



Montgomery County Public Schools



Malcolm Baldrige
National Quality Award

2010 Award Recipient

IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

Baldrige in Action

For more than a decade, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has been on a mission to prepare every student for success in college and a career, regardless of his or her race, ethnicity, income level or special needs. That singular goal—shared by all 22,000 staff members—has been the driving force behind a comprehensive reform initiative and continuous improvement process that has solidified MCPS as one of the highest-performing school systems in the United States. MCPS has achieved this excellence even as the district saw its student population rapidly shift, making the school district one of the most ethnically, racially and socio-economically diverse large school systems in the nation.

To reach its goal of academic excellence for all students, MCPS designed and adopted a strategic plan that guides—every single day—the work of its teachers, principals, administrators, and support staff members in the system. Titled *Our Call to Action: Pursuit of Excellence*, the plan is based on high expectations for all staff and students, and embodies the tenet that all children can and will learn.

MCPS leaders understood that it would take teamwork and buy-in from every employee in the system to provide a high-quality, world-class education to every student. Establishing a plan to maximize the performance level of employees—inside and outside the classroom—became the next critical step to ensure MCPS would deliver on that promise.

THE BALDRIGE JOURNEY BEGINS

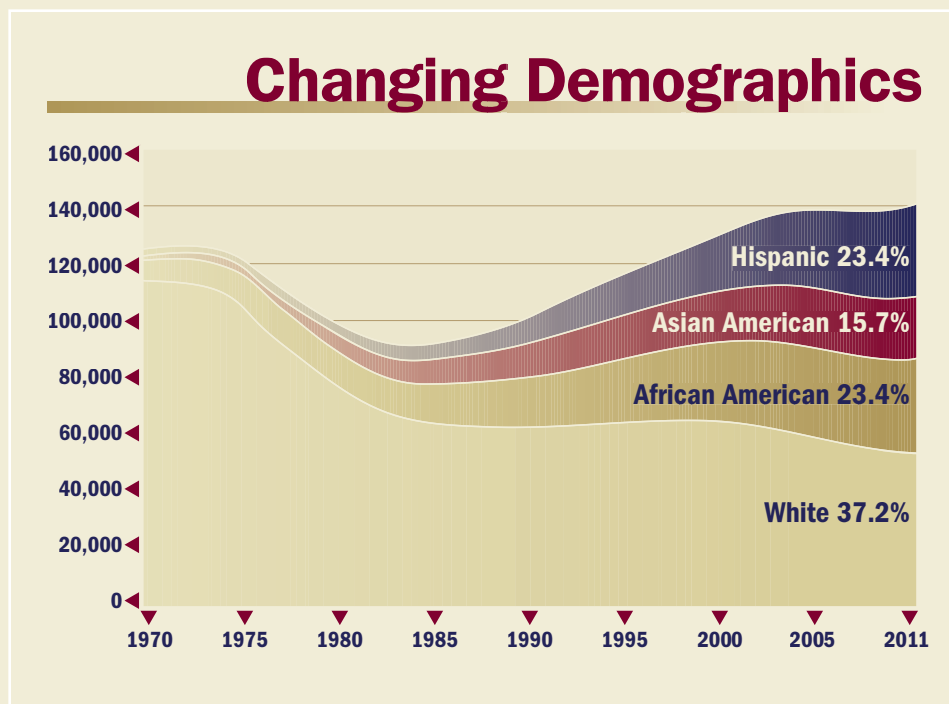
Using the Malcolm Baldrige Education Criteria for Performance Excellence, MCPS embarked on its now more than decade-long journey of continuous improvement that has produced the school system's outstanding academic and operational results. Across every department, MCPS has formalized key processes designed to produce high levels of performance from each staff member. These processes were created through collaboration, making employees integral players in the design of the systems they use every day to perform their jobs.

“Our success is no secret. It’s about hard work and commitment to our people, our plan and our process; and having the persistence to see it through.”

—Dr. Jerry D. Weast
Superintendent of Schools

DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

Collecting, tracking and analyzing data to monitor progress and make decisions about what happens inside and outside the classroom is the anchor in the MCPS process of continuous improvement. Whether it's a change in the mathematics curriculum or the creation of a new bus route, there are sound data to support those decisions.



I N P U R S U I T O



DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP, COLLABORATION AND RESPECT

Likewise, a collaborative, shared leadership approach to how MCPS has planned, designed and pursued its systemwide reforms has not only produced continually rising test scores and academic achievement, but also has fostered a high degree of employee satisfaction and positive work culture. MCPS spends roughly \$42 million a year on professional development for staff members—an investment that strengthens the quality of the workforce and demonstrates that the school system is committed to their professional growth. MCPS has extremely high workforce retention rates—the teacher turnover rate for 2009 was 12.2 percent below the national average.

RESULTS: HOW BALDRIGE PAYS OFF

In 2010, MCPS had the highest graduation rate of any large public school system in the nation, according to a national report published by *Education Week*. The district also was selected as a finalist for the 2010 Broad Prize for Urban Education for its track record in raising academic performance for all students while closing the achievement gap. A 2011 national study by the Center on American Progress, a non-partisan think tank, rated MCPS as one of a select number of school districts producing a strong return on taxpayers' investment in public schools.



Watch video and read more about Baldrige in action in MCPS.
Either scan this Quick Reference (QR) code with your mobile device,
or visit the website and search for Baldrige.

www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org

Baldrige in the Classroom

To achieve the MCPS goal of preparing all students for the rigors of college and 21st century careers, everyone from the superintendent to the youngest student in the school system must be an active participant. That is especially critical inside the school building. To successfully apply Baldrige principles in the classroom requires active engagement of students in the teaching and learning process—and guiding them to take ownership of their own learning. Sherwood Elementary School provides an excellent example of Baldrige principles at work in the classroom.

STUDENTS GATHER AND UNDERSTAND THEIR OWN DATA

At Sherwood, every student has specific, academic goals. Working closely with their teachers, students set those goals and then track them, on a daily basis, in individual “data notebooks.” On any given day, students at Sherwood can report exactly how they are performing in reading and math. Teachers meet with students weekly to review data notebooks and provide feedback on their progress.

The notebooks also are an important communication tool between Sherwood staff members and parents. Students take their notebooks home regularly for parents to review progress and to help them reflect on what they can do to help their child reach his or her academic goals.

FOCUS ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Teachers and administrators have created numerous ways to ensure students have a stake in setting the ground rules and culture of each classroom. Each fall, teachers lead students through a process to establish guidelines and expectations for how their classroom will operate—making the “rules” those of the class and not just the teacher. To keep instructional time focused on academics, every classroom includes an “issue bin,” which students use daily to ask questions and let teachers know about personal issues that may affect their performance. Teachers review submissions daily and decide to meet with students individually, or, if warranted, to call a class meeting to address a larger problem.

EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES

To ensure quality instruction in the classroom, MCPS has developed a highly-effective professional growth system for teachers, as well as a rigorous evaluation process that focuses on helping educators improve their practice. All novice and struggling teachers receive intensive mentoring from their peers who are veteran master educators.

Most teachers hired by MCPS participate in a Baldrige Quality Academy and receive training in how to apply process management principles and strategies for student engagement in their classrooms. The academies have trained more than 7,000 teachers in four years.

At Sherwood, a Baldrige leadership team—comprising teachers, support staff, administrative staff and parents—meets monthly to create schoolwide action plans and review data to gauge progress toward those goals. Whether it is setting a goal of improving Sherwood’s writing program or increasing the academic performance of its English language learners, the Baldrige leadership team plays an integral role in holding the school team accountable for delivering results.

Sherwood students, staff members, administrators and parents are directly involved in improving Sherwood’s academic and operational results, and the school is thriving. For example, 95 percent of Sherwood’s 4th graders scored proficient or advanced in reading on state exams in 2010, compared to 87.4 percent of 4th graders in Maryland. Year after year, Sherwood has consistently raised the bar to meet the rising academic benchmarks that state and federal mandates require.

A STRONG HOME SCHOOL CONNECTION THROUGH EDLINE

Across the district, parents are a critical piece of the pipeline in moving all students toward academic success. To keep them directly connected to what their children are learning and understanding in their classes, all middle and high schools in MCPS provide access to Edline—a web-based system where teachers post assignments and where parents and students track progress throughout the semester.



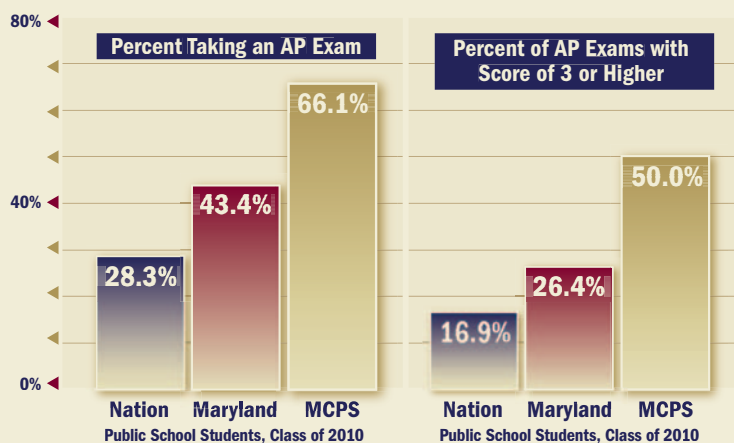
OUR ACADEMIC RECORD OF SUCCESS

- MCPS had the highest graduation rate of any large school district in the nation in 2010, according to an *Education Week* study.
- MCPS was selected as a 2010 finalist for the Broad Prize for Urban Education, a prestigious award that recognizes substantial progress in closing the achievement gap. MCPS is the only school district in Maryland and the Washington, DC area to ever have been a finalist.
- Seven MCPS high schools ranked among the top 100 in the nation by *Newsweek* magazine in 2010. All 25 MCPS high schools ranked in the nation's top 3 percent of the nation's high schools.
- Exactly half of the graduates in the Class of 2010 earned a college-ready score of 3 or higher on at least one Advanced Placement (AP) exam—a record high performance for MCPS that is nearly double the rate in Maryland and triple the rate nationally.
- The percentage of African American and Hispanic graduates in the MCPS Class of 2010 with at least one AP score of 3 or higher surpassed the national average of 16.9 percent for all graduates.
- In 2010, students took more than 2,400 International Baccalaureate exams and earned a college-ready score of 4 or higher on 85.9 percent of the tests.
- The MCPS Class of 2010 earned a 1653 combined average SAT score, setting a school system record and surpassing both national and state averages.
- Nearly 50 percent of graduates in the MCPS classes of 2001-2004 earned a bachelor's degree within six years, compared with 27.5 percent nationwide.
- More than 75 percent of MCPS kindergarten students in 2010 reached or exceeded reading text at Level 6, two levels above the strategic target set by MCPS in the Seven Keys to College Readiness, a step-by-step guide for parents and students to prepare for college.
- Students in Grade 3 through Grade 8 score Advanced in reading proficiency on Maryland School Assessment (MSA) exams in far greater numbers than public school students as a whole in Maryland.



MCPS Outperforms State, Nation in Advanced Placement

National, Maryland, and MCPS Class of 2010



Baldrige in Operations

Keeping the lights on, the buildings clean, the buses tuned up and running, the meals prepared and delivered, and schools stocked with classroom supplies is a massive, daily undertaking in Montgomery County Public Schools.

CUSTOMER SERVICE IN SCHOOLS?—ABSOLUTELY

The Department of Materials Management (DMM)—a critical player in servicing schools—adopted a customer-service approach that’s more commonly seen in the private sector. DMM employees scrutinize supply and demand and constantly tweak their forecasts for what products and services schools are going to need and when. They study performance data and benchmark that against private industry to see what works and what doesn’t.

PROVEN BUSINESS PRACTICES

DMM developed a comprehensive, customer-friendly website so that school-based staff members can easily find and order the supplies that they need and track the progress of their order in real time, just like UPS or FedEx. At the DMM warehouse, employees use bar codes and electronic tracking devices to quickly locate products—from #2 pencils to printer ink cartridges—a process that saves time and money, improves service for school-based customers, and has helped eliminate the practice of supply stockpiling at schools.

Underpinning its commitment to quality customer service, DMM employees hold regular meetings and focus groups with school-based staff members to gather their feedback on how to improve their services. One major new service to come out of these regular conversations is the creation of the Warehouse on Wheels, or WOW, a truck that delivers supplies to schools that need them immediately.

And to relieve the pressure on school secretaries to manage the flow and unpacking of supplies coming into a single school, DMM created a service to deliver and unpack every supply ordered by school staff members at the beginning of each school year. Any errors or oversights are corrected within 24 hours.

KNOWING YOUR CUSTOMERS

MCPS’ Department of Food and Nutrition Services—responsible for preparing more than 13 million meals annually—uses a similar strategy to improve service to schools and students. The team regularly reviews data to track what foods students are buying and what isn’t selling. Team members meet face-to-face with parents and students to solicit ideas on how to improve food selections. To keep parents in the loop about what their children buy for lunch and how much they spend, MCPS implemented electronic food accounts that can be viewed and managed online.

This customer-service approach—demanded in the private sector—runs counter to what many people might expect from a large-scale, public bureaucracy. But the results—whether keeping food costs 10 percent below the industry standard or maintaining a 94 percent average when it comes to completing schools’ supply orders on the first shipment—demonstrate that operations driven by customer needs are the smartest, most cost-effective approach.



OUR OPERATIONAL RECORD OF SUCCESS

- High employee retention rates. The teacher turnover rate in 2009 was 4.6 percent, far below the national average of 16.8 percent.
- Employees report high satisfaction rates with their work. In 2009, more than 91 percent of elementary, middle, and high school staff members reported that they were satisfied with their jobs. The rate for non-school-based staff was 84.8 percent.
- Principals report high satisfaction rates with the departments that provide critical services to their schools: The Division of Construction has kept a 4.25 rating on a scale of 5.0 since 2003, while the Department of School Plant Operations rated a 4.4 on a 5.0 scale in 2009, up from 4.38 in 2008.
- Centralized photocopying services will return more than 50,000 hours of instructional and planning time to teachers in 2010-2011.
- Energy conservation and recycling programs at all 200 schools and offices saved \$632,000 in 2006; \$2.5 million in 2009.
- MCPS mail service delivers letters and packages faster and more economically than the U.S. Postal Service. MCPS spends about 33 cents per letter delivery, compared to the average 46 cents that it would cost via the U.S. Postal Service.
- In-house copier repair service fixes copy machines faster, cheaper and better than outside vendors and saves MCPS approximately \$1.5 million per year.
- On-time completion of construction projects rose from 90 percent in 2007 to 100 percent in 2009.
- First school system in the Maryland/Virginia region to enter innovative, public-private partnership to install solar panels at eight schools that generate 1,148 kilowatt hours of energy each day, resulting in significant energy cost savings. Installation costs of \$7 million absorbed by private partner, not MCPS.
- Commitment to communication with families through numerous methods: More than 2.5 million emailed newsletters (published in six languages) in 2009-2010 school year; 50,000 subscribers to Alert MCPS instant message and texting service to provide breaking news information in regard to weather-related and other emergencies in schools, Connect-ED automated call system for schools to deliver important information to homes, 5,000 followers on Twitter, and a website that attracted 3 million unique visitors in 2010, creating 50 million page views.





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MCPS by the Numbers

- **144,064** students (projected to be 147,000 in 2011)
 - African American 23.4%
 - Hispanic 23.4%
 - Asian American 15.7%
 - White 37.2%
 - American Indian 0.3%
- **971,777** residents in Montgomery County (2010 Census)
- **497** square miles
- **200** schools, **30** additional support facilities
- **23 million** square feet valued at **\$5 billion**
- **22,229** employees (**11,673** are teachers)
- **184** languages spoken/**164** countries represented
- **\$2.1 billion** annual operating budget (2010-2011 school year)
 - Instruction: 80.4%
 - School support: 14.7%
 - Systemwide support: 2.4%
 - Food services/other: 2.5%
- **1,268** school buses transport **96,000** students daily and service **22,000** bus stops.
MCPS buses travel the equivalent distance of four times around the equator each school day.
- **13.1 million** meals served annually
- **\$234 million** in college scholarships earned by the Class of 2010