

Dr. Judith R. Docca

Experience

Retired teacher of Spanish and French, Coordinator of MCPS Human Relations, Assistant Principal at Montgomery Blair High School, Principal of Argyle MS, 38 years as an educator.

BA, Penn State University, Romance Language and Literature; MA, George Washington University, Romance Language and Literature; PH. D., George Washington University, Educational Administration

Founder and president of the Montgomery County Alliance of Black School Educators; Vice President for programs and Education and Parents' Council, NAACP, Sponsor, NAACP Youth Council; Co-chair, Montgomery County Community Partnership; SAT tutor; member of Asian and Latino Educators organizations; member of the Links, International, Silver Spring and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. Theta Omega Omega (Links and AKA are service organizations); former vestry member of St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, Laytonsville; member Nanticoke(Delaware) American Indian Tribe.

Vision

Public education is about preparing all students to be productive and knowledgeable citizens who contribute to the well-being and welfare of the United States. Public education must embrace all students and strive to meet all intellectual, academic and social/emotional needs.

MCPS Priorities

Continue to provide rigorous and challenging curriculum for all students based on equity,not equality-each student brings his/her own abilities to schools)

Provide a more diverse staff, particularly teachers. New techniques for recruiting, particularly Asian and Latino teachers which would better reflect our student population

Continue efforts to close the achievement or "opportunity gap" for Latino and African American students who are underrepresented in AP, Baccalaureate, magnet programs

Improvement

Closing gap, providing a curriculum which reflects the material covered in required federal, state and local exams

Hiring for diversity

Using more ethnic history and writings by actual ethnic persons
Keeping relations productive with the County Executive, the County Council and the State Delegation to improve results of capital and operating budget needs
Reducing suspensions of African American and Hispanic students
Continuing to support collective bargaining for MCPS staff
Keeping class sizes low for special education and English language learners
Determining best pedagogy for all students

Meeting the Needs of Gifted and Talented Students

Continuing to improve the curriculum and delivery in G/T, magnet, International Baccalaureate, language immersion programs
Increasing access to these programs by expanding the number of seats few seats have been added since the 1980's although the student population has almost doubled
This year, more teachers of record will be in classrooms-72. These teachers will have full complement of students. More teachers will be available to increase G/T offerings.

Transparency

The aim of having the six areas of the MCPS reorganization is to provide specialists on each team in the various academic fields. Also, there is a determination to bring G/T programs to more elementary schools so that students will not have to travel away from the home school for rigorous instruction. More community meetings are necessary for our staff to make sure parents in all parts of the county get presentations and are able to ask questions. The MCCPTA president last year developed cluster meetings in the summer where parents could ask open questions. High school cluster meetings, such as a recent one at Walter Johnson should be open-ended and informative. MCPS staff members make themselves available for night meetings to provide essential details to parents/guardians.

Admission practices are being changed to notify all parents of the eligibility of their children while increasing the seats in G/T programs. This does not mean "watering down" the curriculum as some community members have said. Often students who could perform well in advanced courses were omitted because of space. Many had scores one or two points lower than the cut offs.

Diversity of MCPS Teacher and Administrative Workforce

I alluded to this initiative in "Improvements" MCPS is also using staff to partner with universities to encourage more highly qualified graduates to consider teaching. Organizations are reaching out to constituents to consider teaching but with the knowledge that certification does require specific course work.

Capital Investment Planning

Most capital funds come from the County government I will continue to lobby for funds for buildings and for infrastructure needs. The State Delegation works closely with the Board to change the formula for capital funding. Montgomery County Schools have 17% of the total State population of students and receives 12% of the funding.

In addition, we are working more closely with the Council and the Planning Board to discourage "place holding" which means building new domiciles without funding schools which will be needed to accommodate the new population. Because of a shortage of funds, about \$800 million is needed for planned replacement/infrastructure needs. The superintendent is also invested in using commercial space for certain programs-academic programs-to relieve over-capacity.

Advocacy in Annapolis

I will continue to keep relations open with our Delegation so that they may know our needs in depth. I also will continue to work with Maryland Association of Boards of Education who advocate for all school systems. Our growth has been very much larger than growth in other counties, therefore we all must be clear about our needs here.

Bullying, School Climate, Student social and Emotional Wellness

I will continue to find a way to increase the numbers of counselors, Pupil Personnel Workers, psychologists each year. I applaud our mandatory training for all staff, including Board members, to increase the understanding about bullying and cyberbullying, substance abuse, gangs, sexual abuse and suicide prevention. The training provides information about what to look for, but more importantly staff members know that their reports will be taken seriously and it is an obligation to be involved in reporting. Cyberbullying requires the assistance of parents who have access or may have access to the activities on cell phones and computers of their children. Staff members are observant and report what they think is bullying. Once the bullying is reported to the school through the counselor or an administrator, that administrator /administrators must take recommended steps to address the issues. The Technology Department in MCPS also does forensic investigations to track perpetrators.

Honoring Cultural Heritage

Cultural Heritage appreciation should not be limited to specific months only. Our curriculum must include more information about ethnic groups in the US and contributions which were important in our development as a nation. As I said above, we actually need to use materials prepared by ethnic authors and our social studies need to reflect more honestly the contributions (and tribulations) of African Americans, American Indians, Asians, Hispanic persons. Students need to understand the discrimination experienced at some point and that Catholics, Moslems, the Irish and Italians (WOPS- Did you know this meant With Out Papers when referring to Italians) also were discriminated against. In my experience, I taught African American History

and Culture, Hispanic Culture, Ethnic Groups in American Society and my interest in the whole history of the US is very keen.

Boundaries

According to our policies on

overcapacity may require changing existing boundaries and high school cluster affiliation

Transportation, traffic patterns and walkability are considerations

Opening new schools like the high school planned for Crown to relieve high school overcrowding in the Gaithersburg area, and the reopening of Woodward to relieve overcapacity at Walter Johnson, Einstein, Kennedy and Northwood.

Building Seneca Valley to twice its size to alleviate crowding but to be able to offer auto body/mechanics, medical careers(college credit may be attained in these courses), computer assisted design, cosmetology, food services, aviation, homeland security, police and fire cadets. This makes these courses more available to upcountry residents.