MONTGOMERY
COUNTY PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

Evaluation of the Implementation of the Latino Education Coalition Recommendations: 2007–2008

Office of Shared Accountability

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

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Executive Summary

In response to the Montgomery County Latino Education Coalition report, *Recommendations for Improving Latino Student Achievement*, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) established the MCPS Latino Education Coalition Steering Committee. This committee benchmarked districts across the nation, researched best practices, and recommended initiatives and strategies to highlight the strengths and address the needs of Latino students. Recommendations included the development of (1) an instructional program for older high school English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students with interrupted formal education—Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement (*SEPA*), (2) a parent outreach and support component, and (3) a human resources component designed to provide a diverse workforce by recruiting, supporting, and retaining Latino employees (MCPS, 2006). The activities associated with the MCPS Latino Education Coalition are aligned with the following goals of the MCPS strategic plan, Goal 1: Ensure success for every student; Goal 2: Provide an effective instructional program; Goal 3: Strengthen productive partnerships for education, and Goal 4: Create a positive work environment in a self-renewing organization.

The following questions guided the evaluation study:

1. How is the *SEPA* program component implemented in MCPS?

2. How is the family involvement component implemented?

3. How is the human resources recruitment, retention, and training component implemented?

The Office of Shared Accountability (OSA) conducted a mixed-method evaluation of the implementation of the strategies and programs recommended by the MCPS Latino Education Coalition Steering Committee, including document review and survey results from staff members, students, and parents. Data was collected during the fall and winter of the 2007–2008 school year. The Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs furnished data and information about workshops and meetings held with parents/guardians of *SEPA* participants. The Office of Human Resources (OHR) provided data and information addressing teacher recruitment, retention, and training.

Key Findings

Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement (SEPA) Program

The *SEPA* program component was successfully implemented in MCPS. The recommendation from the MCPS Latino Education Coalition Steering Committee report was to develop an instructional program for older high school ESOL students with interrupted formal education. During the 2007–2008 school year, *SEPA* was piloted at Wheaton High School and coordinated with the Thomas Edison High School of Technology. The program included English-language development classes that provided a focus on exploring careers and preparing for the world of work, and a Spanish literacy class for native speakers, also career focused, at Wheaton High School and a coordinated career and technology education component at Thomas Edison High School of Technology (Edison).

The program was initiated in July 2007, with a summer component that previewed career courses that would be utilized during the 2007–2008 school year. Due to student mobility, the classroom population changed slightly over the course of the summer. At the beginning of the 2007–2008 school year, 13 students participated in the *SEPA* fall program. There were three areas students could choose to focus on during the school year, construction, nail technology, and restaurant management. Six students chose construction, four chose nail technology, and three chose restaurant management.

Based on interview results, most principals, teachers, and counselors reported that *SEPA* was a good program. Several comments suggested that students appear to be more confident, take ownership in their lives, and are more serious about their course work. A few expressed concerns that some students were not attending classes, some classes were overcrowded, and a lack of a bilingual staff may be hindering academic performance.

Parents/guardians of *SEPA* participants expressed their satisfaction with the *SEPA* opportunities offered to their children and provided by the school. Positive sentiments also were expressed in regard to the career classes offered, being kept informed about the program, communication provided by teachers, and expectations of the program. Overall, parent/guardians liked the *SEPA* program because of the knowledge, skills, and opportunities offered to their children.

Family Involvement

The family involvement component was successfully implemented. The Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs developed a plan in September 2007 detailing workshops and meetings to be held with parents/guardians of *SEPA* participants. These monthly meetings addressed such topics as academic achievement, navigating MCPS, and identifying community resources to meet family needs. In addition, a parent training component for all parents of students enrolled in the new pilot program and monthly informal parent forum meetings for pilot classes were planned and implemented. Home visits were conducted by the *SEPA* parent community coordinator, during which a needs assessment was conducted to determine topics to provide for parents during the school year. A "safety net" concept was created to remove barriers to accessing essential services (e.g., legal issues [housing, immigration], food, clothing) and to provide a list of organizations that agreed to provide services to *SEPA* families. A trifold card for *SEPA* families listing the providers who signed an informal agreement to collaborate with MCPS for the students and their families also was completed and distributed to families. The card was designed as a pocket/wallet card so families could have the information with them at all times.

Teacher Recruitment, Retention, and Training

The human resources recruitment, retention, and training component demonstrates positive results and successful implementation. The goal of this component was to develop and implement a teacher-recruitment outreach program for Latino students. Efforts included *Grow Your Own Teachers Program* (GYO) aligning resources such as Future Educators of America child development classes and Teacher Academies in one high school cluster with a high percentage of Latino students. Other strategies included piloting English-language development modules and

classes for supporting services professionals to learn English, in collaboration with Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 500, the Office of Organizational Development (OOD), Department of Transportation, Department of Facilities Management, and community partners (MCPS, 2006).

Human Resources Component

A career ladder developed for students and present employees affords participants the opportunity to pursue course work that leads to teacher certification while employed with MCPS. To recruit more bilingual, bicultural teachers for this project, OHR staff attended numerous job fairs at universities with large international student populations. There has been an increase in the number of Latino elementary school teachers hired from FY 2006 to FY 2008. OHR is currently building a network of support within Montgomery County to obtain referrals from businesses and community groups such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, National Institutes of Health, Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, and foreign embassies.

Pilots were held this school year for supporting services professionals who possess limited English proficiency (LEP) using two modes of delivery for English instruction: Sed de Saber and a traditional Face-to-Face class. Across the two modalities, 55 MCPS supporting services employees participated. For the 2008–2009 school year, another strategy, ELLIS (a Pearson Education product), will be piloted.

Career and Technology Education Component

GYO seeks to encourage Latino students in MCPS to pursue a career in education and ultimately, return to MCPS to work. Early in the first semester of the 2007–2008 school year, staff from the MCPS Division of Career and Technology Education met with the principal and an assistant principal of Gaithersburg High School to discuss the program. Currently, there are nine Latino students in the *GYO* program. All students have a mentor teacher assigned to them and have been placed in an internship experience.

Recommendations

- **Continue to review the content and focus of professional development opportunities offered to teachers instructing *SEPA* participants to ensure that they meet the needs of the teachers.** While the majority of respondents who participated in the training sessions rated them positively, teachers raised a concern that there was no ongoing training as a follow-up to their summer training. (Follow-up training sessions were offered to teachers, but they occurred after staff interviews for this evaluation.) Ongoing assessment of the professional development needs of teachers who will be instructing these students prior to program implementation will continue to prove beneficial.

- **Continue to provide consistent information about the expectations for participation and attendance in the *SEPA* program.** Almost all teachers stated that student absences were a barrier to the implementation of courses. This was despite the reported increases in overall attendance by students.

- **Conduct analysis of attendance patterns of *SEPA* participants and determine barriers to attendance to identify where support can be provided.** This analysis may provide support to comments made by some program staff regarding increased overall school attendance by participants. Comparing attendance prior to program enrollment with post-enrollment attendance may reveal significant changes in student school attendance.

- **Continue to have the parent community coordinator and ESOL counselor work with families around issues of student absences.** By continuing to contact parents/guardians about student absences, the parent community coordinator and ESOL counselor have helped mitigate issues related to class attendance.

- **Allow *SEPA* participants more than the three career pathway options initially offered.** Some *SEPA* students presumed they would be able to choose from all pathways offered at Edison. Although never informed of this by program staff, students were disappointed with being limited to only three options during the pilot year.

- **Continue to monitor implementation of the various components of the MCPS Latino Education Coalition to ensure adherence to action plans for the various activities associated with the project.**

- **Continue to maintain consistent communication with parents about the *SEPA* program components and the *SEPA* Safety Net support available to them and their families.**

- **Provide additional Spanish-speaking paraeducators for classroom teachers to assist in program implementation, especially for the career technology courses.** Although bilingual staff were available at both Wheaton High School (i.e., bilingual teachers and ESOL coordinator) and at Edison (i.e., bilingual counselor and ESOL resource teacher), teachers reported a need for Spanish-speaking paraeducators to help with discussions regarding safety in the career classes. A request for additional assistance in this regard was made in July 2007 for the FY 2009 budget. This request was approved and additional staff will be in place for the 2008–2009 school year.

- **Reevaluate the sharing of pre-assessment results with students to assign placement in the native language literacy course.** Some students raised concerns about the course being below their level.

- **School administrators should provide updated enrollment information to special program teachers.** A number of the concerns regarding *SEPA* students was raised by teachers at Edison who felt "out of the loop" about the program and its participants. To assist with this gap, student files could be created for Edison to provide teachers with background information on the students. Also, providing teachers with information about students' educational and literacy levels will allow for differentiation required for these students.

- **Provide more guidance to teachers on how to assess *SEPA* participants.** Although some direction about assessments was offered, teachers still requested additional resources and guidance in this area.

- **Examine the impact of participation in the *SEPA* program on English-language development.** Gathering data on each SEPA cohort may provide program staff with an understanding of how the language-acquisition aspect of courses is benefiting students and whether adjustments in program design are needed. Additionally, this will allow program staff to develop measurable objectives for subsequent cohorts that are obtainable for participants (e.g., students will improve English reading skills by 10%). Information for the pilot-year participants was gathered, but not included in this report.

- **Continue to monitor the expansion of English-language development courses, particularly those piloting new technologies for supporting services professionals.** Continuing to report feedback on program implementation and related data will provide valuable information to MCPS on whether modifications in program design are needed.

Background

In response to the Montgomery County Latino Education Coalition report, *Recommendations for Improving Latino Student Achievement*, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) established the MCPS Latino Education Coalition Steering Committee. This committee benchmarked districts across the nation, researched best practices, and recommended initiatives and strategies to highlight the strengths and address the needs of Latino students. Recommendations included development of (1) a program for older high school ESOL students with interrupted formal education, (2) a parent outreach and support component, and (3) a human resources component designed to provide a diverse workforce by recruiting, supporting, and retaining Latino employees (MCPS, 2006). The activities associated with the MCPS Latino Education Coalition are aligned with the following goals of the MCPS strategic plan, Goal 1: Ensure success for every student; Goal 3: Strengthen productive partnerships for education, and Goal 4: Create a positive work environment in a self-renewing organization.

The Office of Shared Accountability (OSA) conducted an evaluation to assess the 2007–2008 implementation of recommendations developed by the Latino Education Coalition, specifically the *Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement (SEPA)* pilot program, the family involvement component, and the human resources component[1].

Overview of the Latino Education Coalition Strategies

Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement (SEPA) Program

The *SEPA* program was developed in response to community concerns that the needs of older high school ESOL students with interrupted formal education were not being addressed. During the 2007–2008 school year, the *Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement (SEPA)* program was piloted at Wheaton High School (Wheaton) and coordinated with the Thomas Edison High School of Technology (Edison). The program included English language development classes that provided a focus on exploring careers and preparing for the world of work, and a Spanish literacy class for native speakers, which also was career focused. This is in alignment with the MCPS strategic plan, Goal 1: Ensure success for every student.

A set of criteria was developed to determine which students would be eligible to participate in *SEPA*. Eligibility consisted of students who were new to MCPS (born outside the United States) and in the United States for fewer than two years, with limited education and at least 18 years old. Due to their age and large schooling gap, *SEPA* participants are those not likely to meet MCPS and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) High School Assessment (HSA) graduation requirements for high school before the age of 21. However, a "safeguard" was established should a *SEPA* participant's progress indicate that he or she would be able to meet graduation requirements. The safeguard was that at the end of each semester, the English language learners (ELL) team from the school meets to review student progress and course work. A checklist was developed to guide the ELL team and if it appeared that a student would be able

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[1] An evaluation of the 2008–2009 implementation of the Latino Education Coalition is currently in progress.

to graduate from high school, the student would be exited from the *SEPA* program. Fifteen students were selected for the pilot program[2], which included the following components:

- summer career exploratory modules to provide *SEPA* students with opportunities to explore interests and talents and investigate selected career pathways through structured rotations leading to a career pathway;
- career technology classes (at Edison) in one of three areas;
- English-language development class designed for students to acquire English through exploration and workforce development skills;
- native-language literacy class developed through the context of Spanish for specific purposes and English for specific purposes and orientation to American workforce development skills; and
- sheltered content classes in mathematics.

Detailed action plans were developed for each component of the SEPA program and monitored by a project implementation team, as well as the chief academic officer.

The outcomes for the *SEPA* program are as follows:

- To help students develop knowledge and skills that will help prepare them for entry-level jobs in their field of interest and study.

- To increase students' proficiency in oral and written English.

- To support the development of students' English literacy skills in Spanish through coordination with literacy development.

During the 2007–2008 school year, *SEPA* students were able to choose one of the following career development programs at Thomas Edison High School. Outcomes for these classes were modified for *SEPA* students.

- **Construction.** This program teaches skills for different types of construction and building jobs. After one semester of introductory preparation, students in the construction program must choose from three areas of specialization: Masonry, Plumbing, or Carpentry.
- **Nail Technology.** This program teaches nail technology skills. It also emphasizes important skills for sanitation, safety, and customer service.
- **Professional Restaurant Management.** This program teaches skills for working in the restaurant and food service industry with emphasis on food preparation and service and the business functions of a restaurant. It also teaches important sanitation, safety, and customer service skills.

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[2] During the pilot year of the program, students 16 years of age and older were allowed to participate.

Family Involvement

The family involvement component was developed to promote parental involvement, specifically to increase involvement of *SEPA* families. This component was developed in collaboration with parents, community partners, and MCPS departments and divisions. To incorporate parent outreach and support as part of the MCPS Latino Education Coalition by the Steering Committee, three methods were proposed: 1) a parent training component and monthly informal parent forum meetings for the pilot *SEPA* class, 2) a support group for all parents of students enrolled in the *SEPA* pilot program, and 3) extending the use of Study Circles to the parents of the *SEPA* pilot program to allow for discussions of issues they face (MCPS, 2006). Based on observations and interactions with *SEPA* families, the Study Circles objective of the family involvement component was removed because it was determined that parents were not ready for such a program due to their lack of understanding of the school system as well as their language difficulties.

Human Resources Recruitment, Retention, and Training

To ensure that MCPS promotes a diverse workforce, the Human Resources (HR) subcommittee was charged with "recruiting, supporting, and retaining Latino employees to support increased academic achievement for all students" (MCPS, 2006). The strategies to support this goal included developing and implementing a teacher-recruitment outreach program to Latino students in one high school cluster with a high percentage of Latino students, and piloting English-language-development courses for supporting services professionals in collaboration with SEIU-local 500, the Office of Organizational Development, Department of Transportation, Department of Facilities Management, and community partners (MCPS, 2006).

Review of Literature

A literature review was completed by using mass media database programs such as Academic Search Premier, PsycARTICLES, SocINDEX, PsycINFO, ERIC, and Education Research Complete to research programs with similar goals and objectives as the *SEPA* program. Although there are quite a number of programs designed to assist recent arrivals (newcomers) to the United States or a school district who have limited English proficiency, minimal studies exist that evaluate the impact of programs with similar goals and objectives as the *SEPA* program. This review of literature focuses on those studies that evaluated the impact of newcomer programs. Due to the limited number of evaluations of newcomer programs, the current study could be a contribution to the literature on evaluating the implementation of a program designed for older high school students to develop English language and literacy skills through a career-based educational program.

The Bilingual Education Academic/Career Outreach for Newcomers program (Project BEACON) was designed to "facilitate students' acquisition of English proficiency, to help them develop native language reading and writing skills, and to provide instruction in bilingual and English area/vocational classes" (Berney & Gritzer, 1990). Project Beacon commenced in the 1985–1986 school year and was in its fourth year at the time of the evaluation. The evaluation of Project BEACON focused on program implementation as well as outcomes related to professional development, parental involvement, and student achievement. The program served

753 students across five high schools in New York who were native speakers of Chinese, Korean, and Spanish; the majority (79%) being native speakers of Spanish. Forty-eight percent of students in the program were over age for their grade. Students participating in the project were enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL), a Native Language Arts (NLA) course, and in content-area classes that utilized ESL techniques and taught bilingually. Program objectives were developed for the noninstructional (i.e., professional development, parental involvement) and instructional (i.e., ESL, NLA, content-area courses, and career subjects) aspects of the program. Findings revealed that the majority of the program objectives were met. Statistically significant gains in English-language skills by participants were reported. However, due to lack of applicable data, the native-language skill development objective was not assessed; although 86% of participants did pass their NLA courses.

The Kentucky Jefferson County Public Schools implemented a full-day transitional English as a Second Language program for newly arrived immigrant and refugee high school students. The Newcomer Program provided instruction in English (in addition to content-area courses) to students, with support in their native languages. The program was for students in Grades 9 through 11 and designed for them to spend the entire day with others in the program and eventually transition into the regular classroom after one year. An evaluation of the Newcomer Program examined student characteristics, participant perceptions of the program, and improvement in English proficiency, as measured by the Language Assessment Skills (LAS). Findings revealed significantly greater posttest scores on the LAS than on the pretest (Munoz & Clavijo, 2000).

Carvello (2008) conducted a study focusing on Salvadoran adolescents with interrupted, limited, or no formal education in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. She focused on the subgroup as it was postulated that researchers should disaggregate Latino subgroups as that population is not homogenous. Additionally, compared with other Latino subgroups, Salvadoran students had one of the lowest achievement rates. Using qualitative research methods, the study sought to better understand the needs of Salvadoran parents and students, as well as challenges and issues they face in the pursuit of high school and college education. Interviews with students, parents, college representatives, counselors, and others who directly work with the students were conducted. Additionally, focus-group interviews were conducted with parents and students. Analyses revealed parents and students lacked knowledge related to navigating the school system and schools lack the resources (e.g., limited number of bilingual teachers, staff) to support these students. Some of the challenges reported by parents and students included cultural and language barriers, fear of deportation, and gangs. Future research recommendations included examining best practices, assessing students' prior knowledge, continuing to disaggregate the Latino population, and examining the impact of transnational parenting.

The drop-out prevention program (Matos, 1998) was designed to decrease early school withdrawal of Latino and other limited English proficient (LEP) students through counseling and arts/career exploration. Although not designed specifically for newcomers, there are similarities in the activities of the drop-out prevention program with those of the *SEPA* program. A Florida county school district implemented an eight and one-half-month school drop-out prevention intervention program for ninth grade students in two high schools. The purpose of the intervention was to "increase student academic and personal motivation, develop goal-setting and decision-making skills, increase parent involvement, and involve other adults from the

community in the success of Latino/LEP students" (Matos, 1998, p. 24).   Students were organized into four different groups which met at different times over a period of time to discuss topics as self-esteem, peers, and other issues thought to impact academic achievement and staying in school. The program blended proven drop-out prevention strategies with arts and career exploration. The art component was used to "stimulate student self-discovery, career exploration [that would] encourage graduation and higher education." The combination of the drop-out-prevention and arts components is designed to build student self-esteem and cultural pride. Students in the program were measured on grade promotion, reading and writing English, and staying in the alternative program. Outcomes for the program were improved attendance, promotion to Grade 10, improved English reading skills by at least 10% and improved English writing skills by at least 10%. All four outcomes were met.

Scope of the Evaluation

The initial year of the program evaluation focused on the implementation phase of the project. This study gathers information from several stakeholder groups (principals, teachers, students, central office administrators, and parents) about the numerous and complex components implemented during the 2007–2008 school year (*SEPA* pilot program, family involvement, and human resources). Specifically, the purpose of the current study is to determine the following:

- The extent to which the *SEPA* program component has been implemented as intended.
- Stakeholders' experiences with implementation of the *SEPA* program.
- Characteristics of *SEPA* participants.
- The extent to which the family involvement component has been implemented as intended.
- The extent to which the human resources recruitment, retention, and training component has been implemented as intended.
- Revisions that should be made to currently implemented components, or considered while implementing new components.

Evaluation Questions

The following questions guided the evaluation:

1. How is the *SEPA* program component implemented in MCPS?

    a. What are the characteristics of *SEPA* participants?

    b. What services are provided for students?

2. How is the family involvement component implemented?

3. How is the human resources recruitment, retention, and training component implemented?

Methodology

To conduct the evaluation for this school year, a multi-method evaluation design was used to collect and analyze the evaluation data. The purposes for employing mixed methods were development and triangulation—several sources of data that confirm or complement each other (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). Thus, the qualitative and quantitative dimensions of the study were designed to complement each other—that is, to measure "overlapping, but distinct facets" of data collected to examine recommendations provided by the MCPS Latino Education Coalition. Triangulation of research methods included semi-structured interview, document review, and surveys. Document review was used to provide relevant background and contextual information. In-depth interviews were employed to gather stakeholder perspectives on the implementation of the *SEPA* pilot program at Wheaton High School and Thomas Edison High School of Technology. In addition, a student survey was administered to gather feedback from participants in the *SEPA* pilot program. A parent/guardian survey also was administered.

Interview protocols were developed in conjunction with the MCPS Latino Education Coalition project team. Focused interviews were conducted to gather detailed perspectives about program development and implementation and to inform plans for program expansion. Twenty interviews were conducted between December 2007 and January 2008. Each interview took approximately 45–60 minutes. Interviews were conducted using a structured instrument that consisted of several sections asking about program structure, student participants, overall impressions of the program, and suggestions for improvement. Individuals interviewed included principals, teachers, and counselors at Wheaton and Edison, as well as central office program staff.

In addition to interviews, surveys of students were conducted during February 2008 and surveys of parents/guardians in March 2008. The survey instruments were developed in collaboration with central office program staff and the Latino Education Coalition project team. Given the limited literacy levels of the students and parents, the survey was written in Spanish and read aloud to them during administration by the Office of Shared Accountability (OSA) staff. Four students were not in attendance during the original administration; therefore, surveys were left for them to complete and classroom teachers then sent them through the MCPS Pony Express to OSA. Parent surveys were conducted via telephone in Spanish by a Spanish-speaking OSA staff member.

To ensure that stakeholder input was built into the evaluation activities, the MCPS Latino Education Coalition project team provided input on the evaluation questions and data collection instruments. The goal was to improve the validity of the evaluation findings. Members of the project committee included representatives of the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs (OCIP), Office of School Performance (OSP), Office of Human Resources (OHR), Office of Organizational Development (OOD), and Department of Communications. There were also members from Identity, Inc. (community nonprofit), SEIU Local 500, Department of Student Services, and school-based staff members.

Summary of Data Sources and Analyses

Interviews of School-based and Program Staff. OSA staff members conducted interviews with 20 school-based and central office employees during January 2008. The participants included counselors and teachers from Wheaton and Edison. These focused interviews gathered detailed perspectives about program development and implementation.   Interview protocols were developed based on the components of the program and in conjunction with the MCPS Latino Education Coalition project team.

Survey of SEPA Students. The surveys were developed with advice from the MCPS Latino Education Coalition project team. The questions on the survey focused on student experiences in the *SEPA* program. Given the limited literacy levels of the students, the survey was translated into Spanish by the ESOL Translation Unit and read aloud to them during administration by the ESOL bilingual counselor (summer survey) and OSA staff members (fall survey).

Student surveys were administered in February 2008 to gather feedback from *SEPA* participants about their experiences in the program (see Appendix H). Ten out of 12 students responded to the survey, yielding a response rate of 83%. The majority of student respondents were 18 years of age and in Grade 10 (70%); the remaining students were in Grade 11.

Survey of SEPA Parents/Guardians. The surveys were developed with advice from the MCPS Latino Education Coalition project team. The questions on the survey focused on experiences with staff of the *SEPA* program and the impact of the program on their child. Given the limited literacy levels of the parents, the survey was written in Spanish and administered via telephone— read to them by a Spanish-speaking OSA staff member. Parent/guardian surveys were completed during March 2008. Ten out of 11 interviews were successfully completed, for a response rate of 91%.

Teacher recruitment, retention, and training procedures. OOD provided data addressing the employee training with SEIU Local 500. Information about the Grow Your Own concept and program development was provided by the Division of Career and Technology Education.

Review of Documents. Several documents were obtained from the MCPS Latino Education Coalition project team related to various aspects of the project. Documents reviewed included team meeting minutes, monthly project updates, e-mails, the *SEPA* ESOL curriculum, the Steering Committee report, training evaluation results, other program documents, and meeting agendas and notes.

Data analysis procedures included—

- content analysis of interview data to determine themes within and across groups of participants,

- participation in steering committee and project management meetings,

- observation and review of staff development sessions,

- descriptive statistical analysis of survey data to determine frequencies of responses, and

- qualitative document review of information.

Findings

This section of the report is divided into three parts, corresponding to the evaluation questions. The first part details the development and structure of the *SEPA* program. Details regarding program implementation and feedback from several stakeholder groups are described within that section. The second section provides information on steps taken to increase family involvement. Finally, recruitment efforts to attract Latino teachers to MCPS are presented, including the implementation and accomplishments of the Grow Your Own Teachers program.

Evaluation Question 1: How is the *SEPA* program component implemented in MCPS?

In response to the recommendation to develop a program for older high school students with interrupted formal education, *Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement (SEPA)* was developed, aimed at providing older high school students with entry-level job skills while developing English language and native literacy skills through a career-based educational program. *SEPA* students are a subset of older students involved in the Multidisciplinary Education and Training Support (METS) program who will be unable to complete high school graduation requirements before reaching 21 years of age, due to interruption in their formal education. The goal of the *SEPA* program is for participants to learn English in order to prepare for an entry-level job skill and develop proficiency in English. Program infrastructure was developed prior to and during implementation of the *SEPA* program. These infrastructures included the development of criteria for student selection, differentiated career curriculum, the development of the English-language curriculum, and professional development for *SEPA* teachers.

Curriculum Development

A curriculum development action plan for *SEPA* was developed for the 2007–2008 school year, by project team members. Cooperative Work Experience (CWE) course content was used as the context to develop the *SEPA* ESOL class (English for Personal & Career Development). The *SEPA* ESOL curriculum was developed by the *SEPA* instructional specialist in collaboration with a Multidisciplinary Education and Training Support teacher from Gaithersburg High School using ESOL Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC) and CWE content standards. Lesson sequences were developed to provide differentiation for students at varying levels of proficiency in English. Additionally, formative and summative assessments were administered throughout the curriculum implementation to provide evidence of students' language development in English.

In addition to the double-period *SEPA* ESOL class, a Spanish Literacy for Native Speakers course was developed in conjunction with consultant Dr. Margarita Calderon, an expert in language acquisition and bilingual education, to align with the *SEPA* ESOL class. Program and school staff worked with Dr. Calderon's associates to develop concept maps for this course during summer 2007. This course included concepts related to goal setting and workforce behavior, which are discussed in Spanish prior to learning concepts in English. Moreover, this course is designed to provide students with structured Spanish literacy through phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary instruction, fluency, and comprehension skill building.

The *SEPA* ESOL CWE Curriculum Blueprint was initiated as part of the 2007–2008 *SEPA* pilot program, and development of the curriculum was ongoing throughout the pilot. The curriculum "is an English language development curriculum designed for English language learners enrolled in a career education pathway or students wishing to develop English language skills specifically for preparing for the world of work" (Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs, p. 4). Based on the Maryland English Language Proficiency Standards for students in Grades 6 through 12, the curriculum is appropriate for students performing at an overall low-beginning to high-beginning proficiency level in English. The curriculum is developed with three tiers of instruction to assist teachers with differentiation and scaffolding for the various skill levels of students enrolled in the program. The *SEPA* ESOL curriculum provides structured and systematic English-language development and practice for accessing the operational and strategy language in classrooms and content in the career classes for workforce development.

Professional Development

Implementation training: Teachers instructing the courses with SEPA participated in *SEPA* curriculum implementation training from June 25–27. The training was for seven hours each day (from 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.), with a total of 16 teachers attending. Teachers were ESOL and content specialists from Wheaton and Edison. Four outcomes were developed for the training. Each focused on giving teachers an understanding of the Latino culture and factors that might impact *SEPA* student behavior and academic performance. A brief survey developed by OOD was administered at the end of the training.

Results from the OOD survey, conducted at the end of the training, revealed that most teachers strongly agreed or agreed that the training gave them the skills related to each of the outcomes (Table 1). All teachers agreed (strongly agree or agree) that they learned to articulate how the history of El Salvador led to massive immigration of Salvadorans to the United States. More than 90% strongly agreed or agreed that they learned about the effects of family separation and reunification on social behavior and academic performance of *SEPA* students, learned about the "impact of Latino culture on behavior and learning," and acquired knowledge to "integrate effective strategies of *SEPA* students into planning and instruction."

Staff development training: In addition to the summer training, *SEPA* staff development was provided for teachers four times during the school year. Table 2 details the additional staff development opportunities offered for teachers. Eleven teachers attended the first activity, while six attended the next two. Six also were reported to have attended the development activity held in April.

Professional development also focused on collaboration and co-teaching so teachers at Edison and the ESOL teacher from Wheaton could effectively schedule and develop co-teaching practices to assist *SEPA* students with comprehending and accessing the curriculum in the Edison classes.

Table 1
Teachers Agreeing With Statements About the
Curriculum Implementation Training Outcomes (*N*=16)

By the end of the training, participants will be able to:	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %	No Response %
Articulate how the history of El Salvador has led to massive immigration of Salvadorans to the U.S.	75.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Identify the effects of family separation and reunification on social behavior and academic performance of *SEPA* students.	50.0	43.8	0.0	0.0	6.2
Clarify the impact of Latino culture on behavior and learning.	37.5	56.3	0.0	0.0	6.2
Integrate effective strategies of *SEPA* students into planning and instruction.	50.0	43.8	6.2	0.0	0.0

Table 2
Listing of Professional Development Activities Offered

Date	Activities	Number of Attendees	Duration (hours)
Sept. 28, 2007	Expectations for *SEPA* students' participation in Edison programs.	11	7.25
February 5, 2008	Identify areas of focus regarding *SEPA* planning and instruction.	6	2.0
March 13, 2008	Identify components of an effective lesson. Strategies for scaffolding language during content instruction.	6	1.5
April 23, 2008	Implementing strategies to integrate language and content instruction.	6	1.5

SEPA Student-Selection Criteria

Eligibility for *SEPA* follows a similar pattern to that established for enrollment in the Multidisciplinary Education, Training, and Support (METS) program. Appendix A details the path that students follow to be eligible for METS, as well as the *SEPA* program.[3] The eligibility for *SEPA* was based on Language Assessment System (LAS) Links for placement test scores, the Native Language Literacy Assessment (NLLA), and scores on the Entry Assessment Measurement Evaluation (EAME)—an assessment administered as part of the Focus on Achieving Standards in Teaching Mathematics (FAST Math) program—as well as age of 18 or

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[3] The identification process chart has been revised and now more accurately reflects how SEPA students are identified.

older. FAST Math provides a grade-level equivalency for newly arrived limited English proficient (LEP) students in Grades 4–12 who are two or more years below grade level in mathematics. The eligibility list consisted of students who were enrolled in the METS program at Wheaton as of March 2007. Some students were enrolled at John F. Kennedy High School as a home school, but were attending Wheaton because of the METS program. Initially, 19 students were eligible for METS at Wheaton. In March 2007, the ESOL counselor at Wheaton described the *SEPA* program to the eligible students and inquired about who would be interested in participating.

Assessment tools: As mentioned previously, the tools used to assess students for eligibility included scores for LAS Links placement test, NLLA scores, and EAME. Descriptions of these assessment tools are detailed below to provide a better understanding of their use and purpose.

> *LAS Links* is a state-mandated assessment for English-language proficiency that assesses English-language ability and proficiency of English language learners from Grades kindergarten–Grade 12. The assessment comprises four tests—Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. While the Speaking test is administered individually, the remaining assessments may be group administered. The results of each test are presented as a scale score and its corresponding proficiency level. Student results are reported out as scale scores and proficiency levels for each test as well as for comprehension. The proficiency levels are low beginner, high beginner, low intermediate, high intermediate, and advanced. The first administration of the assessment for all MCPS students occurred in spring 2006.

> *Spanish Native Language Literacy Assessment* measures reading comprehension and writing proficiency. The reading comprehension subtest is part of the *Brigance Diagnostic Assessment of Basic Skills, Spanish Edition.* It assesses comprehension of a short selection by measuring the student's accuracy in responding to five multiple-choice questions. The writing subtest was developed by staff members from the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs. Students are asked to write a story based on picture prompts.

> *The Entry Assessment Measurement Evaluation* (EAME) identifies the mathematics skills of students from Grades 1 to 8. The results are used for diagnostic and placement purposes. Results also are used to measure growth in mathematics skills. The test consists of 74 items, with an average of nine items per grade level. This assessment is available in 29 languages.

In addition to the test scores, writing samples in students' native language (Spanish) were collected and submitted to staff in the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs. On June 7, 2007, a parent meeting was convened for interested families of students fitting the eligibility profile to learn more about the program, sign the required insurance forms, and complete a brief questionnaire. Eight families attended the meeting. The *SEPA* parent community coordinator followed up with the remaining families to make sure students enrolled after receiving information about the program and having their questions addressed.

Demographic Characteristics of SEPA Participants

During summer 2007, 15 students (8 males and 7 females) were invited to participate in the *SEPA* program. Participants were either in Grade 10 or 11 and ranged from 16–19 years of age. All of the participants were Latino who were (1) at least three years or more below grade level in mathematics, (2) at low-beginner level on the spring 2006 administration of LAS Links or at level 1 on the 2006–2007 IPT placement test (an antecedent to LAS Links), (3) and at least 16 years of age by June 30, 2007. From August 2007 to March 2008, several students joined the *SEPA* program, while others withdrew/dropped out. Specifically, two students were added and two students withdrew/dropped out, prior to the fall semester. Two additional students withdrew from MCPS in October 2007, one student was added to the program in January 2008, and an additional student withdrew from the program in February 2008. As of March 2008, 11 students were participating in the program.

Results from 2006–2007 EAME data showed that five of the participants were at a third grade level, two were at a fourth grade level, and six at a fifth grade level; one participant did not have end-of-year data. Of the seven participants who had data from the spring 2006 LAS Links administration, all seven had an overall proficiency level of low beginner. The remaining participants had IPT level scores of 1.

SEPA Program

During the initial year of implementation, the *SEPA* program provided services for students during the summer of 2007 and then during the 2007–2008 school year. This section details the aspects of both of these components as well as feedback provided from *SEPA* participants. In addition to student feedback, findings from interviews with school staff and parent feedback also are provided in this section.

SEPA Summer Participation

During summer 2007, students identified to participate in *SEPA* attended a four-week session from July 9, 2007, through August 3, 2007, that introduced them to the career pathways they could choose from during the upcoming 2007–2008 school year. The classes were held at the Thomas Edison High School of Technology for the 15 identified older high school students with interrupted or no formal education. During this four-week experience, students participated in week-long rotations of four different careers—restaurant management, landscaping, cosmetology, and construction. Students participated in hands-on activities related to each career and visited local businesses to observe each career in action. Students began to learn the safety rules and vocabulary associated with each career during this summer component of the program. The summer program also included daily breakfast and lunch for students, all of whom were income eligible.

Student Summer Component Feedback

Surveys were administered to students at the conclusion of the four-week summer career exploratory program (see Appendix B). The surveys were translated into Spanish by the MCPS Translation Unit and administered in Spanish and read aloud as the students followed along. A

total of 12 students out of 14 completed the survey. Of the various career pathways presented, half of the respondents indicated they liked the construction week the best (Table 3).

Table 3
Number and Percentage of *SEPA* Participants
Indicating Summer Week Preference (*N*=12)

Program Area	*n*	%
Construction	6	50.0
Cosmetology	4	33.3
Horticulture	1	8.3
Restaurant Management	1	8.3

In addition to identifying their preferred week, students also responded to several statements based on a Likert-type scale of "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree" as well as a "No Opinion" choices. A combination of the Strongly Agree and Agree response is reported here as Agree. Table 4 presents results from the survey responses. All of the students (100%) agreed that they learned skills that they did not have before participating in the summer component of *SEPA*.   All students agreed or strongly agreed that the *SEPA* courses were interesting, informative, and useful. Almost all respondents (91.7%) agreed that participating in the *SEPA* program helped them decide which career course to select during the fall (school year) and agreed that they improved their English as a result of participation in the *SEPA* summer program (91.6%). All of the students (100%) also reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the *SEPA* opportunities offered during the summer program.

Table 4
Students Agreeing With Statements About *SEPA* Summer Program (*N*=12)

Survey Item	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %	No Opinion %
In *SEPA*, I learned skills I didn't have before.	75.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Teachers of *SEPA* course(s) were helpful.	75.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
I had difficulties with transportation, which affected my participation in *SEPA*.	0.0	8.3	41.7	25.0	25.0
I improved my vocabulary in English.	58.3	33.3	8.3	0.0	0.0
Overall, the *SEPA* courses were interesting, informative, and useful.	83.3	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Participating in *SEPA* helped me decide which career course I will select in the fall.	33.3	58.3	0.0	0.0	8.3

SEPA Fall Component

Not all students who participated in the summer program continued in fall, due to student mobility. *SEPA* participants spent half their day at Wheaton and the other half at Edison. A typical *SEPA* student schedule included *SEPA* ESOL (English for Personal and Career Development), Spanish Literacy for Native Speakers, mathematics, lunch, career development (at Edison HS), and *SEPA* ESOL. *SEPA* students had a choice to enroll in one of three career development programs at the Thomas Edison High School of Technology: 1) Construction (with specializations in carpentry, plumbing, or masonry), 2) Nail Technology, and 3) Professional Restaurant Management. Courses taken by students in the *SEPA* program will be included on their transcripts and they will also have a portfolio to display to potential employers. Of the 14 students enrolled in the *SEPA* program at the beginning of the 2007–2008 school year, 6 chose Construction, 5 chose Nail Technology, and 3 chose Restaurant Management.

Student Fall Component Feedback

Student surveys were administered (in Spanish with oral support) in February 2008 to gather feedback from *SEPA* participants on their experiences in the program (see Appendix C). The student survey contained several items related to the *SEPA* program. Ninety percent of students agreed or strongly agreed that they were a) aware of the expectations to complete *SEPA* courses, b) understood the information presented in *SEPA* class, and c) have the materials and equipment needed for classes (Table 5). All the students agreed or strongly agreed that they like the opportunities to participate in *SEPA*. Seventy percent strongly agreed that they would recommend the *SEPA* program to others; 30% (20% disagree, 10% strongly disagree) reported they would not. During the 2008–2009 evaluation, we will provide a follow-up question on the student survey asking students to explain why they would not recommend the program to others.

Several items on the survey addressed skills and knowledge students acquired in the program. All students agreed or strongly agreed with the statements that the career classes "help prepare me with knowledge and skills for a job in that field," and has helped "decide which career path to pursue in life." Eighty percent also agreed or strongly agreed that *SEPA* helped improve their English vocabulary and improved their reading skills. Students also provided positive ratings toward the teachers and counselors. All students agreed or strongly agreed that teachers in the *SEPA* course(s) helped them learn and 80% agreed or strongly agreed *SEPA* instructors treated them with respect. Seventy percent agreed or strongly agreed that the counselors were helpful. (Table 5). To better understand why some students did not agree that counselors were helpful, we will add a follow-up question to the 2008–2009 student survey asking students to explain why they responded the way they did.

Students were asked to provide comments regarding what they liked about *SEPA,* how the program could be improved, and what teachers could do better to assist them with their classes. Almost all students mentioned they liked the *SEPA* program because it teaches new/different things and provided an "opportunity for the future." A few typical comments included: "I like the program because they teach us different things than regular classes." "I like this program and the teachers and also the help that they give us." "We learn new things and also things that we don't know, and are very important."

In response to how to improve *SEPA,* several students provided positive comments such as wanting to continue the program and providing opportunities for other students. A few provided specific suggestions focusing on English and Spanish classes. One student wrote, "I would like to have English classes more advanced because the Spanish classes are too basic and easy." Another suggested a need for more staff who speak Spanish, "Put more people that speak Spanish, so they can help us translate in the class." Yet another student suggested a need to change how the program is designed with the native language component. "Change the program; do not have classes in Spanish, which is our native language; what we want is to learn English. We don't like that they put us in a lower level of Spanish."

When asked for ways teachers could do better, about half the students wrote that the teachers already help in many different ways. A few students, however, requested that teachers change classroom practices. The following comment captures students' suggestions for improving teacher practices. "I want to work more in groups in the class, to better develop our skills with the other partners and work together as a group. Maybe we could help improve the classroom."

Table 5
Students' Level of Agreement With Statements about the *SEPA* Program (*N*=10)

Survey Item	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %	No Opinion %
SEPA provides me with opportunities to learn skills I didn't have.	70.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
My teachers in the *SEPA* course(s) help me learn.	80.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Counselors in the school are helpful.	30.0	40.0	10.0	20.0	0.0
Participation in this program helps me improve my vocabulary in English.	70.0	10.0	20.0	0.0	0.0
I am aware of the work I am expected to complete in the *SEPA* courses.	70.0	20.0	10.0	0.0	0.0
There are many interruptions to classroom instructional time because of the behavior of some students.	10.0	30.0	10.0	50.0	0.0
Participating in this program helps me improve my reading skills in my native language.	50.0	30.0	10.0	10.0	0.0
The career classes help prepare me with knowledge and skills for a job in that field.	70.0	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
SEPA instructors treat me with respect.	60.0	20.0	10.0	10.0	0.0
I believe I have the materials and equipment I need for my classes.	70.0	20.0	10.0	0.0	0.0
I like the opportunity to participate in *SEPA*.	80.0	10.0	10.0	0.0	0.0
I am able to get additional support for classes if I need it.	50.0	40.0	0.0	10.0	0.0
Overall, the *SEPA* courses are interesting and informative.	80.0	10.0	10.0	0.0	0.0
I am able to understand the information presented in the *SEPA* class.	60.0	30.0	0.0	10.0	0.0
Participating in *SEPA* helps me decide which career path I will pursue in life.[4]	55.6	44.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
I would recommend the *SEPA* program to other students.	70.0	0.0	20.0	10.0	0.0

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[4] One student did not answer the question.

School Staff Interviews

In addition to conducting surveys of students, the Office of Shared Accountability (OSA) staff interviewed principals, teachers, and counselors from both Wheaton and Edison high schools in order to gather in-depth information on implementation of the *SEPA* program at the school level. Different protocols were developed for the various interviewee roles (see Appendixes D through G). A total of 19 interviews were conducted covering such topics as overall perceptions of the program, curriculum implementation, goals and objectives, assessment of students, barriers to implementation, professional development, teacher collaboration, communication with parents and students, and recommendations for improvement. Some respondents did not answer all questions.

The majority of respondents (15 out of 19) provided positive comments about the *SEPA* program and reported they liked it when asked their overall perception of the program. One teacher said, "It's amazingly rewarding to work with these students—difficult, but rewarding. They have a lot to offer. Many don't see [their] potential, but you have to work with them and have patience to get the most out of them." The feeling of most interviewees is best summarized by the following quote from another interviewee. "I believe the program is very positive. It's helping to open a path where they didn't see any hope in school. I think it's making a big difference in METS students' lives. They feel more confident and they feel ownership about their future. They are aware that to be successful you need to study and study math and English. Overall we're on the right track [for] addressing the drop-out rate of METS students."

Barriers to and suggestions for implementation: When asked about barriers to implementation, 6 out of 19 stated student attendance, and 4 out of 19 stated overcrowded classes. "Maintaining class size at a safe limit is necessary for success" reported one interviewee in a discussion about the overcrowded classes at Edison. Additional barriers reported included language (4 out of 19), students' disappointment with not graduating (4 out of 19), and the lack of bilingual staff (3 out of 19). One staff member summarized the issue in the following way: "In the past we have not taken students into the [Edison] program who have not reached at least level 3 of ESOL because of the technical nature of the information the students have to learn for certification. These students have the language barrier as well as a lack of education in their native language to overcome." *SEPA* students are typically at level 1 of ESOL.

Some of the suggestions raised by interviewees to improve program implementation included providing more Spanish-speaking paraeducators (8 out of 19) and providing certification for the students (4 out of 19). As one interviewee said, "[There is a] need [for] a paraeducator to be with the kids at Edison. I think it would make them feel more comfortable and at ease, especially at the beginning of the year for the new students." Another interviewee further elaborated that having paraeducators would not only be beneficial for helping students with hands-on tasks, but "…for the safety aspect of the equipment these students have to deal with, it would be helpful to have a translator at the beginning of the classes. These translators would only be needed at first to make sure that students understand the equipment safety." Additional suggestions included a) incorporate internships or business partnerships (4 out of 19), b) limit the number of students per class (4 out of 19), c) establish expectations for attendance or develop consequences for lack of attendance (3 out of 19), and d) ensure teachers have background information on students enrolled in their class (3 out of 19).

Teacher collaboration: Interviewees were asked to discuss the process of counselors working with classroom teachers and ESOL teachers working with classroom teachers. Six out of 15 respondents indicated that counselors work with teachers to discuss issues such as attendance or behavior, complete referrals, and identify areas to make the program successful. Three out of 15 stated that they do not work with the counselor. With regard to working with ESOL teachers, 11 out of 16 stated that one ESOL teacher provides support across both schools and regularly meets with Edison teachers (5 out of 16). Five out of 16 reported that another ESOL teacher supports the students (such as working with them using flashcards) and yet another ESOL teacher was said to consult with teachers sometimes (5 out of 16).

Professional development: When asked what professional development they received to help address the needs of *SEPA* participants, 11 out of 19 indicated summer training was offered in June 2007. Four out of 19 reported that no professional development was provided. When asked what professional development would be helpful in addressing the needs of *SEPA* participants, responses included a) background information on the *SEPA* students; their individual stories (3 out of 15), b) how to assess the *SEPA* students (3 out of 15), c) differentiation (2 out of 15), d) talking with teachers who have worked in a similar program (2 out of 15), and e) counseling strategies or counseling with a translator (2 out of 15).

Communication and feedback: Interviewees were asked how they were informed about the *SEPA* program. Five out of 17 replied that they were informed in spring 2007, while a few indicated being approached by their supervisor or a program staff member (6 out of 17). In response to how students were informed responses included a) told by the resource teacher (2 out of 5), b) told by the ESOL teacher (2 out of 5), c) attended meetings (2 out of 5), and d) informed by the counselors (1 out of 5). Interview respondents reported that meetings (4 out of 8), the parent coordinator (3 out of 8), and brochures (2 out of 8) were the methods used to inform parents about the *SEPA* program. Respondents also were asked to identify ways that parents are kept informed about student progress and performance in the program. Some replied report cards (6 out of 15), phone calls from either counselor or parent coordinator (5 out of 15), progress reports (5 out of 15), and interim reports (3 out of 5).

Respondents were further asked to identify what feedback they had received from students, parents, and staff members. Most respondents stated that students seemed happy and enjoyed the program (10 out of 18). Other responses included 1) students displeasure with not being able to eat lunch with their Wheaton friends (5 out of 18), 2) students' dissatisfaction about the limited choices at Edison (5 out of 18), and 3) students' unhappiness or concern about the graduation issue (4 out of 18). It should be noted that students were never told that they would have more career choices than those they were offered. Careers chosen were those program staff deemed students were able to be most successful at in developing entry-level jobs skills, given their previous schooling. With regard to staff feedback, responses included 1) teachers see the impact of the program (2 out of 4) and 2) teacher frustrations with absences (3 out of 4).

Recommendations to other schools: Regarding the possibility of expanding the *SEPA* program, participants provided the following recommendations for schools thinking of implementing the program. Make sure parents and students understand the program (6 out of 15) was the most frequently reported recommendation. As summarized by one interviewee, "Make sure the parents and students know early on that the program is to gain skills for later on, but they won't

get a diploma. Be specific with each student about why he or she has been picked for the program. Have individual meetings and say exactly why—age, academic requirements, etc., they are in this type of program to give something after they leave here." Although a revised process was in place by October 2007, teachers responding may have been reflecting on their experiences with students and families at the beginning of the program. Additional recommendations included having bilingual staff/paraeducators (4 out of 15), providing background information (i.e., ESOL, mathematics and English levels) to teachers (4 out of 15), ensuring all teachers involved are committed to the program and buy in (3 out of 15), and having teachers who have experience with this population (2 out of 15). Other suggestions cited by a few included maintaining consistent communication, offering regular professional development, and informing staff involved ahead of time.

Parent Surveys

Parent surveys were administered in March 2008 to gather feedback from parents and guardians on their experiences with the program and their satisfaction with the *SEPA* program (Table 6). The English version of the survey administered to parents is located in Appendix H. Ninety percent (9 out of 10) of parents/guardians agreed (agree or strongly agree) that *SEPA* provides their child with opportunities to learn skills they didn't have. Parents/guardians also expressed positive sentiment about several aspects of the *SEPA* program. Nine out of 10 (90%) parents/guardians agreed (agree or strongly agree) with the following survey items: a) the career classes help prepare my child with skills for a job; b) the teachers of the *SEPA* course(s) communicate with me about my child's progress; c) I was given information about the *SEPA* program prior to my child's participation; and d) I am kept informed about Wheaton High School programs that are related to my needs.

Responses to a few questions addressing parents'/guardians' comfort and involvement may suggest areas for improvement. Six out of 10 agreed with the statement, "I feel comfortable asking *SEPA* staff questions about the program"; only one half agreed that *SEPA* provides them with an opportunity to become more involved in their child's school. In addition, 7 out of 10 agreed with the statement, "I understand the expectations for my involvement in the *SEPA* program." It should be noted that during the pilot program parent expectations were not clearly defined. During the 2008–2009 implementation of the program, the needs of parents are being targeted and addressed.

Parents were asked to describe how the SEPA program benefits them and their family. Several parents/guardians provided positive feedback stating they liked the program. As one respondent said, "I like the program because they teach them different things than regular classes." Another respondent replied that the program is a good one that "gives us hope." When asked to identify changes/differences in their child's attitude about school since he or she enrolled in *SEPA*, several noted that their child was happier, more motivated, and showed higher self-esteem. For example, one parent stated, "My child is more interested in learning new skills. He is happier now."

Table 6
Parent/Guardian Level of Agreement With Statements About the *SEPA* Program (*N*=10)

Survey Item	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %	No Opinion %
SEPA provides my child with opportunities to learn skills he/she didn't have.	80.0	10.0	10.0	0.0	0.0
The teachers of the *SEPA* course(s) communicate with me about my child's progress.	70.0	20.0	0.0	10.0	0.0
Staff involved with *SEPA* helps me understand my child's school progress.	50.0	40.0	0.0%	0.0	10.0
I feel comfortable asking *SEPA* staff questions about the program.	20.0	40.0	20.0	0.0	20.0
I was given information about the *SEPA* program prior to my child's participation.	70.0	20.0	0.0	10.0	0.0
I understand the expectations for my involvement in my child's school.	70.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
The career classes help prepare my child with skills for a job.	90.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
SEPA provides me with an opportunity to become more involved in my child's school.	50.0	0.0	30.0	0.0	20.0
I understand the expectations for my involvement in the *SEPA* program.	50.0	20.0	20.0	10.00	0.0
I am kept informed about Wheaton High School programs that are related to my needs.	70.0	20.0	10.0	0.0	0.0

Evaluation Question 2: How is the family involvement component implemented?

Evaluation question 2 examines the extent to which the second recommendation provided by the MCPS Latino Education Coalition—developing proactive outreach for Latino parent involvement—was successfully implemented. The recommendation was made to incorporate parent outreach and support as part of the MCPS Latino Education Coalition by the Steering Committee. This was to include a parent training component and monthly informal parent forum meetings for the pilot *SEPA* classes and a parent support group for all parents of students enrolled in the *SEPA* pilot program (MCPS, 2006).

Parent Training & Support

The Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs developed a plan in September 2007 detailing workshops and meetings to be held with parents/guardians of *SEPA* participants. This plan included activities scheduled from June 2007 through June 2008 (Appendix I). Some of the events considered for *SEPA* families included expanding existing family and community partnerships and MCPS programs (e.g., Conquista Tus Sueños). In June 2007, a parent meeting was held for *SEPA* parents/guardians that included an introduction to the program. At this meeting, parents/guardians were asked to complete a survey and insurance forms. In August 2007, a parent community coordinator visited all *SEPA* parents at their homes to ensure all necessary forms were completed and returned. A total of 40 families (including 8 *SEPA* parents/guardians) attended the September ESOL Back-to-School Night at Wheaton High School.

One event designed specifically for parents as a result of the *SEPA* program was the First Annual Latino Heritage Celebration and Parent Resource Night. This event was organized by the parent community coordinator who works closely with the students and parents of the *SEPA* program. The event was held on October 29, 2007, at Wheaton High School and highlighted community and nonprofit organizations in the Wheaton community that *SEPA* parents can access. MCPS Office of Human Resources participated to encourage parents to apply for jobs within MCPS. Appendix J presents the English version of the flyer advertising the event, which also was posted in Spanish. Some of the community and partner agencies represented included IDENTITY, the Latin Youth Center, DCC Latino Coalition, Gilchrist Center, YMCA, MANNA, Interfaith Clothing Center, Montgomery College, and Montgomery County Recreational Department. More than 200 families (including three *SEPA* families) attended this event.

Two *SEPA* parents sporadically attended the Wheaton High School *Conquista Tus Sueños (Realize Your Dreams)* program. This is a Spanish-language program aimed at empowering the Latino parent community by teaching them strategies to improve communication, parenting, personal goal setting, and family relationships. The program is a 10-hour motivational course offered as five sessions or modules based on 1) believing in oneself and how all parents are leaders, 2) how resentment develops among family members and others when making cultural adaptations, 3) how parents can help their children with cultural transition and gain a better understanding of the workings of MCPS, 4) how values manifest themselves in relationships and empowerment, and 5) how to convert problems into opportunities as well as future commitments (Addison-Scott, 2008).

A training component for all parents of students enrolled in the *SEPA* pilot program and monthly informal parent forum meetings for pilot classes were planned and implemented. Parents were kept informed through communication from the *SEPA* parent community coordinator and the ESOL resource teacher. Moreover, a parent survey was administered to parents during the home visits to determine parent interest for topics to be covered throughout the year. Parent surveys were also distributed after several workshops and indicated very favorable responses, including the content, presenter's knowledge, effective in communicating information, and holding the meetings/workshops at a convenient time.

A "safety net" concept was put into place to establish partnerships with interested community providers in the Wheaton cluster willing to provide support to the families so they would know where to go to access services (i.e., computer classes for parents, health care, food). The *SEPA* Safety Net was designed to compile a list of organizations that agreed to provide services to *SEPA* families, making these families a priority. These families are easily identified, due to the creation of a common referral form. In November, a meeting of interested providers was convened; 5 out of the 14 targeted organizations were represented. During this meeting, providers learned about the *SEPA* program and summary information about the families involved and shared information about the services they could provide the families. While only 5 of the 14 providers attended the November meeting, all 14 community providers included in the safety net became partners by signing an agreement—Partnership Promise.

A trifold card for *SEPA* families containing a list of the providers who signed an informal agreement to collaborate with MCPS for the students and families was developed. The card was intentionally designed as a pocket/wallet card so families can carry it with them at all times for easy information access.

Evaluation Question 3: How is the human resources recruitment, retention, and training component implemented?

Another recommendation made by the Steering Committee addressed promoting a diverse workforce. Specifically, the Human Resources (HR) Subcommittee was charged with "recruiting, supporting, and retaining Latino employees to support increased academic achievement for all students" (MCPS, 2006). Efforts included a Grow Your Own program, aligning resources such as Future Educators of America child development classes, and Teacher Academies in one high school cluster with a high percentage of Latino students. Other strategies included piloting English-language-development modules and classes for supporting services professionals in collaboration with SEIU Local 500, Office of Organizational Development, Department of Transportation, Department of Facilities Management, and community partners to learn English (MCPS, 2006).

To recruit more bilingual, bicultural teachers, the Office of Human Resources (OHR) staff attended numerous job fairs at universities with large international student populations and career expos hosted by New York City, New York University, Florida International University, University of Miami, Texas A&M University, and Columbia University. To continue the trend of hiring a diverse teaching staff, OHR is currently building a strong network of support within Montgomery County to obtain referrals from businesses and community groups such as The World Bank, The International Monetary Fund, National Institutes of Health, Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, and foreign embassies.

In FY 2006, MCPS hired 11 Latino elementary teachers. In FY 2008, the number of newly hired Latino elementary teachers more than doubled to 27. Among new teachers, the percentage of Latino elementary teachers hired between FY 2006 and FY 2008 increased from 3.2% to 7.8%; the percentage for FY 2007 was 3.3%. Of note, the number of African American and Asian American elementary school teachers has also increased substantially. OHR continues to hold frequent meetings with the elementary staffers to monitor their hiring of qualified diverse candidates.

OHR is developing a career ladder component to allow students to be employed with MCPS while attending college. It is hoped that this component will facilitate a partnership that will cover college costs for participants. OHR staffers have given presentations to high school students to encourage them to major in education when they go to college. OHR staffers also participated at Montgomery College's (MC) recent Youth Job Fair not only to recruit high school students into the field of education but also their siblings and parents with degrees in content areas to MC's Alternative Certification for Effective Teachers (ACET) program, where one can become certified to teach in four months.

Grow Your Own Teachers Program

In response to the recommendation to utilize resources to implement a teacher recruitment program in one high school cluster, the Grow Your Own (GYO) program was established. This program seeks to encourage Latino students in MCPS to pursue a career in education and, ultimately, return to MCPS to work. Early in the first semester of the 2007–2008 school year, staff from the MCPS Division of Career and Technology Education (CTE) met with the principal and an assistant principal of Gaithersburg High School (GHS) to discuss the GYO program. Of note, the Early Child Development, Teacher Academy of Maryland, and GYO are all part of the Academy of Leadership and Education at GHS.

GHS staff held an initial breakfast meeting with the identified students to share information about the program. Subsequent meetings were held with the students to discuss expectations, portfolio development, and a schedule for monthly lunch meetings. Parents of students participating in the program were called and received written information, including program objectives, expectations, guidelines, and permission forms.

Currently, there are nine Latino students in the GYO program. Each student has a mentor teacher assigned to him or her. Moreover, all students have been placed in an internship experience. Some are working in ESOL classes, while others are working with other subjects. The *GYO* program requires that students keep a daily log, which they bring to their internship seminar class. During the class, students use the information in their logs to look at educational theory and compare experiences. Arrangements have been made for students to plan and conduct an in-house parent orientation. During the orientation, students will report on their experiences, how they have grown, and their future aspirations.

CTE staff members continue to collaborate with staff members from the MCPS Department of Recruitment and Staffing who provide information about MCPS educational partnership programs and names of MCPS teachers and paraeducators who might serve as additional role models and for students in this program. GYO has been the impetus for aligning discussions about existing program opportunities to form a career ladder. These efforts appear to be buttressed for students and employees by educational benefits and lead to MCPS employment.

Pilot English-Language Development Courses

Pilot sessions of English-language development courses were held this school year for supporting services staff using two delivery methods for English instruction: Sed de Saber and a Face-to-Face workplace English class. Two groups completed the Sed de Saber program during

the 2007–2008 school year—19 participants at the Department of Transportation Shady Grove Depot, and 13 participants at Churchill High School. Twenty-three employees participated in the face-to-face class.

Sed de Saber. Sed de Saber teaches vocational and life skills in English through its portable language-acquisition program, which blends standards-based curriculum, Quantum LeapPad technology, and learner support. Participants used a Sed de Saber portable "LeapFrog" unit with six unit books and cartridges over a span of four to six months. The technology includes a pre- and post-assessment in order to determine growth. In addition to using the Sed de Saber units, participants met briefly every two weeks with a part-time English coordinator to address any concerns, practice what they learned, and encourage each other as a cohort.

Face-to-face Pilot: Workplace English. Workplace English classes for employees of the Division of Food and Nutrition Services (DFNS) are currently being held. The class of 23 met Mondays and Thursdays from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. Taught by Lara Oerter, the course was held from February 21 through June 5, 2008. Participants used the *Center Stage: Express Yourself in English* textbook, published by Pearson-Longman. In addition to the textbook, a vocabulary list specific to DFNS was compiled, which includes photographs of commonly used cafeteria items and equipment. Two of the classes include visits to the cafeteria to practice vocabulary and the opportunity to receive assistance with job-related questions from a DFNS area supervisor.

Conclusions

This evaluation was conducted to examine the implementation of the recommendations set forth in the Montgomery County Latino Education Coalition report, *Recommendations for Improving Latino Student Achievement*. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected examining experiences of students, parents, teachers, and school staff toward *SEPA*. Program documents also were reviewed to provide details on the implementation of family involvement and the progress made to recruit, retain, and train Latino teachers. The following conclusions are based on the findings from the multiple data collection activities and are organized by the evaluation questions.

How is the *SEPA* program component implemented in MCPS?

The data related to the implementation of *SEPA* reveal that the program is succeeding in providing the services to students with interrupted formal education, as intended. Feedback from school staff, parents, and students indicate that all groups have positive impressions about the SEPA program. Given these findings, the *SEPA* program component is being implemented as intended and per the recommendation of the Montgomery County Latino Education Coalition report.

How is the family involvement component implemented?

The recommendation from the coalition report stated the following activities be implemented: monthly informal parent forum meetings, classes, and a parent support group for all parents of students enrolled in the *SEPA* pilot program (MCPS, 2006). The coalition was successful in implementing a parent-training component for the parents of the pilot *SEPA* program. Although attendance was sparse, parents also participated in the *Conquista Tus Sueños* program. A "safety net" concept in partnership with local human services providers was also implemented to help parents know where to go for services.

How is the human resources recruitment, retention, and training component implemented?

The MCPS Latino Education Coalition successfully implemented the Grow Your Own program through a collaboration with the Division of Career and Technology Education, which currently includes nine Latino students, to encourage and prepare Latino students to become MCPS teachers. The piloting of English-language-development classes for supporting services professionals was also conducted and impacted 55 employees. Additionally, staff members from the Office of Human Resources attended numerous job fairs at several universities and successfully recruited Latino teachers (as well as other minority staff). MCPS is taking steps to recruit and retain employees.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study:

- Continue to review the content and focus of professional development opportunities offered to teachers instructing *SEPA* participants to ensure that they meet the needs of the teachers. While the majority of respondents who participated in the training sessions rated them positively, teachers raised a concern that there was no ongoing training as a follow-up to their summer training. (Follow-up training sessions were offered to teachers, but they occurred after staff interviews for this evaluation.) Ongoing assessment of the professional development needs of teachers who will be instructing these students prior to program implementation will continue to prove beneficial.

- Continue to provide consistent information about the expectations for participation and attendance in the *SEPA* program. Almost all teachers stated that student absences were a barrier to the implementation of courses. This was despite the reported increases in overall attendance by students.

- Conduct analysis of attendance patterns of *SEPA* participants and determine barriers to attendance to identify where support can be provided. This analysis may provide support to comments made by some program staff regarding increased overall school attendance by participants. Comparing attendance prior to program enrollment with post-enrollment attendance may reveal significant changes in student school attendance.

- Continue to have the parent community coordinator and ESOL counselor work with families around issues of student absences. By continuing to contact parents/guardians about student absences, the parent community coordinator and ESOL counselor have helped mitigate issues related to class attendance.

- Allow *SEPA* participants more than the three career pathway options initially offered. Some *SEPA* students presumed they would be able to choose from all pathways offered at Edison. Although never informed of this by program staff, students were disappointed with being limited to only three options during the pilot year.

- Continue to monitor implementation of the various components of the MCPS Latino Education Coalition to ensure adherence to action plans for the various activities associated with the project.

- Continue to maintain consistent communication with parents about the *SEPA* program components and the *SEPA* Safety Net support available to them and their families.

- Provide additional Spanish-speaking paraeducators for classroom teachers to assist in program implementation, especially for the career technology courses. Although bilingual staff were available at both Wheaton High School (i.e., bilingual teachers and ESOL coordinator) and at Edison (i.e., bilingual counselor and ESOL resource teacher), teachers reported a need for Spanish-speaking paraeducators to help with discussions

regarding safety in the career classes. A request for additional assistance in this regard was made in July 2007 for the FY 2009 budget. This request was approved and additional staff will be in place for the 2008–2009 school year.
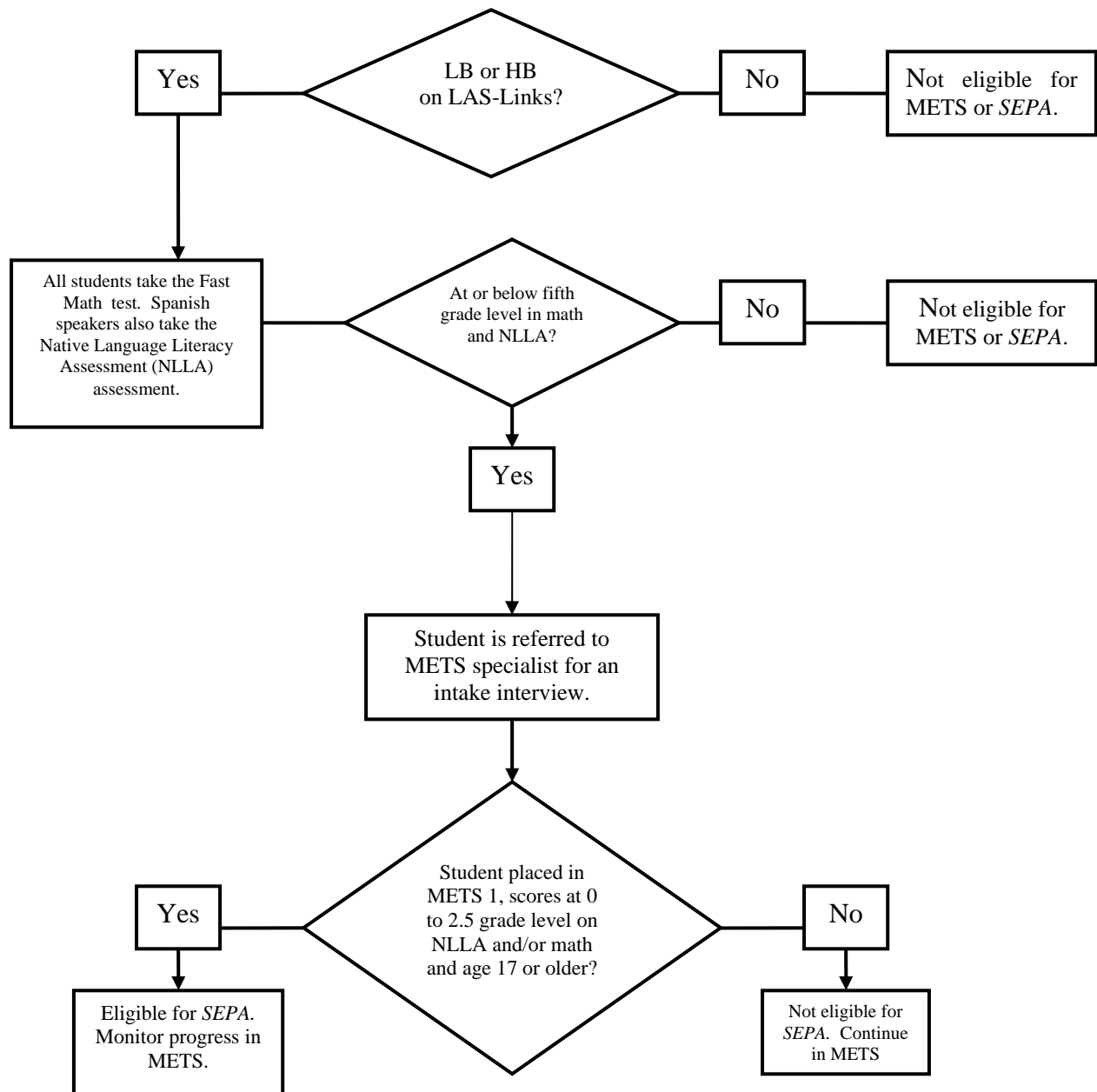
- Reevaluate the sharing of pre-assessment results with students to assign placement in the native language literacy course. Some students raised concerns about the course being below their level.

- School administrators should provide updated enrollment information to special program teachers. A number of the concerns regarding *SEPA* students was raised by teachers at Edison who felt "out of the loop" about the program and its participants. To assist with this gap, student files could be created for Edison to provide teachers with background information on the students. Also, providing teachers with information about students' educational and literacy levels will allow for differentiation required for these students.

- Provide more guidance to teachers on how to assess *SEPA* participants. Although some direction about assessments was offered, teachers still requested additional resources and guidance in this area.

- Examine the impact of participation in the *SEPA* program on English-language development. Gathering data on each SEPA cohort may provide program staff with an understanding of how the language-acquisition aspect of courses is benefiting students and whether adjustments in program design are needed. Additionally, this will allow program staff to develop measurable objectives for subsequent cohorts that are obtainable for participants (e.g., students will improve English reading skills by 10%). Information for the pilot-year participants was gathered, but not included in this report.

- Continue to monitor the expansion of English-language development courses, particularly those piloting new technologies for supporting services professionals. Continuing to report feedback on program implementation and related data will provide valuable information to MCPS on whether modifications in program design are needed.

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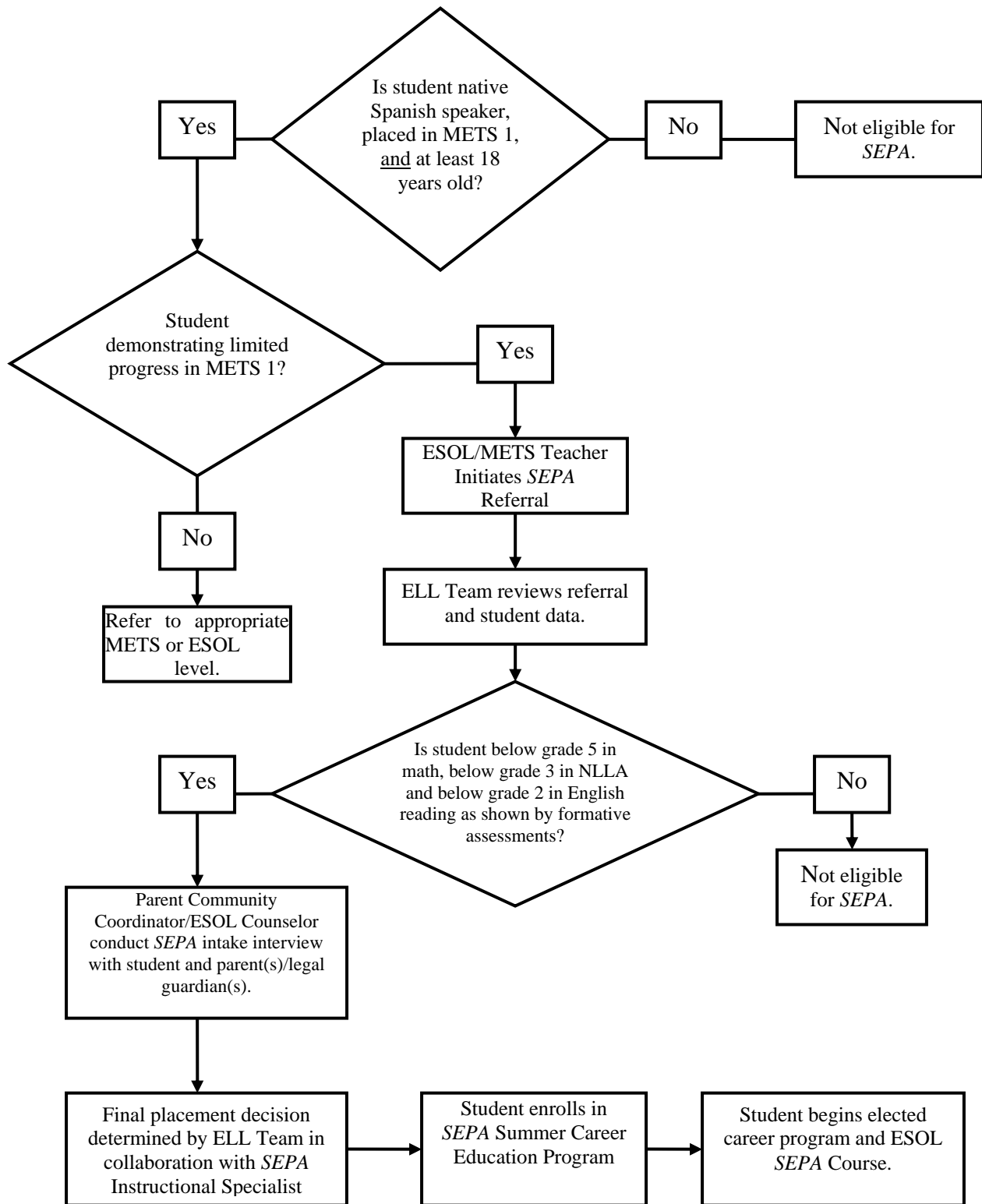
Appendix A

Identification Process for the Multidisciplinary Education and Training Support Program

```
        ┌──────┐         ╱ LB or HB ╲              ┌──────┐      ┌──────────────────┐
        │ Yes  │◄───────  on LAS-Links?  ─────────►│  No  │─────►│ Not eligible for │
        └──────┘         ╲            ╱              └──────┘      │ METS or SEPA.    │
           │                                                       └──────────────────┘
           ▼
┌────────────────────┐                              ┌──────┐      ┌──────────────────┐
│ All students take  │         ╱ At or below ╲      │  No  │─────►│ Not eligible for │
│ the Fast Math test.│        ╱  fifth grade  ╲────►└──────┘      │ METS or SEPA.    │
│ Spanish speakers   │───────  level in math  ─                  └──────────────────┘
│ also take the      │        ╲  and NLLA?   ╱
│ Native Language    │         ╲            ╱
│ Literacy Assessment│              │
│ (NLLA) assessment. │              ▼
└────────────────────┘          ┌──────┐
                                │ Yes  │
                                └──────┘
                                    │
                                    ▼
                        ┌────────────────────┐
                        │ Student is referred│
                        │ to METS specialist │
                        │ for an intake      │
                        │ interview.         │
                        └────────────────────┘
                                    │
                                    ▼
  ┌──────┐          ╱ Student placed in ╲           ┌──────┐
  │ Yes  │◄────────  METS 1, scores at 0  ─────────►│  No  │
  └──────┘          ╲ to 2.5 grade level ╱          └──────┘
     │              ╱ on NLLA and/or math╲             │
     ▼              ╲ and age 17 or older?╱            ▼
┌──────────────┐                                ┌──────────────┐
│ Eligible for │                                │ Not eligible │
│ SEPA. Monitor│                                │ for SEPA.    │
│ progress in  │                                │ Continue     │
│ METS.        │                                │ in METS      │
└──────────────┘                                └──────────────┘
```

Source: Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs.

Identification Process for the Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement Program

Source: Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs.

Appendix B

SEPA Student Survey
Summer 2007

The Department of Shared Accountability (DSA) is in the process of conducting an evaluation of the pilot implementation of SEPA. We want to know what you think about SEPA and ask that you complete this short survey to share your thoughts with us. Please do not put any names on the survey. Responses will be summarized across all respondents.

1. Please indicate what grade you will be during the 2007–2008 school year.

❑ Grade 9   ❑ Grade 10   ❑ Grade 11   ❑ Grade 12

2. What week did you like the best? (Check only one.)

❑ Cosmetology ❑ Restaurant Management   ❑ Hospitality
❑ Construction ❑ Other (specify) _____

For the next section, please indicate the degree with which you agree with the following statements. Check only one per row.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
3. SEPA provides me an opportunity to learn skills I didn't have.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
4. Instructors of SEPA course(s) were helpful.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
5. Transportation was an issue for my participation in SEPA.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
6. I improved my vocabulary in English.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
7. Overall, the SEPA courses were interesting and informative.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
8. Participating in SEPA helped me decide which career path I will pursue in the fall.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

9. Overall, how satisfied were you with the SEPA opportunities offered this summer? [Check one]

' Very satisfied   ' Satisfied   ' Dissatisfied   ' Very dissatisfied
' Not sure/no opinion

10. How could we improve SEPA?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you for your cooperation in completing the survey!

Appendix C

SEPA Student Survey
2007–2008

The Department of Shared Accountability (DSA) is in the process of conducting an evaluation of the implementation of the Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement (SEPA) program. We want to know what you think about SEPA and ask that you complete this short survey to share your thoughts with us. Please do not put any names on the survey. Responses will be summarized across all respondents.

1. Please indicate what grade you are in during this 2007–2008 school year.

    ❑ Grade 9   ❑ Grade 10   ❑ Grade 11   ❑ Grade 12

For the next section, please indicate the degree with which you agree with the following statements. Check only one per row.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
2. SEPA provides me with opportunities to learn skills I didn't have.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
3. My teachers in the SEPA course(s) help me learn.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
4. Counselors in the school are helpful.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
5. Participation in this program helps me improve my vocabulary in English.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
6. I am aware of the work I am expected to complete in the SEPA courses.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
7. There are many interruptions to classroom instructional time because of the behavior of some students.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
8. Participating in this program helps me improve my reading skills in my native language.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
9. The career classes help prepare me with knowledge and skills for a job in that field.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
10. SEPA instructors treat me with respect.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
11. I believe I have the materials and equipment I need for my classes.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
12. I like the opportunity to participate in SEPA.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
13. I am able to get additional support for classes if I need it.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
14. Overall, the SEPA courses are interesting and informative.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
15. I am able to understand the information presented in the SEPA class.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
16. Participating in SEPA helps me decide which career path I will pursue in life.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
17. I would recommend the SEPA program to other students.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

18. Overall, how satisfied are you with the SEPA opportunities offered this school year? [Check one]

    ' Very satisfied   ' Satisfied   ' Dissatisfied   ' Very dissatisfied
    ' Not sure/no opinion

19. What do you like about SEPA?

_____
_____
_____
_____

20. How could we improve SEPA?

_____
_____
_____
_____

21. What do you wish your teachers could do better to help you with your classes?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you for your cooperation in completing the survey!

Appendix D

Latino Coalition
Principal/Assistant Principal Interview Protocol

Part I. Background Information

1. What is your overall opinion about the implementation of the *SEPA* program?
2. What is your role with regard to the implementation of the *SEPA* program?
3. How long have you been involved in the implementation of the *SEPA* program?

Part II. Program Implementation

4. Are there any barriers that have impacted the success of *SEPA* program implementation at the school level?

   a. Currently, how do you deal with these barriers; if any?
   b. What suggestions do you have for improvements; if any?
5. How do classroom teachers and counselors work with each other?
6. How do ESOL teachers and teachers at Wheaton and Edison work together?
7. What professional development is provided for teachers?
8. What opportunities have you had to work with the Steering Committee and planning team?

Part III. Communication

9. How were you informed about the program?
10. What kinds of feedback have you received from parents and students regarding the *SEPA* program?
11. What kinds of feedback have you received from teachers and counselors regarding the *SEPA* program?
12. In what ways does the school communicate with *SEPA* parents to keep them updated on their students' progress and performance?
13. What recommendations do you have for other schools that will implement the *SEPA* program at their schools?
14. What else would you like to share about the implementation of the *SEPA* program that I have not asked about?

Appendix E

Latino Coalition
Counselor Interview Protocol

Part I. Background Information

1. What is your overall opinion about the implementation of the *SEPA* program?
2. What is your role with regard to the implementation of the *SEPA* program?
3. How long have you been involved in the implementation of the *SEPA* program?

Part II. Program Implementation

4. Are there any barriers that have impacted the success of *SEPA* program implementation at the school level?

   c. Currently, how do you deal with these barriers; if any?
   d. What suggestions do you have for improvements; if any?

5. How do you, the counselor, work with classroom teachers?
6. How do ESOL teachers and teachers at Wheaton and Edison work together in the *SEPA* program?
7. What professional development have you received to help you address the needs of *SEPA* students?
8. What professional development do you believe would be helpful to you to address the needs of *SEPA* students?
9. What opportunities have you had to participate in planning for *SEPA* students?

Part III. Communication

10. How were you informed about the *SEPA* program?
11. What kinds of feedback have you received from parents and students regarding the *SEPA* program?
12. In what ways do you communicate with *SEPA* parents to keep them updated on their students' progress and performance?
13. What else would you like to share about the implementation of the *SEPA* program that I have not asked about?

Appendix F

Latino Coalition
Teacher Interview Protocol

Part I. Background Information

1. What is your overall opinion about the implementation of the *SEPA* program?
2. What is your role with regard to the implementation of the *SEPA* program?
3. How long have you been involved in the implementation of the *SEPA* program?
4. In what ways do you see the *SEPA* ESOL curriculum aligned with MCPS curriculum and assessment? In what areas is it most closely aligned? What areas lack alignment? What about alignment of the *SEPA* Spanish Literacy curriculum?

Part II. Program Implementation

5. To your knowledge, what are the goals and objectives of the *SEPA* program?
6. How do you assess students participating in *SEPA*?
7. What kinds of things should MCPS be doing to ensure that the components of the program scheduled for implementation this year are actually put in place in a timely fashion?
8. Are there any barriers that have impacted the success of *SEPA* program implementation at the school level?
    a. Currently, how do you deal with these barriers; if any?
    b. What suggestions do you have for improvements; if any?
9. How do you, the classroom teacher, work with counselors to plan for and address issues with *SEPA* students?
10. How do *SEPA* ESOL teachers and teachers at Wheaton and Edison work together to support *SEPA* students?
11. What professional development have you received to help you address the needs of *SEPA* students?
12. What professional development do you believe would be helpful to you to address the needs of *SEPA* students?

Part III. Communication

13. How were you informed about the program?
14. How were students informed about the program?
15. How was the program communicated to parents and community members at the school level?
16. What kinds of feedback have you received from parents and students regarding the *SEPA* program?
17. In what ways do you communicate with parents to keep them updated on their students' progress and performance in the *SEPA* program?
18. What recommendations do you have for other schools that will implement the *SEPA* program at their schools?
19. What else would you like to share about the implementation of the *SEPA* program that I have not asked about?

Appendix G

Latino Coalition
Program Staff Interview Protocol

Part I. Background Information

1. What is your overall opinion about the implementation of the *SEPA* program?
2. What is your role with regard to the implementation of the *SEPA* program?
3. How long have you been involved in the implementation of the *SEPA* program?
4. In what ways do you see the *SEPA* ESOL curriculum aligned with MCPS curriculum and assessment? In what areas is it most closely aligned? What areas lack alignment? What about alignment of the *SEPA* Spanish Literacy curriculum?

Part II. Program Implementation

5. To your knowledge, what are the goals and objectives of the *SEPA* program?
6. What kinds of things should MCPS be doing to ensure that the components of the program scheduled for implementation this year are actually put in place in a timely fashion?
7. Are there any barriers that have impacted the success of *SEPA* program implementation at the school level? At the administrative level?
    a. Currently, how do you deal with these barriers; if any?
    b. What suggestions do you have for improvements; if any?
8. What professional development have you received to help you address the needs of *SEPA* students?
9. What professional development do you believe would be helpful to you to address the needs of *SEPA* students?

Part III. Communication

10. How were you informed about the program?
11. How were students informed about the program?
12. How was the program communicated to parents and community members at the school level?
13. What kinds of feedback have you received from teachers, parents, and students regarding the *SEPA* program?
14. In what ways do you communicate with teachers to keep them updated on revisions in *SEPA* program implementation?
15. In what ways do you communicate with parents to keep them updated on student progress in the *SEPA* program?
16. What recommendations do you have for other schools that will implement the *SEPA* program at their schools?
17. What else would you like to share about the implementation of the *SEPA* program that I have not asked about?

Appendix H

SEPA Parent Survey
2007–2008

The Department of Shared Accountability (DSA) is in the process of conducting an evaluation of the implementation of the Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement (SEPA) program.   We want to know what you think about SEPA and ask that you complete this short survey to share your thoughts with us. Please do not put any names on the survey.   Responses will be summarized across all respondents.

Please indicate the degree with which you agree with the following statements. Check only one per row.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/Not Applicable
1. SEPA provides my child with opportunities to learn skills he/she didn't have.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
2. The teachers of the SEPA course(s) communicate with me about my child's progress.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
3. Staff involved with SEPA help me understand my child's school progress.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
4. I feel comfortable asking SEPA staff questions about the program.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
5. I was given information about the SEPA program prior to my child's participation.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
6. I understand the expectations for my involvement in my child's school.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
7. The career classes help prepare my child with skills for a job.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
8. SEPA provides me with an opportunity to become more involved in my child's school.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
9. I understand the expectations for my involvement in the SEPA program.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
10. I am kept informed about Wheaton High School programs that are related to my needs.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

11. Overall, how satisfied are you with the SEPA opportunities offered to your child this school year? [Check one]
    ' Very satisfied ' Satisfied   ' Dissatisfied   ' Very dissatisfied
    ' Not sure/no opinion

12. Overall, how satisfied are you with the opportunities at your child's school to ask questions about the SEPA program? [Check one]

' Very satisfied ' Satisfied   ' Dissatisfied   ' Very dissatisfied
' Not sure/no opinion

13. Overall, how satisfied are you with the opportunities at your child's school to share your opinion about the SEPA program? [Check one]

' Very satisfied ' Satisfied   ' Dissatisfied   ' Very dissatisfied
' Not sure/no opinion

14. How does the SEPA program benefit you and your family?

_____
_____
_____

15. How is SEPA supporting your child and helping your family become more involved in school?

_____
_____
_____

16. What suggestions do you have for improving the SEPA program?

_____
_____
_____

17. What changes/differences have you noticed in your child's attitude about school since s/he has enrolled in SEPA?

_____
_____
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Thank you for your cooperation in completing the survey!

Appendix I

DRAFT

Division of ESOL Bilingual Program
SEPA Parents Workshop Plan
Media Center at Wheaton HS

Outcomes
As a result of these workshops and training, parents will be able to:
- Access school staff to discuss their child's academic achievement
- Access their child's grades and reports from the internet
- Navigate MCPS and community resources to meet their family's needs

Month/Date	Topic
June	SEPA Pathways Parent Questionnaire, survey and insurance form
July	Parent Questionnaire and Surveys
August	Home visits and student work site visit
September 11	ESOL Back –to-School Night Phone Calls to parents about graduation concerns
October 29	Hispanic Heritage Celebration focusing on Community Resources available in Wheaton area
October 17, 24 On going	Conquista Tus Sueños
November(TBD)	Individual Parent/Student Update Report
November 13 at 1:00PM Service Providers Meeting at Wheaton HS	SEPA Safety Net
November (TBD)	EDISON Tour for parents
November 7, 14, 28	Conquista Tus Sueños
December-January-Feb. (6 sessions) Dec/19/ - Jan/9/11/23/30/Feb/8	Parent Resource Training (Parent Choice)-Mental Health Reunification, MCPS System, Effective Communication, Developmental Milestones in the Student, Community Resources
January- May 2X a week(TBD	English and Computer Classes (pending funding)
May-June(TBD)	Study Circles
May-June	Impact

Appendix J

Please join us for...
Wheaton High School's
1st Annual Hispanic Heritage Celebration & Parent Resource Night

When? Monday, October 29, 2007 (6:30 – 8:30 PM)

Where? Wheaton High School Cafeteria
Join us for an evening of information gathering, free refreshments, entertainment and prizes!
Wheaton High School and the following local businesses and organizations will be available to answer questions and offer resources & support:

Chevy Chase Bank
Clinica del Pueblo
College & Career Center (Wheaton HS)
DCC Latino Coalition
Thomas Edison High School of Technology
ESOL Department (Wheaton HS)
The Examiner
The Gazette Newspapers
Giant Food
Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity
Health & Human Services
The Homework Center (Wheaton HS)
Housing Opportunities Commission
Identity, Inc.
Interfaith Clothing Center
International Club (Wheaton HS)
Kensington-Wheaton Youth Services
Latin American Youth Center
Manna Food Center
MCPS Human Resources
MCPS Parent Academy
Montgomery College
Montgomery County Fire & Police Departments
Outback Steak House
Panera Bread
PROYECTO SALUD
Starbucks
Telemundo
Wheaton Cluster PTSAs
Wheaton Sports Academy
YMCA
And much, much more!.

If you would like more information about this special event, please contact:
Mrs. Grace Barnes, WHS Secretary 301-929-2050
Mrs. Dian Carter, WHS Assistant Principal 301-929-2050
Mr. Nivardo Candanedo, Wheaton Cluster Parent Liaison 301-230-0670
Mrs. Nilda Colgrove, Division of Family and Community Partnership 301-962-3818

We hope to see you here!