MCCPTA Gifted Education Committee (GEC) Advocacy Toolkit for Elementary Parents - May 2026

At the May 7, 2026 BOE meeting, MCPS announced that cohorted enriched/accelerated compacted math and accelerated English Language Classes (Model 1 CKLA) will be eliminated. Instead, advanced 3rd-5th grade students will receive any acceleration/enrichment in mixed-ability classes. More information about cluster grouping can be found in the initial MCPS Q&A document.

GEC has serious concerns about this plan. For years, MCPS has struggled to meet the full range of learning needs in its classrooms, and advanced students are often not adequately challenged in multi-level classes. Eliminating standalone compacted math and enriched CKLA classes raises concerns about whether gifted students will receive appropriate instruction. It could also deepen inequities, as some families will be able to supplement outside of school while others cannot. Dedicated classes for enrichment and acceleration ensure that students are taught at the right level each day, in line with Maryland law.

Questions can be directed to Gifted@MCCPTA.org

ACTION ITEMS:

1. SPEAK TO YOUR PRINCIPAL NOW- classes are being made for the fall today. See below for more background
2. EMAIL MCPS, BOE and the STATE in support of maintaining Cohorted Accelerated and Enriched Compacted Math classes in elementary school
3. Consider Signing this petition to support continuing compacted math, which was created by a GEC member but is not officially from GEC.
4. Help spread the word about GEC to other PTA members so they can stay abreast of these topics. Email gifted@mccpta.org and ask to join the MCCPTA GEC listserve. To join the GEC Facebook groupMCCPTA GEC, apply and answer all membership questions and agree to the group rules.

1. Elementary Math

2. Elementary ELA

3. FIT/WIN time

4. Advocacy Resources

1. Elementary Math

- Amplify Desmos, which is based on the Illustrative Mathematics curriculum already in use in MCPS middle schools, is the new MCPS curriculum for K-Integrated Algebra 2. We support this curriculum, which was the only high quality instructional material that MCPS selected as a finalist.
- Per the MCPS Board presentation, MCPS is **eliminating compacted math classes,** which to date have provided separate, accelerated math classes for 4th and 5th graders. Instead, MCPS will create mixed-level math classes for 3-5th grades using "cluster grouping." Cluster grouping is a research based classroom management structure done with the goal of reducing the range of students' needs compared to a completely heterogeneous classroom. MCPS states that teachers will be teaching grade level curriculum AS WELL AS an accelerated and enriched curriculum within one classroom within the same class time to different groups of students.
- Math Groupings MCPS PDF
- Please see page 14 of the MCPS Board presentation for possible acceleration patterns. Essentially, K-2 will offer grade-level coursework with enrichment options for advanced students. 3-5 will offer both enrichment *and* acceleration to identified advanced students. All of this will be done through heterogeneous classes with cluster grouping.
- **Please ask your principal NOW the math questions included the Key Questions to Ask your Principal document. Principals are forming math for SY 2026/27 NOW.**
- **Please write to MCPS, BOE and MD State Education Officials** to express your opinions about the plan to eliminate advanced math and ELA classes and have acceleration and enrichment provided entirely in a mixed-ability classroom. **Here is a Sample Email and Email Addresses**

Key Excerpts from the Maryland State Department of Education Math Acceleration and Enrichment policy:

State guidance says:

- By school year (SY) 2027- 2028, all LEAs (MCPS) must develop and implement an accelerated mathematics course progression that is an evidence-based, continuous process that provides students with multiple opportunities to accelerate in mathematics based on readiness and interest.
- By SY 2027-2028, all students entering grades 3-7 should be evaluated for math acceleration readiness at least once a school year based on multiple data points.
- LEAs (MCPS) must implement automatic mathematics course acceleration progressions for all students who achieve the highest level of proficiency level on state assessments in grades 3-6.
- Acceleration course progressions should provide students, who demonstrate readiness, with access to Integrated Algebra before high school.

2. 3rd-5th Grade English Language Arts (ELA) Enrichment

According to the MCPS Board presentation, MCPS will no longer offer a separate, fully advanced accelerated class for English Language Arts (ELA) next year, known as "Model 1." Instead, all schools will shift to "model 2," which provides enrichment only (not acceleration) for advanced learners in a multi-level class through cluster grouping.

Importantly, this enrichment in grades 3-5 is supposed to come in the daily ELA block, over and above any content covered in the FIT/WIN time the school is required to provide. Once again, principals have the discretion to create the classes, including what groups to cluster together.

GEC members have reported that meeting the needs of gifted learners in multi-level classes has not resulted in meaningful enrichment, so it is critical to ask principals now about how they will ensure daily enrichment is incorporated into the ELA block next year.

- **Please ask your principal NOW the ELA questions included the Key Questions to Ask your Principal document. Principals are forming ELA for SY 2026/27 NOW.**

3. Elementary School FIT/WIN Time

Elementary schools are supposed to offer FIT/WIN Time (sometimes referred to as "Focused Instructional Time" or "What I Need" Time) for at least 30 minutes, at least 4 days a week for all elementary school grades. Students are supposed to be regrouped by ability level. This provides an opportunity for advanced students to receive additional enrichment and acceleration, over and above what they receive in the core math/ELA block in grades 3-5. However, MCCPTA members have reported that some schools are not providing FIT/WIN Time as often as is required, are not regrouping students by ability level, and/or are providing enrichment through computer-based games only during this time.

As such, over the past 15 months, MCCPTA has requested that MCPS **publish clear, systemwide guidance** for parents reviewing what is required in FIT/WIN Time. This will enable parents to speak with their school leadership if they are concerned that FIT/WIN Time is not being used effectively. Nevertheless, despite promises that it would publish such guidance, MCPS has not done so.

Because expectations remain unclear, we continue to urge parents to ask **their child's teacher and principal** how FIT/WIN at their school aligns with Maryland state law, which states: ""Each school system shall provide different services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program . . . in order to develop the gifted and talented student's potential. Appropriately differentiated, evidenced-based programs and services shall accelerate, extend, or enrich instructional content, strategies, and products to demonstrate and apply learning."

Please ask Key Questions Here to Ask your Principal related to WIN/FIT time.

Additional Advocacy Resources

1) MCPS's May 7, 2026 BOE Presentation Regarding Elementary ELA and Math Enrichment plan 2026

2) MCPS's initial Q&A document on cluster grouping. Note: This has since been replaced with less detailed information, so GEC is posting the original document.
3) Math grouping MCPS pdf
4) Maryland State Elementary math Accelleration guideline:https://marylandpublicschools.org/about/documents/dcaa/math/math-acceleration-guidance-a.pdf

5) Recent MCPS numbers reported by MPIA:

   Numbers of Gifted Identifed Students for advocacy purposes: (3rd grade and up, Numbers include housed magnet programs)

6) Know Your Rights - overview of the right to gifted education under Maryland law, Board Policy, and MCPS Regulations

7) MCPS Regulation IOA-RS, Gifted and Talented (GT) - This requires access to accelerated and enriched instruction to students who demonstrate advanced academic readiness or potential.

8) Under COMAR 13A.04.07.03, Maryland public school systems are legally required to provide "different services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program" to develop the potential of gifted and talented (GT) students.

The regulation specifically mandates that these programs and services must accelerate, extend, or enrich instructional content, strategies, and products.

Key Requirements for Enrichment & Acceleration

- Continuum of Services: School systems must offer a full continuum of evidence-based academic programs from PreK through Grade 12.
- Instructional Time: These services must be provided during the regular school day.
- Approved Programs: The specific enrichment and acceleration models used must be selected from an annually reviewed MSDE-approved list.
- Blueprint Goals: Under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, schools are required to develop accelerated pathways and enrichment programs so GT students can reach college and career readiness standards before the end of 10th grade.

Examples of Required Services

While exact offerings vary by county, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) identifies several compliant models:

- Acceleration: Early entrance to kindergarten, single-subject or whole-grade acceleration, and dual enrollment in college.
- Enrichment: Pull-out classes, advanced reading or mathematics groups, and specialized GT curriculum units.