

Appendix G

**HCPS Programs & Initiatives
2009-2010**

Harford County Public Schools Bridge to Excellence Master Plan

Programs and Initiatives 2009-2010

Success for All Students

In keeping with the guidelines and requirements of the *Bridge to Excellence* legislation, Harford County Public Schools has developed and implemented goals, objectives, and strategies that will be used to improve student achievement and meet performance standards for all students and for all subgroups of students. In addition to the objectives and strategies identified under each of the goals in the Harford County Public School System Master Plan, there are a number of existing programs and initiatives associated with the organizational structure, professional development, curriculum, and special programs that provide a structure for increasing student achievement for all students and students in subgroups.

Data use and intentional reflection upon the impact of current practice is becoming the norm of professional practice in the school district. As the result of analyzing student data, plans are underway to work to address the needs of specific subgroups of students. Middle schools are working to address the African-American male achievement gap by looking at the learning and teaching needs. Teachers have been receiving professional development in the area of co-teaching and this year school administrators will have training in providing supportive conditions for co-teaching.

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Professional Development

Research shows “overwhelmingly that interventions in teacher education and professional development are successful. That is, teachers can learn to improve their teaching in ways that have direct effects on their students.” (National Reading Panel, 1999, p. 5-13) Darling-Hammond suggests “Nothing is more important to the learning of students than what their teachers know, believe, and can do.”

Harford County Public Schools has made a commitment to professional development as a means to improve achievement of all students, at all levels, and in all subgroups.

Professional Learning Communities (PLC’s)

“The most promising strategy for sustained, substantive school improvement is developing the ability of school personnel to function as professional learning communities.” (DuFour & Eaker, 1998, p. xi)

“A school that operates as (a professional learning community) engages the entire group of professionals in coming together for learning within a supportive, self-created community. Teacher and administrator learning is more complex, deeper, and more fruitful in a social setting, where the participants can interact, test their ideas, challenge their inferences and interpretations, and process new information with each other. When one learns alone, the individual learner (plus a book, article, or video) is the sole source of new information and ideas. When new ideas are processed in interaction with others, multiple sources of knowledge and expertise expand and test the new concepts as part of the learning experience. The professional learning community provides a setting that is richer and more stimulating.” (Morrissey, 2000)

One goal of the HCPS is to institutionalize professional learning communities in the fifty-three schools and the district’s central office. The Instructional Leadership Teams, comprised of school administrators, instructional facilitators, and teacher mentors, engage in training sessions annually to focus on professional learning communities, group effectiveness, change, research-based best practices, and job-embedded professional development. This training supports the cultivation of PLC’s within the school community. Teachers have opportunities to engage in PLC’s during faculty meetings, team planning periods, duty periods, and/or during the designated countywide professional development days. In 2008-2009, professional learning communities continue to build upon knowledge and utilization of the collaborative inquiry process and the appropriate utilization of data as a means of identifying gaps, examining instruction, developing a plan of action, and monitoring student achievement.

Professional learning communities consistently operate along five dimensions: (1) supportive and shared leadership, (2) shared values and vision, (3) collective learning and application of learning (formerly identified as collective creativity), (4) supportive conditions, and (5) shared personal practice (Hord, 1997).

This school year, HCPS will be working with Dr. Mike Hickey and Dr. Ron Thomas to develop capacity in data use. The Classroom-Focused Improvement Process (CFIP) is a protocol used by teacher teams to intentionally reflect upon teaching practice and impact on student learning. School administrators and teacher leaders will be trained during the first quarter of the school year. It is the expectation that school teams begin to train and support teacher teams in school to utilize the CFIP process. As teams begin to put the CFIP process in operation and meet in teacher teams, true PLC’s will emerge. This will be the conjoining of HCPS past focus on building a PLC culture and the practicality of the CFIP process.

New Administrator and Supervisor Training

All new administrative and supervisory personnel in HCPS engage in at least 8 days of professional development during the first year of the new assignment. Topics of the professional development include:

- Special Education
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Student Services
- Facilities Management
- Assessment
- Evaluation of Personnel
- Interviewing/Hiring Candidates for School Positions; Progressive Discipline
- Communications

HCPS Teacher Induction Program

“An induction program will foster a culture of effective teaching. Without effective teachers, we cannot and will not have effective schools.” (Wong, 2003, p. 58)

Without effective teachers, we cannot improve student learning. HCPS believes that new teachers need intentional support and mentoring during the first few years of teaching. A program has been established to support new teachers as they learn during their beginning teaching years.

Induction Activities for Teachers New to HCPS include:

Induction Activity	Focus	Dates
Professional Development Orientation Conference	Four Pathways of Professional Development designed for educators of different experience levels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orient teachers to HCPS culture and expectations • Plan for the first day, week, year • Work with experienced educators 	August (4 days)
Three-hour workshops throughout the year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop knowledge and skills related to teaching Topics include (but are not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reflecting on teaching practice ▪ Preparing for parent conferences ▪ Implementing curriculum ▪ Managing a classroom ▪ Planning active learning activities ▪ Assessing student performance ▪ Maintaining certification ▪ Teaching ELL students 	Periodic evenings throughout the school year
New teacher visitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe experienced teachers teach the curriculum • Conference with experienced educators 	At least one time within the first year
Job-embedded Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with a teacher mentor • Participate in grade level/department team meetings 	Ongoing
Professional Development Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on the first year of teaching • Plan for the second year of teaching • Acquire new strategies that promote active In-depth learning 	June (1 day)

Research regarding teacher induction indicates the need for continual support throughout the first three years of teaching. HCPS plans to continue the development of teacher induction activities for years two and three of teaching. Elements of future training and support will include the offering for opportunities involving summer planning, classroom visitations, mentoring, and strategy workshops.

Curriculum Specific Countywide Professional Development

Harford County Public Schools acknowledges and values school-based professional learning through the PLC model as described previously; however, in the standards-based educational environment that is currently impacting public education, there is a need for content-specific professional development delivered by specialists. Teachers need assistance and support in implementing state standards.

Burns and Purcell (2001) stated that "When some teachers read standards for the first time, their reaction is 'I haven't a clue what this means!'"

Supervisors and coordinators in the Office for Curriculum and Instruction plan professional development activities for teachers that focus on discipline-specific content, standards, and pedagogy. One to two days per year are dedicated to countywide professional development for teachers with a discipline specific focus.

New curriculum guide and instructional materials often present a challenge to the instructional staff in knowing and understanding the expected teaching techniques, sequence of content, and use of materials/equipment. Throughout the school year, teachers may be released from their classrooms for specific professional development for new curriculum initiatives. This provides the opportunity for all teachers to have the training.

Administrative Leadership Academy

Harford County Public Schools has instituted an Administrative Leadership Academy for aspiring school-based administrators. The objective of the academy is to provide aspirants an opportunity to participate in leadership discussions and other experiences. The academy consists of comprehensive presentations on a variety of leadership topics. Presentation topics are as follows:

- Certification
- Instructional Leadership
- Support Services Resources
- Policies, Procedures and Legal Implications
- Crisis/Conflict Management
- Leadership Responsibilities
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Interviewing role-play with feedback

Continuing Professional Development Courses

The school system offers a wide variety of MSDE for-credit courses every semester that can be used toward teacher recertification. Generally, anywhere from 15-20 courses are available every semester. These courses are designed to support teachers as they engage in professional learning beyond the traditional workday and school year.

Department Chairperson Leadership Institute

The Department Chairperson Leadership Institute is designed to provide participants with the strategies and skills for their roles as secondary department chairpersons. Participants explore ways for sustained, substantive school improvement through leadership of their departments as professional learning communities. Workshop topics include how to conduct productive meetings, team building, effective communication, and professional development. Participants apply the skills and knowledge gained during the Institute to their work as department chairpersons during the school year. Participation in the Department Chairperson Leadership Institute is competitive. A rubric is used to review the applications and select the participants.

Leadership Meetings

DuFour (2002) argues that “teachers and students benefit when principals function as learning leaders rather than instructional leaders.”

Through a quarterly professional development cycle, members of the ILT’s and central office supervisors of HCPS meet to engage in professional development. These meetings provide opportunities to support leadership learners. Examples of learning activities are:

High School Reform	Special Education
Middle School Reform	Cultural Proficiency
Making Mentoring Work	Instructional Technology
Research-based Instructional Practices	Observation/Evaluation Process
Supporting Co-Teaching	Classroom Focused Improvement Process (CFIP)

During the 2009-2010 school year, school-based leaders will engage in professional development designed to enhance use of student data. Classroom Focused Improvement Process (CFIP) will be taught using a train-the-trainer model. School leadership teams will receive direct training in using the process and it is the expectation that school leaders take the process back to teacher teams in each school.

Professional Development to Increase Student Achievement of Subgroups

Classroom Learning System

The Classroom Learning System (CLS) is an organized approach to teaching and learning that focuses on the relationship between expectations, goals and measurements, and the results of student achievement. Based on the Criteria for Performance Excellence as defined by The Baldrige National Quality Program, CLS gives educators the tools and processes needed to make data-driven decisions, maintain alignment with county and state initiatives, and increase student achievement. Harford County Public Schools offers a state-approved course to all educators. Currently, 523 people are trained and using CLS in a variety of settings, including pre-K through 12 classrooms, in their roles as guidance counselors, administrators, work coordinators, special educators, mentors, and instructional facilitators. In addition, a workgroup, representative of school stakeholders, meets to discuss proper CLS implementation and review implementation data. It is expected that through a growing network of trainers and ongoing awareness, CLS will not only improve overall organizational effectiveness, but also increase overall student achievement, motivation to learn, and ability to make informed decisions about their learning.

Differentiated Instruction

HCPS provides various opportunities for employees to enhance their knowledge and skills regarding differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all learners. Working at the school level, employees engage in job-embedded professional development activities with colleagues and administrators geared toward effective methods of differentiating instruction. HCPS offers continuing professional development credit courses regarding differentiating instruction such as *A Differentiated Classroom*; *Gifted Education: Theories, Strategies, and Resources*; *Learning Styles in the Classroom of the 21st Century*; and *Teaching Children with Special Needs*. In addition, many non-credit training sessions/workshops are offered to teachers by the Office of Special Education dealing with addressing various identified instructional needs of students with disabilities. The Coordinator of Accelerated Learning Programs and the Coordinator of Equity and Cultural Proficiency provide support in this area.

Addressing the African-American Male Achievement Gap

Middle schools have been provided with a resource of consultant/regional expert in the area of African-American Male learning. This consultant will assist schools in the analysis of student achievement data and other data streams to narrow the focus and create a strategic plan for addressing identified teaching and learning needs.

Framework for Understanding Poverty

Since 2002, the Coordinator of Equity and Cultural Proficiency has implemented a professional development program with nine out of the sixteen modules based on the work of Ruby Payne. This professional development program has been delivered to teaching staffs in 17 of the 53 schools, and is available to other schools upon request.

A three-credit in-service course entitled *Framework for Understanding Poverty* is also offered to all HCPS staff in Fall 2009 and Spring 2010. The course instructor is a certified trainer in the use of Ruby Payne's materials. Participants gain an understanding of the impact of poverty on student achievement and are provided informed teaching strategies.

Education That Is Multicultural

All teachers newly hired by HCPS must complete, within the first two years of employment, a three credit course titled *Education That Is Multicultural in the Classroom of the 21st Century*.

The following topics are addressed in the fifteen sessions:

- Education That Is Multicultural
- Differentiated Instruction
- Multiple Intelligences
- Culture and Bias Reduction
- Instructional Materials; Infusing ETM curriculum
- Assessments
- Teaching Styles, Language and Communication
- Achievement Gap and Understanding Poverty
- Learning Styles
- Culture Awareness
- Learning Environment, Harassment
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Classroom Management
- Sharing and Evaluation

The current *Education That is Multicultural* course will be revised to include additional strategies to eliminate the achievement gap for African American males. These strategies will mirror those listed in the newly revised ETM course developed by the MSDE Education That is Multicultural and Achievement Network Committee. The Acting Coordinator of the HCPS Office of Equity and Cultural Proficiency assisted in the MSDE course revisions.

Special Education

The Office of Special Education offers a variety of professional development programs aimed at supporting increased student achievement of students identified as needing special education services. Sample activities include: co-teaching, compliance, Crisis Prevention Institute training, alternative reading strategies, implementation of the MD On-Line IEP program, aligning IEP goals with the VSC, new teacher supports and behavior management.

Professional development opportunities have been provided to all levels of the instructional staff. School administration is provided time and choice for learning during leadership professional development sessions. Special after-school opportunities are made available to teaching and support staff. Calendar time has been dedicated to special education topics as an attempt to better inform and equip the personnel in Harford County Public Schools to meet the needs of the special education students.

English Language Learners

The ESOL program provides periodic professional development for the itinerant educators who work with identified English Language Learners (ELL's), as well as systemwide professional development to those schools which request additional information for school staff. The focus of this professional development is to analyze the oral and written communication skills of the ELL students and to enhance educator knowledge and skills relevant to the concepts and issues that apply to second language acquisition.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Curriculum is the cornerstone of the educational program and includes all of the experiences which students have under the direction of the school. All school-related activities and experiences support, complement, and expand the written curriculum. Within this concept of curriculum, what the student learns, the means by which the student learns, and the environment in which the learning occurs are all vitally important.

The curriculum for Harford County Public Schools is aligned with the standards and guidelines established by the Maryland State Department of Education, and encompasses additional elements to enhance the learning opportunities for all students of Harford County.

The instructional program for Harford County Public Schools is based upon a number of beliefs with differentiation of instruction being a key element and expected practice. The instructional philosophy stresses that learning is facilitated when students understand the goals of instruction and the expectations for performance. Effective learning occurs when instruction is organized around a limited set of powerful concepts. The ultimate purpose of instruction and learning is to enable students to use knowledge, independently and collaboratively, in meaningful ways.

The alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment is a critical goal of the school system. The evaluation of student progress which culminates in a grade or comment on a reporting device is a continuous process, involving many evaluative activities which parallel the learning experiences in which each student is engaged. Through the alignment of curriculum materials, instructional techniques, and assessment tools, achievement gaps will be eliminated.

The Development of Curricular Programs

The Harford County Public School System maintains a uniform system of education for its youth, providing educational experiences and opportunities designed to meet unique student needs. Curriculum in various skill areas, in the academic disciplines, and in the arts is developed, implemented, evaluated, and revised on a systemwide basis so that each student receives a well-balanced, carefully articulated, and appropriately diversified education.

Curriculum provides the organization and structure for that which is to be learned, so that the instructional and assessment practices of teachers facilitate student mastery of the essential learnings. In order for students to demonstrate the highest levels of mastery of the learnings established by the Harford County Public School System, the curriculum must be designed, developed, and implemented with the appropriate scope, focus, balance, and alignment so that effective direction is given to instructional and assessment practices.

Like all other successful school systems, the Harford County Public School System must continually ensure through its curriculum that what is taught continues to reflect the very best knowledge and practice in all subject areas. A strong, responsive curriculum conveys a powerful, positive vision connecting students to the future. Students must be enabled, through curriculum, to envision that future and must be prepared to successfully meet the challenges and issues which will confront them.

The HCPS curriculum is revised and edited according to an established schedule. The central office supervisor or coordinator facilitates the development and revision of all curriculum documents using the *HCPS Curriculum Development Handbook* (2000).

The following philosophical, theoretical, and practical research provides the framework for curriculum development:

- National, State, and Local Content Standards
- Maryland State Curriculum
- Constructivist Learning Theory
- *Concept Based Curriculum and Instruction*, Lynn Erickson
- *Teaching for Understanding*, Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe
- *Dimensions of Learning*, Robert Marzano and Debra Pickering
- *Differentiated Instruction*, Carol Ann Tomlinson

Curriculum Development with Attention to Subgroups

HCPS curriculum guides provide strategies and adaptations to assist the teacher in differentiating instruction for various subgroups. These curricula additions include Education That Is Multicultural, enrichment, and special education modifications.

Evaluation of Curricular Programs

“Evaluation is a systematic, purposeful process of studying, reviewing, and analyzing data gathered from multiple sources in order to make informed decisions about a program.” (Killion, 2002)

Personnel in the Office of Curriculum and Instruction engage in program evaluation that solicits and analyzes data from teachers, students, and school principals. It is this data, coupled with data from MSDE, which guides curriculum programs.

HCPS Countywide Assessments

Every curricular area has formative and summative assessments that are administered in the classrooms of the HCPS. The curriculum documents include assessments which are expected to be administered and scored as a means to measure student attainment of the standards. The data from benchmark assessments are utilized by classroom teachers to identify learning needs of each student. Instruction is subsequently differentiated as necessary to address student needs.

District assessments are either scored by the teacher or scored electronically as overseen by the Office for Curriculum and Instruction. An increasing number of countywide assessments are being scored electronically utilizing scanning software, and the student data is uploaded to the longitudinal test database and to the INFORM instructional data management system as appropriate.

**Core Content Assessment Tasks Overseen by the Office for Curriculum and Instruction
2009-2010**

Assessment Instrument	Grade Levels	Design and Development	Student Accountability	Document Production	Scanning and/or Scoring	Score Reporting	Format for Data Reporting	Analysis and Interpretation
Maryland School Assessment (MSA); and Alt/Mod MSA	3-8; 10		✓			✓	Electronic Reporting; Home Reports	✓
High School Assessment (HSA); and Mod HSA	7-12		✓			✓	Electronic Reporting	✓
SAT/PSAT	10-12						Hard copy; Electronic file	✓
Advanced Placement Tests	10-12						Hard copy; Electronic file	✓
Otis-Lennon School Ability Test	2		✓			✓	Electronic Reporting	✓
Unit, Midterm, and Final Exams: Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, English	6-12 (type of assessment varies by course)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Electronic Reporting	✓
Running Records Quarterly Assessments	1-3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Hard copy; Electronic Reporting	✓
Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI)	2-7		✓	✓	✓	✓	Hard copy; Electronic Reporting	✓
Performance Series Reading	Grade 8; Gr. 3-5 @ Title I schools; 9 and 10 intervention classes					✓	Electronic Reporting	✓
Elementary Mathematics Unit Assessments	1-5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Hard copy and/or Electronic Reporting	✓
TPRI (Reading)	K				✓		Hard copy and/or Electronic Reporting	✓
SNAP (Student Numeracy Assessment Progression)	K				✓		Electronic Reporting	✓
MMSR	K						Hard copy; Electronic file	✓
Classroom Behavior Checklist	K	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Hard copy	✓
Prekindergarten Skills Checklist	Pre-K	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Hard copy	✓

Service Learning

In 1992, the Maryland State Board of Education mandated Service Learning for all public school students. Through a task force of educators, parents, students, and community members, the Harford County Public Schools determined that sixth through twelfth grade students should experience Service Learning as part of the regular classroom learning activities, thus Service Learning education is imbedded within the middle and high school curriculum. Students attending public secondary schools in Harford County for three or more years meet the Service Learning graduation requirement.

Service Learning education develops responsible citizens by engaging students in service activities beneficial to both the students and their communities. It includes academic preparation, taking action, and structured reflection. Students participating in Service Learning activities make a difference through acts of caring. They make personal contact in the community and engage in acts of citizenship. There are three basic types of action including: direct service where students work with a person or group providing help in meeting a specific need; indirect service where students work behind the scenes to provide resources to meet an individual or community need; and advocacy where students assist in making a difference through public education. Reflection is an integral component of Service Learning. It gives students time to express their thoughts and feelings, to review what they have learned, to ask questions, and to evaluate their service.

Outstanding Service Learning activities should meet a recognized need in the community, achieve curricular objectives, help students reflect throughout the experience, develop student responsibility, and equip students with knowledge and skills needed for service. To help facilitate the day-to-day operation of the program, each secondary school in Harford County has an identified Service Learning Coordinator. The school system also has Service Learning Fellows who assist with modeling exemplary practices, mentoring new teachers, and providing training for staff members. The Fellows and Coordinators help maintain the high quality of the Service Learning Program provided for students. All Service Learning Activities are overseen by the Harford County Public School Service Learning Facilitator.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS TO INCREASE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS AND ALL SUBGROUPS

Advanced Placement Program

Currently twenty-four Advanced Placement courses are available in the high schools of HCPS. The Advanced Placement Program for Harford County Public Schools is being strengthened through the following actions:

- Approve all AP teachers through the AP Audit process.
- Provide Advanced Placement teachers with access to AP professional development offered by the College Board Association. The school system funds registration, room, board, and travel.
- Provide AP students with opportunities to participate in practice AP exams and to receive teacher-scored results and assistance.
- Provide teachers with professional development to enhance their AP test scoring skills.
- Encourage student enrollment in AP courses based on results of AP Potential.

Alternative Education Program

The Alternative Education Program (AEP) began during the 1990-91 school year to provide educational services to students who were excluded from school due to suspension. The program operated in the evenings at several different high schools over the years offering instruction in the four core subject areas. The program was supported by many teachers who taught on a part-time basis for which they received supplementary pay.

During the 2005-06 school year, AEP was given a distinct identity and separate facilities at the Aberdeen High School-North building. A day program was established that offered more course offerings and afforded more flexible scheduling of classes for students. Program eligibility was expanded to include voluntary placements for students who are not achieving at their potential for a wide variety of reasons, usually including behavior and/or attendance problems as well as students needing to earn recovery credit. In 2006-07, a separate middle school program was established at the facility offering course work in language arts, social studies, math and science. The high school program was expanded to include courses in fine arts, technology and work experience.

Staffing for the AEP includes a combination of a full-time dedicated staff and per diem staff. A modified depot transportation system is in place for the day program. The program features include:

- Small student to teacher ratio
- Full-time counselor and behavior specialist
- Group and individual counseling with the emphasis on improving social skills and self-esteem
- Outdoor experiential learning activities to promote team building and trust
- On-line instruction for credit recovery
- Plan for transitioning students successfully back to their home school

Comprehensive Secondary School Reform Program (CSSRP)

Utilizing the CSSRP, HCPS plans to address the identified needs of all students in all subgroups in the middle and high schools. This initiative provides a structure for remediation, intervention, and enrichment to meet the learning needs of those students on both ends of the spectrum – students with specific learning disabilities

who struggle as learners, as well as those who perform at advanced levels. Also this initiative provides strategies to support freshman academies, career clusters, magnet programs, senior year experiences, and smaller learning communities with the goal of providing more successful learning experiences which will decrease the drop-out rate, thereby increasing the percentage of students who graduate.

Implementation of CSSRP:

The Comprehensive Secondary School Reform Program affects each of Harford County’s public high schools. During the 2005-2006 school year, all high school teachers and administrators engaged in professional development activities to enhance and strengthen effective instructional strategies and skills for teaching in an extended period format. Course formats, curriculum, and pacing guides were aligned with the guidelines for teaching in an extended period. A freshman course, *Living in a Contemporary World*, was developed to assist students to be successful in high school and beyond. During the 2006-2007 school year, the revised formats, curriculum, and pacing guides were implemented in all high schools. During the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years plans were made to implement magnet programs of study at select high schools, develop additional mathematics courses, and expand career pathway programs to help students implement their six-year education plans.

Program Concepts:

- Equalize credit offerings at all high schools
- Increase the credits for graduation to 26
- Require a fourth mathematics course experience
- Provide a structure for remediation, intervention, and enrichment
- Support freshman academies, career clusters, magnet programs, and senior year experiences
- Create smaller learning communities for students
- Standardize all HCPS schedules
- Create programmatic consistency among high schools

The Comprehensive Secondary School Reform Program incorporates the seven cornerstone strategies of the *Breaking Ranks II: Strategies for Leading High School Reform* and meets the measures identified by NCLB.

DROP OUT PREVENTION EFFORTS

In an effort to support students who may be at-risk of dropping out of school, HCPS has developed programs to increase the number of students graduating from high school. The following chart captures some of the many activities designed to support struggling students.

School Level	Focus
Elementary/Middle	Academic intervention programs including extended day and extended year programs
High	Voluntary placement of students in the Alternative Education Program enabling at-risk students to earn additional credits
	School Improvement Plans include strategies addressing attendance and truancy
	Placement of ninth grade students on interdisciplinary teams providing a collaborative approach to meeting students’ needs
	A dropout recovery program exists offering support and encouragement for students to return to school, earn a GED, or take vocational classes
	A Comprehensive Secondary School Reform Program has been implemented ensuring learner needs are met through various learning improvement initiatives

Early Childhood Education

Prekindergarten

Prekindergarten is a structured educational program for at-risk four year olds that is intended to close the achievement gap and prepare participants for kindergarten success. There are 23 pre-K facilities in the HCPS district to serve the needs of all qualified 4-year olds. The program engages children in age-appropriate oral language, literacy and mathematics experiences, as well as in social studies and science, movement, and fine arts programs that promote the children's total development giving them background knowledge and vocabulary for understanding the world-at-large.

Teacher training using the MSDE early learning program standards is an integral pre-kindergarten component. Observation, performance-based activities, and thematic portfolios provide data for instructional planning. Pre-kindergarten teachers involve the parents in observing their child's growth and development. Other aspects of parental involvement include volunteering, parent education, parent-child take home tasks, and annual surveys to measure parent satisfaction with pre-kindergarten. The Early Childhood Advisory Committee and the Private Child Care Directors Group link the HCPS pre-kindergarten program with preschool and child care organizations in the broader Harford County community.

Kindergarten

Full-day kindergarten programs exist in all Harford County public schools. The initiative to provide a full-day program in all schools was implemented over a period of five years. In a continuing effort to close the achievement gap and ensure that all children have the opportunity for academic success in first grade, full-day kindergarten doubles the amount of learning time in language arts and mathematics. The curriculum is aligned with the Maryland State Content Standards, including the five areas of literacy in *Reading First*. Kindergarten methodologies are research-based and age and gender appropriate. Student achievement is monitored through observation, performance assessments, and a modified version of the Work Sampling System. Student data enables teachers to differentiate instruction. Kindergarten and first grade teachers use the HCPS Summative Performance Record to promote a K-1 transition that is seamless for each child. School-based teacher professional development and parent involvement are integral to the success of full-day kindergarten.

English Language Learners Program

Since the 1999 academic year, high school English language learners have been provided an opportunity to attend the ESOL Center located at Harford Technical High School. Students are enrolled based on the outcome of a diagnostic language assessment and are provided comprehensive, yet sheltered, English reading, science, social studies, and mathematics instructional services. Similarly, students are provided an opportunity to be enrolled in mainstream classes in the fine and practical arts, physical education, and mathematics. As students' language proficiencies increase, they may be mainstreamed into the regular curricular offerings at Harford Technical High School. Following two years of intensive English language services, students are encouraged to re-enroll in their neighborhood high school or apply to participate in either the comprehensive and technical course offerings offered at Harford Technical High School or one of the other magnet programs offered within the school system.

For the elementary and middle school English language learners, a pull-out/plug-in model of English language instruction is offered by an itinerant ESOL staff. All English language learners take the State-mandated CTB McGraw-Hill LAS LINKS assessment each spring to ascertain their oral and written language skills as well as ascertain their service level designations for the next school year.

The Harford County Public Schools' ESOL office exits students from instructional services based on their positive demonstrations of success in speaking, reading, and writing instruction as demonstrated from the LAS LINKS score reports, as well as reading growth measured from the Woodcock-Munoz word recognition and passage comprehension assessments.

As English language learners exit the ESOL program, the ESOL office monitors them for two years thereafter. The academic successes of these students are monitored using a Maryland State Department of Education assessment rubric, including classroom teachers' input, as well as the exited students' demonstration of successes on their school report cards.

Equity and Cultural Proficiency

The Office of Equity and Cultural Proficiency (OECF) assists HCPS in implementing the spirit and letter of the Education That Is Multicultural (ETM) Bylaw provisions related to curriculum instruction, instructional materials, climate, and staff development with a focus on eliminating achievement gaps. The OECF is available to provide cultural proficiency professional development to all support and professional staff countywide and at the school level. All newly hired support staff is required to take ETM training provided by OECF. All professional employees, new to HCPS, must take the three-credit course, "*ETM in the Classroom of the 21st Century*" within two years of employment. Also, certified trainers of Ruby Payne's *Framework for Understanding Poverty* offer staff development on the impact of socioeconomics on achievement, in addition to the topics of learning styles, multiple intelligences, differentiated instruction, and cross-cultural understanding.

The OECF also assumes responsibilities related to:

- Supporting the revision and writing of curriculum infused with ETM and cultural proficiency goals
- Assisting the system with plans related to the disproportionate number of minority students in special education
- Assisting the system in addressing the issue of disproportionate numbers of minority students being referred and suspended
- Administering the Making Progress Program as an intervention to eliminate the achievement gap
- Using disaggregated data in identifying achievement gaps, informing instruction and assisting the system in reaching the goal of improving achievement for all students with emphasis on eliminating the minority and lower socioeconomic achievement gap
- Managing and implementing ETM components of Goals 1, 2, and 4 in the HCPS Master Plan
- Adhering to the goals and benchmarks of the HCPS Strategic Plan
- Consulting in the development of policies related to ETM such as hate/bias and harassment, developing supporting materials, and receiving and analyzing hate/bias incident data
- Investigating equity complaints from students, parents, and staff as directed by the Superintendent and Executive Directors of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Completing Office of Civil Rights Compliance Reports and responding to formal OCR complaints
- Completing MSDE reports related to ETM
- Organizing the Harford Equity Leadership Program Conference in partnership with Harford Community College and monitoring implementation of action plans
- Providing resources for African American and Women's History Month Celebrations
- Disseminating information on the Harford County Government initiatives related to the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration
- Serving as liaison to MSDE's ETMA (Education That Is Multicultural and Minority Achievement) Network Committee
- Chairing ETM OECF Advisory Committee meeting

- Facilitating Superintendent’s Ad Hoc Committee meetings and providing minutes and agendas
- Serving as HCPS Title IX Coordinator
- Administering 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant
- Delivering staff development to support the professional staff on topics such as Cross-Cultural Understanding, Differentiated Instruction, Multicultural Education, Learning Styles, Multiple Intelligences Impact of Socioeconomics on Achievement, Framework for Understanding Poverty, and Cultural Proficiency
- Providing follow-up training and support as schools implement differentiated instruction
- Providing annual new support staff training on Cultural Proficiency to include bus drivers, clerical, food service, custodians, and instructional assistants/technicians
- Developing and revising, as needed, required ETM course content
- Training ETM course instructors and coordinating course scheduling
- Remaining current on research related to multicultural education, minority achievement and cultural proficiency and sharing research with others
- Assuming special assignments of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
- Facilitating HCPS involvement in the Inner County Outreach Parent and Child Therapeutic Mentoring (PACT) grant
- Participating on the HCPS Task Force “Developing Cultural Proficiency to Eliminate the African American Achievement Gap”

Fine Arts

Harford County Public Schools offers all students fine arts instruction in a variety of venues. Students in full day kindergarten through grade 5 receive art and music instruction each year of their schooling. Art and music classes are offered to students in grades 6 through 8. Instrumental music and choral programs are available for students in grades 4 through 12.

The high school students of Harford County Public Schools have the opportunity to select from a wide variety of fine arts courses to meet graduation requirements. Throughout their school years, students have multiple opportunities to display art productions and to perform musical, drama and dance selections for a wide range of audiences.

The *Fine Arts Voluntary State Curriculum and Essential Learner Outcomes* documents serve as the guidelines and blueprints for all curriculum development in music, art, drama, and dance. As stated in the document, “...the primary purpose of the fine arts curriculum is to establish a foundation for a life-long relationship with the arts for every student,” and Harford County Public Schools has supported this concept in the past and will continue to do so in the future.

Gifted and Talented Education

The HCPS Gifted Education Program is designed to align with Criteria for Excellence and provides a full menu of options for gifted and talented students in Kindergarten through Grade 12. A wide variety of measures are used to identify those students in need of additional challenge. Test scores, classroom performance, and teacher/parent/student recommendation are just a few of the criteria used. Gifted and Talented teachers, classroom teachers, and others provide practical, research-based strategies for acceleration and/or enrichment that best meet the needs of the individual student.

In elementary schools, Gifted and Talented teachers work with students individually, in small groups, or in collaboration with the classroom teacher. Instructional options include Junior Great Books, Hands-On Equations, Stock Market Game, Literature Circles, interest groups, in-depth investigations, web quests, and web site construction. Elementary schools have the services of an enrichment teacher for a minimum of two days a week, with some schools having a full-time enrichment teacher. The staffing distribution is based on school enrollment. In middle schools, students may be grouped with students of similar ability levels in math and language arts. Numerous enrichment opportunities are also available based on teacher expertise and student interest. Honors, AP courses, and magnet programs, such as the Science/Math Academy, are offered in the high schools. At every level, teachers differentiate instruction in each subject. Concept-based, rigorous curriculum provides challenges for all students and addresses different learning styles and intelligences.

Intervention Programs: Reading and Mathematics

Reading Intervention Programs

LAUNCH: An intervention program for at-risk kindergarten students as they acquire competency in literacy skills. Lessons are designed to include specific and explicit attention to letters, sounds, and words, as well as a comprehension component.

Wilson Reading: *Wilson Reading System* is a research-based reading and writing program for identified students in the intermediate grades. It is a complete curriculum for teaching decoding and encoding (spelling) beginning with phoneme segmentation. WRS directly teaches the structure of words in the English language so that students master the coding system for reading and spelling. It provides an organized, sequential system with extensive controlled text to help teachers implement a multisensory structured language program. The basic purpose of the Wilson Reading System is to teach students fluent decoding and encoding skills to the level of mastery. From the beginning steps of the program, it also includes sight word instruction, fluency, vocabulary, oral expressive language development and comprehension.

SIPPS: *Systematic Instruction in Phoneme Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words* is a research-based approved reading intervention program for identified students in grades 1-5. *SIPPS* is a systematic decoding program that helps struggling readers develop word recognition and reading fluency. The three level program starts with short vowels and simple consonant sounds. It progresses to complex vowels and high frequency irregular words and the polysyllabic strategies that help students unlock content area vocabulary words. Lessons include the following six routines: phoneme awareness activities, phonics and decodable words practice, sight word review, guided spelling, oral reading, and fluency practice.

Fast Track: *Fast Track Reading* is an intervention program for delayed readers in grades 6 through 8 who are reading at least two years below grade level. This comprehensive and intensive program is based on current research into theoretical models of reading, instructional design and methodologies, and the needs of delayed readers. *Fast Track Reading* accelerates delayed readers to grade-level proficiency and standards by helping teachers accurately assess student needs and deliver intensive, targeted instruction. The program is divided into three strands – Word Work, Comprehension, and Fluency – that work together to provide explicit, direct, and systematic instruction.

Strategic Reading: *Strategic Reading* is an intervention program for delayed readers in grade 9. This program aims to give students reading two or more years below grade level an opportunity to accelerate their reading in an age-appropriate, motivational, and innovative classroom. *Strategic Reading* uses a balanced-literacy approach whereby students move through four timed components in a daily 90 minute instructional block. These components include: reading showcase, focus lessons, student team literature, and self-selected centers. This structure allows students to practice a variety of skills and strategies in order to be successful when they enter their required English I class in the second semester.

Reading and Writing in Your Career: *Reading and Writing in Your Career* is an intervention program for delayed readers in grade 10. This program aims to give students reading two or more years below grade level an opportunity to accelerate their reading in an age-appropriate, motivational, and innovative classroom. *Reading and Writing in Your Career* uses a balanced-literacy approach whereby students move through four timed components in a daily 90 minute instructional block. These components include: reading showcase, focus lessons, student team literature, and self-selected reading and centers. This structure allows students to practice a variety of skills and strategies in order to be successful when they enter their required English II class in the second semester.

Corrective Reading: Corrective Reading is a one-to-one, teacher-to-student directed program implemented in the high schools and is designed to improve the reading skills of below-level readers. The goal of this program is to enable at-risk students to reach grade level proficiency in reading using a highly structured direct instruction approach.

Soar to Success: A remediation program intended for students in grades 3-8 who are reading two years below grade level. Lessons are designed to include motivating literature, reciprocal teaching, and graphic organizers that target reading comprehension.

Summer Success Reading: This summer reading program is for students who have completed grades K-8. It is designed to prevent "slippage" that occurs when school is not in session for an extended period of time. The extended year opportunity offers additional time to explore and internalize grade level reading concepts.

Imagination Station: *Imagination Station* is a program intended for students in grades 1-5 who need extra support in reading. Lessons are designed to be interactive and internet based focusing on skills in the areas of phonemic and print awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Read 180: *Read 180* is a program for students in grades 6-8 who are two or more years below grade level in reading. Lessons are designed to address individual needs through adaptive and instructional software, high interest literature, and direct instruction in reading and writing skills. Students rotate through a daily 90 minute instructional block of time which incorporates the following components: small group instruction, self-selected reading, and computer application.

Tune in to Reading: *Tune in to Reading* is an extended day program for students in grades 3-8 who are behind in reading. Lessons are designed to focus on reading fluency by providing engaging practice opportunities through repeated reading and singing of song lyrics. Students meet for a minimum of three times a week for a 12 week cycle

Read About: *Read About* is an extended day program for students in grades 3-6. The program is intended to reach a wide variety of readers through leveled text with instruction that adapts according to student response, thus offering differentiated instruction for struggling readers, English Language Learners, and enrichment for more advanced readers. Lessons are designed to involve adapted technology and nonfiction text to enhance comprehension and vocabulary.

Comprehension Strategy Instruction (CSI): *Comprehension Strategy Instruction* is an extended day program for students in grades 6-8. The program is intended to provide extra support in the areas of comprehension strategies instruction, vocabulary, and fluency. Lessons are designed to use short, engaging diverse texts for comprehension instruction. Teachers model metacognitive approaches before, during, and after reading.

Mathematics Intervention Programs

Knowing Mathematics: The Knowing Mathematics intervention program is a small group program designed to support students who are performing two or more years below grade level proficiency. The program is designed to vertically accelerate students to grade level proficiency in the Number and Operation content strand in about fourteen weeks. The program draws on fragmentary and insufficient learning and repairs/reorganizes misconceptions to build a sound foundation for future learning.

Cognitive Tutor Algebra: The Cognitive Tutor Algebra program is designed to provide at-risk students with an opportunity to learn Algebra I in both classroom and computer lab settings. Students work with Cognitive Tutor software for approximately 40% of their course time and spend the remaining 60% of course time engaged in collaborative learning activities in a classroom setting. The software responds to demonstrated student proficiencies, tracks student progress, and assigns successive problems based on student strengths and weaknesses. The Cognitive Tutor collaborative model enhances student understanding of mathematics and increases student engagement in the learning process.

Afterschool Achievers Math Club: An intervention/remediation program intended for students in grades 1-8 who will benefit from additional time and instruction to internalize mathematics concepts. Lessons contain opportunities for students to extend and refine their understanding of grade level mathematics. The lesson format includes opportunities for students to compute and communicate mathematical thinking. Students who have demonstrated learning gaps may complete Afterschool Achievers lessons from earlier grades.

Math Navigator: A remediation program intended for students whose understanding of basic mathematical concepts lags at least two years behind their peers. Lessons are designed to identify misconceptions and gaps in understanding that are needed to master higher level mathematics. The program, which includes a screening test and frequent assessments, is organized around concept-specific learning modules.

Math Recovery: A remediation program intended for early childhood students demonstrate significant gaps in conceptual understanding of number and operations. Lessons are conducted in an individual or small group format. The program includes interview and assessment component designed to identify student deficiencies in counting, computation, and other whole number concepts.

Ramp Up to Algebra: A remediation program intended for students in grades eight and nine whose mathematics achievement is two or more years below grade level. Lessons are designed to correct student misconceptions that hinder understanding and performance. The program applies algebraic concepts to arithmetic and basic mathematics concepts.

Summer Success Math: An intervention/remediation program intended for students in grades K-8 whose mathematics understanding is fragile. These students need additional opportunities to practice doing mathematics. The program provides opportunities for students to extend and refine their mathematical understanding; preventing the "slippage" that occurs while schools are closed for summer vacation. Lesson routines are structured to engage students in their learning.

Success Maker: A software program that forecasts and manages student performance on high stakes tests from the district level to the individual student level. At initial placement, each student is assessed to determine the right starting level. Based on information gleaned from the needs assessment, self-paced lessons are provided. Detailed reports provide information about student competencies and deficiencies. In turn, this information is used to provide appropriate differentiated instruction.

Intervention Programs: Youth Development/Mentoring Programs

HCPS works with many community-based and partner agencies to provide youth development and mentoring programs designed to increase student supports. Partnerships include, Big Brothers Big Sisters, boys ii Men program, Boys and Girls Clubs, and other service providers.

Intervention Committee

As the result of a review and analysis of student achievement data, a comprehensive plan for providing direct assistance and support to schools was developed and implemented during the 2005-2006 school year. Three major actions were taken during spring 2005 to align resources and to support the development of the Intervention Committee, which will coordinate and provide assistance to school leadership personnel and faculties.

The first action involved the realignment of local operating intervention funds to support schools not eligible for Title I funding, but in need of assistance as identified by HCPS. The amount of \$706,731 was redistributed to support and provide interventions to non-Title I schools identified by HCPS in need of assistance based upon data and assessment trends. The second action occurred when the Superintendent of Schools requested and received from the Board of Education \$377,122 in the 2006 HCPS Operating Budget to be used to support schools needing assistance.

The third action was the creation of the Intervention Committee. The purpose of the Intervention Committee is to assist with providing direct support to Instructional Leadership Teams and schools designated by the Maryland State Department of Education as “Schools in Improvement,” as well as other schools identified by HCPS. Additionally, the Intervention Committee reviews and identifies intervention and extended-day/-year programs for all schools to utilize.

The Intervention Committee consists of the following positions:

- ✓ Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
- ✓ Executive Director of Elementary Education
- ✓ Director of Special Education
- ✓ Supervisor of Research, Evaluation, & Accountability
- ✓ Supervisor of Compensatory Education
- ✓ Coordinator of Intervention
- ✓ Coordinator of Reading Intervention Programs K-12
- ✓ Coordinator of Mathematics Intervention Programs K-12
- ✓ Coordinator of School Improvement
- ✓ Assistant Supervisors in Special Education
- ✓ Elementary School Principal
- ✓ Middle School Principal
- ✓ High School Principal

The Coordinator of Intervention works with members of the Intervention Committee and school personnel to coordinate intervention assistance and strategies through regularly scheduled meetings. Agendas for meetings include, but are not limited to identification of intervention and extended-day/-year programs; guidelines for identification of students for intervention; guidelines for High School Assessment mastery; and implementation strategies for schools to utilize programs. All members of the Intervention Committee collaborate to provide aligned and purposeful assistance, provide professional development and recommend and support specific intervention and extended-day/-year strategies based upon a review of the data.

Working in collaboration with the ILT, the Intervention Committee strives to provide resources to identify

and support intervention and mastery needs, as well as provide professional development for staff members. For example, if a middle school has a high number of first year mathematics teachers on staff, the Intervention Committee might identify central office personnel to provide professional development for the new mathematics teachers. Or, the Intervention Committee may respond to an ILT's request to monitor an intervention program to determine fidelity of implementation. The Intervention Committee also has the responsibility of requesting funds from the Central Instructional Leadership Team to support needed intervention and remediation actions recommended by the Intervention Committee.

There are numerous benefits and intended outcomes for the Intervention Committee. These outcomes include:

School System

- Identification and classification of all reading and mathematics intervention and extended-day/year programs
- Determination of successful intervention and extended-day/year programs
- Process for identifying and supporting systemic intervention and mastery needs

Teacher

- Opportunity for receiving direct assistance, e.g., professional development and/or materials
- Access to data and information regarding intervention programs and teaching strategies

Student

- Access to mathematics and reading assistance
- Academic improvement

The 2008-09 budget was approved by the Board of Education for \$643,072 for teacher salary and transportation funds for extended-day/-year assistance. In addition to academic offerings during the school day, a key component to supporting students not meeting with success on the Maryland State Assessments and/or High School Assessments is to provide extended-day/-year academic assistance.

Additionally, \$90,000 has been allocated to assist school with materials of instruction and \$200,000 has been allocated to assist schools with transportation services for students.

Elementary school resources have been pro-rated based on the number of students who have not scored proficiently on the 2008 Maryland School Assessment. Middle schools will utilize the resources to assist students who have not achieved proficiency or advanced on Maryland School Assessment. High schools will utilize the resources to provide remediation for students who have not passed a High School Assessment or who are working on the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation. Edgewood Middle School is currently in Year Six of School Improvement and will utilize the resources to support the implementation of the required Maryland State Department of Education's plan for schools in restructuring.

Schools will submit an Outline for the utilization of intervention and mastery resources. The applications must incorporate:

- Harford County Public Schools Strategic Plan
- Harford County Public Schools Approved Materials
- School Improvement data
- Reading
- Mathematics
- High School Assessment
- Bridge Plan for Academic Validation
- Maryland Core Learning Goals
- Voluntary State Curriculum

Making Progress Program

The Office of Equity and Cultural Proficiency administers the Making Progress Program. The Making Progress Program is an outgrowth of recommendations from the Study Circles which examined the HCPS minority achievement gap. Five technicians provide tutoring and other academic support to identified students at Hall's Cross Roads Elementary, George D. Lisby Elementary at Hillsdale, and Edgewood Middle Schools. Classroom support to those students identified as performing below proficient on MSA, Holistic Reading, SRI, Running Records, and end of unit assessments improves student achievement. Five permanent substitutes provide coverage for teachers receiving staff development, meeting with parents, and attending IEP meetings at Hall's Cross Roads Elementary, George D. Lisby Elementary at Hillsdale, and Edgewood Middle Schools. These substitutes receive additional training in classroom management, ETM, and differentiated instruction so that learning continues seamlessly when the teacher is not present.

Mathematics Coach Program in the Middle Schools

Four middle schools in HCPS have mathematics coaches. Key components of the program include providing direct instruction aligned with demonstrated need, consistent evaluation of data regarding student performance, and consultation to improve mathematics instruction for all students. Each mathematics coach receives at least twelve 6-hour blocks of training per year by the Supervisor of Mathematics.

Mathematics Facilitator Program in the Elementary Schools

Every elementary school in HCPS has two mathematics facilitators, one primary and one intermediate classroom teacher. A key component in improving mathematics instruction for all students is focusing attention on the elementary mathematics program by providing strong mathematics leadership at each elementary school. School mathematics facilitators serve as an immediate resource to teachers by demonstrating knowledge, competence and leadership in mathematics education. Each mathematics facilitator receives three 3-hour blocks of training per year by the Supervisor of Mathematics.

Partnership for Student Achievement

Harford County Public Schools is committed to utilizing school, business community, and family partnerships to support student achievement and success. The intent is to positively impact the achievement of students Grades Pre-K-12 through meaningful collaborations with businesses, community groups and organizations, and parents and adult family members by utilizing a collaborative approach that integrates awareness initiatives, communication, direct involvement, and advocacy.

Business partnership collaborations and activities focus on enlisting involvement and support from members of the business community in ways that can be directly linked to the enrichment of the academic experience for students and/or assist in preparing them for today's workforce and the workplace of the future. Partnerships such as the National Network of Partnership Schools (Johns Hopkins University), Homework 411 (interactive homework television show), Achievement Counts, guest speakers, work experience programs, job shadowing, curriculum-based advisory committees, and the Aberdeen Proving Ground Military Partnership program bring necessary resources and expertise to both students and staff with target goals and achievement outcomes clearly identified. In addition, the Harford Business Roundtable for Education, a coalition of Harford County employers, works collaboratively with government officials, educators, parent community leaders, and other stakeholders to strengthen and/or redesign systems that affect student learning.

In addition to business partnerships, HCPS schools and students are provided with community based supports through mentoring services and other youth development opportunities. Currently, Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Central Maryland provides mentoring services to youth in the following schools:

<u>Elementary Schools</u>	<u>Middle Schools</u>	<u>High Schools</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bel Air • Hall’s Cross Roads • Havre de Grace • Lisby/Hillsdale • North Harford • Prospect Mill • Riverside • William Paca/Old Post 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aberdeen • Bel Air • Edgewood • Fallston • Havre de Grace • Magnolia • North Harford • Southampton • John Archer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C Milton Wright • Joppatowne

The boys ii Men Program also provides a multicultural mentoring program in the middle schools along the Route 40 corridor of Harford County, reaching disadvantaged and “at risk” young males at Aberdeen, Edgewood, Havre de Grace and Magnolia Middle Schools. The program features academic, behavioral and athletic concepts which assist males toward succeeding in education. Boys ii Men consists of male mentors inspiring male mentees.

A critical component of the overall partnership for student achievement is the relationship between school, family, and community. This integral partnership encompasses outreach to families and community members to make the connections necessary to secure at-home learning support from adult family members and meaningful in-school involvement by family and community volunteers. This is best accomplished through education and training programs, the provision of readily-accessible parent and learning resources, and through a targeted internal and external communication plan.

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS)

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) is an application of a behaviorally-based systems approach to enhance the capacity of schools, families, and communities to design effective environments that improve the link between research-validated practices and the environments in which teaching and learning occur. Attention is focused on creating and sustaining primary (school-wide), secondary (classroom), and tertiary (individual) systems of support that improve lifestyle results (personal, health, social, family, work, recreation) for all children and youth by making problem behavior less effective, efficient, and relevant, and desired behavior more functional.

PBIS goals are as follows:

- Increase consistent use of positive teaching and reinforcement strategies among all school staff at school-wide, classroom and individual student levels.
- Reduce use of reactive discipline measures in schools (i.e., office discipline referrals, detentions, suspensions, expulsions) for all students.
- Increase data-based decision-making about behavior and academic instruction and reinforcement across all school settings.
- Implement effective comprehensive supports/services/interventions for students with the most intensive behavioral/emotional needs through wraparound plans that address home, school, and community settings.

Reading Specialists

The *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* report (1998) argues reading specialists provide leadership and instructional expertise for the prevention and remediation of reading difficulties. HCPS has made a commitment to hire at least one reading specialist for each of the elementary schools in the district. A future goal is to provide every secondary school with a reading specialist. Providing school wide leadership with regard to the overall reading program, reading specialists offer support to the classroom teacher regarding reading instruction, assessment, interpretation of diagnostic data, and instructional decision-making.

Recruitment, Retention, and Placement of Highly Qualified Staff

Harford County Public Schools is committed to the recruitment and retention of a highly qualified workforce. The power of highly skilled employees in every position in the school system contributes to maximizing student achievement. The HCPS recruitment plan includes a recruiter inservice program, e-recruiting, a growing web site presence, and an active participation at over seventy job fairs, colleges, and universities to attract the best employees to the county. In addition, HCPS has recently implemented an on-line application for teacher candidates.

Current certificated employees are offered a support system to address the needs of staff development and curriculum implementation. Mentors, teacher specialists, instructional facilitators, and supervisors deliver ongoing, job-embedded professional development and support to all instructional staff. Tuition reimbursement programs are available for employees to pursue further courses of study. Teachers new to HCPS participate in a New Teacher Induction program to ensure successful orientation in the school system. In addition, HCPS encourages teachers to enroll and participate in the National Board Certification program and the HCPS Administrative Leadership Academy.

SAT Preparation Program

Harford County Public Schools is participating in Collegeboard's Early Participation Program. All 10th grade students will be taking the PSAT during school hours. It is hoped that by looking at students' strengths and weaknesses on the PSAT, HCPS can better prepare them for the SAT, as well as encourage more participation in AP courses. SAT prep classes are offered at all high schools. Through the results of PSAT testing, students have the ability to access individualized detailed reports prescribing instructional strategies to improve individual student performance on the actual SAT. Participating students receive free of cost practice tests, reports focusing on their particular needs, and instructional assistance. Funds have also been allocated to hire school personnel to provide after school assistance based upon student results and materials.

Safe and Secure Schools

The Department of Safety and Security continues to enhance security within Harford County Public Schools by integrating safety into the fabric of the school system through evaluation, education, and training. Through collaboration, safety is incorporated into every aspect of the educational/operational practices of the Harford County Public Schools System, thus eliminating the perception of it being an external component.

Goal: Harford County Public Schools will implement strategies designed to insure that all learning environments are safe and secure.

Five objectives have been identified to accomplish this goal. The department has identified a variety of strategies to accomplish the stated objectives.

Objective 1: To establish clear expectations for positive school climates and maximize student learning. Strategies implemented that support this objective include:

- Review and update as needed Critical Incident Flip Chart
- School's Critical Incident Plans – These plans are living documents at the beginning of each year schools submit a revised plans that is site specific. Addendums or revision are required by the following February. Schools conduct practice drills each month and the results are reflected in this report
- Identification of off-site locations in the Off-Site Evacuation Plans
- Incident Command Center – An administrative command center
- Non-Public Schools – Assist in the development and training of critical incident plans
- Each school has established a safety committee to address safety concerns and collaborate on their school's plan
- All incident reports are now submitted in an online format
- Develop a safety and security education specification manual for construction projects

Objective 2: To provide safe and secure schools during daytime and evening hours of building use.

- Multiple Cameras In Secondary Schools
- Additional equipment was identified that would provide a safer learning.
- Electronic Surveillance Warning Signs
- Hand Held Radios
- Bull Horns
- Knox Boxes
- Emergency Generators
- Hand-Held Metal Detectors – eight additional detectors were purchased
- AlcoBlow Detectors – eight additional alcohol detectors were purchased
- Various signage for schools include but not limited to speed restriction signs and security camera warning signs
- Entrance cameras with locking door strikers - 52 school buildings have an obstructed view of the front door from their main office
- New school construction included an interior vestibule that directs visitors into the main office where they register and receive visitor passes
- All schools' exterior doors are sequentially numbered for easy identification in the event of a police response or evacuation
- Supplemental Police Protection – The coordination of police protection for alternate education, extracurricular activities and special events
- Computer visitor management system – This system standardizes the process of registering all visitors to our schools
- Proxy card access systems – a keyless entry system for access to certain identified exterior doors

Objective 3: To provide safe and secure schools during those hours when the buildings are not occupied.

- Intrusion Alarms – Every building is equipped with an intrusion alarm and monitored on a twenty-four hour basis
- Fire Alarms - Every building is equipped with an operational fire alarm system
- Knox Boxes – Every building is equipped with a Knox boxes for building access by emergency personnel
- Surveillance Cameras – The police departments and the school administrators have the ability to remotely access the cameras as required

Objective 4: To maximize school building safety and security through student, staff, and parent training.

- Harford County Public Schools On The Web – Safety and Security Page

- Gang Awareness – Updates
- Ed Leadership -information on a variety of safety and security related topics
- Support Service Meeting – Schedules meeting provide building support staff with timely information that effect the safe operation of their buildings
- Special Alerts notices are distributed to schools on an as needed basis
- Introduce the G.R.E.A.T. program, Gang Resistance Education And Training, into elementary and middle school to provide students with positive reinforcement to avoid gangs

Objective 5: To expand interagency cooperation and partnerships among youth-serving professionals and agencies.

- Memorandum of Understandings – The written agreement extends between agencies in County government for School Resource Officers, and a program to monitor sexual offenders in the community
- Responsible for coordinating the AAA Youth Safety Patrol for HCPS elementary schools
- Department of Parks and Recreation

School Improvement

As a part of the continued focus on increased student achievement and success, Harford County Public Schools created the Office of School Improvement during SY 2005-2006. The major responsibilities of this office include planning, coordinating, implementing, and evaluating of comprehensive system wide school improvement initiatives. This office also acts as the MSDE liaison in the development and monitoring of MSDE requirements related to schools in formal school improvement status including Alternative Governance. The Office of School Improvement supports Instructional Leadership Teams and School Improvement Teams in the analysis of student achievement data and participates in school-based strategic planning as well as develops, implements, and evaluates professional development related to school improvement, data-informed decision making, and the Classroom Focused Improvement Process.

Special Education

HCPS Department of Special Education is dedicated to providing a continuum of supports and resources that enable students to achieve their potential.

The HCPS service delivery model for students with special needs supports inclusive learning practices. Special Education services for students with disabilities are designed to support access to the general education curriculum. The alignment of IEP goals and objectives with the Voluntary State Curriculum and general education content standards supports student participation in the Maryland State Assessment programs. For students with intensive needs, the alternative content standards identified in Maryland's Alternative Maryland School Assessment (ALT-MSA) are addressed through the IEP process. Alignment of goals and objectives with these alternative standards enables students to successfully achieve these outcomes. Special education services are available for all students ages birth through 21, as appropriate. There is a full continuum of services to meet the needs of students with educational disabilities in the least restrictive environment. These services are provided in the community schools to the fullest extent possible.

Strategic Goals for the Office of Special Education:

Communication:

To increase effective communication among HCPS personnel, families and community partners using a

variety of strategies in order to build and sustain collaborative, productive relationships.

Instruction:

To build the capacity of HCPS personnel to provide a full continuum of effective and diverse instruction utilizing interventions, services, and supports for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment.

Compliance:

To expand the knowledge and skills of HCPS personnel related to the processes and procedures aligned with federal, state and local guidelines in order to enhance the effective implementation of IDEA.

Title I Program

Title I is intended to help ensure that all children have the opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach proficiency on challenging state academic standards and assessments. Title I targets resources to schools where the needs are greatest. High-poverty schools (those with 45 % or more students from low-income families) are eligible to adopt school wide programs to raise the achievement of low-achieving students by improving instruction throughout the entire school, thus using Title I funds to serve all children.

The following chart highlights the Title I programs:

Name of Title I Program	Focus
LAUNCH	LAUNCH is a language arts program which builds foundation skills necessary for a child to learn to read. This program targets students who have been identified as at-risk on the beginning-of-year kindergarten performance assessment. The program is in all Title I schools.
SIPPS	<i>Systematic Instruction in Phoneme Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words</i> is a research-based approved reading intervention program for identified students in grades 1-5. <i>SIPPS</i> is a systematic decoding program that helps struggling readers develop word recognition and reading fluency. The three level program starts with short vowels and simple consonant sounds. It progresses to complex vowels and high frequency irregular words and the polysyllabic strategies that help students unlock content area vocabulary words. Lessons include the following six routines: phoneme awareness activities, phonics and decodable words practice, sight word review, guided spelling, oral reading, and fluency practice.
Wilson Reading System: Wilson Intermediate and Wilson Foundations	<i>Wilson Reading System</i> is a research-based reading and writing program for identified students in the primary and intermediate grades. It is a complete curriculum for teaching decoding and encoding (spelling) beginning with phoneme segmentation. The basic purpose of the Wilson Reading System is to teach students fluent decoding and encoding skills to the level of mastery. From the beginning steps of the program, it also includes sight word instruction, fluency, vocabulary, oral expressive language development and comprehension. <i>WRS</i> has two program strands: the <i>Wilson Intermediate</i> program is a remediation program intended for students in grades three through five who are performing in the lowest thirtieth percentile and are deficient in fluent decoding and encoding skills. The <i>Wilson Foundations</i> program is a remediation program intended for students in kindergarten through grade 3 who are performing in the lowest thirtieth percentile. <i>Foundations</i> lessons are designed to include phonological/phonemic awareness, phonics, and spelling, using an explicit multi-sensory process.

Name of Title I Program	Focus
I-Station	<i>Imagination Station</i> is a program intended for students in grades 1-5 who need extra support in reading. Lessons are designed to be interactive and internet based focusing on skills in the areas of phonemic and print awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
Paraprofessionals	Paraprofessionals work under the direct supervision of the professional staff to provide various types of instructional assistance to identified at-risk students. The intent is to accelerate student understanding so the student will be on par with peers in regular classroom work.
Knowing Mathematics	<i>Knowing Mathematics: Knowing Mathematics</i> is a small group mathematics remediation program for students who are two or more years below grade level proficiency. The program is designed to vertically accelerate students to grade level in about fourteen weeks. The program draws on fragmentary and insufficient learning and repairs/reorganizes it to build a sound foundation for future learning.
Success Maker	A software program for mathematics that forecasts and manages student performance on high stakes tests from the district level to the individual student level. At initial placement, each student is assessed to determine the right starting level. Based on information gleaned from the needs assessment, self-paced lessons are provided. Detailed reports provide information about student competencies and deficiencies. In turn, this information is used to provide appropriate differentiated instruction.
Family Liaison	Each Title I school has one family liaison; one two-building school has two of these paraprofessionals. The family liaison maintains and is responsible for a lending library of books and materials for parent use to support student achievement. Parent support and workshops are planned, coordinated and delivered by the family liaison. The family liaison maintains the home/school partnership for at-risk students.
Teacher Specialists	The Title I teacher specialists are charged with oversight of all Title I programs in the school. Data collection and analysis are performed by these specialists with the intent of providing instructional implications and assistance to the classroom teachers. Additionally, the Title I teacher specialists provide professional development to teachers and paraprofessionals in their respective schools.
Asst. Supervisor of Finance/Data	This position assists with the electronic collection and reporting of essential Title I student performance data and all financial reports for Title I. Data documents are scanned and reported in teacher usable formats to identify student needs in specific areas. These reports are used by the Title I teacher specialists in collaboration with classroom teachers to derive classroom implications and strategies to assist in improving student academic success. Financial reports are compiled to validate appropriate use of Title I funds. The Assistant Supervisor maintains data on HQ teachers and paraprofessionals in the Title I schools.

21st Century Learning Centers

The Office of Equity and Cultural Proficiency provides oversight to the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant. Five schools – Halls Cross Roads, William Paca/Old Post Road, and George D. Lisby at Hillside Elementary Schools and Aberdeen and Edgewood Middle Schools utilize federal grant funds to provide after school, and summer programs. This grant, which originally was granted in 2001, has recently been renewed in 2008 and will be funded for another two years.

The following are components of the 21st Century Learning Centers program:

- 90-day after school programs per 180 day school year
- Summer programs – 30 days

- Academic instruction, games and activities in reading, math and science utilizing project-based curriculum materials designed to address individual learning styles and close the achievement gap
- Enrichment activities designed to increase computer literacy skills, hands-on learning in robotics, science, math, chess, Jr. Achievement, drama, field trips, etc.
- Adult assistance in completing homework assignments
- Activities related to character education, team building, fairness and conflict resolution
- Supervised recreational activities – physical activities, arts, music, dance, drill instruction, karate and more
- Field trips within the community, guest speakers, and access to cultural events
- Safe bus transportation home from school programs
- Parent training utilizing HCPS, HCC and HCPL staffs
- YMCA support of recreational activities
- Strategies and information to reduce the use of drugs, alcohol and violence

Over 300 students participate in the program. Special recruitment efforts are made to include the most at-risk minority and lower socioeconomic students. Collection and analysis of achievement data assists in determining program success.