Responses to the NAACP Parents' Council Questions — March 3, 2021

Topic	Questions	Response
Academic & Instruction	1. Would love to hear more about what you think are the most promising strategies to address unequal learning loss across race/SES?	MCPS' 2.5 Year Plan identifies the core component, Mitigate Learning Disruption Across Schools, which specifically addresses the impact this past school year has had on student learning. Supports to students include: ● Summer Programming enriched, rigorous, and interest-based learning opportunities ● Trauma-Informed Instruction ● Partnerships with external agencies for instruction and authentic learning experiences (career exploration, higher education, work experiences, etc.) ● Compacted curriculum to mitigate instructional gaps ● Compensatory education for students with disabilities ● Collaboration with community partners to support equity hub experiences ● Supports for English language learners ● Planning and implementing work through antiracism and equity lenses
	2. How will MCPS provide equitable education to the children who stay virtual for the remainder of the school year?	Since over 60% of MCPS students are remaining virtual, the school system is aware of the need to maintain rigor and fidelity in instruction. The MCPS Return to School plan highlights what instruction will look like on all three levels (elementary, middle, and high) as well as how the virtual experience will be executed to ensure equity. Schools have been monitoring who selected in-person vs. virtual instruction. Schools have encouraged families of students who would benefit from returning to in-person instruction to attend. ● https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/reopening/#expect

3. Are students achieving the increases in learning anticipated as a result of the new K-8 math and English curricula?	At the March 18 Board of Education meeting, student progress will be discussed during the agenda item "All in Equity and Achievement Framework: Mid-Year Progress." In a traditional year, the assessments that are aligned to the curriculum standards would provide the baseline data to the new curricula. MCPS is awaiting guidance from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) on the School Year 2020 - 2021 assessment program, which is currently being finalized as a result of the change to virtual learning. Therefore, there may be modifications to how student progress is assessed, reported, and analyzed in this unprecedented year.
4. How can we ensure that black and brown children get equal help, opportunity, and assistance that helps them advance into Magnet schools?	MCPS continues to maintain a commitment to equity, access, and opportunity for all students outlined in our All In: Equity Accountability Framework ● https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/evidence-of-learning-framework/equity-accountability-model.aspx

5. Under what circumstances can students improve an unacceptable grade? Are there classes that can be taken during non-standard class hours?	Students may retake select classes at the secondary level utilizing one of the following options: summer school, high school intervention program, or a specified credit recovery program.
	The Board of Education has also taken action as a result of the global COVID-19 Pandemic and called for the temporary adjustments to stated policies and procedures based on the potential impact of the disruption of learning. The adjustments to grading and reporting include:
	● Options for abbreviated schedules
	● Options to take courses credit/no credit (Pass/Fail)
	● Extension of deadline to withdraw from a course without notation on the transcripts from the 25th day of the semester to beginning of marking period 4
	● Retroactive options include Semester 1 of 2020-2021
	   ○ Withdrawing from a course after 25th day
	   ○ Changing letter grade to credit/no credit
	Seniors who are not on track to graduate receive direct and individualized support via school wellbeing teams, counselors, and other school staff.

		• Graduation Validation Process - centralized tracking of student not on track for graduation by staff to create individual follow-up • Monitoring of individual student grades • Academic intervention (weekly check-ins, tutoring, and resource classes) • Senior Contracts • Written and personal outreach to students and families The Board of Education took action on February 23, which stated, "The superintendent of schools may adjust graduation requirements for the Class of 2021 to align with the graduation requirements imposed by the Maryland State Board of Education and by Code of Maryland Regulation, which includes three mathematics credits (which include at least one in algebra/data analysis, and one in geometry); and one-half credit in physical education for a total of 21 credits versus the original MCPS 22 credits, which exceeds the state's requirements.
	6. Does the MCPS system have a Vo-Tech High School involving the trades? If yes, how effective is it & what is the ethnic breakdown of minority and disabled students?	MCPS has a robust Career and Technology Education (CTE) program. Students are able to take courses in an array of areas and earn professional certification. A description of the career areas and locations can be found via this link: • https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/career-readiness/programs/Career-Readiness-Programs.pdf
Equity	7. With all the current events and distractions, what is your plan to ensure MCPS remains focused on equity?	MCPS is in the process of implementing the Antiracism System Audit in MCPS, which is a systematic examination of the policies, practices, and conditions within MCPS that may hinder the lack of success for all students. The audit is expected to objectively show the work that still needs to be done to interrupt bias through analyzing practices and interactions between staff and students. MCPS has identified an external expert to conduct the audit and to support the associated plan of action.
Health & Safety	8. Will the students with severe asthma and other health conditions still be allowed to do virtual learning a little longer?	The decision for a student to return to in-person learning is made by the parents/guardian who knows the circumstances under which a decision would be made.

9. Is the vaccine mandatory for all MCPS staff?	The vaccination is not mandatory for staff.
10. What type of accommodations will be made for those students with pre-existing health conditions? Can they continue virtual?	All families have the option to remain virtual for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year.
11. What's the status of teacher vaccines?	According to Governor Larry Hogan, teachers and school personnel fall into Phase 1B. MCPS is working with partners at DHHS to prioritize teacher vaccinations. On 2.26.2021, a voluntary survey was sent to all employees inquiring about vaccination plans (whether they have already been vaccinated by other means or will need MCPS to vaccinate them) in order to determine the actual count of staff members needing and desiring a vaccine.
12. Listen and learn about safety protocols?	School safety protocols, processes, and procedures can be found on the MCPS COVID-19 Dashboard under resources • https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/coronavirus/dashboard/
13. Our family supports surveillance COVID testing to detect COVID cases in the schools to help decrease the risk of in-person instruction. Can you give more information about whether it will happen and, if so, how it will happen?	Free COVID-19 testing will be provided for students and staff at every school and will be available beginning March 15. Students and staff will do the nasal swab test themselves. The MCPS COVID testing does not currently involve the collection and testing of saliva as outlined in surveillance COVID testing.
14. If a student, teacher, or staff test positive for COVID, what actions will then be taken in a school, and will parents be informed?	A process has been developed to provide consistency in following the appropriate health protocol and communicating appropriate information to staff and families if an individual has a positive COVID-19 test result. - School Health Services (SHS) Personnel works with staff to identify close contact of the individual. - SHS provides list of close contacts to school administrator and the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS)

	- Contact tracing is implemented via confidential COVID notification portal - Administrator works with DHHS to assess transmission levels and assists with contact tracing. - DHHS advises on quarantine of exposed individuals and room or school closure, if necessary - Administrator or SHS notifies identified close contacts to inform them of the need to quarantine for 14 days and recommends contacting their healthcare provider. - Administrator informs staff, students/parents of positive COVID-19 case at school via a letter. - MCPS collaborates to identify and secure any needs for students, staff, and families in quarantine. - Classrooms and other areas where there was exposure are deeply cleaned and disinfected, windows are opened fully to increase air flow, and an alternative classroom/space is identified, if needed. - Staff/students in quarantine may return to the school after meeting the criteria to end quarantine.
15. Are Substitute Teachers included in the Teacher category?	Yes, substitute teachers and temporary part-time employees who are currently on assignment in MCPS are included in the plans for vaccination.
16. Do school nurses monitor students or staff entering school buildings?	A COVID-19 Attestation Form will be completed by staff and students/parents on a weekly basis before entering a school or office building. The form identifies conditions under which a student or staff member responds to four questions that would determine if the individual is permitted to enter a school or office. Staff also have information to identify symptoms of COVID-19, which would require further assessment by the school health personnel.
17. What will happen if there's another outbreak between phases?	In December 2020, the **Health Metrics Grid** for a Safe Phased-In Return to In-person Instruction was endorsed by the MCPS Board of Education. It aligns with the CDC guidelines. The grid/matrix states that major changes to the system reopening schedule would be considered following significant changes in the overarching public health conditions in the county. Cases or

		outbreaks at individual schools would have an impact on that individual school community in alignment with the contact tracing process.
		The metrics matrix states the reassessment of the in-person schedule "if new case rate increased by 2 per 100,00 or if positivity rate increases by 1.5% within two weeks." MCPS would work in collaboration with the county and state health officials to inform such an important decision.

		Resources: COVID-19 Health and Safety Procedures (**5 resources**)
		   1. COVID Process Map Student Illness or Exposure.pdf
		   2. DHHS COVID Response for Schools with Decision Aid.pdf
		   3. COVID Quick Guide for Staff.pdf
		   4. Non-COVID Quick Guide for Staff.pdf
		   5. COVID-19 Notification for Community.pdf

	18. Will they do PPE every day?	MCPS has provided personal health and safety supplies to schools and offices including cloth and disposable masks, face shields, gloves, hand sanitizer and dispenser units, and sani-wipes. Both MCPS and Governor Hogan are committed to providing these PPE supplies. MCPS will continue to address preventive maintenance required for infrastructure and systems as well as upgrading the air filters in the mechanical systems for all schools. This ongoing project includes installing air cleaners in the facilities that have ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems that require supplemental measures for air ventilation.
	19. Can you address social distancing on the bus? Will there be a monitor on the bus?	MCPS will limit capacity to 22 passengers on an MCPS general education bus, in accordance with current public health guidelines for physical distancing. There will only be one student per seat, except for household members. Masks will be required on buses. Capacity limits on special education buses will vary based on the number of staff needed to ensure student safety. The Department of Transportation will hold training sessions for staff to review COVID-19 protocol, including bus cleaning.

		The staffing allocation for a general bus remains the same. A bus monitor has not been identified for these buses. However, if there is a need for a monitor (distancing, social-emotional and behavioral support, etc.), the transportation director will consult with the appropriate state to determine the need and available resources.
	20. Have the metrics to reopen changed at all?	MCPS developed a Health Metrics Grid for a Safe Phased-In Return to In-Person Instruction. The in-person experience includes physical distancing, mask wearing, and frequent hand cleaning. The grid is aligned with CDC guidelines and was developed in consultation with Montgomery County health officials. Since December 15, 2020, MCPS has used the following metrics: ● 14-Day Average Test Positivity Rate: **< 5%; MCPS is currently at 3.1% (3.1.21)** ● 14-Day Raw Average of New Cases: **52-157** ● 14-Day Average New Case Rate* *(MD Calculation Model)*: **5 -15** ● 14-Day Average New Case Rate* *(CDC Calculation Model): 70 - 209* ***Per 100,000 Residents**
	21. At one point Derek Turner briefed that MCPS purchased enough thermometers for each family to take temps at home before sending kids to school. When will those thermometers be received?	Thermometers will be distributed to and go home with students when they return to school.
	22. If more than one student is not feeling well, how will that be monitored in the health room?	All staff members must call or contact the health room prior to excusing a student from the classroom. Students should not be sent directly to the health room without consultation from school health personnel. The health room staff will review symptoms using the Evaluation for COVID-Like Illness (CLI) checklist to triage the student and determine if the student should come to the health room or be taken to the Triage Room for further evaluation.
	23. What is the deadline for principals to communicate their school's specific reopening plan?	Schools informed families by February 23 via electronic letter about the virtual or in-person experience, teacher, and schedule for student groups in Phase I

In-Person & Virtual Learning	24. Will teachers return back to school March 15?	The teacher return to in-person teaching depends on a number of factors including: ● space availability that must comply with safety guidelines for social distancing, which impacts some buildings based on enrollment, and will result in some teachers having to remain teaching virtually; ● confidential accommodations approved via the American Disabilities
	25. What are the procedures to return to virtual learning if my child does not feel safe from catching COVID-19 at school?	Schools communicated with families to share their preference to transition to in-person learning or remain in virtual learning. It is the parents' decision given they know the factors that influence that decision. Notification was due by February 26.
	26. What feedback have you received from teachers regarding online learning?	Teachers' feedback varies and cannot be generalized as it is not officially documented. In the beginning of the unexpected all virtual learning experience, there were expected challenges with transitioning to a full-time virtual experience; which required a different skillset to plan for and implement lessons in a different way. It has been publicly expressed that this created stress for teachers. Professional development and technological resources were provided and will continue to be needed. Other concerns were with student engagement, which was complicated by students who did not turn on their cameras and with some behavioral issues. Our youngest students also experienced some challenges with using technology and staying engaged. There are also positives that have been experienced by some students and staff. ● The need for an increase in collaborative planning amongst teachers has occurred within and across schools. ● Enhanced use of a variety of instructional resources and strategies along with new digital tools have been planned for and implemented by teachers to engage students thus building their digital instructional capacity. ● Some students have vocalized they love virtual learning, which meets their personal learning style and has opened access to enrolling courses in other schools that were not previously available.

	Again, this is a compilation of a variety of information that has been shared but should not be viewed as the opinion or experience of all teachers.
27. What are the updated plans for reopening schools?	The plans to transition to in-person learning will occur in phases and is comprehensively outlined in the document linked below. ● https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/reopening/#expect
28. What will the class size ratio's look like in our school?	Class size ratio will vary from school to school, depending upon the size of the classroom and number of students. On average there will be no more than 10-12 students in a classroom at a time.
29. How can high school opening dates be moved up?	Updates will be given to the board on March 23, 2021 about next steps and any updated acceleration in schools.
30. Can children stay virtual for the rest of the school year?	Yes. The decision to remain virtual for the rest of the year is a decision that parents/family members make based on the student(s) best interest and the family's circumstances.
31. What options are available to seniors that are 18 years old to return to in class instruction?	Seniors needing additional support to remain on track for graduation will return on March 15th. Please note that there may be a combination of instructional models across a student's daily and/or weekly schedule. For example, a secondary student may come into the school for two classes taught in a simultaneous model and then be supervised in a support model to engage in their remaining classes virtually. Potential in-person enhancements and supports ● Monitoring work production and completion ● Review of timeline and plan for meeting graduation requirements ● Subject specific support for students who have not been accessing remote instruction successfully ● In-person support and tutoring through CARES Act ● Program support for ESOL and special education students

	● One-on-one meetings with counselors/PPWs to address social emotional needs.
32. Does the MCPS system have a Vo-Tech High School involving the trades?	MCPS has extensive Career Technical Education (CTE) clusters, some of which are similar in trade to what you remember as vocational education. Today's information-based economy demands highly skilled individuals with the ability to work with people from different cultural and educational backgrounds. Therefore, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) strives to provide students with an education that combines rigorous academic and technical study with the excitement of discovery through small learning communities and career-themed programs of study that make their experiences more meaningful by relating future goals to current coursework.

The MCPS CTE clusters are based on what students need to know and be able to do in order to graduate prepared for further education and careers in the 21st century. The following are the 11 MCPS CTE clusters: Arts, Humanities, Media, and Communications; Business Management and Finance; College/Career Research and Development; Construction Technology Programs; Education, Training, and Child Studies; Environmental, Agricultural, and Natural Resources; Health and Biosciences; Human and Consumer Services, Hospitality, and Tourism; Information Technologies; Law, Government, and Public Safety; Manufacturing, Engineering, and Technology; Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics.

Students in the CTE programs returned to in-person learning on March 1. |
| 33. Do we have any preparation plan when the kids go back to school? If yes, how effective is it & what is the ethnic breakdown of minority and disabled students? | Resources about the plan for in-person and virtual learning is provided in Question 28. The disaggregated data regarding the students who are returning to in-person learning and those who are remaining in virtual learning are provided in the link below. The data compares the initial survey results in December 2020 and the current data as of February 2021.
● Parent Preference Survey Results |

34. Why were non-responses automatically slated as virtual?	MCPS had made a concerted effort to contact families to participate in the community survey. Families were able to make changes until February 26, 2021 for in-person learning. If this information was not completed, they will continue to remain virtual.
35. Share a typical day	The typical school day will look very differently from the school day before COVID-19. The school day will be differentiated for students based on student numbers for both virtual and in-person learning and space availability. The elementary, middle and high school instructional experiences are age, grade-level, and course specific. The link below, under "What to Expect," provides information on the typical day for each school level. ● https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/reopening/ While MCPS has identified consistent models that are available to implement; each school will determine which model meets the diverse needs of its students based on the grade level; number of students who are in-person and virtually; space limitations based on social distancing requirements; etc. ● https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/reopening/docs/Instructional-Experience-Models.pdf
36. How does the transportation piece fit in the puzzle?	Transportation times for general education students will be similar to traditional school year times and will be posted on the MCPS transportation webpage by March 1. Bus route times are approximate as two or more routes with fewer students may be combined and routes with many students may be split into two buses. Transportation times for students in specific special education and CTE programs returning March 1 and March 15 will be shared directly with families. Please see Question 19 to read about the bus capacity, safety precautions, and other information about general education and special education transportation. ● https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/reopening/#transportation

	37. 7th & 10th Graders are in the last phase to return to school on April 26 and with the last day of school June 16th, does it make sense for them to return for just 7 weeks of instructions?	Although the current phase in schedule is stating that 7th and 10th graders are returning April 26, after we begin the phase in process we will be revisiting an acceleration of the phase in schedule at the March 23 Board of Education meeting.
Learning Loss	38. What are the plans for learning recovery	One of the first ways we are going to address learning disruption is to build a comprehensive summer school program that is open to all students. In the coming weeks more information will be shared with families and students about the opportunities that will be provided to all students throughout the summer. The summer school programs will be tuition free for students to maximize participation in the programs. As part of the 2.5 Year Plan, mitigating learning disruption will be a focus of our work. Some of the work we are planning for in this are as follows *(this is not an exhaustive list as planning is still underway)*: ● We plan on administering grade level assessments in the fall to accurately determine student progress so plans for acceleration and remediation can be created and implemented for each student ● We plan on using data to make necessary curriculum adjustments as needed ● We plan on utilizing after school and weekend programs to assist students based on need ● We plan on identifying and implementing strategic supports to address students in Special Education, English Language Learners, and students in specialized programs.
	39. For context, what percentage of the overall budget does the $30M for these allocations represent and for how many students?	The 30 million dollars is a relatively small percentage of the over 2 billion dollar budget, however, the 30 million dollar allocation is in addition to the state and federal monies that will be used to support well-being support, mitigation of learning disruption, focus on most poverty impacted schools, and digital learning and support. The 2.5 Year Plan will strategically support all students in MCPS based on need.

	40. How can we as NAACP Parent Reps help you implement and make accountable the budget and areas of focus set forth tonight; particularly at our individual schools	NAACP Parent Reps are a valuable and integral part of the PTSA structure at each school. Engaging in PTSA meetings, staying abreast of information shared at the Board of Education meetings and through MCPS communications will allow you to keep up to date on the 2.5 year plan and the budget. Building positive relationships with the school staff so you can engage in dialogue and collaboration to benefit the students will be integral in the success of our students. Additionally, Mr. Byron Johns is a part of the MCPS Budget Advisory Committee and can share updates and offer ways to engage in the MCPS Budget process.
	41. If schools were supposed to reach out to families already about in-person … Many schools have NOT yet. I am hearing many families have no word or communications from the schools. Is there a time line I should be telling families to wait until reaching out to the school?	Parents were to receive information from principals by February 23. If a parent has not received information about the return to in-person instruction; they should contact the school immediately.
	42. Who is going to cover when staff is out?	We are continuing to build our substitute teacher pool. Similarly, to when we were all virtual, when we return to in-person instruction, substitute teachers will be deployed to schools when teachers are on leave.
Additional Questions	43. How do I sign up for the faith-based initiative?	The project lead for the Faith-Based Advisory Group, Dr. Nicole Allain, can be reached at Nicole_P_Allain@mcpsmd.org. Please contact her and discuss your interests and the faith-based organization through which you are interested in participating. MCPS is looking to expand the number and diversity of participating faith-based organizations.
Additional Resources	Dr. McKnight requested that the links to presentations at the Board meetings be included in this information.	1. Antiracist System Audit in MCPS (January 19, 2021) 2. Opening of Schools in Recovery Education (February 9, 2021) - Highlights the instructional models for in-person learning. 3. Opening of Schools in Recovery Education (February 23, 2021) - Highlights the health and safety operations for the return to in-person learning