



BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DATE: November 20, 2001
TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION
FROM: Dr. J. Hairston, Superintendent
SUBJECT: Presentation on the Academic Intervention Team
ORIGINATOR: Christine Johns, Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction

RESOURCE

PERSON(S): Eileen Copple, Principal, Academic Intervention Team

INFORMATION

Early in 2001, the Superintendent set forth an initiative for improving under achieving schools in Baltimore County Public Schools. A task force was appointed and their recommendations were released in May, 2001. Using the School Performance Index, the California Test of Basic Skills, and SAT scores as criteria, 20 under achieving schools were identified. Of these, ten are elementary, five are middle, and five are high schools. A recommendation for an academic intervention team was set forth and during July and August, 2001, this team was put into place. The task force called for two teams of "experts," one elementary and one secondary, on-site who offer administrative support and focus on teaching and learning at all levels of the school with an emphasis on the core subjects of reading/language arts, social studies, science, and mathematics.

These teams have facilitated discussion between teachers, become familiar with the staff and needs of each school, and provided coaching, mentoring, and other support services, as needed.

These teams have met with every principal at the elementary level and with each principal and each department chair at the secondary level. The elementary teams have met with grade level teams in schools. From these meetings have come requests for assistance from teachers and administrators.

The elementary schools have been assisted as they wrote the addendum plan for funds made available to each elementary school for before or after school or Saturday assistance for students and families.

Any given day can find these team members in schools observing teachers, modeling instruction, providing feedback, accessing materials, assisting with program development, leading staff development, interacting with staff members, and much more.

The teams have attended PTA meetings and presented workshops at the Baltimore County PTA sessions at Cockeysville Middle School.

These teams have aligned themselves and work closely with the curriculum offices under the leadership of Kathy McMahon and Estelle Collins. In addition, the teams have attended work sessions on vertical teaming and middle school matters at Howard County Community College in order to assist with current Baltimore County initiatives. The team members also have presented at Baltimore County staff development sessions.

This investment of skills, time, and energy would be futile if it didn't address results. Many of the activities and daily functions of team members do not lend themselves to immediate results. Rather, they are "seeds that are planted" to produce results that are observable over a period of time. Some efforts have immediate results as teachers change instruction and demonstrate the use of better teaching strategies in their daily instruction. Most immediate, is the opportunity to provide feedback to the principal to use in making decisions regarding staff development needs or assignments. At the middle schools and high schools, the efforts are directed toward reading, writing, and math, particularly as they impact MSPAP, the Maryland Functional Writing and Math tests, and CTBS. At the elementary schools, the emphasis is on reading and writing across the curriculum and mathematics with anticipated results in MSPAP and CTBS.

CJ/elc