advanced mathematics are also provided. In high schools, English, foreign language, mathematics, science, social studies, research, and computer science courses are offered along with after-school courses in fine arts and advanced mathematics. An advanced level internship program is offered for high school students.

Statement of Need

Gifted and talented (G/T) education program participation data is collected annually from each school. Patterns existing in the data show a marked underrepresentation of some populations in the gifted education program. The primary areas of concern and needs to be addressed include:

- Minority and female students are under represented in G/T mathematics. For example, the population of African-American students in Howard County is 19 percent; however, participation of African-American students in elementary G/T mathematics is 6 percent. The population of female students is 48%, but participation of female students in 4th grade G/T mathematics is 38 percent.
- Minority and female students are under represented in gifted program services that involve reading and writing. For example, participation of African-American students in Grade 6 G/T English classes is 7 percent while the total population

representation is 19 percent. The population of male middle school students is 52 percent; however, participation of male students in Grade 6 G/T English classes is 43 percent.

- Students of lower socio-economic status as indicated by free and reduced meal status (FARM) are under represented in gifted program services. For example, one elementary-middle school feeder system has 25 percent of its population receiving FARM while less than 1percent of that population is participating in gifted program services.
- Parents have indicated that they do not understand the gifted education services offered in the county, the methods used to identify students for participation in the services, and the role of the parent as an advocate for students with high potential. A variety of surveys and parent advisory meetings were used to gather input from parents about their perceptions of the gifted education program services. Among the themes that emerged were a need for more communication about the gifted education program services and how parents can support their children at home effectively, particularly in the area of accelerated mathematics at the elementary level.
- Professional development for teachers is needed in talent development, instructional strategies, and best practices for engaging children of diverse cultures in advanced courses. Classroom teachers also indicated a need for additional help and time to gather multicultural resources and instructional strategies.

Interventions during the 2001-2002 school year showed mixed results. An elementary summer mathematics initiative was very successful with a 26 percent minority student participation rate. Females showed a modest increase in participation. School based literary initiatives (advanced book clubs) had mixed results showing a minority participation rate of 28 percent, an increase of nearly 21 percent, but male participation fell short of the intended goal of 27 percent. The writers' initiatives demonstrated the similar patterns with underrepresented populations. There continues to be a need to introduce and increase participation of minority students in advanced level programming.

The Howard County Gifted and Talented Education Program is fully staffed with a minimum of one full-time G/T resource teacher in every elementary, middle and high school. In addition, middle and high schools are provided with additional staff with part-time responsibility for teaching gifted and talented content area classes.

Students receiving gifted education services must be taught by educators who have received specialized training and preparation in gifted education. There is a critical need for these teachers to have expertise in appropriate methods for differentiating curriculum and instruction. Research shows that preservice teachers have not developed knowledge and competencies in gifted education. Therefore, there is a need to provide ongoing preparation and comprehensive professional development in gifted education to enhance existing knowledge and skills and to update best practices. Professional development is an ongoing process and staff must be able to enter and exit the cycle of professional development activities based upon prior knowledge and experience. Training must be tailored to meet the needs of the professionals as it relates to their role in the education of gifted learners. A staff development plan for the gifted education program must be

integrated with district-based professional development programs and should include activities that build on one another to meet the varied and diverse needs of G/T instructional staff.

Another need relates to further development and implementation of differentiated curriculum for advanced-level learners. This involves modification of content, process, product, and/or learning environment. Gifted children possess certain cognitive and affective characteristics that can and must be addressed through the delivery of differentiated curriculum. Effective gifted education programming combines approaches that provide opportunities for acceleration, enrichment, and individualized instruction. G/T education program staff needs funding and administrative support for curriculum extensions through learning conferences as well as curriculum writing workshops. With the impending mandate of full day kindergarten, the Howard County Gifted Education Program will need to identify and better serve primary grade students capable of achieving high levels of performance. Students in prekindergarten through third grade are at a stage in development when it is important to recognize student strengths and talents. A program development project is researching and crafting models for G/T and general education teachers to use to identify and provide services for precocious primary grade students.

Finally, the Howard County Gifted Education Program Advisory Committee requires support to offer educational opportunities for parents and community members interested in the field of gifted education. A firm base of community knowledge, awareness, support, and advocacy is essential for maintaining special programming in the public school system. The Advisory Committee will continue to sponsor a G/T Education Parent Academy series. These Parent Academies provide a series of training workshops on topics of interest related to gifted education and parenting of gifted children. The workshops provide a foundation of knowledge and community awareness that serve the entire school community as it advocates for continued support for gifted education programming in the Howard County Public School System.

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objectives

- Develop a data collection and analysis system that disaggregated achievement data on the MSA, HSA, AP, MFMT, and MFRT assessments for G/T students.
- Develop rigorous curriculum and assessments for K-12 G/T program offerings.
- Eight percent of African-American students will participate in elementary G/T mathematics.
- Eight percent of African-American and Hispanic students will participate in elementary G/T enrichment offerings.
- Eight percent of African-American and Hispanic students will participate in one or more Middle School G/T class.

- Develop a data collection and analysis system that disaggregates participation data for High School G/T and AP students by gender and ethnicity
- Eight percent of the African-American and Hispanic students will participate in one or more High School G/T classes.
- Eight percent of the African-American students will participate in one or more Advanced Placement class for which they take the AP Subject Examination.
- Thirty percent of G/T resource teachers will have a graduate degree or certification or district certification in gifted education.
- Thirty percent of G/T content teachers in middle and high schools will have a graduate degree or certification in the relevant content area.
- Develop a comprehensive staff development plan for all teachers working with advanced-level students.
- Implement a G/T Parent Academy to provide the community with information about gifted education and the HCPSS Gifted and Talented Education program.
- Implement G/T Education Program parent orientations in every school in the early fall/spring.
- Implement a variety of informational venues that explain the mission, goals, and components of the HCPSS G/T program.
- Implement a variety of showcase events that allow community members and school staff to celebrate the accomplishments of students participating in G/T program offerings.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004-2005

Objectives

- Collect and disaggregate achievement data on the MSA, HSA, AP, MFMT, and MFRT assessments for G/T students.
- Develop rigorous curriculum and assessments for K-12 G/T program offerings.
- Ten percent of African-American students will participate in elementary G/T mathematics.
- Ten percent of African-American and Hispanic students will participate in elementary G/T enrichment offerings.
- Ten percent of African-American and Hispanic students will participate in one or more Middle School G/T class.
- Collect and analyze disaggregated participation data for High School G/T and AP students by gender and ethnicity
- Ten percent of the African-American and Hispanic students will participate in one or more High School G/T classes
- Eight percent of the African-American students will participate in one or more Advanced Placement class for which they take the AP Subject Examination
- Forty percent of G/T resource teachers will have a graduate degree or certification or district certification in gifted education.
- Thirty percent of G/T content teachers in middle and high schools will have a graduate degree or certification in the relevant content area.
- Implement a comprehensive staff development plan for 30% of teachers working with advanced-level students.

- Implement the G/T Parent Academy to provide the community with information about gifted education and the HCPSS Gifted and Talented Education program.
- Implement G/T Education Program parent orientations held in every school in the early fall/spring.
- Implement a variety of informational venues that explain the mission, goals, and components of the HCPSS G/T program.
- By the year 2007-2008, there will be a variety of showcase events that allow community members and school staff to celebrate the accomplishments of students participating in G/T program offerings.

Third Year of Implementation: 2005-2006

Objectives

- Collect and disaggregate achievement data on the MSA, HSA, AP, MFMT, and MFRT assessments for G/T students.
- Develop rigorous curriculum and assessments for K-12 G/T program offerings.
- By the year 2007-2008, twelve percent of African-American students will participate in elementary G/T mathematics.
- By the year 2007-2008, twelve percent of African-American and Hispanic students will participate in elementary G/T enrichment offerings.
- Twelve percent of African-American and Hispanic students will participate in one or more Middle School G/T class.
- Collect and analyze disaggregated participation data for High School G/T and AP students by gender and ethnicity.
- Twelve percent of the African-American and Hispanic students will participate in one or more High School G/T classes.
- Nine percent of the African-American students will participate in one or more Advanced Placement class for which they take the AP Subject Examination
- Fifty percent of G/T resource teachers will have a graduate degree or certification or district certification in gifted education.
- Fifty percent of G/T content teachers in middle and high schools will have a graduate degree or certification in the relevant content area.
- Implement a comprehensive staff development plan for thirty percent of teachers working with advanced-level students.
- Implement a G/T Parent Academy to provide the community with information about gifted education and the HCPSS Gifted and Talented Education program.
- By the year 2007-2008, there will be G/T Education Program parent orientations held in every school in the early fall/spring.
- By the year 2007-2008, there will be a variety of informational venues that explain the mission, goals, and components of the HCPSS G/T program.
- By the year 2007-2008, there will be a variety of showcase events that allow community members and school staff to celebrate the accomplishments of students participating in G/T program offerings.

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006-2007

Objectives

- Collect and disaggregate achievement data on the MSA, HSA, AP, MFMT, and MFRT assessments for G/T students.
- Develop rigorous curriculum and assessments for K-12 G/T program offerings.
- Fourteen percent of African-American students will participate in elementary G/T mathematics.
- Fourteen percent of African-American and Hispanic students will participate in elementary G/T enrichment offerings.
- Fourteen of African-American and Hispanic students will participate in one or more Middle School G/T class.
- Collect and analyze disaggregated participation data for High School G/T and AP students by gender and ethnicity
- Fourteen percent of the African-American and Hispanic students will participate in one or more High School G/T classes
- Nine percent of the African-American students will participate in one or more Advanced Placement class for which they take the AP Subject Examination
- Seventy percent of G/T resource teachers will have a graduate degree or certification or district certification in gifted education.
- Seventy percent of G/T content teachers in middle and high schools will have a graduate degree or certification in the relevant content area.
- Implement a comprehensive staff development plan for thirty percent of teachers working with advanced-level students.
- Implement a G/T Parent Academy to provide the community with information about gifted education and the HCPSS Gifted and Talented Education program.
- By the year 2007-2008, there will be G/T Education Program parent orientations held in every school in the early fall/spring.
- By the year 2007-2008, there will be a variety of informational venues that explain the mission, goals, and components of the HCPSS G/T program.
- By the year 2007-2008, there will be a variety of showcase events that allow community members and school staff to celebrate the accomplishments of students participating in G/T program offerings.

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

Objectives

- Collect and disaggregate achievement data on the MSA, HSA, AP, MFMT, and MFRT assessments for G/T students.
- Develop rigorous curriculum and assessments for K-12 G/T program offerings.
- Fifteen percent of African-American students will participate in elementary G/T mathematics.

- Fifteen percent of African-American and Hispanic students will participate in elementary G/T enrichment offerings.
- Fifteen percent of African-American and Hispanic students will participate in one or more Middle School G/T class.
- Collect and analyze disaggregated participation data for High School G/T and AP students by gender and ethnicity
- Fifteen percent of the African-American and Hispanic students will participate in one or more High School G/T classes
- Ten percent of the African-American students will participate in one or more Advanced Placement class for which they take the AP Subject Examination
- By the year 2007-2008, 100 percent of G/T resource teachers will have a graduate degree or certification or district certification in gifted education.
- One hundred percent of G/T content teachers in middle and high schools will have a graduate degree or certification in the relevant content area.
- Implement a comprehensive staff development plan for thirty percent of teachers working with advanced-level students.
- Implement a G/T Parent Academy to provide the community with information about gifted education and the HCPSS Gifted and Talented Education program.
- Implement G/T Education Program parent orientations held in every school in the early fall/spring.
- Implement a variety of informational venues that explain the mission, goals, and components of the HCPSS G/T program.
- Implement a variety of showcase events that allow community members and school staff to celebrate the accomplishments of students participating in G/T program offerings.

Strategies For All Five Implementation Years

- Conduct curriculum and assessment writing workshops for elementary, middle, and high school G/T program offerings.
- Develop and implement advanced-level mathematics interventions at the primary level that recognize and develop talent in students of various cultures.
- Develop and implement advanced-level instructional seminars for grades K-5 that recognize and develop talent in students of various cultures.
- Develop and implement a G/T Summer Institute for Talent Development that recognize and develop talent in students of various cultures..
- Develop and implement advanced-level offerings that recognize and develop talent in students of various cultures.
- Develop and conduct student placement review meetings with GT resource teachers, classroom teachers and administrators to recommend students for potential and appropriate placement in GT content area classes.
- Collaborate with the Office of Assessments, the Office of Data Processing, high school registrars, and data clerks to collect and disaggregate achievement data for G/T students on state assessments.
- Develop and implement advanced-level offerings that recognize and develop talent in students of various cultures.

- Develop and conduct student articulation review meetings with GT resource teachers, classroom teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators to recommend students for potential and appropriate placement in GT and AP classes.
- Develop and implement advanced-level offerings in grades K-8 that recognize and develop talent in students of various cultures.
- Develop and conduct student articulation review meetings with GT resource teachers, classroom teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators to recommend students for potential and appropriate placement in GT and AP classes.
- Provide professional development opportunities for teachers in vertical teaming and AP course instruction that are effective in improving minority student participation.
- Collaborate with the Chief Academic Officer's Leadership Team to communicate the need for local certification for teachers providing instruction in gifted and talented course offerings.
- Collaborate with local institutions of higher education to promote and increase graduate course offerings and certification in gifted education.
- Develop a comprehensive documentation system to gather qualification data of staff who teach G/T and AP courses in middle and high school.
- Develop a comprehensive district G/T certification process.
- Collaborate with local institutions of higher education to promote and increase graduate course offerings and certification in relevant content areas.
- Develop a comprehensive district G/T certification process.
- Implement a differentiated staff development plan to meet the professional development needs of G/T resource teacher staff.
- Provide opportunities for G/T staff to attend professional conferences on gifted education.
- Develop an annual Parent Academy Series of meeting
- Develop an exemplary G/T parent orientation presentation (videotape, *PowerPoint*) for elementary, middle and high school levels.
- Revise current documents and information venues to reflect the current mission, goals, and components of the HCPSS G/T program.
- There will be an annual countywide showcase event in April (Gifted Education Month).
- Each elementary and middle school will have annual high quality enrichment fair in the spring.
- Conduct an annual G/T High School Learning Conference.
- Conduct an annual G/T Middle School Learning Exposition.

HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Five-Year Plan for School Year 2003-2004

Through School Year 2007-2008

The unprecedented growth in Howard County over the past decade equated to a 35% increase in population. Along with the strengths and contributions associated with the new residents came some urban environmental circumstances. Some of the children and youth, who are at risk of academic failure deal with family instability, poverty, and homelessness. According to the Howard County Department of Citizen Services, the lack of affordable housing attributes to the increase in homelessness.

Despite the perception of affluence in Howard County, the number of people who are homeless continues to increase. Children comprise one-half of Howard County's homeless population. Placing families in temporary housing is one of the county's services. According to the Howard County Department of Citizen Services, the following table provides data demonstrating an increase in the number of total bed-nights provided and the number of people turned away over the past two years.

Howard County's Increase in the Homeless Population

Total Number of	1999	2001	Percentage of Change
Bed-nights	30,294	45,195	50%
Turn-aways	2,172	3,067	41%

Over the past three years, the number of homeless children provided emergency shelter in Howard County increased by 20 percent from 279 children in 1999 to 335 children in 2001. Although the need for shelter increased 20 percent the number of children receiving services through the Howard County Homeless Education Assistance Program (HEAP) increased

43 percent from 122 children in 1999 to 174 children in 2001. Beginning in July 2002, the HCPSS' pupil personnel staff began to collect data on displaced children forced into living in multiple family situations. This change in the method of identifying and collecting data on homeless children, the McKinney-Vento Act mandate, is expected to dramatically increase the number of children in need of homeless services.

The HCPSS has developed a coordinated system to:

- Identify students in shelters and in multiple family situations who are homeless.
- Maintain communication between the home school and the homeless family.
- Assure that the needed services or referrals are provided.
- Maintain accurate records.

Howard County's *Comprehensive Plan for Accelerated School Improvement* has made a commitment to educate *all* students, one at a time. For homeless children and youth, extended-day, -week, and -year programs offer opportunities for homeless students who are performing below grade level to reach standards. Through Student Support Plans (SSPs) for Acceleration, the elimination of the achievement gap for the homeless population remains a priority.

The HCPSS will provide the following services to meet the identified needs of homeless children and youth:

- Immediate enrollment in school
- Equal access to educational programs
- Inclusion in existing programs
- Development of an effective home/school partnership
- Professional development for classroom teachers to increase their sensitivity to homelessness
- Coordination with community agencies
- Transportation.

The school system is committed to assessing the effectiveness of the services provided to homeless students. However, interrupted school attendance during a marking period, student availability when assessments occur, limited resources to promote a home learning environment, and the stress associated with homeless are just a few of the obstacles that create barriers to collecting the data needed to assess the academic achievement of Howard County's homeless school population.

Reference: *Howard County's McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act of 2001 Grant Proposal*, September 24, 2002.

LIBRARY MEDIA

The program described below offers a variety of strategies to meet the school system's goals. Any one strategy or a combination of strategies may be implemented in any Howard County Public School at some point during the school year. However, the data-driven needs of a school's student population and the school's school improvement plan for a specific year determine which strategies are operative at any given time.

Overview

The mission of the Howard County School Library Media Program is to provide opportunities for students and staff to become effective users of ideas and information. This mission directly supports the Howard County Public School System mission and the school system goals.

Learning and teaching, information access and delivery, and program administration are the essential elements of the school library media program. These elements suggest the roles that the library media specialist plays in supporting student learning. The functions and services necessary to the learning and teaching and the information access roles promote that learning directly. Program administration activities offer underlying organization support to the program.

The library media specialist is a primary leader in the school's use of all kinds of technologies – both instructional and informational – to enhance learning. Library media specialists work collaboratively with teachers to design student learning experiences that focus on authentic learning, information literacy, and curricular mastery. By being knowledgeable about both the structure and presentation of information and about the operation of the devices that deliver that information, the library media specialist brings a broad expertise to teachers' and administrators' discussions of technological issues. The library media specialist draws upon that unique expertise to play a leading role in collaborating with the learning community to plan, design, implement, and continually refine an effective, student-centered technology plan. Such a plan focuses on helping students and others become independent, lifelong learners who use information and information technology responsibly and ethically.

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objectives

- Provide integrated instruction to foster competence and stimulate interest in reading, viewing and using information and ideas.
- Provide support for the improvement of the library media program.
- Develop and implement a curriculum that ensures a program of instruction in library media and technology skills that will support classroom instruction in all areas.
- Provide resources and materials that support classroom instruction in all areas.
- Promote the library media program to the community.
- Provide library media materials and inservice courses that will help students and library media specialists develop an appreciation for the achievement, problems, and aspirations of all people in a culturally diverse society.
- Provide online resources for library media specialists.

Strategies

- Schedule school visits to discuss how to integrate library media skills throughout the curriculum.
- Idea sharing sessions for each level – elementary, middle and high school.
- Work with Coordinators, Instructional Facilitators, and Resource Teachers from all curricular areas to provide resources for teachers and students through the Central AV Library.
- Familiarize library media specialists with Exemplary Program documents.
- Provide staff development for changing fixed schedules to flexible schedules.
- Provide library media assistants at all schools.
- Encourage current Howard County employees to become certified as library media specialists through county organized cohort groups.
- Provide staff development training for library media specialists and library media assistants/secretaries.

- Participate in curriculum writing workshops.
- Provide funding for schools with low student-to book ratios.
- Provide access to on-line resources for all students.
- Provide the “Best of the Year” order list for all library media specialists.
- Develop recommended summer reading lists in conjunction with the Howard County Library.
- Maintain the Library Media portion of the HCPSS website.
- Conduct meetings of the Library Media Advisory Council, which is composed of community and staff.
- Provide bibliographies and suggestions for ordering culturally diverse materials.
- Provide online professional materials (procedural information, lesson plan ideas, etc.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004 -2005

Third Year of Implementation: 2005 -2006

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006 -2007

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007 -2008

For the life cycle of the *Bridge to Excellence Comprehensive Master Plan*, the objectives and strategies will remain the same with appropriate modifications based on all available data sources and budget constraints. Therefore, any changes to the objectives and strategies during the second, third, fourth and fifth implementation years will be provided in the annual updates.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The program described below offers a variety of strategies to meet the school system’s goals. Any one strategy or a combination of strategies may be implemented in any Howard County Public School at some point during the school year. However, the data-driven needs of a school’s student population and the school’s school improvement plan for a specific year determine which strategies are operative at any given time.

Overview

A Leadership Task Force has been working during the 2002-2003 school year to develop a professional development plan that focuses on building capacity of all employees in their current positions and outlines succession planning for all levels of leaders from teacher to assistant superintendent. Upon completion of the Professional Development Plan, this section will reflect the future direction of leadership development for Howard County Public School System.

The HCPSS is committed to providing opportunities for professional development that will ensure increases in student achievement. Systemic and/or site-based professional development activities are designed to advance the knowledge, skills, abilities and

attitudes of the teaching and administrative staff in ways that positively impact student achievement.

The school system uses a professional development model based on the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) standards. These standards outline a model that includes three categories: content, context and process. (Refer to Appendix Z.) Professional development is job-embedded and targeted for individual staff and teams to learn and implement new instructional practices. This model also includes support and follow-up to staff regarding the use of researched-based practices resulting in improved student achievement.

Professional development is the core of district and school improvement efforts. Professional development must align with school improvement plans by asking what the adults must learn in order to help students learn. The *Management and Performance Review of the Howard County Public School System* that was completed in October 2001 indicated the need to conduct a comprehensive assessment of professional development needs using multiple sources of input and develop mechanisms to monitor effectively the use of professional development. A process is needed to determine gaps in student and staff performance and identify what staff skills and competencies are necessary to close the performance gap. This needs assessment will inform the planning process and assist with the implementation of highly effective professional development that is aligned with the district's goals.

The HCPSS's District Planning Team (DPT) set forth three priorities, two of which are supported by highly effective professional development: increased student achievement and workforce leadership development. A leadership task force has been working during the 2002-2003 school year to develop a professional development plan that focuses on building capacity of all employees in their current positions. It outlines succession planning for all levels of staff from aspiring leaders to the assistant superintendent. Upon completion of the Professional Development Plan, this section will reflect the future direction of leadership development for Howard County Public School System.

Finally, in the year 2002-2003, a professional development facilitator for electronic learning (e-learning) was hired to develop and implement an on-line Collaborative Learning Community (CLC) to support the needs of instructional staff as they work toward reaching the targets set in the *Comprehensive Plan for Accelerated School Improvement*. This CLC will connect staff immediately with assistance and collaborative resources that support highly qualified teaching.

The following objectives and strategies for professional development for the next five years are divided into three sections: instructional staff, leadership development and e-learning.

Instructional Staff

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objectives

- Highly effective systemic professional development will be designed based upon the data from a systemic needs assessment
- All professional development will be aligned with the long-range systemic professional development plan
- All instructional and resources materials available to HCPSS staff through the Teacher Resource Center will be aligned with the long-range systemic professional development plan
- Systemic professional development will be designed based on identified staff needs from the first administration of a system-wide survey that targets the HCPSS Goal 2, which is to provide a safe and nurturing school environment that values our diversity and commonality.

Strategies

- Develop a systemic professional development needs assessment for instructional staff to establish tracking of staff certification and gap analysis of needs.
- Develop varied (online, traditional courses, multiple delivery modes) professional development opportunities to address the needs identified from analysis of the needs assessment.
- Coordinate approval of all professional development offerings to ensure that these offerings are aligned with the goals of the district.
- Design all professional development offerings using the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) standards and/or content specific standards.
- Develop and distribute the district master calendar of systemwide professional development offerings.
- Provide input for the development of the Professional Development Course and Workshop Catalog to ensure alignment with the long range systemic professional development plan, teacher certification and re-certification needs.
- Develop standardized format to be used for all professional development evaluations/feedback to facilitate data analysis and tracking of professional growth.
- Collect multiple types of data, both quantitative and qualitative, for evaluation and analysis purposes.
- Coordinate preparation of evaluation summaries for all systemic professional development offerings.
- Use analysis of evaluation summaries to make improvement in professional development offerings.
- Develop a process for monitoring and documenting the alignment of the school improvement plan(s) professional development activities with teacher and student outcomes.
- Develop a plan so that participants provide input to the professional development design process.

- Develop a process to ensure that the materials and resources available through the Teacher Resource Center are aligned with the long range systemic professional development plan.
- Revise the new teacher induction program to ensure site-based and systemic support for all new teaching staff.
- Analyze the systemic data obtained from the systemwide survey to determine instructional staff professional development needs related to a providing as safe and nurturing school environment (i.e. classroom management, bullying, diversity training).

Second Year of Implementation: 2004 -2005

Third Year of Implementation: 2005 -2006

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006 -2007

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007 -2008

For the life cycle of the *Bridge to Excellence Comprehensive Master Plan*, the objectives and strategies will remain the same with appropriate modifications based on all available data sources and budget constraints. Therefore, any changes to the objectives and strategies during the second, third, fourth and fifth implementation years will be provided in the annual updates.

Leadership

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objectives

- A leadership development plan will be developed for the following groups of professionals: aspiring leaders, team leaders/instructional leaders, resource teachers, instructional facilitators, coordinators, directors, assistant principals and principals with a timeline for phasing in each of the components.
- The leadership of the School Improvement Unit (SIU) will participate in targeted professional development on a regular basis.
- The Administrators Guidebook for School Improvement Planning will be updated on a yearly basis to support the school improvement planning process in all schools.

Strategies

- Develop specific plans for each job category based on recommendations from the leadership task force in 2002-2003.
- Develop a timeline for implementation of the leadership development program for each of the job categories.
- Continue partnerships with Loyola College and Johns Hopkins University to provide opportunities for Master's degrees and certification in administration and supervision.
- Use Title II grant funding to continue the "Coaching for Results" project for a determined number of current assistant principals.

- Update the job description for team leaders/instructional leaders to include mentoring and support of new teaching staff and data based instructional decision making.
- Design and implement a study group for the leadership in the SIU based on a current instructional/leadership issue.
- Provide regular, targeted professional development to the leadership of the SIU.
- Conduct bi-annual professional development sessions for the Division of Curriculum, Instruction and Administration
- Provide support for out of county professional development opportunities for Directors and Coordinators (i.e. attend professional conferences, academies, leadership coaching and/or 360 degree feedback processes).

Second Year of Implementation: 2004 -2005

Third Year of Implementation: 2005 -2006

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006 -2007

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007 -2008

For the life cycle of the *Bridge to Excellence Comprehensive Master Plan*, the objectives and strategies will remain the same with appropriate modifications based on all available data sources and budget constraints. Therefore, any changes to the objectives and strategies during the second, third, fourth and fifth implementation years will be provided in the annual updates.

E-learning

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objectives

- A CLC will be created for instructional staff that blends online communication and collaboration tools with curriculum and professional development resources
- At New Teacher Orientation (NTO), staff new to the HCPSS will be introduced to the CLC to develop awareness of the resources and support available.
- All essential curriculum documents will be centralized on a single, searchable document repository that is a component of the CLC
- All instructional staff will use a unified data source (Open District) to make instructional decisions based on student data
- The needs of instructional staff will be analyzed electronically and matched with professional development courses and training.
- All system leaders will receive awareness training on the resources and supports available through the CLC.

Strategies

- Develop a process to track staff certification to satisfy the requirements as stated in the *No Child Left Behind Act*.
- Determine teachers' needs through self assessments that are available online through the CLC.
- Provide training sessions to school based administrators and central office personnel in the use of the resources and support on the CLC.
- Design and implement professional development sessions at New Teacher Orientation so that new staff is aware of the resources and support available on the CLC.
- Provide training to team leaders/instructional leaders regarding the resources and support available on the collaborative learning community.
- Evaluate the curriculum writing process to include a process for updating the document repository with the essential curriculum documents.
- Create methods for teachers and administrators for input and analysis of student data.
- Provide training to instructional staff and administrators on the use of the electronic Student Support Plan (SSP) for instructional decision making.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004 -2005

Third Year of Implementation: 2005 -2006

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006 -2007

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007 -2008

For the life cycle of the *Bridge to Excellence Comprehensive Master Plan*, the objectives and strategies will remain the same with appropriate modifications based on all available data sources and budget constraints. Therefore, any changes to the objectives and strategies during the second, third, fourth and fifth implementation years will be provided in the annual updates.

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLANS—SYSTEMWIDE

The program described below offers a variety of strategies to meet the school system's goals. Any one strategy or a combination of strategies may be implemented in any Howard County Public School at some point during the school year. However, the data-driven needs of a school's student population and the school's school improvement plan for a specific year determine which strategies are operative at any given time.

During the 2002-2003 school year, the Curriculum, Instruction, and Administration (CIA) Department analyzed the data presented in the needs assessment section of this document and identified four program needs. These needs are listed below in alphabetical order:

- Computational Fluency

- Content Literacy
- Gifted and Talented Program Participation
- Standard Achievement Test (SAT) Participation

To provide continuous improvement at the system level in each of these identified program areas, each CIA staff member joined one of the four teams. The teams met twice during the school year and will continue to work as program improvement teams in a manner similar to school improvement teams. The work of these teams will be presented to the Board of Education, the schools, and the community as program improvement plans and results develop. The five-year plans for each program improvement team follow.

COMPUTATIONAL FLUENCY

Improvement Plan Purposes

In order for all students to achieve computational fluency, the Elementary and Secondary Offices of Mathematics will focus on improving student achievement on the Maryland Functional Mathematics Test (MFMT). The purpose of this improvement plan is to ensure that at least 75 percent of all students in Grade 6 pass the MFMT on the first official administration; 85 percent of all Grade 7 students pass the MFMT, and 97 percent of students in Grade 8 pass the MFMT. A second purpose is to increase the percentage of African American and Hispanic students in above grade level mathematics classes. With an increase in participation, it is anticipated that these students will pass the MFMT on the first administration. A third focus of this plan is to enhance the elementary and secondary programs to increase the percentage of all subgroups passing rates for the first administration of the MFMT.

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objectives

- By Spring 2004, at least 75 percent of the on and above grade level Grade 5 students will pass the spring Grade 6 MFMT.
- Each middle and feeder elementary school with a 2002 pass rate of less than 70 percent will show improvement in the 2003-2004 school year MFMT.
- By Fall 2003, there will be a 5 percent increase in the Level I MFMT pass rates of the diploma bound FARMS, African-American, Hispanic, and special education students.

Strategies

- The elementary office will highlight the MFMT outcomes in the Essential Curriculum
K – 5.

- The elementary coordinator will provide professional development for fifth grade teachers on the domains of the MFMT.
- The middle school mathematics office will revise the middle school mathematics curriculum to include all MFMT outcomes.
- The elementary and secondary coordinators will disseminate summer packets to Grade 5 students, *What Every Student Should Know When They Enter Grade 6*.
- The elementary coordinator will disseminate summer packets to all students in Grades K – 4 to provide continuous practice during the summer months.
- Student Support Plans (SSPs) for Acceleration will be written for students who do not pass Fall 2003 Level I MFMT.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004-2005

Objectives

- By spring 2005, 95 percent of the Grade 5 Gifted and Talented students will pass the MFMT administered to them at the end of Grade 5.
- By spring 2005, the percent of diploma bound FARMS, African-American, Hispanic and special education students passing the Grade 6 MFMT will increase by at least 15 percent.

Strategies

The elementary and secondary coordinators will collaboratively implement the following objectives:

- The elementary office, in conjunction with the gifted and talented office, will revise the G/T curriculum to highlight the MFMT outcomes and incorporate the objectives from the Maryland State Voluntary Curriculum.
- The elementary coordinator and the gifted and talented resource teacher will provide inservice training on the administration of the MFMT.
- The elementary and secondary coordinators will disseminate the MFMT Handbook for elementary teachers to all G/T resource teachers.
- Seventh and eighth grade students who have not passed the MFMT will be identified for participation in extended-day and extended -year programs.

Third Year of Implementation: 2005-2006

Objective

The Grade 8 pass rate for African-American and Hispanic students will reflect continuous improvement.

Strategy

Administrators and teachers will identify Grade 7 and Grade 8 students who need academic interventions. Possible interventions will include an additional mathematics class, after-school tutoring, and/or extended-year instruction.

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006-2007

Objectives

- The Grade 6 pass rate on the MFMT will be 75 percent on the first official administration; 85 percent of all Grade 7 students, and 97 percent of the Grade 8. All subgroups will show continuous improvement on the first official administration.
- Based on needs as indicated by the achievement levels of all students and subgroups, objectives will be adjusted and revised.

Strategy

Students who have not passed the MFMT will be identified for the extended-day and extended-year instructional will have an SSP for interventions.

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

Objective

Objectives will be adjusted and revised based on needs as indicated by the achievement levels of all students and subgroups.

Strategy

Professional development on strategies to help students who have not passed the MFMT will be provided for teachers.

CONTENT LITERACY

The program described below offers a variety of strategies to meet the school system's goals. Any one strategy or a combination of strategies may be implemented in any Howard County Public School at some point during the school year. However, the data-driven needs of a school's student population and the school's school improvement plan for a specific year determine which strategies are operative at any given time.

Elementary

The purpose of this plan are to improve the informational reading processes for students who have not yet met grade level expectations and to support continuous improvement for all students.

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objective

Sixty (60) percent of diploma-bound students in each subgroup in Grades 3-5 will meet or exceed state standards (TBD) for the informational portion of the MSA.

Strategies

- School-based professional development support will be provided by reading specialists, resource teachers, and reading support teachers using the trainer-of-trainer model.
- Documents will be provided to all schools identifying books that support social studies and science content units to provide resources.
- School improvement plan goals will be shared with all administrators for accountability.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004-2005

Objective

Seventy (70) percent of diploma-bound students in each subgroup in Grades 3-5 will meet or exceed state standards (TBD) for the informational portion of the MSA.

Strategies

In addition to ongoing strategies identified for the previous year, the following will be implemented:

- Book clubs will be implemented in Tier I/Tier II schools and at reading specialist meetings for professional development.
- Local informational reading assessments will be developed for use in all schools, Grades 3-5 to provide resources.
- Administrators will receive necessary background information and will be trained to observe exemplary reading content instruction for accountability.

Third Year of Implementation: 2005-2006

Objective

Eighty-five (85) percent of diploma-bound students in each subgroup in Grades 3-5 will meet or exceed state standards (TBD) for the informational portion of the MSA.

Strategies

In addition to ongoing strategies identified for the previous year, the following will be implemented:

- A teacher cadre will be implemented to provide workshops in content reading instruction at central locations for professional development.
- Central office personnel will purchase trade books for all schools to support content reading instruction by providing resources.
- Teachers will identify objectives related to content literacy in their Appendix D documents for accountability.

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006-2007

Objective

One hundred (100) percent of diploma-bound students in each subgroup in Grades 3-5 will meet or exceed state standards (TBD) for the informational portion of the MSA.

Strategies

In addition to ongoing strategies identified for the previous year, the following will be implemented:

- A Continuing Professional Development (CPD) course will be designed to address content literacy instruction.
- CD-ROMS and other resources will be developed with exemplary content reading lessons demonstrated.
- Education will be provided to various family and community agencies to support the content literacy initiative for accountability.

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

Objective

Objectives will be adjusted and revised based on needs as indicated by the achievement of all subgroups.

Strategies

Strategies will be revised and implemented based on student needs as indicated by the achievement of all subgroups.

Secondary

The secondary systemic improvement plan in content literacy aims to improve the content literacy skills of all students, but especially those students in under-served populations in the school systems School Improvement Unit (SIU) schools. While this plan is still under development, Howard County's approach will be to partner with the Strategic Literacy Initiative of West Ed (Oakland, California) in building professional learning communities in every secondary school in the district, beginning with the seven SIU secondary schools in 2003-2004 school year.

The yearly pattern will include two parts—intensive summer institutes equipping school teams of teachers to implement Reading Apprenticeship in content area classrooms, and yearlong, follow-up projects. Throughout the year, participants will conduct action research on classroom applications of their summer learnings, followed by professional portfolios. Additionally, participants will contribute to an electronic learning community of ideas, resources, and materials for promoting strategic content literacy in the subject areas.

First Year of Implementation, 2003–2004

Objective

By 2004, each of the seven SIU schools will have at least 70 percent of their students (in all subgroups) scoring at or above proficient in reading on the MSA at Grades 8 and 10.

Second Year of Implementation, 2004–2005

Objective

By 2005, each of the seven SIU schools will have at least 80 percent of their students, in all subgroups, scoring at or above proficient in reading on the MSA at Grades 8 and 10.

Third Year of Implementation, 2005–2006

Objective

By 2006, each of the seven SIU schools will have at least 85 percent of their students, in all subgroups, scoring at or above proficient in reading on the MSA at Grades 8 and 10.

Fourth Year of Implementation, 2006–2007

Objective

By 2007, 100 percent of schools will have at least 80 percent of their students, in all subgroups, scoring at or above proficient in reading on the MSA at Grades 8 and 10.

Fifth Year of Implementation, 2007–2008

Objective

By 2008, 100 percent of schools will have at least 90 percent of their students, in all subgroups, scoring at or above proficient in reading on the MSA at Grades 8 and 10.

Strategies for All Five Implementation Years

- Summer Institute for non-SIU schools in English, ESOL, mathematics, social studies, science, special education, and other subjects as interested and action research projects with all previous participants will continue.
- The collaborative, electronic learning community will continue as a primary vehicle for communication, support, documentation, and publication for participants in the Secondary Content Literacy Initiative.
- The co-teaching pilot implemented at Hammond and Oakland Mills High Schools will continue and will be expanded.
- Improved text resources will be available for content teachers to increase reading and to engage students.
- High school teachers will be able to use Grade 8 results of Degrees of Reading Power assessment to provide appropriate reading materials and to increase the quality and quantity of student reading.
- A dedicated reading specialist will be provided as a content reading resource to each secondary SIU school.

GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

The five-year implementation plan for the Gifted and Talented program is presented in detail in Chapter V: CROSS PROGRAM THEMES. (Refer to pages 75-83 for description.) The following are the objectives for systemwide improvement.

- By school year 2007-2008, 100 percent of students participating in the G/T program offerings will achieve exemplary status as defined by state and local assessments

- By school year 2007-2008, 15 percent of all underrepresented populations of students will participate in G/T program offerings.
- By school year 2007-2008, 100 percent of G/T staff will be highly qualified as defined by the National Association for Gifted Children in accordance with gifted education program standards.
- By school year 2007-2008, there will be full implementation of a comprehensive plan for the gifted and talented education program's communication and community involvement.

SAT PARTICIPATION AND ACHIEVEMENT SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The program described below offers a variety of strategies to meet the school system's goals. Any one strategy or a combination of strategies may be implemented in any Howard County Public School at some point during the school year. However, the data-driven needs of a school's student population and the school's school improvement plan for a specific year determine which strategies are operative at any given time.

The purpose of this improvement plan is to support HCPSS high schools as they work to increase the number of students who meet or exceed the school system's expectations for participation while maintaining high achievement on the Standard Achievement Test (SAT).

HCPSS has set a standard that at least 80 percent of students graduating in a given year will participate in SAT testing. Although the system does not currently have an achievement standard, schools have been asked to strive for at least 75 percent of participating students to earn a combined SAT verbal and mathematics score at or above 1,000. Subgroups with achievement well below system expectations include African Americans and Hispanics.

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objective

- By June 2004, the percentage of students in the Class of 2004 taking the SAT will remain at 80 percent, while maintaining or improving current achievement levels. Subgroup participation will improve such that all subgroups have at least 50 percent of students taking SAT I before graduation.
- By June 2004, the percentage of students in the Class of 2004 with a combined score of 1,000 or more on the SAT will increase from 66 percent to 70 percent, while maintaining or improving participation.

Strategies

- Implementation of SAT Prep workshop in selected schools
- Implementation of SAT Prep semester course in selected schools
- Development of SAT Prep yearlong course
- Development of community outreach program
- Purchase and development of multimedia materials to use in workshops/semester courses
- Professional development for teachers that enables them to deliver workshops and semester courses.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004-2005

Objectives

- By June 2005, the percentage of students in the Class of 2005 taking the SAT will remain at 80 percent, while maintaining or improving current achievement levels. Subgroup participation will improve such that all subgroups have at least 60 percent of students taking SAT I before graduation.
- By June 2005, the percentage of students in the Class of 2005 with a combined score of 1,000 or more on the SAT will increase to 75 percent, while maintaining or improving participation.

Strategies

- Expanded implementation of SAT Prep workshop in additional schools
- Expanded implementation of SAT Prep semester course in additional schools
- Implementation of SAT Prep yearlong course in selected schools
- Implementation of community outreach program focused on importance of the SAT
- Development of counseling initiative focused on course placement of African-American and Hispanic students.

Third Year of Implementation: 2005-2006

Objectives

- By June 2006, the percentage of students in the Class of 2006 taking the SAT will remain at 80 percent while maintaining or improving current achievement levels. Subgroup participation will improve such that all subgroups have at least 70 percent of students taking SAT I before graduation.
- By June 2006, the percentage of students in the Class of 2006 with a combined score of 1,000 or more on the SAT will increase to 75 percent while maintaining or improving participation. Subgroup achievement will improve such that all subgroups have at least 70 percent of students earning a combined score of 1,000 or more.

Strategies

- Expanded implementation of a SAT Prep workshop/semester course/yearlong course in additional schools
- Expanded implementation of SAT community outreach program
- Implementation of counseling initiative related to course placement of African-American and Hispanic students.

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006-2007

Objectives

- By June 2007, the percentage of students in the Class of 2007 taking the SAT will remain at 80 percent, while maintaining or improving current achievement levels. Subgroup participation will improve such that all subgroups have at least 80 percent of students taking SAT I before graduation.
- By June 2007, the percentage of students in the Class of 2007 with a combined score of 1,000 or more on the SAT will increase to 75 percent while maintaining or improving participation. Subgroup achievement will improve such that all subgroups have at least 75 percent of students earning a combined score of 1,000 or more.

Strategies

- Expanded implementation of SAT Prep workshops/semester courses/yearlong courses in remaining high schools
- Expanded implementation of SAT community outreach program
- Expanded implementation of counseling initiative related to course placement of African- American and Hispanic students.

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

Objectives

- By June 2008, the percentage of students in the Class of 2008 taking the SAT will remain at 80 percent while maintaining or improving current achievement levels. Subgroup participation will be maintained such that all subgroups have at least 80 percent of students taking SAT I before graduation.
- By June 2008, the percentage of students in the Class of 2008 with a combined score of 1,000 or more on the SAT will increase to 75 percent while maintaining or improving participation. Subgroup achievement will be maintained such that all subgroups have at least 75 percent of students earning a combined score of 1,000 or more.

Strategies

Continued implementation and refinement of previously identified strategies.

SAFE SCHOOLS

The program described below offers a variety of strategies to meet the school system's goals. Any one strategy or a combination of strategies may be implemented in any Howard County Public School at some point during the school year. However, the data-driven needs of a school's student population and the school's school improvement plan for a specific year determine which strategies are operative at any given time.

The first goal of the HCPSS is for each student to meet or exceed rigorous academic and performance standards. In March 2002, a second goal became part of the school improvement planning process reflecting the school system's philosophy that in order to assist students to learn and grow—academically, socially, emotionally, and ethically—a system must build a supportive learning community. It was determined that the interpretation of “safe schools” for HCPSS should be broadened from the State Board of Education definition in COMAR 13A.01.04. Howard County's goal is to foster educational environments that are free from harassment, discrimination and violence for students, staff, parents and community members. Furthermore, to achieve Goal 2 Howard County must incorporate the kinds of strategies that will prevent disruptive behavior and discriminatory treatment, not merely increase punitive interventions based on the prohibitive efforts of policy implementation. Students, staff, parents, businesses and organizations must feel valued and connected as part of a nurturing learning community. To achieve the goal for each school to meet state standards and to eliminate all achievement gaps requires school plans that foster positive behavior and responsible citizenship.

A supportive learning community consists of a number of core elements including:

- Schoolwide approaches to safety and discipline
- Respectful, supportive relationships among and between students, staff, parents and community members
- Institutionalized processes for learning about and responding to cultural differences
- Involvement of family and the surrounding community.

The school improvement process is designed to focus on the two HCPSS goals. Data-driven decision making at the system, school and classroom levels is enhanced and encouraged for Goal 2 through the systemic use of information from the annual Disruptive Youth Report and the Maryland Adolescent Survey (MAS) of 2002, and subsequently 2004, and 2006. Valuable information can also be gained from attendance and dropout data, the percentage of student participation in extracurricular activities, the number of staff participating in training for cultural competency, and the rate of parent volunteerism at the school-based level. However, the objective of creating a supportive learning community is that everyone involved—staff, parents, and students—feels a

strong sense of belonging and connectedness to the educational process. Therefore, the HCPSS has entered into a contract with a national education research company for the development, administration, scoring and reporting of surveys to be administered to students, staff, and parents for the school year 2002-2003. In conjunction with the data provided by items identified above, survey data will allow for the assessment of the systems commitment to create schools that are safe and inspiring places to learn.

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

The HCPSS's Safe Schools Action Plan is submitted annually to MSDE and revised according to a review system determined by the state. In accordance with MSDE's guidelines, the objectives and strategies for Safe Schools will be included in Howard County's annual *Bridge to Excellence Comprehensive Master Plan* update submitted in July of each implementation year.

Objectives and strategies for Goal 2 have been identified for three groups – students, staff, and parents/community members. For the second, third, fourth, and fifth years of implementation, this format will be followed and updated.

Students

Objectives

- By June 2004, all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status will attend schools that are free from harassment, discrimination, and violence.
- By June 2004, the number of students suspended from HCPSS due to severe disruption to the school environment, e.g. fighting, drug and alcohol use, weapon possession, or other violations of Board of Education policies, will be reduced at all levels, elementary, middle, and high.
- By June 2004, the number of students participating in extracurricular and co-curricular activities, service learning programs, and/or other school sponsored events and (information or support) programs will increase.

Strategies

- Students will receive information on reporting procedures for BOE policies on harassment, discrimination, and violence in an age appropriate manner. This will be accomplished through student/parent handbooks, newsletters, and various means of communication to include, but not be limited to: posted information, verbal announcements, the HCPSS website, and other electronic formats.
- Each school will implement the health education and guidance curriculum that focuses on substance abuse prevention, violence prevention, and the understanding of and appreciation for cultural groups in the United States.
- Each School Improvement Plan will reflect the implementation of curriculum materials and developmentally appropriate programs such as, Character

Education, *Flirting or Hurting*, *Bullyproofing*, *Building Cultural Bridges*, *No Put Downs*, *Facing History and Ourselves*, the LABELS Project, and/or *Second Step*.

- Explore the use of the Developmental Assets Framework, which identifies relationships, experiences, values, attitudes, and attributes that all children and youth need for success as a strategy to build supportive relationships among students and staff.
- As part of the School Improvement Plan, each school will identify a school-wide discipline approach that includes positive behavioral interventions and supports for all students. Methods or strategies to communicate the approach to students, staff, and parents will also be incorporated into the School Improvement Plan.
- Effectively utilize the Student Support Teams and Instructional Intervention programs to identify causes of disruptive behaviors and create intervention plans to appropriately address the behavior before it reaches suspension level.
- Provide intervention strategies to all staff on how to appropriately address cultural differences in students so that the disproportionate number of African-American suspensions is decreased.
- Increase the use of early identification and intervention strategies from Safe and Drug Free Schools in elementary schools to address the behavioral as well as learning needs of students.
- At the district level, continue to explore ways of utilizing Alternative Education as a strategy for improving academic and behavioral performance.
- Establish and maintain strong alliances with the home following initial disciplinary referrals in order to continue to provide an additional avenue of communication and unified effort with the home to correct behaviors that lead to suspension.
- Individual school data will be collected and school improvement strategies identified in SIP that will increase student participation in extra and co-curricular activities regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, disability or socioeconomic status.
- Each School Improvement Plan will reflect opportunities for students to create their own resources/programs to promote a safe and inspiring learning environment.
- In Fall 2003, all eligible high school students in Howard County will participate in the nationally standardized Preliminary Student Achievement Test (PSAT). This will promote early engagement of students with appropriate teachers/counselors for educational and career planning and participation in related programs.

Staff

Objectives

- By October 2003, all staff will be educated about school system policies and procedures related to the implementation of the Code of Maryland Regulation (COMAR 13A.01.04) on School Safety.
- By September 2004, the professional development plans known as “Appendix D” for all certificated personnel will include strategies to increase knowledge and skills in

the areas of achievement equity, cultural diversity, safe schools, and family involvement.

- By 2004, the HCPSS will identify and provide to selected school-based staff, additional training and resources to reduce cultural stereotyping, prejudice, and bias while promoting resiliency and positive identity development with students.
- Schedule annual information sessions for all employees on policies related to 'safe schools' including procedures for staff to identify and respond to incidents of harassment, discrimination, and violence (including child abuse, alcohol/drug use, and hate/bias incidents).
- Selected in-service training and professional development opportunities will enable staff to identify and respond to incidents of harassment or discrimination.
- Provide new employees information packets and reference materials on all policies affecting a 'safe school' environment.
- By August 2004, the HCPSS will provide experiences to support equity and diversity through multiple professional development programs. Topics to be addressed will include the impact of racial, ethnic, religious, socioeconomic, and cultural influences on learning and performance; the impact of cultural stereotypes on academic success; and the need for multiple perspectives in curricula. Emphasis will be placed on strategies that will reduce differential expectations and eliminate the achievement gap for identified students.
- Administrators will be expected to participate in professional development program(s) designed to address the above topics. Topics to be added will include strategies to increase family involvement, and address diversity in the workplace.
- By June 2004, identified staff at the school-based level will have received additional professional development designed to:
 - ✓ promote equitable classroom and school environments for all cultures
 - ✓ increase capacity to intervene with severe cases of hate/bias and discriminatory behaviors.

Parents and Community

Objectives

- By September 2003, parents and community members will be aware of the school system's applicable policies on harassment, discrimination, and violence, including supports available and consequences for a policy violation.
- By June 2004, decision-making processes, as well as teams and committees, will include representatives from the diversity of our schools and community.
- By September 2003, outreach efforts will be present in each School Improvement Plan that address issues of school safety, achievement equity, and diversity.

Strategies

- By Fall 2003, information contained in the Parent/Student Calendar Handbook will be translated into four identified areas most used by Limited English

Proficiency (LEP) parents (Chinese, Korean, Spanish and Urdu). The Calendar Handbook contains information on the school system's goals and relevant policies.

- A variety of methods will be used to inform parents and the community of BOE policies related to Goal 2. Information will be disseminated through methods identified in the community outreach plan of the Office of Public Information. This includes outreach to parents through public engagement with community organizations, clubs and houses of worship.
- Demographics of the Howard County community will be reflected in appointments of parents and/or community members to system level and school-based committees or action teams.
- In order to improve home-school communication, the number of materials (print and visual) translated into the four identified languages used by most of the LEP parent community (Chinese, Korean, Spanish and Urdu) will increase at the system and school levels.
- By summer 2003, results from the School Improvement Planning Survey - Parent Version will contain information from each school and all grade levels. This information will be utilized to improve family outreach efforts for the 2003-2004 School Improvement Plans. As a result, school improvement teams will be able to develop strategies to:
 - ✓ provide information to all families, not only to the few who attend workshops or meetings at the school building.
 - ✓ enable families to share information about their family background, culture, talents, goals, and needs with the school community.
 - ✓ obtain ideas from families to improve the design and content of communications such as newsletters and student progress reports.
 - ✓ increase parent involvement from our diverse populations at school functions and activities.
 - ✓ develop interactive school assignments that foster parent-student-school communication around high student achievement.
 - ✓ utilize parents and community members to provide information on the impact of cultural stereotypes and prejudice on families, children and school success.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The program described below offers a variety of strategies to meet the school system's goals. Any one strategy or a combination of strategies may be implemented in any Howard County Public School at some point during the school year. However, the data-driven needs of a school's student population and the school's school improvement plan for a specific year determine which strategies are operative at any given time.

Overview

The number of students with disabilities served by the HCPSS is approximately 10.7 percent of the current student population. The percentage of students with disabilities represented in the student population has remained stable over the last six years. (Refer to Appendix AA.) The largest percentage of students served is in the categories of Speech/Language Impaired (33.7 percent) and Specific Learning Disability (25.5 percent). The number of students with complex needs has continued to increase: autism has tripled since 1996; developmental delay and speech/language impaired have increased by 8 percent and 9 percent respectively.

The Office of Special Education (OSE) has conducted a needs assessment and identified target objectives and strategies that will assist the OSE in meeting standards established by *No Child Left Behind* and *Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act*. The needs assessment and objectives address the following instructional levels: Early Childhood Intervention, Elementary and Secondary. Two other priority areas established by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) are also addressed: Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) (refer to Appendix BB) and Disproportionality below.

Early Childhood Intervention

The MSDE Early Childhood Assessment Work Sampling System (WSS) was administered to all 5-year-old students with disabilities during Fall 2002. Thirty-six percent of students with disabilities met the standard in the full readiness range. MSDE data reflect that 32 percent of 5 year olds with disabilities enrolled in kindergarten participated in the fall 2002 WSS.

Elementary Schools

The following charts present data from the 2002 Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills for children with disabilities.

Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills

Percentage of Students with Disabilities by Quartile				
	Quartile 1 (0-25)	Quartile 2 (26-50)	Quartile 3 (51-75)	Quartile 4 (76-99)
Grade 2	24%	18%	25%	33%
Grade 4	33%	18%	23%	26%

Maryland Functional Reading Test (MFRT) – The 2002 fall administration of the MFRT reveal that 63 percent of students with disabilities passed the test during the first administration of the examination in the 6th grade.

Report Card Information

Elementary data for 2001-2002 reflect the following percentages of students with disabilities who are on and above grade level:

	On grade level	Above grade level
Reading	39%	8%
Mathematics	55%	9%

Secondary Schools

High School Assessments (HSA)

Overall Howard County students scored 15 points above the 50th percentile on all five tests. The median score for students with disabilities was below the 50th percentile on each of the assessments.

Percentage of Students with Disabilities Scoring Above 50 th Percentile on the High School Assessments	
Algebra I	31%
English 9	28%
American Government	27%
Biology	28%
Geometry	44%

Maryland Functional Tests (MFT) - According to 2001-2002 functional test data, 21 percent of students with disabilities passed the Maryland Functional Math Test (MFMT) on the first administration. The state standard for first time administration is 75 percent. Fifty-nine percent of students with disabilities passed the first administration of the Maryland Writing Test (MWT). The state standard is a 95% pass rate. Sixty-nine (69) percent of students with disabilities that have passed all three of the functional tests at the end of grade 8. HCPSS has adopted a higher standard than the state of Maryland with a goal of a 100 percent pass rate while MSDE has identified a 95 percent pass rate.

Maryland School Assessments (MSA) - Data will be analyzed when standards have been established, and upon receiving MSA results in August 2002.

Attendance and Dropout Rate—Special education student attendance rate is 92.6 percent, which is below the county standard of 96 percent. Special education student dropout rate is 2.07 percent, which is above the county standard of 1.25 percent, but within the state satisfactory standard of 3.00 percent.

Disproportionality

African-American students represent 17.9 percent of the total Howard County Public School System population. According to state standards the county proportion of special education students who are African American should be below 21.5 percent

December 2002 Data Proportion of African Americans by Disability	
Mental Retardation	26.4%
Emotional Disturbance	25.7%
Specific Learning Disabilities	25.1%
Speech/Language Impaired	24.0%
Developmental Delay	27.6%

All of the above are represented at disproportionate rates in special education.

Least Restrictive Environment

Ages Birth to Five

LRE data from 2002 for students with disabilities ages 3-5 indicate the following percentages:

LRE M	LRE O	LRE M+O	LRE N
13%	15%	17.7%	68%

State standards for students with disabilities ages 3-5 for LRE M and O $\geq 80\%$ with LRE M ≥ 60 percent. MSDE's long-range goal is LRE M ≥ 80 percent.

Ages 6-21

LRE A	LRE B	LRE A+B	LRE C
58.2%	27.2%	85.3%	10.2%

- HCPSS LRE data for students with disabilities ages 6-21 in LRE A and B combined is 85.39 percent, exceeding the state standard (>80 percent).
- HCPSS LRE data for students with disabilities in LRE C is 10.02 percent, exceeding the state standard (<15 percent).
- Students with disabilities of mental retardation, multiple disabilities and autism are over represented in LRE C in comparison to other disability categories.
- African American students with disabilities are over represented in LRE C.

Independence Mastery Assessment Program (IMAP)

The IMAP portfolio assessment was administered during Spring 2002 to students with disabilities seeking alternate outcomes in grades 3, 5, 8, and 11. The 2002 administration of the IMAP reports a composite score range up to a maximum of 83.

MSDE data reflects the following overall scores for students assessed:

IMAP Overall Scores

Level	Composite Score Range	Total # of Students in Score Range
Elementary	50-83	51
	0-49	16
Secondary	50-83	39
	0-49	11

Early Childhood Interventions

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objective

By the year 2003-2004 ECA composite data will indicate that 46 percent of 5-year-old students score in the full readiness (proficient) level.

Strategies

- Continue professional development activities for early childhood general education and special education staff in implementation of the HCPSS Early Childhood Curriculum and *Let's Begin with the Letter People* curriculum.
- Provide professional development activities for general education and special education staff in data analysis and interpretation for instructional decision-making.
- Conduct quarterly data analysis by OSE and school-based staff to identify targeted areas for instruction.
- Increase family involvement through home visitation for parent coaching and dissemination of instructional materials such as *Ready at Five* and *Let's Begin with the Letter People* family involvement publications.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004 -2005

Third Year of Implementation: 2005 -2006

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006 -2007

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007 -2008

For the life cycle of the *Bridge to Excellence Comprehensive Master Plan*, the objectives and strategies will remain the same with appropriate modifications based on all available data sources and budget constraints. Therefore, any changes to the objectives and strategies during the second, third, fourth and fifth implementation years will be provided in the annual updates.

Elementary Interventions

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objectives

- The percentage of students with disabilities in Grade 2 performing in Quartiles 3 and 4 of CTBS will increase from 50 percent to 60 percent.
- The percentage of students with disabilities performing at or above grade level in reading and mathematics will increase from 64 percent in mathematics to 72 percent and from 47 percent to 60 percent in reading.
- The percentage of students with disabilities performing at the standard set by the State will increase by 10 percent over the Spring 2003 administration of the MSA.
- Students with disabilities passing the Maryland Functional Reading Test during the first administration in the fall of the school year will increase from 63 percent to 71 percent.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004-2005

Objectives

- The percentage of students with disabilities in Grade 2 performing in Quartiles 3 and 4 of CTBS will increase from 60 percent to 70 percent.
- The percentage of students with disabilities performing at or above grade level in reading and mathematics will increase from 72 percent in mathematics to 80 percent and from 60 percent to 70 percent in reading.
- The administration of the MSA, the percentage of students with disabilities performing at the standard set by the State will increase by 10 percent over the spring 2004 administration.
- Students with disabilities passing the Maryland Functional Reading Test during the first administration in the fall of the school year will increase from 71 percent to 79 percent.

Third Year of Implementation: 2005-2006

Objectives

- The percentage of students with disabilities in Grade 2 performing in Quartiles 3 and 4 of CTBS will increase from 70 percent to 80 percent.

- The percentage of students with disabilities performing at or above grade level in reading and mathematics will increase from 80 percent in mathematics to 88 percent and from 70 percent to 80 percent in reading.
- The administration of the MSA, the percentage of students with disabilities performing at the standard set by the State will increase by 10 percent over the spring 2005 administration.
- Students with disabilities passing the Maryland Functional Reading Test during the first administration in the fall of the school year will increase from 79 percent to 87 percent.

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006-2007

Objectives

- The percentage of students with disabilities in Grade 2 performing in Quartiles 3 and 4 of CTBS will increase from 80 percent to 90 percent.
- The percentage of students with disabilities performing at or above grade level in reading and mathematics will increase from 88 percent in mathematics to 96 percent and from 80 percent to 90 percent in reading.
- The percentage of students with disabilities performing at the standard set by the state will increase by 10 percent over the Spring 2006 administration on the MSA.
- Students with disabilities passing the Maryland Functional Reading Test during the first administration in the fall of the school year will increase from 87 percent to 96 percent.

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

Objectives

- The percentage of students with disabilities in Grade 2 performing in Quartiles 3 and 4 of CTBS will increase from 90 percent to 100 percent.
- The percentage of students with disabilities performing at or above grade level in reading and mathematics will increase from 96 percent in mathematics to 100 percent and from 90 percent to 100 percent in reading.
- The percentage of students with disabilities performing at the standard set by the State will increase by 10 percent over the Spring 2007 administration on the MSA.
- Students with disabilities passing the Maryland Functional Reading Test during the first administration in the fall of the school year will increase from 96 percent to 100 percent.

Strategies For All Five Implementation Years

- Develop a framework of the components of an exemplary reading and math program to be used by all special education teachers delivering reading and or math instruction for the purpose of accelerating student achievement.

- Develop “Look Fors” for exemplary special education reading and math programs to be used by administrators and special education resource teachers and instructional facilitators.
- Present data of special education student performance on all statewide assessments, identify the areas of strengths and weaknesses, and provide resources and materials to all elementary special educators.
- Develop and implement a professional development program to identify effective strategies to increase the practice of collaborative teaching.
- Provide recognition and incentives to individual teachers, schools, and students for improvement in reading and mathematics.
- Develop strategies for teachers to have their students graph and/or chart their progress on assignments and assessments.

Secondary Interventions

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objectives

- Thirty-one (31) percent of students with disabilities will pass the MFMT on the first administration.
- Sixty-six (66) percent of students with disabilities will pass the MWT on the first administration.
- Seventy-five (75) percent of students with disabilities will pass all three functional tests prior to entering high school.
- Forty-four (44) percent of students with disabilities will score above the 50th percentile on the Algebra 1 High School Assessment.
- Forty-one (41) percent of students with disabilities will score above the 50th percentile on the English 9 High School Assessment.
- Forty (40) percent (of students with disabilities will score above the 50th percentile on the American Government High School Assessment.
- Forty-one (41) percent of students with disabilities will score above the 50th percentile on the Biology High School Assessment.
- Fifty-five (55) percent of students with disabilities will score above the 50th percentile on the Geometry High School Assessment.
- The dropout/withdrawal rate of students with disabilities will meet or exceed the state standard.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004-2005

Objectives

- Forty-two (42) percent of students with disabilities will pass the MFMT on the first administration.
- Seventy-three (73) percent of students with disabilities will pass the MWT on the first administration.

- Eighty-two (82) percent of students with disabilities will pass all three functional tests prior to entering high school.
- Fifty-seven (57) percent of students with disabilities will score above the 50th percentile on the Algebra 1 High School Assessment.
- Fifty-four (54) percent of students with disabilities will score above the 50th percentile on the English 9 High School Assessment.
- Fifty-four (54) percent of students with disabilities will score above the 50th percentile on the American Government High School Assessment.
- Fifty-four (54) percent of students with disabilities will score above the 50th percentile on the Biology High School Assessment.
- Sixty-five (65) percent of students with disabilities will score above the 50th percentile on the Geometry High School Assessment.
- The dropout/withdrawal rate of students with disabilities will meet or exceed the state standard.

Third Year of Implementation: 2005-2006

Objectives

- Fifty-three (53) percent of students with disabilities will pass the MFMT on the first administration.
- Eighty-one (81) percent of students with disabilities will pass the MWT on the first administration.
- Eighty-eight (88) percent of students with disabilities will pass all three functional tests prior to entering high school.
- Seventy (70) percent of students with disabilities will score above the 50th percentile on the Algebra 1 High School Assessment.
- Sixty-seven (67) percent of students with disabilities will score above the 50th percentile on the English 9 High School Assessment.
- Sixty-eight (68) percent of students with disabilities will score above the 50th percentile on the American Government High School Assessment.
- Sixty-seven (67) percent of students with disabilities will score above the 50th percentile on the Biology High School Assessment.
- Seventy-five (75) percent of students with disabilities will score above the 50th percentile on the Geometry High School Assessment.
- The drop out/withdrawal rate of students with disabilities will meet or exceed the state standard.

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006-2007

Objectives

- Sixty-four (64) percent of students with disabilities will pass the MFMT on the first administration.
- Eighty-eight (88) percent of students with disabilities will pass the MWT on the first administration.

- Ninety-four (94) percent of students with disabilities will pass all three functional tests prior to entering high school.
- Eighty-three (83) percent of students with disabilities will score above the 50th percentile on the Algebra 1 High School Assessment.
- Eighty (80) percent of students with disabilities will score above the 50th percentile on the English 9 High School Assessment.
- Eighty-two (82) percent of students with disabilities will score above the 50th percentile on the American Government High School Assessment.
- Eighty (80) percent of students with disabilities will score above the 50th percentile on the Biology High School Assessment.
- Eighty-five (85) percent of students with disabilities will score above the 50th percentile on the Geometry High School Assessment.
- The dropout/withdrawal rate of students with disabilities will meet or exceed the state standard.

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

Objectives

- Seventy-five (75) percent of students with disabilities will pass the MFMT on the first administration.
- Ninety-five (95) percent of students with disabilities will pass the MWT on the first administration.
- One hundred (100) percent of students with disabilities will pass all three functional tests prior to entering high school.
- Ninety-five (95) percent of students with disabilities will score above the 50th percentile on the Algebra 1 High School Assessment.
- Ninety-five (95) percent of students with disabilities will score above the 50th percentile on the English 9 High School Assessment.
- Ninety-five (95) percent of students with disabilities will score above the 50th percentile on the American Government High School Assessment.
- Ninety-five (95) percent of students with disabilities will score above the 50th percentile on the Biology High School Assessment.
- Ninety-five (95) percent of students with disabilities will score above the 50th percentile on the Geometry High School Assessment.
- The dropout/withdrawal rate of students with disabilities will meet or exceed the state standard.

Strategies For All Five Implementation Years

- Provide professional development to ES/MS/HS general and special educators on best practices for instruction, differentiated instruction, co-teaching models and test-taking strategies.
- Provide yearly, differentiated professional development to newly hired teachers.
- Assist ES/MS/HS teachers in identifying students in need of accelerated instructional support in reading, math and writing prior to the administration of statewide tests.

- Develop models for providing the delivery of accelerated instruction.
- Analyze results of non-passers of statewide tests after each administration to provide skill specific instructional support using an analysis-planning sheet.
- Provide students with opportunity for additional accelerated learning support beyond school day/week/year.
- Plan and implement parent programs to provide them with opportunities to better understand HCPSS and MSDE standards as well as to equip them with the skills needed to support their children.
- Provide training to teachers and students on the use of Kurzweil 3000.

Disproportionality Interventions

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objective

Census data will indicate that the proportion of students with disabilities of Mental Retardation, Emotional Disturbance, Specific Learning Disabilities, Speech/Language Impaired, Developmental Delay and Multiple Disabilities who are African American will decrease by one percent.

Strategies

- Develop a data management system that allows Central Office to monitor the disproportionality data quarterly (by school, by race, by disability).
- Monitor African-American students with disabilities who are new enrollees in the HCPSS to determine impact on county data.
- Review and revise HCPSS identification criteria for Speech/Language Impaired, Developmental Delay, and Multiple Disabilities.
- Conduct record reviews for those African-American students who have been identified as Mentally Retarded, Speech/Language Impaired, and Developmentally Delayed.
- Provide professional development for all special education and general education staff, school-based administrators and central office staff regarding individual school data and issues surrounding disproportionality in special education.
- Continue to implement the Instructional Intervention Team process in all elementary and middle schools, including professional development activities for those schools.
- Develop a process for implementing instructional intervention teams in all high schools.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004-2005

Third Year of Implementation: 2005-2006

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006-2007

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

For the life cycle of the *Bridge to Excellence Comprehensive Master Plan*, the objectives and strategies will remain the same with appropriate modifications based on all available data sources and budget constraints. Therefore, any changes to the objectives and strategies during the second, third, fourth and fifth implementation years will be provided in the annual updates.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Interventions

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objectives

- LRE A or LRE M data will be ≥ 63 percent; LRE C data will be ≤ 9.5 percent.
- African-American students with disabilities instructed in separate classes (LRE) ≤ 30 percent.
- The numbers of students with mental retardation instructed in separate classes (LRE C) will be ≤ 50 percent.
- A survey used by the schools will indicate that ≥ 75 percent of the inclusive practices will be in place and ≤ 25 percent of the inclusive practices will be in progress.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004-2005

Objectives

- LRE A or LRE M data will be ≥ 68 percent; LRE C data will be ≤ 9 percent.
- African-American students with disabilities instructed in separate classes (LRE) ≤ 27 percent.
- The numbers of students with mental retardation instructed in separate classes (LRE C) will be ≤ 45 percent.
- A survey used by the schools will indicate that ≥ 80 percent of the inclusive practices will be in place and ≤ 20 percent of the inclusive practices will be in progress.

Third Year of Implementation: 2005-2006

Objectives

- LRE A or LRE M data will be ≥ 73 percent; LRE C data will be ≤ 8.5 percent.
- African-American students with disabilities instructed in separate classes (LRE) ≤ 24 percent.
- The numbers of students with mental retardation instructed in separate classes (LRE C) will be ≤ 40 percent.

- A survey used by the schools will indicate that ≥ 75 percent of the inclusive practices will be in place and ≤ 15 percent of the inclusive practices will be in progress.

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006-2007

Objectives

- LRE A or LRE M data will be ≥ 78 percent; LRE C data will be ≤ 8 percent.
- African-American students with disabilities instructed in separate classes (LRE) ≤ 21 percent.
- The numbers of students with mental retardation instructed in separate classes (LRE C) will be ≤ 35 percent.
- A survey used by the schools will indicate that ≥ 90 percent of the inclusive practices will be in place and ≤ 10 percent of the inclusive practices will be in progress.

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

Objectives

- LRE A or LRE M data will be ≥ 80 percent; LRE C data will be ≤ 7 percent.
- African-American students with disabilities instructed in separate classes (LRE) ≤ 18 percent.
- The numbers of students with mental retardation instructed in separate classes (LRE C) will be ≤ 30 percent.
- A survey used by the schools will indicate that ≥ 95 percent of the inclusive practices will be in place and ≤ 5 percent of the inclusive practices will be in progress.

Strategies For All Five Implementation Years

- Utilize *Best Practice for Promoting LRE Indicator Survey* in the schools.
- Disseminate and analyze needs assessment in all areas of competencies related to LRE to design needed professional development.
- Design professional development for all general education and special education staff on best practices to promote student achievement in the least restrictive environment.
- Review placements of students with disabilities in LRE codes more restrictive than C for possible movement into a lesser restrictive environment.
- Analyze, monitor, and share all LRE data by county, level and individual schools with administrators and staff.
- Analyze, monitor, and share enrollment in courses, including GT/Honors/AP, at the secondary level for students with disabilities with administrators and staff.

- Work with schools to incorporate LRE data in school improvement plans.
- Access technical assistance from MSDE.
- Continue the countywide committee of appropriate stakeholders, addressing LRE concerns.
- Implement high school pilot on the use of co-teaching to improve student achievement.
- Collaborate with colleges and universities to ensure the skills/knowledge for promoting LRE are present in coursework for preservice teachers.
- Collaborate with curriculum offices to include differentiation of instruction within the curriculum areas.
- Share annual plan and progress with Special Education Community Advisory Committee.

Independence Mastery Assessment Program (IMAP)

Elementary

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objective

By the year 2003-2004, 65 percent of elementary students with disabilities taking IMAP will score in the proficient-advanced level.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004-2005

Objective

By the year 2004-2005, 75 percent of elementary students with disabilities taking IMAP will score in the proficient-advanced level.

Third Year of Implementation: 2005-2006

Objective

By the year 2005-2006, 85 percent of elementary students with disabilities taking IMAP will score in the proficient-advanced level.

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006-2007

Objective

By the year 2006-2007, 90 percent of elementary students with disabilities taking IMAP will score in the proficient-advanced level.

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

Objective

By the year 2007-2008, 100 percent of elementary students with disabilities taking IMAP will score in the proficient-advanced level.

Strategies For All Five Implementation Years

- The Office of Special Education and the Office of Student Assessment and Program Evaluation will conduct countywide professional development activities for IMAP established by the MSDE for test administration procedures for the current school year.
- Implement professional development activities for school-based teams with a focus on exemplary artifacts for submission to the IMAP portfolio.
- Conduct professional development with Administrators and Instructional Facilitators on IMAP Best Practices (Look Fors).

Secondary

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objective

By the year 2003-2004, 60 percent of secondary students with disabilities taking IMAP will score in the proficient-advanced level.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004-2005

Objective

By the year 2004-2005, 70 percent of secondary students with disabilities taking IMAP will score in the proficient-advanced level.

Third Year of Implementation: 2005-2006

Objective

By the year 2005-2006, 80 percent of secondary students with disabilities taking IMAP will score in the proficient-advanced level.

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006-2007

Objective

By the year 2006-2007, 90 percent of secondary students with disabilities taking IMAP will score in the proficient-advanced level.

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

Objective

By the year 2007-2008, 100 percent of secondary students with disabilities taking IMAP will score in the proficient-advanced level.

Strategies For All Five Implementation Years

- The Office of Special Education and the Office of Student Assessment and Program Evaluation will conduct countywide professional development activities for IMAP established by the MSDE for test administration procedures for the current school year.
- Implement professional development activities for school-based teams with a focus on exemplary artifacts for submission to the IMAP portfolio.
- Provide breakout sessions during countywide professional development with a focus on secondary instruction and artifact collection.
- Conduct professional development with Administrators and Instructional Facilitators on IMAP Best Practices (“Look Fors”).

STUDENT SERVICES

The program described below offers a variety of strategies to meet the school system’s goals. Any one strategy or a combination of strategies may be implemented in any Howard County Public School at some point during the school year. However, the data-driven needs of a school’s student population and the school’s school improvement plan for a specific year determine which strategies are operative at any given time.

In order for students to benefit from instruction, the barriers that interfere with learning must be eliminated. These barriers to student learning, if not addressed in a comprehensive, collaborative, and coordinated manner, will continue to cloud the academic landscape of schools and perpetuate the gaps in student achievement. Such

barriers may include a range of academic, behavioral, social-emotional, psychological, socio-economic, and health-related issues. Leaving no child behind means addressing the barriers of the growing numbers of students from diverse backgrounds who have not been successful in the HCPSS.

Student services staff—school counselors, health assistants, nurses, psychologists and pupil personnel workers—are responsible for assisting in the design and delivery of programs and services to facilitate the cognitive, personal and social development of students and to help remove obstacles that may prevent student success. COMAR requires that each local school system provide a coordinated program of student services for all students that focuses on the academic, health, personal, interpersonal and career development of the student (COMAR 13A.05.05). Student services provide coordinated services through multidisciplinary teams working with regular and special education teachers, families, students, parents and community agency personnel to provide the most successful and comprehensive educational opportunities for all students. Student services help educators make the link between the emotional, physical and mental health of students and their academic achievement.

In order to meet the HCPSS academic achievement goal of meeting or exceeding rigorous performance standards regardless of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, disability or gender, and the safe schools goal of providing a safe, nurturing environment that values diversity and commonality, student services staff will address indicators in the Key Results Area of student performance by using a wide range of data and assisting students in overcoming the academic, social, personal and health-related barriers to learning. The objectives and strategies outlined in this section are based on the needs assessment indicators in the needs assessment section of this document.

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objectives

Academic Achievement

By School Year 2007-2008 the Instructional Intervention Teams (IIT) at all schools will demonstrate an implementation level of 90 percent.

Safe Schools

By School Year 2007-2008 all schools will implement schoolwide programs to support and promote safe and nurturing environments. In addition, all school-based crisis teams will demonstrate an overall exemplary level of implementation.

Strategies

Academic Achievement

- Continue to implement the IIT process in all elementary and middle schools, including professional development activities for facilitators, team members, new members, and central office staff.
- Assist in the development and implementation of the IIT problem-solving process in all high schools.
- Efficiently collect and analyze multiple sources of process and student outcome data to assess and develop intervention plans to address the academic, social/emotional, behavioral, attendance, and physical health success of referred students (i.e. OCR referral data, dropout, attendance and suspension data, process observation and level of implementation (LOI) data, goal attainment data, teacher rating of student progress).
- Actively participate on each IIT.
- Assist IITs in promoting the personal, social, and cognitive development of students.
- Help to foster student assets by linking students' strengths and talents to intervention plans.
- Gather and analyze teachers' ratings of students' progress following IIT interventions.

Safe Schools

- Provide professional development to support the implementation of school-wide prevention and intervention programs.
- Support school improvement teams in the planning and implementation of school-wide programs that promote safe schools.
- Effectively utilize IIT's to identify causes of disruptive behavior and assist in the development of interventions to address them prior to the suspension of students.
- Utilize IIT's to address needs of students who have made threats and who are victims of threats.
- Utilize the exemplary standards for school-based crisis teams, identifying a current baseline for 2003-2004; utilize baseline to develop annual strategies to achieve overall objectives by 2007-2008.
- Provide professional development for administrators, teachers, counselors, nurses, PPW's and psychologists serving on school-based crisis teams.
- Provide professional development for members of cluster crisis teams.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004 -2005

Third Year of Implementation: 2005 -2006

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006 -2007

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

For the life cycle of the *Bridge to Excellence Comprehensive Master Plan*, the objectives and strategies will remain the same with appropriate modifications based on all available data sources and budget constraints. Therefore, any changes to the objectives and

strategies during the second, third, fourth and fifth implementation years will be provided in the annual updates

TECHNOLOGY

The program described below offers a variety of strategies to meet the school system's goals. Any one strategy or a combination of strategies may be implemented in any Howard County Public School at some point during the school year. However, the data-driven needs of a school's student population and the school's school improvement plan for a specific year determine which strategies are operative at any given time.

The Technology Office of the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) was created in December 2001 and charged with the mission of supervising several departments with the goal of planning, implementing, and administering the budget for technology deployment and use throughout the district.

The integration and coordination of technology-related efforts put forth by Technology Office and related staff in the Curriculum, Instruction and Administration (CIA) division has produced extremely positive results. Projects such as the summer Curriculum Writing Workshop, upgrade to the Media Center software, installation of computers in High School Science labs, deployment of hardware and software in the schools for the Assessment office, and incorporation of school-based Special Education computers into the administrative wide area network have been completed or are in progress.

Project teams, including staff from across departments, are currently planning enhancements to the Student Support Plans, a comprehensive upgrade to our e-mail software, and purchase of technology and media equipment and software for the new elementary and middle schools. In addition, we have received tremendous support and assistance from staff in the Business Office, including purchasing, accounting, and finance, to achieve these results. Concurrent with the creation of the Technology Office, the Purchasing Officer realigned responsibilities among staff so that a single purchasing buyer is responsible for all technology contracts. (Refer to Appendix NN for a detailed description of Howard County's technology program with financial information.)

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objectives

- Provide the support and resources for the school system to meet its curriculum goals.
- Provide the support and resources for the administrative staff to support the school system.

- Help steer the technological vision of the school system into the 21st Century.

Strategies

- Ensure a secure, reliable, managed network.
- Provide an efficient way to communicate for all staff.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004-2005

Third Year of Implementation: 2005-2006

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006-2007

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

For the life cycle of the *Bridge to Excellence Comprehensive Master Plan*, the objectives and strategies will remain the same with appropriate modifications based on all available data sources and budget constraints. Therefore, any changes to the objectives and strategies during the second, third, fourth and fifth implementation years will be provided in the annual updates.

ENDING COMMENTS

This chapter has been, of necessity, a *potpourri* of programs that cross academic and social lines. However, these programs are, in aggregate, as central to the mission of the school system as the major academic disciplines (the “3Rs” and the scientific and social studies). They are at the heart of academic rigor, and they contribute extensively to the safe, nurturing environment of all the schools in Howard County. Academic rigor and a safe environment are the two main goals of the school system.