

Citizens Advisory Committee
Final Report
2015-2016

2015-16 Membership

Members are classified by the high school district in which they live.

Calvert

Maricarol Blanco Cloak
Mariann Crisman
Margaret Dunkle
Judy Hooker
Abiodun O. Ijaola
Elaine Reilly
Terese D. Wells*
John A. Williamson, Jr.

Huntingtown

Donald Clime
Derek Sabedra
William Wiggins
+Harleigh White
+David Rothbaum

Northern

Inez Claggett
Nicole S. Cooksey
Yolanda Woods Holmes
Stefany Lang
Angela Novak
Debra Ruzinsky
George L. Sisson, III
+Michael Metler

Patuxent

Jack Fringer**
Wanda Hassler
Culver Ladd
Richard Sanchez
+Chris Stone

* Chair

** Vice-Chair

+ Student Member

INTRODUCTION

The 2015-16 Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was tasked by the Board of Education to continue a study we began in September 2014 on Bridging the Achievement Gap in Calvert County Public Schools (CCPS). We were also asked to look at how Title IX and STEM are addressed in CCPS. This report contains a review of our studies, our recommendations, presentations received, participation on other committees by members, and our recommendations for future study topics.

PRESENTATIONS

During the course of the year, the CAC received the following presentations:

- MAC Scholars from Calvert High School – CHS Mac Scholars and sponsor Julie Morrison
- Title IX and STEM Update - Kim Roof, Scott McComb, Kevin Hook, Yovonda Kolo, and Mark Wilding.
- Title IX Recommendations - Calvert County Commission for Women
- NHS Reconstruction - George Leah

- Addressing the Low Minority Recruiting, Hiring, and Retention Rate in CCPS - Closing the Gap Coalition
- How Student Attendance and Behavior affects the Achievement Gap - Kim Roof
- How Schools at each level are addressing the Achievement Gap
 - Elementary – Karen Vogel (SES)
 - Middle - Mandy Blackmon (SMS)
 - High – Francis Forrest (PHS)
- The Achievement Gap from a BOE Member Perspective – Bill Phalen
- School Security – Larry Titus

STUDY TOPICS

BRIDGING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

Findings:

The Achievement Gap can be defined as the disparity in academic performance between groups of students. This is a broad topic and there are many gaps with plenty of statistics. The CAC decided to concentrate our study of the Achievement Gap on African American and FARM students. Research indicates test scores of African American and FARM students are lower than their White counterparts. Therefore, we limited our study to the specific gaps between All students and African American students, and All students and FARM students. Not being given access to a speaker from the Department of Instruction, it was hard to ascertain what exactly is being done in CCPS to address these achievement gaps. However, through various speakers and articles we learned the following:

- Gaps at the high school level are not the same as Elementary level gaps. There isn't one answer; both have gaps but different causes.
- There is little to no gap in kindergarten, however a gap appears by third grade.
- There is no gap in graduation rates. However it happens, students get their diplomas.
- Number of African American teachers in CCPS is declining, despite efforts of the Human Resources Department.
- Attendance
 - Chronic absenteeism may be a cause of the gap.
 - African American students are suspended at higher rates.
 - Suspensions should be used sparingly. Alternatives to suspension are important to keep students in school - students can't learn if they are not present.
- Parents need to be involved in their child's education. If education is not important to the parent, then it certainly won't be a priority to the student.

- Brainstorming Session: One of the CAC's activities was a Start, Stop, Continue exercise to look at current practices and programs within CCPS and identify which should be stopped or continued and what programs or practices should be started. The Start and Continue recommendations are attached. There were no Stop recommendations.

Recommendations:

- Since CCPS has its own Closing the Achievement Gap Committee and there is a Closing the Gap Coalition (a community group), there is no further need for the CAC to study this topic.
- Continue efforts to hire a more diverse, multi-cultural teacher workforce.
- Ascertain why minority teachers don't stay at CCPS and find ways to encourage them to stay.
- CCPS should continue efforts on bridging the Achievement Gap and also continue meeting and working with the Closing the Gap Coalition
- Encourage student attendance, possibly providing incentives for perfect attendance (by month).
- Continue to find other methods of discipline to avoid suspensions.
- Ways to increase parent involvement need to be found and developed.

Title IX

Findings:

- Title IX addresses not just athletics and gender, but discrimination and making sure all students have access to all programs and activities.
- There are still subject areas where gender differences are high (i.e., males in welding, females in cosmetology). However, CCPS respects student choice in these selected pathways that appeal to the student's preferences and goals.
- While not directly a Title IX issue, female students enroll in AP classes more often, and pass the corresponding test with more frequency, than male students. Females have higher GPA's and higher SAT scores in reading and writing. Males have higher SAT scores in math.
- Athletics
 - At the high school level, there are actually more sports offered to females (16) than to males (15).
 - In high school athletics, 20% more males than females participate. This is most likely because football is an all male sport. Each high school's football team has 125-150 male participants.
 - CCPS is the only district in Maryland that offers inter-scholastic sports at the middle school level. Middle schools offer five sports for females and

four sports for males with overall female participation being slightly higher.

- Title IX initiatives are embedded in the culture as a school system, and not a standalone program.
- The information learned satisfied the CAC that Title IX is being adequately addressed by CCPS.

Recommendations:

- CCPS seems to be doing quite well in this area and we recommend that you keep up the good work.
- CCPS should continue to proactively and positively address Title IX issues as they arise.

STEM

Findings:

- STEM opportunities are increasing at the elementary school level and in extracurricular activities.
- Statistics – The Engineering track has 80% male students, while the Biomedical track is dominated by 80% females.
- There is a concerted effort to increase teacher training in STEM curriculum, reduce the participation gap between males and females in certain fields, and to encourage more females overall to participate in STEM programs.
- CCPS has initiated numerous programs to increase college awareness and attendance such as Destination College.

Destination College:

- Exposes 5th grade students to college in order to generate interest in post secondary education.
- Provides students with stimulating STEM experiences to foster greater interest in these fields.
- Encourages all students to remain in school through graduation.

Recommendations:

- Encourage more female and minority participation in STEM classes and programs.
- Continue the progress and implementation of STEM programs.

PARTICIPATION

Members of the CAC participated in the following committees:

- Teacher of the Year Selection Committee

- Educational Support Person of the Year Selection Committee
- 2017-18 Calendar Committee

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE PRESENTATIONS TO THE CAC

- Scope of Programs and staffing issues for each department (Special Education, Elementary, Secondary, Fine Arts, etc.)
- Honors versus the Advanced Learning Program
- Equity Policy
- Education Legislative Reports
- Grading System and current policy
- CCPS communication practices with the various communities, i.e., Parent to School, School to Parent, School to Community, BOE to Community
- Drug Awareness Programs provided in K-12.
- What CCPS does to encourage parents to become more involved in their child's education
- What kind of Mentoring programs are available and at what grade levels. Is mentoring only in the high schools, or elementary and middle, as well?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE CAC STUDY/REVIEW

- Retention and Acquisition of quality teachers, especially minority and special education teachers.
- CCPS Grading Policy
- CCPS Policy and Procedure Review

ATTACHMENT

Start-Stop-Continue

Apr 25, 2016

START

- Set higher expectations for middle and lower achieving students
- Making sure students know you respect them
- Hot Line for Parents for Child's homework
- Tips for parents to be able to help students
- Identify specific groups where gaps exist: grade, subject, academic programs and schools
- Increase the length of the school day
- Investigate 15 minute blocks in the high school schedule
- Communication with parent/teacher/guidance counselor
- Fund Pre-K for all children
- More Community partnerships
- Formalize MAC Scholars across all high schools
- Allow students to try honors and AP classes who don't quite qualify (even in elementary school).
- More emphasis on ROTC information and participation (participation in this program does not mean you're going in the military).
- Reduce class sizes at elementary level
- Allow teachers to tailor instruction to the specific class
- Move highly skilled, dynamic teachers to lower performing schools/classes.

CONTINUE

- Data Collection
- Co-taught classes
- Recruit/hire qualified minority staff
- High Standards for all students both in academics and behavior
- Professional development for school personnel
- Emphasis on Fine Arts
- Implementation of Equity Policy
- AP Classes – emphasis and exposure
- Real-life assemblies (speakers with real life stories to which students can relate)
- Have dynamic teachers provide professional development for others
- Programs to encourage/require students to do homework (such as sport team study halls)
- Teachers should only teach subjects they are certified/qualified to teach.