

Kindergarten Assessment Options

Background

MCCPTA was contacted by the head of Elementary School Instruction, Ebony Langford, looking for input regarding an option that MCPS is considering.

MCPS currently assesses Kindergarten students three times: at the beginning of school, mid-year, and end of year. These assessments give scores on reading level, fluency, letter and word recognition, etc. Since this assessment program was started several years ago, it has been a continuing challenge for teachers to conduct these assessments while continuing to teach the rest of the class. MCPS has been providing some money to schools to use for substitutes, but there is still the issue of students having substitutes for the many days it takes to complete the testing. Some elementary schools have worked out individual solutions with other staff conducting the testing or other alternatives.

Since the general feeling is that teachers would prefer to do the assessments themselves (to get a better sense of where their students stand and also because they feel the students perform truer to ability when assessed by someone they are used to) it is especially problematic to have the teacher out of the classroom during the first two weeks of school when students are just starting to be familiar with the school and routine. Consequently, MCPS put together a work group to explore several options.

OPTIONS:

- (1) Have parents make appointments and bring incoming kindergarten students in for assessments over the summer
- (2) Conduct the assessments during the first two days of the pre-service week (week before school starts when teachers work anyway) and have kindergarten start 2 days after the other students begin school (to give Kindergarten teachers time to set up their rooms, etc).
- (3) Have a rolling start to kindergarten, that is have 1/3 of kind. Students come to school on the first day to be assessed, have the next third come on the second day, and have the final third only come on the third day. All students would attend school on the fourth day.

Due to budget considerations and the sense that people do not want to be tied up during the summer, MCPS is currently considering only the **third option**.

MCPS would like to hear the pros and cons as different PTAs see them in this option, as well as any steps that you think the school system would and/or could take to make option (3) work more smoothly. It is not decided whether they would try to implement this change for fall 2008, or wait until 2009, if they decide to move forward on this at all. If you have alternative suggestions, please send those too. *Use the back of this sheet to submit your comments and send it in to the PTA box in the school office. Please reply by Friday March 14th.*