Welcome Back!

I know that we are all thinking that summer went by a little too quickly….Here we are again for another challenging yet rewarding year in GCPS! I am confident that this year will be a good, if not a great one for all of us. Some of the dust has settled from the myriad of changes we have experienced over the past few years. Not that more change isn’t on the horizon, but hopefully it will be less dramatic and less stressful for all.

From the Secondary Education perspective, we will be experiencing some growth with expanded responsibilities, new programs and personnel, modifications to Service Learning, inclusion of Hands Only CPR, articulations with area institutions of higher education, and implementation of transition courses as we prepare students for the 21st Century and equip them with skills for college and career success.

On a slightly different note, I reflected upon my role and the past year in my new position. I feel good about the work that I did but I definitely see some areas which need improvement. I mentioned those areas in my last newsletter and hope to continue to work on my leadership skills in my capacity as Supervisor of College and Career Readiness.

The bottom line is that we are all here for the students. We need to maintain that focus and continue to do the excellent work that we have always done in preparing students for the world beyond PreK-12. I have no doubts in your commitment, professionalism, and skills. I wish you the best in your classroom and school this year. May you continue to grow in education and perfect your craft.

As always, please call upon us to assist you in anyway! We are here to serve you and work with you!

Michelle Harman
Hands Only CPR

At the A & S retreat, I shared with building administrators that schools may submit requests for Hands Only CPR/AED Training provided by trained staff and I will coordinate the training in collaboration with Mrs. Becky Aiken. Additionally, if there is a need for advanced CPR Training, I will assist schools in providing that certification as well. Hands Only Training takes about 30 minutes while the regular CPR Training takes about 4 hours. If you are interested in organizing a training at your school, please see your administrator to get the ball rolling.

Those 9th graders entering high school in the fall of 2015 will be required to be trained in at least Hands Only CPR/AEDs prior to their graduation through their health or physical education classes.

MAST/TEEAM Conference

This year’s conference will be held October 17-18 at Turf Valley. The 2-day conference provides a key note speaker, specialized sessions, and product vendors. For more information about attending, please contact Michelle Harman. There is some support for registration, etc. available through the Offices of Professional Development and Secondary Education.

Visit http://www.emast.org/ for more information about this event.

Disciplinary Literacy in Your Content Area

If you are interested in locating reading passages on current events that relate to your discipline, visit newsela.com. I may have shared this previously but it is a great source of current articles in many content areas. More importantly, the reading level can be adjusted to meet the varying levels of mastery of your students.
STEM Assistance

If you would like assistance linking your content to STEM practices, contact my office and I will meet with you at your convenience to assist you with your understanding of STEM and the creation of lessons that meet the practices. In most cases, it is merely a matter of identifying where teachers already do this. STEM is just a plate on which we serve content, not another item on your plate.

A reminder of the practices.....

What is STEM?
Of course, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics but....

1. Learn and Apply Rigorous STEM Content
2. Integrate STEM content
3. Interpret and Communicate Information from STEM
4. Engage in Inquiry
5. Engage in Logical Reasoning
6. Collaborate as a STEM Team
7. Apply Technology Strategically
RTI—Response to Intervention

This year, in accordance to direction provided by MSDE, we will be implementing a more precise method for tracking interventions in all schools, as all levels. Currently, there is some variance to our approaches from school to school so this summer we worked towards bringing everyone up to speed on RTI. Teams will be working with your schools to describe the work completed thus far and the direction we wish to take with respect to RTI. The bottom line is that all interventions will need to be carefully recorded or documented so that when students need referred to the higher levels of intervention, clear documentation will be available to support decisions made for individual students.

This is a work in progress so be patient as we work together to refine our methods and provide the best possible learning environments and conditions for ALL students. An excerpt from Dr. Phil Lauver’s rationale statement provides an overall framework for our work: “With the increasing need for accountability, assessments and interventions will need to be well-documented and consistent, and implemented in a planned manner that provides for the continual review of student progress. This need and responsibility is most evident with those students who are at risk of retention. Response to Intervention (RTI) is the best practice to meet this need and standard for these students. However, at the first meeting of the committee which was to address how this would be done, there was unanimous agreement that RTI needed to be implemented universally for all students. Prior to being identified as being at risk of retention, students experiencing deficits need to be identified and receive consistent, evidenced-based intervention aligned with their areas of learning strengths. Through the RTI process, students will move through the three tiers of universal, tier 2 and tier 3 interventions as needed. Training in RTI was previously provided to our staff through Solutions Tree. Their RTI model, developed by Mike Mattos, utilizes the PLC process for the implementation of the school’s RTI program. Additional training this year by Solutions Tree helped the committee and subcommittees to complete the development of the RTI process for Garrett County Public Schools.”

Garrett County Board of Education
40 South Second Street
Oakland, MD 21550
301-334-8900