



## 2010 Award Recipient

### Montgomery County Public Schools

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) is the largest school district in the state of Maryland and the 16th-largest school district in the nation. Located in suburban Washington, D.C., MCPS serves an extremely diverse community, with its more than 144,000 students coming from 164 countries and speaking 184 languages. About 31 percent of the district's students receive subsidized meals and 13 percent receive English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services. The district, with its central office located in Rockville, Maryland, employs 22,229 persons, making it the second-largest employer in the county. In fiscal year 2011, the MCPS operating budget was \$2.1 billion.

### Committed to World-Class Education for Every Child

- In 2010, half of MCPS graduates received a college-ready score of 3 or higher on at least one Advanced Placement (AP) exam while in high school. That is nearly twice the state rate and three times the national rate. The greatest increase in AP participation has been seen among African American and Hispanic students. Success on AP has been shown to be a direct predictor of success in college.
- MCPS has made a strong commitment to early education, including prekindergarten programs for economically disadvantaged students, and a strong focus on reading skills in kindergarten. The efforts are paying strong dividends. In 2010, 92 percent of kindergarten students were reading at grade level, up from 82 percent in 2006. In 2010, more than 75 percent of kindergarten students were reading above grade level.
- Seniors from the class of 2010 had an average score of 1653 on the SAT—an all-time high for the district. For the second year in a row, an independent analysis of graduation rates by *Education Week* found that MCPS had the highest graduation rate of any large school district in the nation.
- MCPS students continue to achieve at high levels on state assessments and are narrowing racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps. For instance, in middle school reading, MCPS has narrowed the achievement gap between its African American and white students by 13 percentage points in the five years from 2006 to 2010.

### Quality Instruction a Top Priority

- The current levels and trends in MCPS budgetary and financial performance show that instructional services are a priority and reflect improvements in efficiency. In 2007, the district spent 61.3 percent of its budget on instructional categories, compared to a state average of 60.6 percent and a comparable county's average of 58 percent.



### Highlights

- In 2010, half of MCPS graduates received a college-ready score of 3 or higher on at least one Advanced Placement (AP) exam while in high school. That is nearly twice the state rate and three times the national rate.
- An independent analysis of graduation rates by *Education Week* found that MCPS had the highest graduation rate of any large school district in the nation in 2008 and 2009.
- Parent satisfaction has ranged from 79.7 to 86.7 percent, compared to a national comparative average of 54 percent from 2005 to 2010.
- MCPS “reverse engineered” the education process by starting with the goal of college and career readiness, and then identifying the knowledge and skills needed for students to reach that target. The result is The Seven Keys to College Readiness.



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- MCPS has lowered class sizes, which has allowed it to individualize attention to students and retain its priority of instructional services. In 2009, MCPS had 13.4 students for every teacher, compared to 14.1 for the state and 15.4 for the nation. For its focus schools (i.e., schools with high rates of poverty), per-pupil spending for instruction is \$11,013 compared to \$9,026 in other schools, a difference of 22 percent.

### Parental Support, Employee Satisfaction Foster Student Success

- MCPS receives very favorable ratings from parents and students in measures of general satisfaction, staff expectations, and perceptions of safety. Specifically, parent satisfaction has ranged from 79.7 to 86.7 percent, compared to a national comparative average of 54 percent from 2005 to 2010.
- From 2007 to 2009, the percentages of positive responses to questions regarding work satisfaction have ranged from 91.3 percent to 95.5 percent for employees at all school levels. Positive responses from nonschool-based employees increased from 78.9 percent to 84.8 percent over the same period. Further, teachers at the elementary, middle, and high school levels have reported over 90 percent satisfaction from 2007 to 2010.
- MCPS's recent (2009) turnover rates for administrators, teachers, and supporting services are 3.8 percent, 4.6 percent, and 4.6 percent, respectively, in line with the average of 3.9 percent for 15 of the top 100 best companies as reported in *Fortune 500* magazine.

### Strategic 'Call to Action'

- MCPS comprehensive reform efforts are guided by the district's strategic plan, Our Call to Action: Pursuit of Excellence (OCA). The plan incorporates five strategic goals, clearly defines the key performance measures and action plans, and provides alignment throughout the district. The plan is reviewed and updated annually, and a report on 54 data points is published and placed on the MCPS Web site.
- Senior leaders engage in extensive outreach with partners, customers, and the community to solicit shared concerns and expectations that are codified in the OCA. The OCA then is deployed throughout the organization.
- The OCA is aligned with the Maryland State Board of Education's Bridge to Excellence Master Plan and federal requirements. Cascading downward, each office, department, and school has developed related improvement plans with performance measures for evaluating the proper courses of action, all of which are aligned with OCA. The systematic alignment of the district's strategic plan has a direct impact on MCPS's ability to fulfill its core competencies of developing and implementing a rigorous instructional program that is responsive to the needs of the individual student.

### So That Every Child Can Learn

- MCPS "reverse engineered" the education process by starting with the goal of college and career readiness, and then identifying the knowledge and skills needed for students to reach that target. The result is The Seven Keys to College Readiness, a pathway of seven measurable academic goals, from kindergarten through high school, that are deployed throughout the school system. The Seven Keys constitute a college-readiness trajectory in which each key builds on the previous one.
- MCPS demonstrates high levels of performance related to the needs of special education and ESOL students, supporting its core value to do whatever it takes to ensure that every child, regardless of physical or academic challenges, learns and succeeds.
- For demonstrating its commitment to closing the achievement gap, MCPS was selected as a finalist for the 2010 Broad Prize for Urban Education, the nation's largest education award given to school districts. The Broad Prize honors large districts that have raised student achievement and narrowed racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps.

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