

# MANASSAS CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



## 2019-2020 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

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Manassas City Public Schools (MCPS), located in Northern Virginia, is a diverse, urban school division serving 7,847 students in nine schools for the 2019-2020 school year. MCPS takes pride in its economic, ethnic, and racial diversity. Sixty-two percent of its students are economically disadvantaged, and Spanish is the first or second language for almost 63% of the student population. Sixty percent of our students are eligible for free or reduced lunches, which is a significant increase from twenty-eight percent in 2008.

MCPS is the employer of approximately 1,315 employees and must compete at a national level to attract and retain the “best and brightest” employees. State funding reductions such as the support cost caps, elimination of costs of competing funding, and other adjustments to the funding formula have reduced state funding for our schools, while mandated VRS rate increases and ever-increasing expectations continue to drive up our costs. These changes have shifted approximately \$7 million per year in costs to the locality requiring reductions in services, and increased class sizes.

Over the next five years, enrollment is expected to exceed 8,000 students. Additionally, the School Division plans to rebuild Jennie Dean Elementary School while maintaining and renovating existing facilities at a cost of \$80 million.

FAST FACTS	
Demographics:	
American Indian.....	0.321%
Asian.....	3.34%
Black.....	9.7%
Hispanic.....	67.62%
White.....	13.9%
Hawaiian.....	0.007%
2 or more races.....	5.3%
Special Education.....	12.43%
English Learners.....	49.72%
Enrollment as of 9/30/19	



**Our Mission**

Manassas City Public Schools, in collaboration with families, employees, and community members will provide a safe and innovative learning environment that inspires, engages, and challenges all students.

**Our Vision**

Each student becomes a positive, contributing member of society by maximizing their potential.

**Our Beliefs**

- We believe students must have access to high-quality instruction to develop skills to support their success and on-time graduation.
- We believe student learning must include opportunities for critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, and citizenship.
- We believe in open, proactive communication as one community in support of student success.
- We believe financial decisions should be based on an inclusive and open process that supports student learning.
- We believe in an innovative, safe and orderly environment that maximizes student performance.

# Statements of Support/Opposition

## **STANDARDS OF QUALITY/ STANDARDS OF ACCREDITATION**

Support for all legislation that provides full-funding (actual costs) for implementing the SOQs.

Support for all legislation that increases funding to allow for the following staffing ratios as recommended by the Virginia Board of Education:

One nurse for every 550 students K-12 per the recommendation of the National Association of School Nurses.

One school counselor for every 250 students K-12, one school psychologist and one school social worker for every 1,000 students K-12 per the recommendation of the American School Counselor Association.

One Instructional Technology Coach and one Technology Specialist for every 550 students K-12 to support increasing classroom technology.

Support for all legislation that would create a level playing field by allowing all students to qualify for an Advanced Studies Diploma through either completion of courses in three scientific disciplines from among earth sciences, biology, chemistry or physics, or the completion of advanced sequence of courses in any two of those disciplines.

Support for all legislation preventing the use of an “A-F Grading Scale” to rank Virginia’s schools.

Support for all legislation allowing the successful completion of computer coding courses to satisfy standard units of credit in foreign/world language requirements to graduate with an advanced studies diploma.

Support for all legislation that directs VDOE to include in its state accreditation formula the results of all substitute tests that allow students to earn verified credit.

## **FINANCE/PURCHASING**

Support for all legislation that corrects the funding formula to fully recognize the cost of providing high quality public education services, to include an annual salary step increase for teachers and restoration of the costs of competing supplement (for higher cost of living areas like Northern Virginia), for teachers and support staff.

Support for all legislation that eliminates the local school division budgetary match currently required to receive Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) funding to allow school divisions to expand preschool opportunities, which help all children develop emotional, academic, and social skills necessary for Kindergarten.

Support for all legislation that eliminates unnecessary mandates and fully funds any new mandates on school divisions.

Support for all legislation that prohibits the use of lottery funds to supplant general funding for Virginia school divisions.

Support for all legislation that modifies current language for the use of VPSA bonds so that computer refresh funding is not limited to capital expenses, but can also be used to purchase tablets and other mobile devices.

Opposition for all legislation that usurps the authority of local school boards to properly allocate funding between instructional and support expenditures.

## **INSTRUCTION & STANDARDS OF LEARNING**

Support for all legislation that provides greater flexibility for measuring achievement of all students with an emphasis on students with disabilities and limited English proficiency to ensure assessments fairly, accurately and meaningfully measure student achievement. This would include the use of growth models that measure individual student progress rather than meeting a single standard on the SOL assessments.

Support for all legislation that removes the 1% participation cap on the VAAP. This cap arbitrarily penalizes small school divisions with a large number of students with significant cognitive disabilities when accreditation ratings are calculated.

Support for all legislation directing the state to define comparable verified units for graduation purposes for students transferring to Virginia school divisions from other states.

Support for all legislation that provides increased and targeted funding for the necessary resource and expertise to provide professional development and support collaboration for all school division employees to include teachers, support staff, and administrators.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY**

Support for all legislation that provides increased and targeted funding for educational technology infrastructure and increased bandwidth. Further, surveys demonstrate that school divisions within the Commonwealth pay substantially more for bandwidth than national averages. Such legislation should also recognize that this issue is best addressed at the state level.

## **SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE**

Oppose all legislation that limits local school board's authority over the formation and operation of charter schools within their divisions.

## **CONDUCT & DISCIPLINE**

Support for all legislation mandating statewide disciplinary procedures that would inhibit school administrators in circumstances requiring immediate disciplinary action or otherwise limit their discretion in disciplinary matters.

Oppose all legislation that prohibits the use of suspension and expulsion.

## **BUSINESS/BUILDING**

Support for all legislation that would modify the Code of Virginia to allow the Virginia Retirement System to remove the 80% work limitation imposed on retirees, eliminating obstacles to recruitment and hiring teachers and SRO's.

Support for all legislation that provides targeted, new funding to build the necessary classroom space and to hire the additional teachers needed to lower class-sizes sufficiently enough to improve academic results.

## Our Goals

1

Optimize academic performance and student success

2

Cultivate a culture of excellence and service

3

Forge relationships to support and maximize success

4

Operate effectively and efficiently

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