MONTGOMERY
COUNTY PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

Evaluation of the Implementation and Outcomes of the Programs and Strategies Developed in Response to the Latino Education Coalition Recommendations: 2008–2009 and 2009–2010

Office of Shared Accountability

March 2011

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Executive Summary

The Office of Shared Accountability (OSA) conducted an evaluation of the implementation and outcomes of the programs and strategies developed in response to recommendations of the Latino Education Coalition. The evaluation was requested by the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs. This report presents findings from the evaluation of the 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 school year programs; a previous evaluation study addressed the implementation of the program during its first year (2007–2008 school year) (Addison-Scott, 2008).

Background and Evaluation Questions

The Montgomery County Latino Education Coalition was formed in 2005 to examine the most pressing factors influencing poor Latino student achievement and to put forward a set of recommendations for addressing those factors. In its report, *Recommendations for Improving Latino Student Achievement* (2006), the Coalition stated:

> The factors that have driven immigration over the past twenty years, including family reunification, civil strife, political instability, poverty and natural disasters, will continue to fuel immigration in the future. The numbers of potential students with poor academic foundations in their first languages will continue to grow and we must begin now to plan for embracing and supporting the achievements of these youth. (Montgomery County Latino Education Coalition, 2006, p. 9)

In response to the Coalition report, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) established the MCPS Latino Education Coalition (LEC) Steering Committee. This committee researched best practices at districts across the nation 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 develop a diverse workforce by recruiting, supporting, and retaining Latino employees (MCPS, 2006). The initiatives associated with the MCPS Latino Education Coalition recommendations 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 following questions guided the evaluation study. Each of the three components of the program was examined in terms of context, implementation, and outcomes.

1. SEPA
   a. What is the background and context of the SEPA program? What are its goals and objectives?
   b. What is the status of the SEPA program implementation, years 2 and 3, including a report of changes in year 3 under a new program model?
   c. What are the outcomes of the SEPA program?

2. Family Involvement
   a. What is the background and context of the Family Involvement component of the program? What are its goals and objectives?
   b. What is the status of implementation of the Family Involvement component?
   c. What are the outcomes of the Family Involvement component?
3. Recruitment, Support, and Retention
   a. What is the background and context of the Recruitment, Support, and Retention component of the program? What are its goals and objectives?
   b. What is the status of implementation of the Recruitment, Support, and Retention component, including the Grow Your Own Program?
   c. What are the outcomes of the Recruitment, Support, and Retention component?

To answer the questions, a mixed-methods evaluation was conducted. Data collection strategies and measures for the evaluation of the SEPA program included: student, parent, and staff surveys; interviews with program manager; attendance data; achievement data; teacher ratings of student classroom behavior; performance on English language assessments; and data from professional development sessions. The family involvement component was examined using parent workshop information (meeting topics and attendance) and logs from safety net providers. Data from Office of Human Resources and Development (OHRD), records from the Grow Your Own program, and participation data for the English language development opportunities were examined to address the recruitment, support, and retention component of the program.

Key Findings

Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement Program

Context and development of the 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 (year 1), the Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement (SEPA) program was piloted at Wheaton High School (Wheaton), in coordination with the Thomas Edison High School of Technology (Edison). The program included English language development classes that focused on exploring careers and preparing for the world of work, a Spanish literacy class for native speakers, and a career and technology education component at Edison. Fourteen students were enrolled in SEPA during year 1.

Year 2. During the 2008–2009 school year, the SEPA program was expanded to Albert Einstein High School (Einstein), with students from Einstein and four other high schools attending career-focused English language development classes at Einstein in the morning, and career and technology education courses at Edison in the afternoon. Fifteen students were enrolled in SEPA during 2008–2009; seven students completed the 2008–2009 SEPA program at Einstein, and eight students completed their second year of the program at Wheaton.

Year 3. In the 2009–2010 school year, the structure of the SEPA program was revised in an effort to address low levels of school attendance of many of the SEPA students during years 1 and 2. Instead of requiring all SEPA students to meet at one site for morning classes, students in year 3 attended classes in the morning at their home school and then took career classes at

Edison in the afternoon, with a SEPA ESOL class at the end of the day. The revised program structure was designed to allow students to maintain their connection with their home school and to enroll in mathematics and ESOL classes that would better fit their skill levels and support their individual learning needs. In addition, a counseling component was added in year 3, and an attendance contract was introduced. Fourteen students joined the program at their home schools in 2009–2010, and four students continued in their second year.

Program implementation—stakeholder feedback. Survey responses from students and their parents showed high levels of satisfaction with the SEPA program. Response rates for students were 47% (year 2) and 46% (year 3), and for parents were 60% (year 2) and 61% (year 3). During both school years, 100% of students responding to surveys agreed that they were more confident using English and that they could get help with their work if they needed it. Parents of SEPA students were most positive about communication from their child's teachers, and the help received from SEPA staff in understanding their child's progress at school (100% agreement in 2008–2009; 87% agreement in 2009–2010 on both survey questions). Survey responses from school staff (response rates were 63% in year 2 and 33% in year 3) indicated that most teachers and counselors were positive about the communication and collaboration among program staff and that they were kept informed about program implementation (more than 70% agreed). During both years, staff expressed concerns about attendance and the extensive academic and language needs of the SEPA students.

Program outcomes. Students' classroom behavior was assessed monthly by their teachers during year 2 of the program (2008–2009). An examination of these behavioral ratings showed that most of the behaviors were rated more positively at the end of the year than at the start of the school year. The largest improvement was shown for "Works well with others."

Students' English language proficiency, as measured by Language Assessment System (LAS) Links, showed improvement during both program years. The percentage of SEPA students who posted increases of 15 scale score points or more was 42.9% in 2008–2009 and 75% in 2009–2010.

Finally, SEPA participants' academic success varied by course. During both years, half or fewer of the students achieved C or better in their mathematics course. In contrast, nearly all of the SEPA students had a C or better in their career course; in fact, two thirds of the SEPA students in 2008–2009 and over half of the students in 2009–2010 had an A or a B in their career course at the end of the year.

Family Involvement

Program implementation and outcomes. The family involvement component was implemented as designed during years 2 and 3 of the program. Home visits were conducted by the SEPA parent community coordinator, and a needs assessment determined topics of interest to parents during the upcoming school year. Meetings were provided during each school year to address such topics as communication, helping your student, academic achievement, navigating MCPS, and identifying community resources to meet family needs. Attendance at the family meetings ranged from 4 to 14 participants. In year 3, a case management model was put into place, so that communication with the SEPA families could be ongoing through the parent

community coordinator.   In response to a parent survey at the end of the school year, over three quarters of parents in years 2 and 3 agreed that SEPA provided them with an opportunity to become more involved in their child's school.

In addition, a "safety net" concept was put in place to help families access essential services (e.g., housing, immigration, food, clothing).   A list of organizations that agreed to provide services to SEPA families was distributed to parents each year. Follow-up records showed that SEPA families used the "safety net" program during years 2 and 3, contacting many of the participating organizations.

Human Resources: Recruitment, Support, and Retention

Program implementation and outcomes.   The human resources recruitment, support, and retention component was implemented as planned in year 2, but not in its entirety during year 3. Positive results have accrued from the strategies supporting the objectives of this component.

Grow-Your-Own program.   A teacher recruitment outreach program for Latino students, the *Grow Your Own Teachers Program* (GYO), was developed in 2007–2008 in cooperation with the Academy of Leadership and Education at Gaithersburg High School. The GYO program was continued in 2008–2009 and expanded to Montgomery Blair High School (Blair), but in 2009–2010 the program was discontinued as a result of administrative and teacher changes within the high schools. During the 2008–2009 school year, five Latino students participated in the GYO program at Gaithersburg and four students participated at Blair. With support from the program, all students at both schools submitted college applications upon high school graduation.

Recruiting Hispanic teachers to MCPS.   An additional objective was the recruitment of bilingual and bicultural teachers. Office of Human Resources and Development (OHRD) staff members attended numerous job fairs at universities with large international student populations. OHRD has built a network of support within Montgomery County to obtain referrals from businesses and community groups such as the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. In addition, representatives from the Latino Education Coalition steering committee worked with the MCPS Asian/Hispanic Leadership Development Project Team in the recruitment and development of employees into leadership positions. The percentage of Hispanic teachers increased 18% since the start of the program, from 3.8% in 2006–2007 to 4.5% in 2009–2010.

English language development classes.   Other retention and training strategies included providing English language development modules and classes for supporting services professionals, in collaboration with Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 500, OHRD, Department of Transportation, and Department of Facilities Management, Division of School Plant Operations and Division of Food and Nutrition Services. During the first three years of the program, 305 MCPS supporting services employees participated in the English language development sessions.

Recommendations

Data collected in this study suggest the following recommendations:

*Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement (*SEPA*) Program*

- Continue to monitor attendance and provide consistent information about the expectations for participation and attendance in the SEPA program.

- Continue to establish practices and supports to address the attendance issues through the ESOL transition counselor.

- Further examine the SEPA students' needs in mathematics and identify specific supports and ways to monitor progress.

- Continue to review the content and format of professional development opportunities offered to SEPA staff to ensure that the needs of the program staff are being met.

- Provide more opportunities for teachers in the SEPA program to communicate and collaborate with each other.

- Solicit feedback and input from SEPA school staff throughout the year.

Family Involvement Component

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

Recruitment, Support, and Retention Component

- Determine the feasibility of reestablishing the Grow Your Own Teachers Program.

- Continue to monitor the expansion of English language development courses for supporting services professionals.

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Evaluation of the Implementation and Outcomes of the Programs and Strategies Developed in Response to the Latino Education Coalition Recommendations: 2008–2009 and 2009–2010

Julie Wade

Background

The Montgomery County Latino Education Coalition was formed in 2005 to examine the factors contributing to poor Latino student achievement and to put forward a set of recommendations for addressing those factors. The Coalition's report, *Recommendations for Improving Latino Student Achievement* (2006), was submitted to the Montgomery County Board of Education and Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). The overarching goal of the Coalition recommendations was to improve Latino student achievement in MCPS. The Coalition identified the three most pressing issues impacting Latino student achievement in Montgomery County: 1) lack of appropriate support for older students entering the system with limited or interrupted education, 2) low levels of parent involvement, and 3) lack of cultural and linguistic competence within MCPS and among its staff (Montgomery County Latino Education Coalition, 2006).

The Coalition report affirmed the urgency and importance of addressing the challenges and needs of this unique and growing student population.

> The factors that have driven immigration over the past twenty years, including family reunification, civil strife, political instability, poverty and natural disasters, will continue to fuel immigration in the future. The numbers of potential students with poor academic foundations in their first languages will continue to grow and we must begin now to plan for embracing and supporting the achievements of these youth. (Montgomery County Latino Education Coalition, 2006, p. 9)

In response to the Coalition report, MCPS established the MCPS Latino Education Coalition Steering Committee. This committee researched best practices in school districts across the nation and recommended initiatives and strategies to address the issues identified by the Coalition. Recommendations included:
1. Development of a program for older high school ESOL students with interrupted formal education
2. Creation of a parent outreach and support component
3. Development of a human resources component designed to build a diverse workforce by recruiting, supporting, and retaining Latino employees (MCPS, 2006).

The activities associated with the MCPS Latino Education Coalition Committee recommendations 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*.

Overview of the Latino Education Coalition Initiatives and Strategies

Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement Program

The Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement (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 (year 1), the SEPA program was piloted at Wheaton High School (Wheaton), in coordination with the Thomas Edison High School of Technology (Edison). The program included English language development classes that focused on exploring careers and preparing for the world of work, a Spanish literacy class for native speakers, and a career and technology education component at Edison. During the 2008–2009 school year (year 2), the SEPA program was extended to Albert Einstein High School (Einstein), while SEPA students at Wheaton continued in a second year of the program. In the 2009–2010 school year (year 3), the structure of the SEPA program was revised to address the low levels of school attendance of many of the SEPA students during the first two years of the program. In year 3, SEPA students from several high schools attended classes in the morning at their home school, then took an MCPS bus to Edison for afternoon career classes, followed by a SEPA ESOL class at the end of the day. The revised program structure was designed to allow students to maintain their connection with their home school, and to enroll in mathematics and ESOL classes that would better fit their levels of skill and support their individual learning needs.

SEPA program components and goals. The SEPA program 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 classes at Edison teaching entry-level job skills
- English language development class designed for students to acquire English through career 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 (In the third year of the program, this component was replaced by a reading class.)

In the first year of the program, students chose from three career development programs at Edison (Construction, Nail Technology, or Professional Restaurant Management). In the second year, a fourth choice was added—Automotive Technology. Outcomes for these classes were modified for SEPA students.

The goals for the SEPA program were—
- to help students develop knowledge and skills that will help prepare them for entry-level jobs in their field of interest and study and
- to increase students' proficiency in oral and written English.

Family Involvement

The family involvement component was developed to promote parental involvement, specifically to increase involvement of SEPA families in their child's education. This component was developed in collaboration with parents, community partners, and MCPS departments and divisions. To incorporate parent outreach and support within the strategies developed to address the MCPS Latino Education Coalition recommendations, several methods were proposed. During the three years of the program, this component has been developed and modified to meet the needs of the families involved. During the 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 school years, the family involvement component has consisted of three key elements: 1) a parent training component with workshops for the SEPA families, 2) support for parents of students enrolled in the SEPA pilot program through group meetings and case management, and 3) a "safety net" program which provides SEPA family members with referrals to community resources.

Human Resources: Recruitment, Support, and Retention

To ensure that MCPS develops 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: 1) developing and implementing a teacher recruitment outreach program to Latino students in high school clusters with high percentages of Latino students (Grow Your Own program), 2) efforts to recruit more bilingual and bicultural teachers, and 3) support for current MCPS staff through English language development courses (in collaboration with SEIU Local 500, the Office of Organizational Development, Department of Transportation, Department of Facilities Management, and community partners) (MCPS, 2006).

Literature Review

Nationwide, a number of school programs have been designed to assist students who are recent arrivals to the United States and who have limited English proficiency (Boyson and Short, 2003; Medina, 2009; Schultz & Vanna, 2008). Although few studies have evaluated the impact of programs with goals and objectives similar to those specified by the Latino Education Coalition in MCPS, this literature review reports on studies that evaluated the impact of programs supporting newly arrived immigrant students.

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). 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%) were native speakers of Spanish. Forty-eight percent of students in the program were over age for their grade. Findings revealed that the majority of the program objectives were met, including statistically significant gains in English language skills by participants.

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. Findings revealed significantly higher scores on the Language Assessment Skills after the program than on the pretest (Munoz & Clavijo, 2000).

A Florida county school district implemented an eight and one-half-month school drop-out prevention intervention program for Latino and other limited English proficient (LEP) students. 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). Program participants showed improved attendance, higher rates of promotion, and improved English reading and writing skills (Matos, 1998).

Carvello (2008) conducted a qualitative study focusing on Salvadoran adolescents with interrupted, limited, or no formal education in the Washington, DC Metropolitan Area. 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. 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, and examining the impact of transnational parenting.

A limited number of evaluation studies have focused on programs that serve older high school students with interrupted education and limited English language skills. The current study may therefore offer new information about implementation and outcomes of a program designed for these students to develop English language and literacy skills through a career-based educational program.

Description of Programs

The program components developed in response to the recommendations of the MCPS Latino Education Coalition are addressed in the following sections of the report. Descriptions and findings are organized into three parts, corresponding to the three components of the program. The first section details the implementation and outcomes of the SEPA program; survey feedback from several stakeholder groups as well as student outcome data are described. The second section provides findings related to the family involvement component of the program. Finally, results of efforts by MCPS to recruit and retain Latino employees are presented in the third part, including the implementation and accomplishments of the GYO program, and English language development classes for supporting services professionals.

The SEPA Program

SEPA **selection criteria**. Students are referred by teachers or counselors to be considered for the SEPA program. Eligibility requirements include that the student is a native speaker of Spanish with limited or interrupted education, and 18 years old by the start of his or her first year in SEPA. Due to their age and large schooling gap, SEPA participants are those students not likely to meet MCPS graduation requirements for high school before the age of 21.[1]

Eligibility for SEPA is further determined by assessments on several performance measures: Language Assessment System (LAS) Links English language proficiency test, the Native Language Literacy Assessment (NLLA), and the Focus on Achieving Standards in Teaching Mathematics (FAST Math) program. A descriptive map of the referral process and eligibility decisions is shown in Appendix A.

Enrollment process. Students recommended for the program are invited with their parents to meet with the SEPA parent community coordinator and SEPA staff in an intake interview, where they hear about the program and reason for referral and, if interested, sign forms indicating agreement. Students and parents who have signed up for SEPA attend an orientation meeting with other families and SEPA staff to learn more about the program. The SEPA parent community coordinator follows up with the family to ensure that students and parents have their questions answered and that enrollment forms are completed. In fall 2009, an attendance contract was introduced for students to sign at enrollment.

SEPA *Instructional Program*

First-year students. Enrollment in the SEPA program begins with a free, four-week summer program at the Thomas Edison High School of Technology. Summer program classes meet Monday through Friday and introduce students to the four different career areas offered in the SEPA program. At the end of the summer program, students choose the career program they wish to study during the school year. Breakfast and lunch are provided during the summer program.

Career program areas include:
- **Automotive Technology**. This program prepares students for work in auto body repair, including skills in automotive detailing, body repair, paint prep and polishing, and collision estimating. The program also teaches important shop safety skills and proper tool and equipment use.
- **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.

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[1] A "safeguard" was established should a *SEPA* participant's progress indicate that he or she would be able to meet graduation requirements. The safeguard required that at the end of each semester, the English language learners (ELL) team from the school meets to review student progress and coursework. A checklist was developed to guide the ELL team and if it appeared that a student would be able to graduate from high school, the student would be exited from the *SEPA* Program.

- **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.

In the fall, students attend classes at the home school in the morning, then travel by MCPS bus to Edison for career classes in the afternoon. The 2009–2010 schedule for first-year SEPA students is shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Courses for SEPA Participants in Their First Year

Classes at the Home School	**ESOL**	Students take an assigned ESOL course at their home school based on their ESOL level.
	Reading	Students take an assigned reading course at their home school based on their reading level.
	Math	Students take an assigned math course at their home school.
Classes at the Thomas Edison High School of Technology	**Career Pathway Program Classes** (3 class periods)	Students enroll in one of the following career pathway programs at the Thomas Edison High School of Technology*: ▪ Nail Technology ▪ Construction ▪ Restaurant Management ▪ Automotive Technology * MCPS Transportation is provided between the students' home school to Thomas Edison High School.
	SEPA ESOL (1 period)	In the SEPA ESOL course, students learn English through a career exploration curriculum. For example, students learn to: ▪ Describe their goals, interests, skills, and experiences ▪ Research careers and jobs ▪ Use English to communicate at school and at work

Table reprinted from "The SEPA Program: Options and Opportunities," Montgomery County Public Schools Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs, 2010. The complete document is included in Appendix B.

In previous program years (years 1 and 2), a Spanish literacy course was included in the SEPA curriculum in place of the reading course. Feedback from students and teachers indicated that an English language reading course would better address students' needs and the curriculum was changed for the 2009–2010 program year.

For some students with limited mathematics skills, the mathematics course options were not appropriate for their needs, even in year 3, when selecting from courses available at their home schools. During the 2009–2010 school year, SEPA instructional specialists along with

mathematics content specialists developed a resource to help address the mathematics needs of the SEPA students and other English language learners.

After completing their first year in the SEPA program, students may apply for a summer work-based internship to gain real-world job experience while working with a supervising adult professional. Internships may or may not be paid, and most are part time. SEPA program staff assist students to explore these opportunities and apply for positions.

Second-year students. Students enrolling in their second year of the program continue to take courses in ESOL, reading, and mathematics, as well as their career program.[2] In addition, students take a College/Career Research and Development course at Edison. The second-year schedule is shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Courses for SEPA Participants in Their Second Year

Classes at the Home School	**ESOL**	Students take an assigned ESOL course at their home school based on their ESOL level.
	Reading	Students take an assigned reading course at their home school based on their reading level.
	Math	Students take an assigned math course at their home school.
Classes at the Thomas Edison High School of Technology	**Career Pathway Program Classes** (3 class periods)	Students continue classes in their career pathway program at the Thomas Edison High School of Technology. Some students may also be eligible to participate in a non-paid work experience internship or an On-the-Job Training (OJT) experience with an employer.
	College/Career Research and Development (CCRD) (1 period)	In the College/Career Research and Development course, students learn how to research, find, and be successful in a job. For example, students learn: ▪ How to develop a plan to find a job ▪ How to prepare for and participate in a job interview ▪ How to use technology to create resumes and cover letters and to research jobs.

Table reprinted from "The SEPA Program: Options and Opportunities," Montgomery County Public Schools Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs, 2010. The complete document is included in Appendix B.

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[2] Other courses may be assigned depending on a student's needs and ability level, as advised by the school's instructional and counseling teams.

The Family Involvement Component

The second recommendation of the MCPS Latino Education Coalition was the development of proactive outreach for Latino parent involvement. This facet of the program was to include a parent training component and informal parent forum meetings for all parents of students enrolled in the SEPA program.

The involvement of parents in the SEPA program begins with an intake interview at school. Students who have been recommended for the SEPA program are invited, along with their parents, to an intake interview, where they meet with SEPA staff and hear about the program and the reason for referral. If the student and parent are interested in enrolling in the program, they sign agreements and are invited to an orientation meeting with other SEPA families and program staff to learn more about the program. The SEPA parent community coordinator follows up with the family to ensure that students and parents have their questions answered, that enrollment forms are completed, and that students are ready for program attendance. During the student's involvement in SEPA in the summer and school year, support for the family continues through parent meetings and workshops, as well as individual family assistance as needed.

In conjunction with the SEPA program, a "Safety Net" component was put into place to help families access essential services (e.g., housing, immigration, food, clothing). The SEPA parent community coordinator arranged partnerships with community organizations agreeing to provide services for SEPA families.   A list of these Safety Net organizations is distributed to parents each year, and the SEPA parent community coordinator assists families with contacting the organizations and accessing the services they need.

Human Resources Component: Recruitment, Support, and Retention of Latino Employees

The third recommendation made by the Latino Education Coalition 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).

To recruit more bilingual, bicultural teachers, the Office of Human Resources and Development (OHRD) staff attended numerous job fairs at universities with large international student populations. OHRD continues to build a strong network of support within Montgomery County to obtain referrals from businesses and community groups such as the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

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. Begun in 2007–2008, the GYO program was developed within the Academy of Leadership and Education at Gaithersburg High School, joining the Early Child Development program and the Teacher Academy of Maryland.

English language development classes. English language development courses were held for supporting services staff using three delivery methods for English instruction. Sed de Saber and

a face-to-face workplace English class were used during each year of the program.   A third method, a Web-based program called ELLIS, was piloted during year 3 but was found to be less successful than the other methods so was not continued.

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 Workplace English. Workplace English classes were offered for food services, transportation, and plant operations using the *Center Stage: Express Yourself in English* program, published by Pearson-Longman. The program addresses life and job skills and includes reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In addition to the program textbook, a picture dictionary specific to each of the job areas was created by the project coordinator. Job-specific vocabulary was embedded into the three sets of lesson plans.

Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation of year 1 of the program focused on the implementation phase of the project (Addison-Scott, 2008). The evaluation of years 2 and 3 continued to monitor implementation of the three components of the Latino Education Coalition project in Montgomery County Public Schools, as well as assess outcomes related to the program.

Evaluation Questions

The following questions guided the evaluation study. Each of the three components of the program was examined in terms of context, implementation, and outcomes.

1. SEPA
    a. What is the background and context of the SEPA program? What are its goals and objectives?
    b. What is the status of the SEPA program implementation, years 2 and 3, including a report of changes in year 3 under a new program model?
        i. What are the characteristics of the SEPA students?
        ii. What are the perceptions of students, parents, and staff regarding the SEPA program?
    c. What are the outcomes of the SEPA program?
        i. Do students in the SEPA program show improved attendance, improved English language proficiency, improved math proficiency?
        ii. Do students in the SEPA program achieve success in their career courses?
        iii. How do teachers rate SEPA students' work habits, learning skills, communication and cooperation skills?
        iv. What are SEPA students' attitudes toward school, and their goals for the future?

2. Family Involvement
   a. What is the background and context of the Family Involvement component of the program? What are its goals and objectives?
   b. What is the status of implementation of the Family Involvement component?
      i. What activities and information were provided for families of SEPA participants?
      ii. What communication strategies were used with families of SEPA participants?
   c. What are the outcomes of the Family Involvement component?
      i. Did parents attend family involvement activities and training sessions, and did they learn useful information?
      ii. How many, and what types of referrals were made to Safety Net partners?

3. Recruitment, Support, and Retention
   a. What is the background and context of the Recruitment, Support, and Retention component of the program? What are its goals and objectives?
   b. What is the status of implementation of the Recruitment, Support, and Retention component, including the Grow Your Own Program?
   c. What are the outcomes of the Recruitment, Support, and Retention component?
      i. What percentage of MCPS teachers are Latino?
      ii. How many students participated in the GYO program, and what was their experience?
      iii. How many employees participated in the English language development opportunities?

Methodology

To ensure that stakeholder input was built into the evaluation activities and to improve validity of the evaluation findings, the MCPS Latino Education Coalition project team provided input on each year's evaluation questions and data collection instruments. 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 and Development (OHRD), Department of Communications, Department of Student Services, and school-based staff members.

During the second and third years of the program, the evaluation continued to monitor implementation of the program components, with attention to changes in the program model during year 3. In addition, the evaluation included outcome measures for each component of the program. A mixed-methods approach was used to gather the data needed to answer each of the evaluation questions. Measures for the evaluation of the SEPA program included: student surveys, parent surveys, SEPA staff surveys, interviews with program manager, attendance data, achievement data, teacher ratings of student classroom behavior, performance on English language assessments, and data from professional development sessions. The Family Involvement component was examined using parent workshop information (meeting topics and attendance) and logs from Safety Net providers. Data from OHRD, records from the GYO program, and participation data for the English language development opportunities were examined to address the Recruitment, Retention, and Training component of the program.

All 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, student surveys were written in Spanish and read aloud to students during administration at school; parent surveys were administered to parents in Spanish via telephone by a Spanish-speaking OSA staff member.

Summary of Data Sources

Survey of students. The student surveys were developed in consultation with the MCPS Latino Education Coalition project team. Two surveys were used with students. In the fall, a survey was administered that addressed attitudes toward school and plans for the future. In the spring, the attitude survey was administered again, and a second survey was given with questions focused on student experiences in the SEPA program. Given the limited literacy levels of the students, both surveys were translated into Spanish by the Language Assistance Services Unit and read aloud to students during administration by the ESOL bilingual counselor or OSA staff members. Fall surveys were conducted during the first quarter of the school year, and spring surveys were conducted during the last three weeks of the school year. Response rates for student survey administrations for 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 were, respectively: summer, 100% and 92%; fall, 89% and 80%, and spring, 47% and 46%. The spring response rates, which are lower than student response rates to other MCPS surveys, were affected by scheduling of the surveys at the end of the year.

Survey of SEPA parents/guardians. The parent surveys were developed in consultation with the MCPS Latino Education Coalition project team. The questions on the survey focused on experiences with 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 by a Spanish-speaking OSA staff member. Parent/guardian surveys were completed during June 2009 and June 2010. Response rates were 60% in 2009 and 61% in 2010, which are higher than parent response rates to other MCPS surveys.

Survey of SEPA staff. The staff surveys were developed in consultation with the MCPS Latino Education Coalition project team. Many of the survey topics and questions were constructed from information obtained in year 1 staff interviews. Questions addressed administrative and organizational issues, as well as preparation and support, and perceptions of the program impact on students. The surveys were administered in June 2009 and June 2010. Response rates were 63% in 2009 and 33% in 2010, similar to response rates to systemwide surveys of staff.

Measures of student participation and achievement. Using a rating scale developed by the SEPA instructional specialist and OSA in consultation with SEPA teachers, students' classroom behavior was assessed monthly by their teachers during year 2 of the program (2008–2009). Students' English language proficiency was measured by LAS Links, a state-mandated English language proficiency assessment for ESOL students from kindergarten through Grade 12. SEPA students' school participation and achievement were examined using MCPS attendance records and report card files.

Teacher recruitment, support, and retention procedures. OHRD provided data addressing the employee training with SEIU Local 500. Percentages of professional staff who are Hispanic

were obtained from the MCPS publication, *Schools at a Glance*. Information about the Grow Your Own program was provided by the Division of Career and Technology Education.

Review of Documents. Documents were obtained from the MCPS Latino Education Coalition project team, including team meeting agendas and minutes, the SEPA ESOL curriculum, training evaluation results, and logs from the Safety Net program.

Summary of Data Analysis

Procedures included:
- Descriptive statistical analysis of student, parent, and staff survey data
- Qualitative review of document information for the three components of the program (SEPA; Family Involvement; and Recruitment, Support, and Retention)
- Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance used to determine statistical significance of changes in student ratings by teachers over time
- Paired samples t-test used to determine statistical significance of changes in LAS Links scale scores
- Descriptive statistical analysis of student performance and attendance

Findings

The three components of the program—SEPA, Family Involvement, and Recruitment, Support, and Retention have been established and developed to address the issues identified by the Latino Education Coalition Committee. Each of the three components of the program was examined in terms of context, implementation, and outcomes, and findings are presented for each component.

Implementation of the SEPA Program, Year 2 (2008–2009) and Year 3 (2009–2010)

Students enrolled in SEPA participated in program opportunities during the summer and school year. This section details both of these components as well as feedback provided from SEPA participants, parents, and staff.

SEPA *Summer Program*

Students in their first year of SEPA attended a four-week summer session introducing them to the career pathways they would choose from in the upcoming school year. Students participated in week-long rotations that introduced four different career areas—automotive technology, construction, nail technology, and restaurant management. Students participated in hands-on activities related to each career, and they began to learn the safety rules and vocabulary associated with each career during this summer component of the program.

Table 3 describes the students who attended the SEPA summer program during 2008 and 2009. All students during both summers were Latino; students had come to the United States from Guatemala, El Salvador, and the Dominican Republic.

Table 3
SEPA Summer 2008 and 2009 Program
Characteristics of Participants

Demographic		SEPA Participants Summer 2008 (N = 11)		SEPA Participants Summer 2009 (N = 13)	
		N	%	N	%
Gender	Male	6	54.5	8	61.5
	Female	5	45.5	5	38.5
Grade	Grade 9	1	9.1	1	7.7
	Grade 10	4	36.4	8	61.5
	Grade 11	4	36.4	4	30.8
	Grade 12	2	18.2	0	00.0
FARMS (current or previous)	Economically Disadvantaged (FARMS)	11	100.0	12	92.3
Age	Mean	18.6		19.1	
	Range	17.5–20.1		18.1–20.2	

Note. FARMS = Free and Reduced-price Meals System.

Summer Program Attendance

Students enrolled in the 2008 program attended classes very consistently; attendance of students in the 2009 program was mixed, with nine of the students attending more than three quarters of the class sessions. Table 4 shows attendance during the 2008 and 2009 summer programs.

Table 4
Student Attendance at SEPA Summer 2008 and 2009 Program

	2008	2009
Number of days attended	Number of students attending	
20 days	5	1
18–19 days	4	4
15–17 days	2	4
fewer than 15 days	0	4

Summer Program Feedback

Surveys were administered to students at the conclusion of the four-week summer program (see Appendix C). The surveys were translated into Spanish by the Language Assistance Services Unit and administered aloud in Spanish as the students followed on their copy of the survey. All 11 students completed the survey for summer 2008, and 12 of 13 students completed the survey for summer 2009.

The survey presented students with statements about the summer program using a Likert-type scale of "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree" as well as a "No Opinion" choice. Table 5 summarizes results from the student surveys for 2008 and 2009. Students responded positively

to questions about the summer classes; all of the students (100%) during each summer program reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the SEPA classes offered during the summer program.

Students were invited to provide comments at the end of the survey; nine of the 11 students responding to the 2008 survey wrote an additional comment, and all 12 of the 2009 survey respondents wrote a comment. Overall, comments to the question, "What are ways we can make the SEPA program better for students?" were very positive in both 2008 and 2009 (the most prevalent response was "Everything is good"). One student in 2009 added, "This program is very interesting and helps the students …. Who knows if one of us has a great future?"

Table 5
Students Agreeing With Statements About SEPA Summer 2008 and 2009 Program

Survey Item		Summer 2008 (N = 11) % Agree*	Summer 2009 (N = 12) % Agree*
I learned new job skills in the SEPA classes.		100.0	100.0
I learned about important safety rules.		100.0	100.0
I learned new vocabulary in English.		100.0	100.0
I feel more confident using my English in school.		100.0	83.3
Expectations about attendance and behavior were clear.		100.0	100.0
The instructors of the SEPA course were patient and helpful.		100.0	91.7
Having teachers who speak Spanish helped me better understand what I needed to learn and do.		100.0	91.7
The classes were interesting.		100.0	90.9
The purpose of the SEPA program has been clearly explained to me.		100.0	91.7
I plan to participate in SEPA this school year.		100.0	91.7
Overall, how satisfied were you with the SEPA classes offered this summer?	Very satisfied	72.7	75.0
	Satisfied	27.3	25.0
	Dissatisfied	0.0	0.0
	Very dissatisfied	0.0	0.0
Which week did you like the best?	Restaurant Management	9.1	25.0
	Automotive Technology	45.5	25.0
	Nail Technology	18.2	25.0
	Construction	18.2	25.0
	All (write-in)	9.1	

* % Agree reflects responses of "Strongly Agree" plus "Agree"

SEPA *School-Year Component*

Most of the students attending the summer program (9 of 11 in 2008 and 11 of 13 in 2009) continued in SEPA for the following school year. In addition, several students during each school year program enrolled after the summer session, either because they were new to MCPS or because they were unable to attend the summer program because of work obligations. Table 6 describes the students completing the school-year programs during 2008–2009 and 2009–2010.

Table 6
SEPA Program 2008–2009 and 2009–2010
Characteristics of Participants

		SEPA Participants 2008–2009 (N = 15)*	SEPA Participants 2009–2010 (N = 13)*
Demographic			
Gender	Male	66.7%	61.5%
	Female	33.3%	38.5%
Ethnicity	African American	0.0%	0.0%
	American Indian	0.0%	0.0%
	Asian American	0.0%	0.0%
	Hispanic	93.3%	100.0%
	White	6.7%	0.0%
Grade	Grade 9	6.7%	7.7%
	Grade 10	20.0%	61.5%
	Grade 11	66.7%	15.4%
	Grade 12	6.7%	15.4%
FARMS (current or previous)	Economically Disadvantaged (FARMS)	86.7%	69.2%
English language learning needs (tested previous school year)			
LAS Links	High Beginner Level	71.4%	41.7%
	Low Beginner Level	28.6%	58.3%

*Includes students who completed the school-year program.
Note. FARMS = Free and Reduced-price Meals System; LAS = Language Assessment System.

It should be noted that there is some overlap in the groups of students enrolled during the two school years. Three of the students completing the program in 2009–2010 were in their second year of SEPA, i.e., they also were enrolled in the 2008–2009 program. Table 7 details the number of students enrolled during years 2 and 3 of the SEPA program, including the number of students who enrolled in 2008–2009 and continued in the program in 2009–2010.

It also is important to recognize that the population of SEPA students was not stable through the school year. The mobility of this group of students is a significant factor in their education experience, and it is reflected in the SEPA program enrollment. During each of the school years reported here, some students enrolled in SEPA but withdrew from the program or from school before completing the program. The number and percent of students completing the program during years 2 and 3 also are shown in Table 7.

Table 7
SEPA 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 Program Participants
Cohort and Completion Rates

Cohort	SEPA Participants 2008–2009 Year 2			SEPA Participants 2009–2010 Year 3		
	Number enrolled during 2008–2009	Number completing 2008–2009 program	% completing program	Number enrolled during 2009–2010	Number completing 2009–2010 program	% completing program
Cohort 1 (Enrolled fall 2007), based at Wheaton	8	8	100.0			
Cohort 2 (Enrolled fall 2008), based at Einstein	14	7	50.0	5	3	60.0
Cohort 3 (Enrolled fall 2009), based at home schools				19	10	52.6
Total, both cohorts	22	15	68.2	24	13	54.2

In year 2 (2008–2009) of the program, students who continued in SEPA for a second year had better completion rates than students who had enrolled for their first year in 2008–2009 (100% compared with 50%). The difference in completion rates between first and second year students was not seen in 2009–2010. Reasons for withdrawal from the program included working (5 in 2008–2009; 2 in 2009–2010), moving out of MCPS (1 in 2008–2009; 3 in 2009–2010), and returning to the home school[3] (1 in 2008–2009; 4 in 2009–2010).

School-year Component Feedback, Years 2 and 3: Student Survey

During the final weeks of the 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 school years, a survey about the SEPA program was administered to SEPA students (see Appendix D). The paper and pencil survey was in Spanish and students were assisted in their classrooms by a SEPA staff member (in 2008–2009) or a Spanish-speaking staff member from OSA (in 2009–2010). The staff member visited classrooms on several days in an effort to collect surveys from all currently enrolled SEPA students. Participation was voluntary. In year 3 (2009–2010) survey administration occurred on days when the schedule was altered, so several students were not available to complete the survey in class. Among the seven students responding in 2008–2009, four attended Einstein and three attended Wheaton. Two students indicated that they were in Grade 12, two indicated Grade 11, one student each reported Grades 10 and 9, and one student did not indicate grade. In 2009–2010, three students attended Blair, one student attended Northwood, and two students did not identify their school. One student was in Grade 9, two were in Grade 10, two were in Grade 11, and one did not indicate grade. Students' responses to the survey questions are presented in Table 8.

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[3] Among the five students returning to their home school, four wanted to attempt a graduation track, and one needed to be closer to his after-school job.

Table 8
Students Agreeing With Statements About 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 SEPA School-Year Program

Survey Item	2008–2009 N = 7 % Agree*	2009–2010 N = 6 % Agree*
The career classes helped prepare me with knowledge and skills I need for a job.	85.7	83.3
I feel more confident using English in school.	100.0	100.0
I am able to get additional help for classes if I need it.	100.0	100.0
At my home school, SEPA instructors treat me with respect.	100.0	83.3
At my home school, expectations about attendance and behavior are clear.	100.0	83.3
At my home school, expectations about class work and homework are clear.	83.3	100.0
At Edison, instructors treat me with respect.	100.0	83.3
At Edison, expectations about attendance and behavior are clear.	100.0	66.7
At Edison, expectations about class work and homework are clear.	100.0	66.7
The paraeducators at Edison are helpful.	85.7	66.7

* % Agree reflects responses of "Strongly Agree" + "Agree"

In both years, most students reported positive perceptions of the SEPA program. All survey respondents in 2008–2009 and in 2009–2010 indicated that they felt more confident using English in school and that additional help for classes was available if needed. Further, 100% of the 2008–2009 survey respondents and all but one of the 2009–2010 respondents reported that SEPA instructors at their home school and at Edison treat them with respect. All respondents in 2008–2009 reported that expectations for attendance, behavior, and classwork at Edison were clear, but in 2009–2010 two students disagreed or had no opinion in response to these survey items.

Students also were asked to rate their classes on usefulness, interest, and how well they understood the material. Among the students surveyed in both years, all of the respondents made at least one rating on usefulness, but ratings on interest and understanding were too few (fewer than five) to report. Ratings of classes on usefulness are shown in Table 9. Response to the survey in both years showed that all students rated the three common (i.e., taken by most of the SEPA students) classes—ESOL, mathematics, the career course at Edison—"Very useful" or "Useful." One hundred percent of the students in 2008–2009 rated the Edison career course as "Very useful."

Table 9
Student Ratings of Classes in 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 SEPA School-Year Program

	2008–2009 School Year N = 7 (maximum) Percent responding			2009–2010 School Year N = 6 (maximum) Percent responding		
How useful was the class?	Very useful	Useful	Not very useful	Very useful	Useful	Not very useful
SEPA ESOL class	85.7	14.3	0.0	80.0	20.0	0.0
Math	33.3	66.7	0.0	33.3	66.7	0.0
Career program classes at Edison	100.0	0.0	0.0	60.0	40.0	0.0

Students were asked to respond to several open-ended questions; Spanish-speaking staff members helped the students read and reply to the questions in writing. In both years, the largest number of students (four) reported that the most helpful aspect of SEPA was the support provided by the teachers. This sentiment was expressed by one of the students in 2009–2010 in this way: "What helped me the most was all the effort my teacher put in to help me understand everything." Students were asked to report the most important things they learned in SEPA, and several noted the importance of working with others. One student responded, "The most important thing I learned was communication with other people and to work in groups." Another student recognized similar skills gained in the program: "The most important thing was how to learn to work as a team, and work when you are supposed to work." General comments from students were very positive in both years, as illustrated by the following: "I know this will help me in my future to find a good job;" "In SEPA I discovered many skills that I did not know I had hidden." Finally, a student in 2009–2010 wrote, "I think SEPA is an amazing program and it has everything that we need."

Parent Survey. During June 2009 and June 2010, parents of SEPA students were asked to participate in a telephone survey about the SEPA program (see Appendix E). The survey was administered in Spanish by a staff member of OSA. Participation was voluntary. All parents of students who participated in the 2008–2009 SEPA program at Wheaton or at Einstein were called in June 2009, and all parents of students who participated in the 2009–2010 SEPA program were called in June 2010. The following exceptions applied to calls made during each of the two program years: parents of students who had withdrawn before the second semester were not included; students who live independently were not included; parents with no working phone number on file were not contacted. Nine parents completed the 2008–2009 survey, and eight parents completed the 2009–2010 survey. A summary of their responses is shown in Table 10.

Table 10
Parent Responses to Telephone Survey about the SEPA Program, 2009 ($N = 9$) and 2010 ($N = 8$)

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Program Year	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA/ don't know
The teachers in the SEPA program communicate with me about my child's progress.	2008–2009	77.8	22.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2009–2010	75.0	12.5	12.5	0.0	0.0
Staff involved with SEPA help me understand my child's school progress.	2008–2009	88.9	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2009–2010	75.0	12.5	12.5	0.0	0.0
I have opportunities to talk with my child's teachers about the SEPA program.	2008–2009	44.4	33.3	0.0	11.1	11.1
	2009–2010	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
SEPA provides me with an opportunity to become more involved in my child's school.	2008–2009	55.6	22.2	0.0	11.1	11.1
	2009–2010	62.5	25.0	12.5	0.0	0.0
I am kept informed about programs that are related to my needs.	2008–2009	77.7	11.1	0.0	0.0	11.1
	2009–2010	75.0	12.5	12.5	0.0	0.0
	Program Year	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not sure
Overall, how satisfied are you with the academic program that your child receives in SEPA?	2008–2009	55.6	22.2	0.0	0.0	22.2
	2009–2010	87.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5
Overall, how satisfied are you with the career program that your child receives in SEPA?	2008–2009	77.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	22.2
	2009–2010	87.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5

All parents responding in 2008–2009 reported that teachers in the SEPA program communicate about their child's progress and that staff involved with SEPA help them understand their child's school progress. Responses from parents also suggested that the SEPA program is supporting parent involvement in their children's education. Over three quarters of parents responding in 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 agreed that SEPA provided them with an opportunity to become more involved, and over 85% agreed that they are kept informed about programs that are related to their needs. In response to questions about overall satisfaction with the academic program and with the career program, over three quarters (78%) of the parents in 2008–2009 reported they were satisfied, and 22% indicated they were "not sure." In 2009–2010, 87% of parents responded that they were "Very satisfied" with the academic program, and the same percentage were "Very satisfied" with the career program.

Parents also were asked to answer a series of open-ended questions about the program. Parents responding during both years generated nearly all positive comments (only one respondent in 2008–2009 noted that her child was not doing well in the program). Typical comments from parents in 2008–2009 included: "Because SEPA opens the doors to my child and other students;" "I can see my child growing and having new experiences in life;" "SEPA has given an opportunity to achieve a goal." Parents in 2009–2010 provided similar comments about the program; one parent reported that she is "Very happy, because [her son] can follow his dreams. He is going to do something that he likes."

Staff Survey. Near the end of both the 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 school years, all staff involved with the SEPA program were asked to complete a survey, including teachers, resource teachers, and paraeducators. The survey addressed implementation of the SEPA program, as well as professional development related to the SEPA program. Questions regarding program implementation will be discussed in the current section; questions about staff training and support will be discussed in a subsequent section.

Seventeen staff members (63%) completed the survey in 2008–2009, and eight staff members (33%) completed it in 2009–2010. In both years, the largest number of respondents was from Edison (eight in 2008–2009; four in 2009–2010); the other respondents were from Einstein and Wheaton (or without school identification). In 2008–2009, eight of the respondents were teachers or paraeducators, four were counselors, and five did not identify their positions. In 2009–2010, six respondents were teachers or paraeducators; two did not identify their positions. Staff responses about program implementation are summarized in Table 11.

Table 11
Program Staff Responses About Program Implementation, 2009 (*N* = 17), and 2010 (*N* = 8)

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Program Year	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No answer
I am kept informed about decisions and changes in the implementation of the SEPA program in our school.	2008–2009	17.6	58.8	17.6	5.9	0.0
	2009–2010	37.5	37.5	12.5	12.5	0.0
Collaboration and communication among staff involved with the SEPA program works well.	2008–2009	23.5	47.1	23.5	5.9	0.0
	2009–2010	37.5	50.0	0.0	12.5	0.0
In my opinion, the SEPA program is meeting the needs of its students.	2008–2009	23.5	23.5	41.2	11.8	0.0
	2009–2010	25.0	37.5	12.5	25.0	0.0
The process for selecting and referring students to the SEPA program worked well this year.	Not asked in 2008–2009					
	2009–2010	12.5	25.0	25.0	12.5	25.0
The SEPA Summer Career Exploration program helps prepare students for success in SEPA during the school year.	Not asked in 2008–2009					
	2009–2010	25.0	25.0	12.5	12.5	25.0
The support that SEPA students receive enables them to be successful in the program.	Not asked in 2008–2009					
	2009–2010	37.5	25.0	12.5	12.5	12.5

During both years, most staff responding to the program survey agreed that they were kept informed with decisions and changes in the SEPA program implementation (76% in 2008–2009 and 75% in 2009–2010) and that collaboration and communication among SEPA staff worked well (71% and 87%). About one half of the staff respondents (47%) in 2008–2009 and 62% in 2009–2010 agreed that the SEPA program is meeting the needs of its students. In 2009–2010, additional survey questions were asked in an effort to obtain more detailed perceptions from staff members regarding the implementation of the program. The highest agreement was in response to "The support that SEPA students receive enables them to be successful in the program" (62% of respondents agreed.) However, only 37% of respondents agreed that "The process for selecting and referring students to the SEPA program worked well this year." (It should be noted that 25% indicated that the question was not applicable to them; if those respondents are not included, 50% agreed.)

Responses to open-ended questions provided further information and insights from staff. In both years, the most frequently named obstacle reported by staff members was attendance (named by five staff members in 2008–2009 and four in 2009–2010). The extensive needs of the students, both academically and socially, were named as a challenge by four respondents in 2008–2009 and two in 2009–2010. Two staff members recommended regular meetings for students with a social worker, and other respondents suggested additional counseling and community support for the families of SEPA participants.

Survey questions about what is working well in SEPA and what could be improved generated mixed responses from staff during both years. Several staff members expressed concern that the program is not able to meet the needs of some of the students, including students who are working long hours and cannot spend the time needed in class or on homework. One teacher suggested that the program should not accept students who are working full time, "as those students are either absent or half-asleep when present." Other respondents, however, while recognizing the challenges, believe that the program is benefitting the students involved. One teacher expressed this point of view by observing, "The SEPA program is unique in providing students with both job and literacy skills. [The students] exit the program with improved self-confidence and with real life skills." Another teacher noted that the SEPA program "…is a necessary program for our changing population."

Outcomes of the SEPA Program, Year 2 (2008–2009) and Year 3 (2009–2010)

Course Performance

Report card data were examined for students during years 2 and 3; average grades for semesters 1 and 2 for each program year are presented in Table 12. During 2008–2009, less than one third of the students were successful in their mathematics course during first semester, but some improvement was seen in the second semester. In 2009–2010, a little under half of the students at the end of each semester received a C or better in their mathematics class. In their ESOL classes, about two thirds of the students earned a C or better at the end of each program year. In contrast, 100% of the SEPA participants in 2008–2009 and 92% in 2009–2010 had a C or better in their career course at the end of the year. In addition, over two thirds of the SEPA participants

in 2008–2009 and over half of the participants in 2009–2010 had an A or a B in their career course at the end of the year.

Table 12
SEPA 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 Program Completers
Semester 1 and Semester 2 Course Grades

	SEPA Completers, 2008–2009 % earning C or better		SEPA Completers, 2009–2010 % earning C or better	
Course	Sem. 1 $N = 14$*	Sem. 2 $N = 15$*	Sem. 1 $N = 13$*	Sem. 2 $N = 13$*
Mathematics[a]	30.8	50.0	46.2	45.5
ESOL	83.3	66.7	69.2	61.5
Career Course at Edison	100.0	100.0	66.7	92.3
Cumulative GPA, End-of-year				
Mean	2.35		2.15	
Minimum, Maximum	1.42, 3.76		1.52, 2.78	

* Not all students were enrolled in courses in all subject areas.
[a] Mathematics courses were at a range of levels and included: Language of Math; Mathematical Approach to Problem Solving; Related Math; Algebra 1; Geometry.

The students' success in their career courses was underscored by the number of students who received awards and recognition from their program at Edison. Table 13 lists these accomplishments for each year.

Table 13
SEPA 2008–2009 and 2009–2010: Recognition and Awards, Edison Career Programs

2008–2009	Outstanding SEPA Student of the Year, Nail Technology (2 awards) Outstanding SEPA Student of the Year, Restaurant Management Outstanding SEPA Student of the Year, Foundations in Automotive Technology Outstanding Student of the Year, Foundations in Automotive Technology Outstanding Attendance, Building and Construction Career and Technology Education County Award in the area of Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics Outstanding Attendance Perfect Attendance, Carpentry 2 Teacher's Award, Carpentry 2
2009–2010	Outstanding SEPA Student of the Year, Carpentry Outstanding SEPA Student of the Year, Nail Technology Outstanding SEPA Student of the Year, Foundations in Automotive Technology Outstanding SEPA Student of the Year, Building and Construction Technologies Teacher's Award, Nail Technology Most Improved Student, Nail Technology Teacher's Award, Building and Construction Technologies

English Language Proficiency

One of the major goals of the SEPA program is improved English language proficiency. LAS Links scale scores were examined for students enrolled in each of the program years. The average change in scale score from the previous year to the program year is presented in Table 14.

Table 14
SEPA 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 Program Completers
Change in LAS Links Scale Scores, Previous Year to Program Year

	SEPA Completers, 2008–2009 $N = 14$[1]			SEPA Completers, 2009–2010 $N = 12$[2]		
LAS Links subtest	2008 Mean	2009 Mean	Difference	2009 Mean	2010 Mean	Difference
Overall	463	471	8	443	475	32**
Speaking	455	471	16**	430	462	32**
Listening	456	452	-4	411	470	59**
Reading	474	481	7	476	496	20
Writing	469	482	13	455	473	18
	% of students			% of students		
Increased 15 scale score points on Overall Composite score	42.9			75.0		

[1] 14 students tested at both administrations (Spring 2008 and Spring 2009).
[2] 12 students tested at both administrations (Spring 2009 and Spring 2010).
*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$.

Students completing the 2008–2009 program showed some improvement overall in their English language proficiency, with significant improvement on the speaking subtest. Students in the 2009–2010 program showed significant increases on the overall LAS Links scale score, as well as on speaking and listening.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) defines progress toward English language proficiency as an increase of 15 scale score points on a student's overall LAS Links score from the 2008 to 2009 administration. The percentage of SEPA participants who posted increases of 15 scale score points or more was 42.9% in 2008–2009, with an additional 21.4% increasing their overall scale score by smaller amounts. In 2009–2010, 75% of SEPA participants increased their overall LAS Links score by 15 or more scale score points, and 16.6% showed smaller increases (see Table 14).

To examine this finding within a larger context, targets set by MSDE for meeting Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives were 56% (posting an increase of 15 points or more) in 2009 and 58% in 2010. Among all MCPS students with limited English proficiency, 67% met this standard for progress in 2009 (MCPS, 2009); official MCPS data for 2010 are not yet available. LAS Links scores for all LEP MCPS students and those for SEPA participants must be considered in conjunction with other factors—that is, the SEPA participants had, in addition

to limited English proficiency, interrupted formal education and in many cases, challenging backgrounds and circumstances. With these issues in mind, the increases in English proficiency shown by SEPA participants, particularly in the 2009–2010 program, are impressive.

Teacher Ratings of Student Behavior

During the 2008–2009 school year,[4] teachers in the SEPA program provided monthly ratings of classroom behavior for each student on the following dimensions:

- Attentiveness in class
- Independence in starting and completing tasks
- Organization
- Working well with others
- Participation in class

Students were rated monthly on each behavior using a four-point scale: 1=Never; 2=Sometimes; 3=Often; 4=Always. Figure 1 represents averaged ratings for 15 students who completed the SEPA program during 2008–2009. Figure 1 shows the average ratings over seven months of the school year.
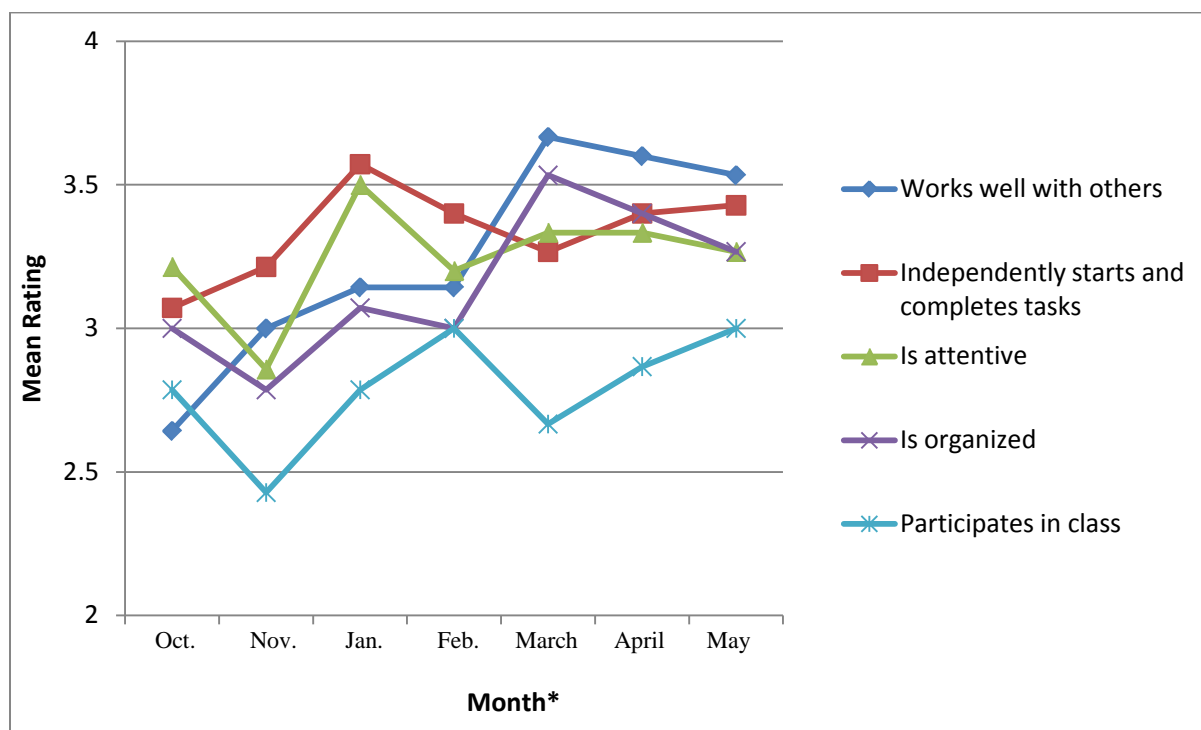
* Ratings were not available for December for one class so were not included in analysis.

Figure 1.   Average classroom behavior ratings of 15 *SEPA* students during 2008–2009 school year.

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[4] Ratings were not conducted during 2009–2010 because the change in program structure would have required many different teachers to be involved in the ratings, thus reducing reliability and making interpretation more difficult.

The 2008–2009 SEPA participants were rated higher at the end of the year (May) than at the start of the year on four of the behaviors: "Independently starts and completes tasks;" "Is organized;" "Works well with others;" and "Participates in class." The increased ratings over time for "Works well with others" and "Is organized" were statistically significant ($p<.05$); the other two ratings, although not statistically significant, also showed overall positive changes during the course of the year.

Student Attendance

Measures of attendance for students in years 2 and 3 showed that overall school-year attendance was slightly lower than MCPS high schools overall. Lower percentages of SEPA participants had five days absent or fewer. The percentage of students with more than 20 days absent was higher than the MCPS high school average in 2008–2009, but lower in 2009–2010. Table 15 shows attendance rates for SEPA participants in year 2 and year 3, for the program year and the previous year. The attendance rates in Table 15 represent daily attendance in MCPS and may not reflect absences from individual classes.

Table 15
SEPA 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 Program Completers Attendance Rates
And all MCPS High Schools 2009–2010

Measure	SEPA Completers, 2008–2009 $N = 15$	SEPA Completers, 2009–2010 $N = 13$	All High Schools 2009–2010 $N = 44,605$
Percent days attended	93.0	94.4	95.3
Percent with fewer than 5 days absent	26.6	15.4	48.8
Percent with more than 20 days absent	20.1	0.0	9.0

It should be noted that the attendance data reported in Table 15 represent only the students who completed the SEPA program. Students who participated in the program but did not complete the school year had lower attendance rates. In 2008–2009, the attendance rate among students who did not complete the SEPA program was 76.6% and the percentage of those students with more than 20 days absent was 71.4%. In 2009–2010, the attendance rate for non-completers was 83.4%, and 36.4% of the non-completers had more than 20 days absent.

Finally, the finding that no SEPA participants had more than 20 days absent during 2009–2010 may be the result of the introduction of the attendance contract during year 3 as well as more intensive counseling services. In some cases, the contract may have provided some incentive for students to keep up consistent attendance, and counseling may have helped students overcome some of the obstacles to regular attendance. Program records show that in cases of consistently poor attendance, however, students were required to exit the program after multiple opportunities to meet the requirements of the attendance contract.

Student Survey of Attitudes and Goals

In the fall and spring of each program year, students were given a survey asking about their perceptions and attitudes toward school, and their goals for the future. Their responses are summarized in Table 16.

Table 16
Percentage of Students Agreeing With Statement About Attitudes and Goals,
2008–2009 and 2009–2010 SEPA School-Year Program

	Percent agree			
	2008–2009		2009–2010	
	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
Survey Item	N = 16	N = 7	N = 12	N = 6
I am not afraid to try things I have not learned or experienced before.	81.3	100.0	75.0	100.0
If I can't do something the first time, I keep trying.	81.3	85.7	100.0	83.3
I ask questions when I don't understand something.	93.8	100.0	100.0	100.0
Adults at school are willing to help me with my problems.	81.3	85.7	100.0	83.3
Cooperation with other people is important.	93.8	85.7	100.0	83.3
I try to treat other people with respect.	100.0	85.7	100.0	83.3
Before I decide to do something, I usually think about what might happen—what the consequences of my actions might be.	93.8	100.0	100.0	83.3
It is important for me to stay in school.	93.8	100.0	100.0	83.3
I want to improve my English skills.	100.0	100.0	100.0	83.3
I believe I have choices/opportunities available to me in the future.	87.6	100.0	100.0	83.3
I can succeed in life.	81.3	85.7	100.0	100.0
I like to set goals for the things I will accomplish each day.	81.3	100.0	91.7	100.0
I like to finish what I start.	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
I have skills that can help me get a job.	93.8	100.0	100.0	83.3

* % Agree reflects responses of "Strongly Agree" + "Agree"

Table 16 illustrates that students in both program years had positive attitudes about school, at both the start and end of the program year. It should be noted that the number of students completing the survey at all administrations is small, and the responding groups are not the same at the two administrations for each program year. In both years, because of an altered schedule for seniors, fewer students were available to complete the survey at the end of the year. Six students completed a survey at both administrations during 2008–2009 and four students completed both fall and spring surveys in 2009–2010. In both years, only a few of the items resulted in different levels of agreement between fall and spring. Just two items showed a difference of more than one person: "I am not afraid to try things I have not learned or

experienced before" (in 2008–2009: 81% in the fall, 100% in the spring; in 2009–2010: 75% and 100%), and "I like to set goals for the things I will accomplish each day" (2008–2009: 81% in the fall, 100% in the spring).

Professional Development for the SEPA *Program, Years 2 and 3*

Summer training. In June 2008, teachers participating in the 2008–2009 SEPA program were required to attend SEPA curriculum training. Thirty-three teachers attended the summer 2008 session. Participating teachers were ESOL and content specialists from Wheaton and Einstein, and career teachers from Edison.

Staff development training. In addition to the 2008 summer training, SEPA staff development was provided for teachers during the 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 school years. Group sessions were provided in 2008–2009, with topics designed to support the implementation of the SEPA program, as well as focus on collaboration and co-teaching among teachers at Edison and the ESOL teachers from the home schools, with the goal of assisting SEPA participants access the curriculum in the Edison classes. Table 17 details the staff development opportunities offered for teachers during years 2 and 3.

Table 17
Professional Development Activities Offered During 2008–2009 and 2009–2010

Date	Activities	Number of attendees
2008–2009 Program year		
June 2008	Introduction to SEPA program: Background of students; Strategies	33
Nov. 21, 2008	Equitable classroom practices; student-to-student interaction; scaffolding language	12
Jan. 15, 2009	Meeting the academic and social/emotional needs of SEPA students; differentiated instruction	*
March 9, 2009	Plan to address the need to increase SEPA student participation	9
April 27, 2009	Analyzed data relating to class participation; identified student needs and possible barriers to engagement	*
May 11, 2009	Identifying "Root Causes" that may be impacting student performance	8
June 11, 2009	Developing and implementing strategies for differentiation using formative assessments	11
2009–2010 Program year		
Jan. 15, 2010	Differentiation; Using equitable practices that promote positive environment	11

* Attendance data not available.

Following the summer 2008 training session, a survey developed by OHRD was administered. Results from the survey revealed that most teachers agreed that the training gave them the skills related to implementation of the SEPA curriculum (Table 18). The largest percentages of teachers agreed that the training helped them "articulate how the background experiences of students in the SEPA program might impact their educational experience," use instructional

practices that communicate high expectations and language scaffolding strategies to increase SEPA participants' comprehension.

Table 18
Teachers Agreeing With Statements About the
Curriculum Implementation Training Outcomes, Summer 2008 (*N*=25)

By the end of the training, participants will be able to:	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	No response %
Articulate how the background experiences of students in the SEPA program might impact their educational experience.	88.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	8.0
Describe the patterns in traditional Latino culture that may impact student learning and behaviors.	64.0	32.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Identify language scaffolding strategies that increase comprehensible input for SEPA students.	84.0	16.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Identify effective approaches to small group instruction and student-student interaction to promote oral language development.	76.0	16.0	0.0	0.0	8.0
Implement curriculum in a systematic and consistent manner.	56.0	36.0	0.0	0.0	8.0
Develop an approach to collaborative teaching that utilizes the skills of each teacher and para-educator.	68.0	28.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Plan for and incorporate instructional practices that purposefully communicate high expectations.	88.0	12.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Additional survey questions addressed teachers' satisfaction with the training session, and teachers responded with between 92% and 100% agreement. Examples include: "Opportunities were provided to process and reflect upon the application of knowledge and skills" (100% agreement); "The trainers effectively communicated information" (96% agreement).

In response to feedback from SEPA staff, and to align training with the restructured SEPA program as well as address budget constraints, the professional development component of the program was changed for the 2009–2010 school year. The focus of staff development in year 3 shifted to a school-based, job-embedded model, so that more training and support could take place during the school day and after school. One professional development session was held with SEPA teachers and paraeducators at mid-year in January 2010, and an online professional development process was established to provide ongoing support.

In addition, the SEPA instructional specialist provided ongoing professional development and support to teachers, through classroom observations and debriefs, co-planning sessions, and regular meetings with staff to discuss strategies and develop curriculum resources.

Staff development and support for SEPA staff also were addressed in the survey given to staff at the end of each year. Table 19 summarizes the responses of SEPA staff in the 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 program years.

Table 19
Program Staff Responses about Staff Development and Support, 2009 (*N*=17) and 2010 (*N*=8)

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Program Year	Percent responding				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No answer/or NA
The professional development/staff training opportunities for the SEPA program have prepared me to work with this group of students.	2008–2009	17.6	35.3	29.4	5.9	11.8
	2009–2010	25.0	37.5	25.0	0.0	12.5
I have the professional support I need to work effectively in the SEPA program.	2008–2009	29.4	41.2	23.5	0.0	5.9
	2009–2010	25.0	37.5	12.5	25.0	0.0
Additional support and answers to my questions about the SEPA program are available to me when needed.	2008–2009	23.5	52.9	17.6	5.9	0.0
	2009–2010	25.0	37.5	37.5	0.0	0.0

Staff surveyed during both years had mixed responses to questions about staff development. More than half of the staff members (53% in 2008–2009 and 62% in 2009–2010) agreed that the SEPA training prepared them to work with this group of students. A higher percentage in 2008–2009 and a similar percentage in 2009–2010 indicated that they have the professional support to work effectively in the program (71% and 62%, respectively) and that support and answers to questions about the program are available when needed (77% and 62%, respectively). Survey comments from the teachers further illustrated these findings. Respondents noted that they liked learning about the background and needs of the SEPA participants, meeting with staff from other schools, and gaining teaching strategies—particularly related to English language learning. At least two teachers from each survey year, however, noted that much of the material taught in the professional development sessions was not useful, that teachers are already equipped to work with students on all levels. Several teachers indicated that there was not enough time to talk with other teachers; respondents suggested scheduling meetings during the school year to discuss strategies, share materials, and learn scaffolding techniques. Overall, most of the staff responding to the surveys each year appeared to value the training and support but felt they needed other professional development opportunities, particularly in terms of sharing strategies with other teachers. A teacher during 2008–2009 suggested, "It would be beneficial to have an open forum where the Edison and home school teachers discuss effective and successful strategies to use for specific students. This could also be sort of a "myth-busting" experience because there is a lot of "he said, she said" within the program which leads to misunderstandings." A teacher in 2009–2010 also commented on the importance of working with other SEPA teachers: "Discussing issues with other SEPA teachers has been most helpful…and [learning] how teachers deal with those scenarios."

Implementation and Outcomes of the Family Involvement Component

Parent Training and Support

Workshops were held monthly or every two months in the 2008–2009 school year, and during each semester during the 2009–2010 school year. (In 2009–2010, the schedule of workshops was changed because feedback from parents in previous years had indicated that it was difficult for families to attend monthly meetings.) Topics for the workshops were determined by asking parents and guardians, during the initial home visit, what information would be most helpful to them.   The workshops have addressed such topics as academic achievement, family communication, and identifying community resources to meet family needs.   Table 20 presents a list of parent activities provided during 2008–2009 and 2009–2010, and the number of family members attending.

Table 20
SEPA Parent Events Held During 2008–2009 and 2009–2010

Date	Activities	Number of attendees*
2008–2009 Program Year		
May 28, 2008	Introduction to the SEPA Program	13
November 18, 2008	SEPA parent meeting at Wheaton HS	3
November 20, 2008	SEPA parent meeting at Einstein HS	12
November 20, 2008	Latino Parent Night at Wheaton HS	7
December 17, 2008	SEPA Family Communication Workshop	12
January 21, 2009	Family Communication Workshop at Rocking Horse Road	4
March 19, 2009	Family Reunification and Acculturation Workshop	9
April 16, 2009	Mental Health/Family Communication at Rocking Horse Road	10
May 21, 2009	GED/Summer Programs	cancelled
2009–2010 Program Year		
June 9, 2009	Introduction to the SEPA Program	14
November 11, 2009	First Semester Workshop: How to Help Your Child	4
April 27, 2010	Second Semester Workshop: Family Communication	0
May 27, 2010	End of year celebration	9

* In some cases, parents of students in other programs were invited to the workshops if school staff thought it would be beneficial.

Parent surveys were conducted after several workshops and responses were favorable, including the participants' rating of the content, presenter's knowledge, effectiveness in communicating information, and holding the meetings/workshops at a convenient time.

"Safety Net" Providers

During the first year of the SEPA program, a "Safety Net" component was put into place to help families access essential services (e.g., housing, immigration, food, clothing). Based on a needs assessment conducted during home visits, the SEPA parent community coordinator arranged partnerships with community organizations that would address many of the needs of the SEPA families. A list of organizations agreeing to provide priority services to SEPA families is distributed to parents each year, and the parent community coordinator assists families with contacting the organizations and accessing the services they need.

Records from the SEPA parent community coordinator show that the Safety Net program provided numerous referrals for SEPA families during years 2 and 3. Table 21 summarizes the types of referral services made through the Safety Net program.

Table 21
Safety Net Service Referrals for SEPA Families During 2008–2009 and 2009–2010

Service category	Service providers	Number of referrals 2008–2009	Number of referrals 2009–2010	Total referrals
Food	Manna, Private Sector	5	33	38
Employment	LAYC, MCRD, Maryland Multicultural Youth Center, Private Sector	13	9	22
Housing	HOC, HSS,	6	2	8
Clothing	Thrift Store, Interfaith Clothing Center	3	2	5
English Language	Gilchrist Center	4	2	6
Health	Proyecto Salud, Mercy Health Clinic, Amerigroup	7	3	10
Welfare, Financial	HSS	2	2	4
Legal, Immigration	HHS, Catholic Community Service	4	0	4
Other	Proyecto Salud, MCVC, Identity, Kensington Youth Services	5	3	8
Total number of referrals through Safety Net		49	56	105

Implementation and Outcomes of the Recruitment, Support, and Retention Component

The third 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).

Ongoing Recruitment Efforts

To recruit more bilingual, bicultural teachers, OHRD staff attended numerous job fairs at universities with large international student populations. OHRD continued to build a strong network of support within Montgomery County to obtain referrals from businesses and community groups such as the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

The percentage of MCPS professional staff (teachers, administrators, counselors, and specialists) who are Hispanic has shown a steady increase since the program began. Table 22 details the percentage of Hispanic professional staff at elementary, middle, and high school levels during the last four school years.

Table 22
Percentage of MCPS Professional Staff who are Hispanic*

School Level	2006–2007	2007–2008	2008–2009	2009–2010
Elementary	3.5	3.7	4.1	4.2
Middle	4.2	4.1	4.5	4.9
High	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.8
All MCPS	3.8	3.9	4.2	4.5

*Data from MCPS *Schools at a Glance* 2006–2007, 2007–2008, 2008–2009, and 2009–2010, Department of Policy, Records and Reporting, http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/regulatoryaccountability/glance

The percentage of professional staff in MCPS who are Hispanic has increased by 18% during the years that the program has been in place, from 3.8% to 4.5%. Percentages at elementary, middle, and high school levels have increased at similar rates.

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. Begun in 2007–2008, the GYO program was developed within the Academy of Leadership and Education at Gaithersburg High School, joining the Early Child Development program and the Teacher Academy of Maryland. In the 2008–2009 school year the program was extended to students at Montgomery Blair High School. In 2009–2010, administrative and teacher changes within the high schools, as well as reduced Perkins funding, resulted in a discontinuation of the GYO program.

During the second year of the program (2008–2009), five Latino students participated at Gaithersburg and four students participated at Blair. Each student had a mentor teacher assigned to him or her. In addition, in their second year of participation in the GYO program at Gaithersburg, each student was placed in an internship experience, working in ESOL classes or other subjects. Students also experienced mock interviews, prepared applications for college, and explored scholarship opportunities. With support from the program, all students at both schools submitted college applications upon high school graduation.

English Language Development Classes

English language development courses were held for supporting services staff using three delivery methods for English instruction. Sed de Saber and a face-to-face workplace English class were used during each year of the program.   A third method, a web-based program called ELLIS, was piloted during year 3 but found to be less successful than the other methods so was not continued.

Sed de Saber. Sed de Saber teaches vocational and life skills in English through its portable language-acquisition program. In addition to using the Sed de Saber teaching 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.   Employees in the Department of Transportation created conversation clubs after they completed their Sed de Saber experience.

Face-to-face Workplace English. Workplace English classes were offered for food services, transportation, and plant operations using *Center Stage: Express Yourself in English* program, published by Pearson-Longman. The program addresses life and job skills and includes reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Job-specific vocabulary was embedded into the three sets of lesson plans.

During the 2008–2009 school year, 101 employees participated in English language development classes.   Twenty-six employees from the Department of Food and Nutrition Services, 49 employees from the Department of School Plant Operations, and 29 employees from the Department of Transportation took the Sed de Saber or Workplace English classes.

During 2009–2010, 164 employees participated in English language development classes, including 33 Department of Food and Nutrition Services employees, 75 Department of School Plant Operations employees, 51 Department of Transportation employees, and 5 other MCPS staff members.

Pre- and post-testing conducted by the program staff showed that both methods resulted in 18–20% gains in ability to communicate in English. The face-to-face workplace English strategy also included support for reading and writing skills, and similar gains were shown in those skills.

Conclusions

This evaluation was conducted to examine the implementation and outcomes of the programs recommended by 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 in the SEPA Program. Program documents were reviewed to provide details on the implementation of the family involvement component, 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 three program components.

How is the SEPA program being implemented, and what are its outcomes?

The data related to the implementation of SEPA revealed that the program is providing services to ESOL students with interrupted formal education. Survey responses from students and their parents showed high levels of satisfaction with the SEPA program. During the 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 school years, 100% of students completing surveys agreed that they were more comfortable using English and that they could get help with their work if they needed it. Parents of SEPA participants were most positive about communication from their child's teachers, and the help received from SEPA staff in understanding their child's progress at school. Survey responses from school staff involved with SEPA during the 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 school years indicated that most teachers and counselors were positive about the program, particularly with regard to communication and collaboration among program staff, and support available for SEPA staff. During both years, staff expressed concerns about attendance and the extensive academic and social needs of the SEPA participants.

Impact on student achievement was measured in several ways. Students' classroom behavior was assessed monthly by their teachers during year 2 of the program (2008–2009). An examination of these behavioral ratings showed that most of the behaviors were rated more positively at the end of the year than at the start of the school year. The largest improvement was shown for "Works well with others." Consistent with this finding, survey comments from several students noted that "working as a team" and communicating and working in groups were important skills that they learned from the SEPA program.

Students' English language proficiency, as measured by LAS Links, showed improvement during both program years. The percentage of SEPA participants who posted increases of 15 scale score points or more was 42.9% in 2008–2009 and 75% in 2009–2010. In year 3 (2009–2010), the curriculum was changed so that an English language reading course was offered in place of a Spanish literacy course; further monitoring of students' progress in the reading course is needed, but it may be one factor in the improved language proficiency scores in 2009–2010.

Finally, SEPA participants' school participation and achievement during years 2 and 3 showed uneven results. Attendance was still a problem for some students during both years, and overall attendance rates did not improve during program involvement. In terms of their academic achievement, success varied by course. During both years, one half or fewer of the students were successful in their mathematics course. In contrast, nearly all of the SEPA participants had a C or better in their career course; in fact, two thirds of the SEPA participants in 2008–2009 and

over one half of the participants in 2009–2010 had a B or an A in their career course at the end of the year.

How is the family involvement component being implemented, and what are its outcomes?

The family involvement component has been implemented as designed during years 2 and 3 of the program. Parent workshops and meetings developed by the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs were held with parents/guardians of SEPA participants. These meetings addressed such topics as academic achievement, navigating MCPS, and identifying community resources to meet family needs. Home visits were conducted by the SEPA parent community coordinator, and a needs assessment was conducted to determine topics of interest to parents during the upcoming school year. A "safety net" concept was put in place to help families access essential services (e.g., housing, immigration, food, clothing). A list of organizations that agreed to provide services to SEPA families was distributed to parents each year. Follow-up records showed numerous referrals of SEPA families to Safety Net providers during years 2 and 3.

How is the human resources recruitment, support, and retention component being implemented and what are its outcomes?

The human resources recruitment, support, and retention component was implemented as planned in year 2, but not in its entirety during year 3. Positive results have accrued from the strategies supporting the objectives of this component. A teacher-recruitment outreach program for Latino students, the *Grow Your Own Teachers Program* (GYO), was continued in year 2, with nine students participating in the program at two high schools. OHRD has continued efforts during years 2 and 3 to recruit bilingual and bicultural teachers, and the percent of Hispanic professional staff in MCPS has increased every year since the start of the program. Finally, 305 supporting services staff have participated in English language development classes during years 2 and 3.

Overall, are the recommendations of the Latino Education Coalition being addressed?

The overarching goal of the Montgomery County Latino Education Coalition recommendations was to improve Latino student achievement in MCPS. The Coalition identified the following three most pressing issues impacting Latino student achievement in Montgomery County:
1. Lack of appropriate support for older students entering the system with limited or interrupted education
2. Low levels of parent involvement
3. Lack of cultural and linguistic competence within MCPS and among its staff

The three components of the program have been implemented to address these issues. Through the SEPA program, three cohorts of students have gained knowledge and skills preparing them for jobs in their field of interest, while at the same time improving their English language skills. Students have received intensive support from the ESOL transition counselor to address extensive educational and social needs. Parents have been invited to school-related activities and have received support from the parent community coordinator. Finally, the linguistic skills and cultural competence in MCPS are improving in both the near term and the long term. As more Hispanic professional staff have been hired and support staff have enrolled in English language

development classes, MCPS has gained linguistic expertise. In the long term, Latino students who have been introduced to teaching while in high school may return as educators to further enrich the MCPS community.

Recommendations

Data collected in this study suggest the following recommendations:

Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement* (SEPA*) Program

- **Continue to monitor attendance and provide consistent information about the expectations for participation and attendance in the SEPA program**. Many teachers during years 2 and 3 reported that student absences were an obstacle to the implementation of the program. In the fall of 2009 an attendance contract was developed for students to sign, reinforcing the program expectations for attendance. A clear and consistent message must be maintained regarding the expectations and requirements for attendance.

- **Continue to establish practices and supports to address the attendance issues through the parent community coordinator and the ESOL transition counselor**. Continue to have the parent community coordinator and ESOL transition counselor work strategically with families around issues of student absences. By contacting parents/guardians about student absences, the parent community coordinator and ESOL transition counselor can help mitigate some issues related to class attendance.

- **Further examine the SEPA participants' needs in mathematics, and identify specific supports and ways to monitor progress**. One of the objectives in the year 3 program modification was to better address the needs of students in mathematics by providing the appropriate level of instruction at the student's home school. Poor performance by some students, however, indicated that math needs were not being met consistently. Determine what courses are available for students who are not ready for Algebra. Continue to look for new ways to support these students in math, such as math support groups at Edison or the home school, or peer support with SEPA participants who have mastered the math level.

- **Continue to review the content and format of professional development opportunities offered to SEPA staff to ensure that the needs of the program staff are being met**. In response to feedback from SEPA program staff, the year 3 professional development shifted its focus to a school-based, job-embedded model, so that more training and support could take place during the school day and after school. Ongoing assessment of the professional development needs of the staff will continue to prove beneficial.

- **Provide more opportunities for teachers in the SEPA program to communicate and collaborate with each other**. Teachers during years 2 and 3 have requested more time to meet and share information and strategies. In addition to providing opportunities to meet and discuss issues related to the SEPA program, the use of a share point system may help teachers build collaborative relationships.

- **Solicit feedback and input from SEPA program staff throughout the year**. Responses to the surveys in 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 indicated that only 47% and 62% of teachers agree that the SEPA program is meeting the needs of its students; particular concern was expressed with regard to the selection and referral process. To maintain a positive presence in SEPA, it is important for teachers to buy in to the program, so regular communication and ways to address concerns, are needed.

Family Involvement Component

- **Continue to maintain communication with parents about the SEPA program components and the SEPA Safety Net support available to them**. Safety Net records indicate that referrals are being made on a regular basis, but a general reminder to families about the support available may encourage more families to access these services. Continue to assess the needs of the SEPA families during their involvement in the program.

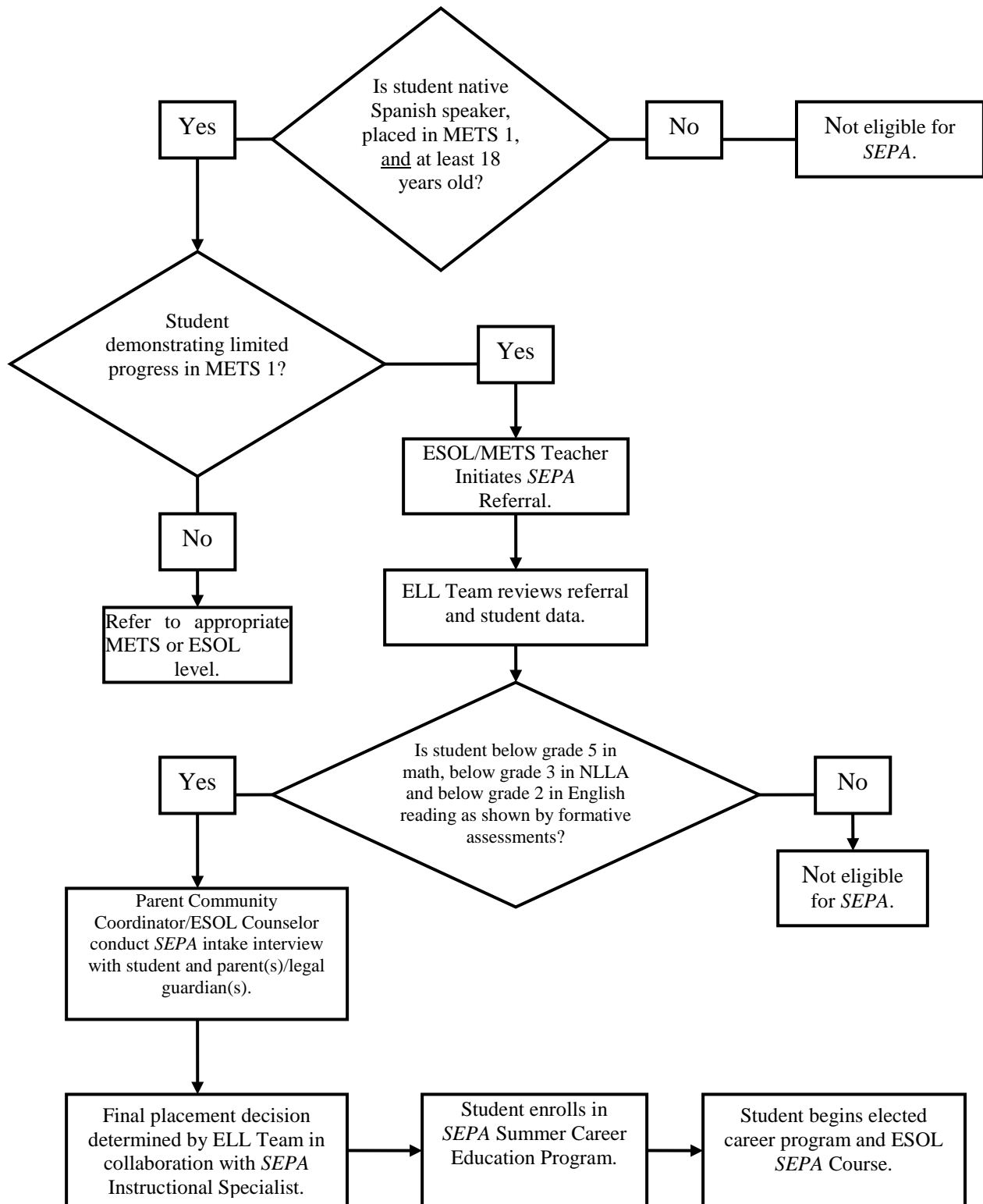*Recruitment, Support, and Retention Component*

- **Determine the feasibility of reestablishing the Grow Your Own Teachers program**. Examine the administrative needs for future implementation of the program, or explore ways to encourage Latino students to enroll in existing education programs in MCPS, such as the Academy of Leadership and Education, the Early Child Development program, or the Teacher Academy of Maryland.

- **Continue to monitor the expansion of English language development courses for supporting services professionals**. Collecting feedback and measures of proficiency will provide valuable information to MCPS on whether modifications in program design are needed.

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Appendix A

Identification Process for the Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement Program

Is student native Spanish speaker, placed in METS 1, <u>and</u> at least 18 years old?

Yes

No → Not eligible for *SEPA*.

Student demonstrating limited progress in METS 1?

Yes

ESOL/METS Teacher Initiates *SEPA* Referral.

No → Refer to appropriate METS or ESOL level.

ELL Team reviews referral and student data.

Is student below grade 5 in math, below grade 3 in NLLA and below grade 2 in English reading as shown by formative assessments?

Yes

No → Not eligible for *SEPA*.

Parent Community Coordinator/ESOL Counselor conduct *SEPA* intake interview with student and parent(s)/legal guardian(s).

Final placement decision determined by ELL Team in collaboration with *SEPA* Instructional Specialist. → Student enrolls in *SEPA* Summer Career Education Program. → Student begins elected career program and ESOL *SEPA* Course.

Source: Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs.

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Appendix B
The SEPA Program:
Options and Opportunities

Programa SEPA: Opciones y Oportunidades

Montgomery County Public Schools, Maryland
2010

Montgomery County Public Schools Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs
The SEPA Program: Options and Opportunities

Purpose

This document provides information on the **Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement (SEPA)** program for Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) students and families.

What is SEPA?

SEPA is an acronym for the **Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement** program.

SEPA is a career readiness program focused upon building entry-level job skills for Spanish-speaking high school ESOL students who have experienced interrupted or limited formal education. To be eligible for the SEPA program, students must be at least eighteen (18) years of age at the start of their first school year in the SEPA program.

As a result of having interrupted or limited schooling, SEPA students begin high school with academic skills several years below their grade level. Due to this significant gap and the limited time students have to "catch up", SEPA students are not able to meet all Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) graduation requirements by age 21.

The SEPA program is an alternative instructional program that allows non-graduating students to continue their education while developing the skills they need to successfully prepare for the workforce and build a career pathway to their future. Students elect a career program pathway at the Thomas Edison High School of Technology and take courses that help them develop key career readiness skills, including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), reading, mathematics, and College/Career Research and Development.

SEPA students and their families receive a wide range of support to ensure their success, such as small class sizes, bilingual classroom support, summer programs, bilingual counseling, parent outreach, and assistance with student fees required at the Thomas Edison High School of Technology.

In this document, you will find information about:

SEPA Instructional Program
Year 1: Courses for First Year SEPA Students

Summer Program: Year 1

In Year 1, SEPA students attend a four-week summer program at the Thomas Edison High School of Technology.   Classes are scheduled Monday–Friday, 8:15 a.m.–1:00 p.m. and introduce students to four different career areas. At the end of the program, students choose the career program they wish to study during the school year. Transportation, breakfast, and lunch are provided every day.

Summer Classes
- Week 1: Restaurant Management
- Week 2: Automotive Technology
- Week 3: Nail Technology
- Week 4: Construction

Academic School Year: Courses for Year 1 SEPA Students

SEPA students enroll in the following courses during their <u>first</u> year in the program.

Classes at the Home School	7:30–10:30 a.m.	**ESOL**	Students take an assigned ESOL course at their home school based on their ESOL level.
		Reading	Students take an assigned reading course at their home school based on their reading level.
		Math	Students take an assigned mathematics course at their home school.
Classes at the Thomas Edison High School of Technology	11:00 a.m.–1:30 p.m.	**Career Pathway Program Classes** (3 class periods)	Students enroll in <u>one</u> of the following career pathway programs at the Thomas Edison High School of Technology*[1]: ▪ Nail Technology ▪ Construction ▪ Restaurant Management ▪ Automotive Technology *Spaces may be limited in some classes.
	1:35–2:10 p.m.	**SEPA ESOL** (1 period)	In the SEPA ESOL course, students learn English through a career exploration curriculum. For example, students learn to: ▪ Describe their goals, interests, skills, and experiences ▪ Research careers and jobs ▪ Use English to communicate at school and at work

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[1] MCPS transportation is provided to and from the Thomas Edison High School for Downcounty Consortium (DCC) students. Students from all other schools will be provided with transportation to Thomas Edison High School but must be able to arrange their own transportation (public or other) from Thomas Edison High School after school.

SEPA Instructional Program
Year 2: Courses for Second Year SEPA Students

Summer Program: Year 2

After completing their first year in the SEPA program, students are able to apply for a summer work-based internship experience, pending funding availability. The internship allows students to gain real work experience while working with a supervising adult professional. Most internships are part-time and may or may not be paid. Students also may enroll in Regional Summer School ESOL classes and/or pursue work opportunities on their own.

Academic School Year: Courses for Year 2 SEPA Students

SEPA students enroll in the following courses during their second year in the program.

Classes at the Home School	**7:30–10:30 a.m.**	**ESOL**	Students take an assigned ESOL course at their home school based on their ESOL level.
		Reading[2]	Students take an assigned reading course at their home school based on their reading level.
		Math	Students take an assigned mathematics course at their home school.
Classes at the Thomas Edison High School of Technology	**11:00 a.m.– 1:30 p.m.**	**Career Pathway Program Classes** (3 class periods)	Students continue classes in their career pathway program at the Thomas Edison High School of Technology.[3] Some students also may be eligible to participate in a non-paid work experience internship or an On-the-Job Training (OJT) experience with an employer.
	1:35– 2:10 p.m.	**College/Career Research and Development (CCRD)** (1 period)	In the College/Career Research and Development course, students learn how to research, find, and be successful in a job. For example, students learn: ▪ How to develop a plan to find a job ▪ How to prepare for and participate in a job interview ▪ How to use technology to create resumes and cover letters and to research jobs.

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[2] Other courses may be assigned depending on a student's needs and ability level, as advised by the school's instructional and counseling teams.

[3] MCPS transportation is provided to and from Thomas Edison High School for Downcounty Consortium (DCC) students. Students from all other schools will be provided with transportation to Thomas Edison High School but must be able to arrange their own transportation (public or other) from Thomas Edison High School after school.

<div align="center">

SEPA Instructional Program
Year 3: Courses for Third Year SEPA Students

</div>

Summer Program: Year 3

Students who have completed two years in the SEPA program have the option of finding employment on their own or participating in a summer work-based internship experience. Internships may or may not be paid. Students also may enroll in Regional Summer School ESOL classes.
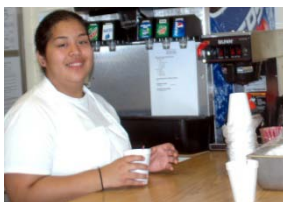
Academic School Year: Courses for Year 3 SEPA Students

SEPA students are enrolled in the following courses during their <u>third</u> year in the program.

Classes at the Home School	**7:30–10:30 a.m.**	**ESOL**	Students take an assigned ESOL course at their home school based on their ESOL level.
		Math	Students take an assigned mathematics class at their home school.
		Other content area course	As recommended by the school's instructional team.
Classes at the Thomas Edison High School of Technology	**11:00 a.m.–1:30 p.m.**	**Career Program** (3 class periods)	Students select one of the following career program options[4]: **A:** Students continue classes in their career pathway program. (Construction and Automotive programs only) **B:** Students select a new career pathway at the Thomas Edison High School of Technology. **C:** Students participate in a non-paid work-based learning experience position (e.g., teaching assistant). **D:** If eligible, students participate in an OJT experience with an employer.
	1:35–2:10 p.m.	**Teaching Assistant/Student Mentor Experience** (1 period)	Students who are otherwise not working or participating in an internship or OJT during school hours may apply for a teaching assistant/student mentor position to assist Year 1 and 2 SEPA students in the classroom.

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[4] MCPS Transportation is provided to and from Thomas Edison High School for Downcounty Consortium (DCC) students. Students from all other schools will be provided with transportation to Thomas Edison High School but must be able to arrange their own transportation (public or other) from Thomas Edison High School after school.

SEPA Career Program Pathway:
Nail Technology[5]

SEPA Cosmetology Topics

This is an alternative course for first year SEPA students who participate in the Nail Technology program. SEPA students are not eligible to take the Maryland State Board Nail Technician exam in their first year of the program without special permission.

To extend skills learned, SEPA students may repeat this course in their second year.

Nail Technology A/B

Nail Technology A/B prepares students for the Maryland State Board Nail Technician exam. A SEPA student may enroll in this course after successfully completing their first year if:

- The student has a recommendation by the teacher to enroll,
  and
- The student has a valid Social Security Number

Work-based Learning Experiences

Students gain experience in a job setting by participating in one of the following options:

- Unpaid work experience position, <u>or</u>
- OJT. Students must be eligible to work and provide appropriate documentation to participate.

Program Outcomes

A student who successfully completes course work and exams:

- Earns a **Certificate of Participation** in the Nail Technology Program.
- Creates a **professional portfolio** that includes a resume, a profile of competencies learned, exemplary work samples, and awards or certificates earned.
- If eligible to take the **Maryland State Board Examination**, can become licensed and be eligible to work as a Nail Technician.
- If non-licensed, may work as a Salon Receptionist, Cashier, or Nail Technician assistant.

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[5] SEPA students may be graded on adjusted outcomes if recommended by the instructor and English

Nail Technology

Topics and Skills Taught in the Program

- Basic manicure
- Pedicure
- Advanced nail technology
- Salon management
- Interpersonal skills
- Oral/written communication
- Related theory
- Bacteriology
- Sanitation
- Skin/nail diseases/disorders
- Anatomy and physiology
- Comprehensive instructional support
- Freehand nail design
- Airbrush nail design
- Acrylic nail technology
- Tips with acrylic and nail wraps
- Gel nail applications
- Electric filing
- Aromatherapy
- Memorize and use vocabulary related to the field, including anatomy and physiology words
- Fine motor skills needed for intricate applications of chemicals to the nails
- Ability to safely handle chemicals that could burn upon contact
- Social skills required for working with other students and communication with clients

SEPA Career Program Pathway:
Professional Restaurant Management[6]

Restaurant Management 1A (semester 1)
Restaurant Management 1B (semester 2)

Students must pass the written **ServSafe Certification exam** in English or Spanish in Restaurant Management 1A.

SEPA Culinary Topics

To extend skills learned, SEPA students may continue in the Restaurant Management program in their second year.

Work-based Learning Experiences

Students gain experience in a job setting by participating in one of the following options:

- Unpaid work experience position, <u>or</u>
- OJT. Students must be eligible to work and provide appropriate documentation to participate.

Program Outcomes

A student who successfully completes course work and exams:

- Earns **National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF) ServSafe Certification** for food training and safety.
- Earns a **Certificate of Participation** in the Professional Restaurant Management Program.
- Creates a **professional portfolio** that includes a resume, a competency profile listing employability skills learned, exemplary work samples, and awards or certificates earned.
- May be ready for **entry-level positions in the culinary arts field**.

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[6] SEPA Students may be graded on adjusted outcomes if recommended by the instructor and ELL team.

Professional Restaurant Management

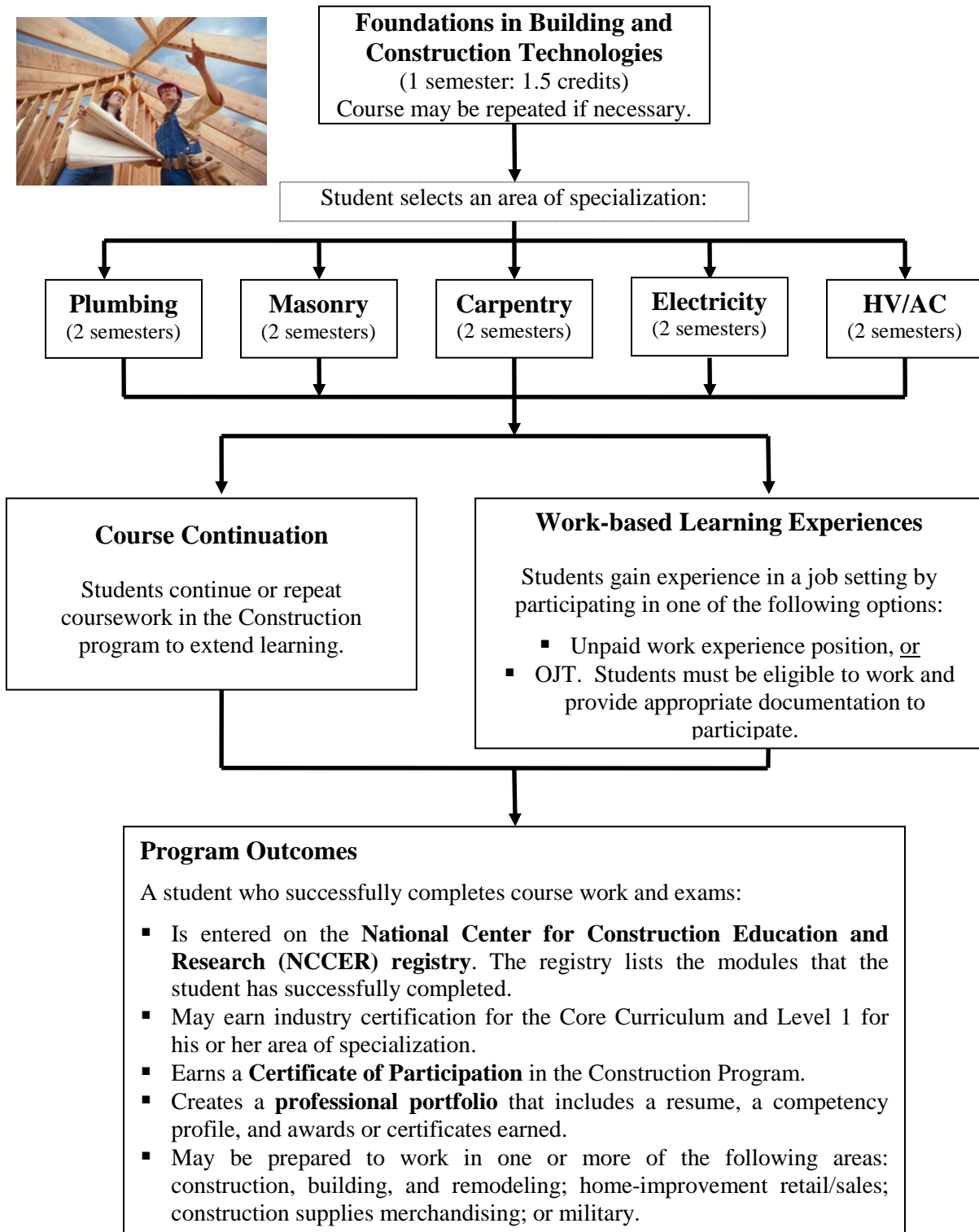**Topics and Skills Taught in the Program**

- o Operate a small restaurant (Cafe Edison) bakery, snack bar, and catering service within a school facility
- o Describe several job opportunities in the hospitality industry
- o Use safety and sanitation principles, which are required for safe food handling
- o Identify the principles involved in the prevention of food-borne illness
- o Use and care of commercial food service equipment
- o Display evidence of acquired self-development and work attitudes compatible to obtaining and maintaining a job
- o Develop menus
- o Develop fine motor skills necessary for measurement, use of kitchen equipment, and cooking techniques
- o Learn to work with others in kitchen production
- o Use basic mathematics skills including fractions needed to cut recipes

Examples of Job Opportunities Related to the Program

- o Bussing
- o Dishwashing
- o Restaurant host or cashier
- o Restaurant server
- o Prep cook or line cook
- o Catering assistant
- o Baker's assistant/cake decorator
- o Banquet set-up assistant

SEPA Career Program Pathway: Construction[7]

Foundations in Building and Construction Technologies
(1 semester: 1.5 credits)
Course may be repeated if necessary.

↓

Student selects an area of specialization:

| **Plumbing** (2 semesters) | **Masonry** (2 semesters) | **Carpentry** (2 semesters) | **Electricity** (2 semesters) | **HV/AC** (2 semesters) |

Course Continuation

Students continue or repeat coursework in the Construction program to extend learning.

Work-based Learning Experiences

Students gain experience in a job setting by participating in one of the following options:

- Unpaid work experience position, or
- OJT. Students must be eligible to work and provide appropriate documentation to participate.

Program Outcomes

A student who successfully completes course work and exams:

- Is entered on the **National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) registry**. The registry lists the modules that the student has successfully completed.
- May earn industry certification for the Core Curriculum and Level 1 for his or her area of specialization.
- Earns a **Certificate of Participation** in the Construction Program.
- Creates a **professional portfolio** that includes a resume, a competency profile, and awards or certificates earned.
- May be prepared to work in one or more of the following areas: construction, building, and remodeling; home-improvement retail/sales; construction supplies merchandising; or military.

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[7] SEPA students may be graded on adjusted outcomes if recommended by the instructor and ELL team.

Construction

Topics and Skills Taught in the Program

Foundations of Building and Construction Technology (Core Curriculum)

o Basic Safety
o Introduction to Construction Math
o Introduction to Hand Tools
o Introduction to Power Tools
o Basic rigging
o Basic Communication Skills
o Basic Employability Skills

Masonry

o Introduction to Masonry
o Masonry Tools and Equipment
o Measurements, Drawings, and Specifications
o Mortar
o Masonry Units and Installation Techniques

Plumbing

o Introduction to the Plumbing Profession
o Plumbing Safety
o Plumbing Tools
o Introduction to Plumbing Math
o Introduction to Plumbing Drawings
o Plastic Pipe and Fittings
o Cast-Iron Pipe and Fittings
o Carbon Steel Pipe and Fittings
o Corrugated Stainless Steel Tubing
o Fixtures and Faucets
o Introduction to Drain, Waste, and Vent (DWV) Systems
o Introduction to Waster Distribution Systems
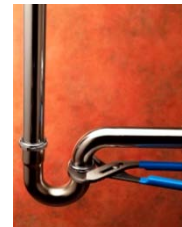
Carpentry

o Orientation to the Trade
o Building Materials, Fasteners, and Adhesives
o Hand and Power Tools
o Reading Plans and Elevations
o Floor Systems
o Wall and Ceiling Framing
o Roof Framing
o Introduction to Concrete, Reinforcing Materials, and Forms
o Windows and Exterior Doors
o Basic Stair Layout

SEPA Career Program Pathway: Automotive Technology[8]

Foundations of Automotive Technology

1 year, 3.0 credits
Students may repeat the course to extend skills learned.

Course Continuation

Students continue coursework in the Transportation program in the areas of Auto Body or Automotive Technology as recommended by the instructor.

Work-based Learning Experiences

Students gain experience in a job setting by participating in one of the following options:

- Unpaid work experience position, <u>or</u>
- OJT. Students must be eligible to work and provide appropriate documentation to participate.

Program Outcomes

A student who successfully completes course work and exams:

- Earns a **Certificate of Participation** in the Transportation Program.
- Creates a **professional portfolio** that includes a resume, a competency profile listing employability skills learned, exemplary work samples, and awards or certificates earned.
- Will be prepared to work in one or more of the following areas: porter, detailer, body repair apprentice, paint prep/polisher, apprentice painter, body repair technician, collision estimator, or parts clerk.

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[8] Students may be graded on adjusted outcomes if recommended by the instructor and ELL team.

Foundations in Automotive Technology

Topics and Skills Taught in the Program

Students will learn how to:

o   Properly use tools and equipment
o   Lab/Shop Safety
o   Detail vehicles
o   Apply and sand body filler
o   Repair body panels
o   Replace body panels
o   Prep and paint vehicles
o   Perform preventative maintenance and service fluids

Students also will learn to:

o   Project a positive attitude toward work and professionalism
o   Function effectively in a working team of ideologically and culturally diverse persons
o   Think logically, decisively and effectively solve problems pertaining to automotive repair
o   Demonstrate competence in the use of tools used in automotive repair

Students should:

o   Want to work on cars
o   Possess a positive work ethic
o   Possess standard work skills—report on time, turn work in completed, etc.
o   Be able to follow multi-step directions
o   Be willing to get dirty
o   Be willing to perform physical labor and stand on their feet for two or more hours
o   Possess good gross and fine motor skills to handle tools

Examples of Job Opportunities Related to the Program

o   Parts clerk
o   Porter
o   Detailer
o   Body repair apprentice
o   Paint prep/polisher
o   Apprentice painter
o   Body repair technician
o   Collision estimator

FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions

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1. **Can I graduate from high school?**

2. **If I do not graduate, can I still get a high school diploma? Can I go to college?**

3. **What do I need to know and do in order to pass the General Equivalency Diploma (GED)?**

4. **How will the SEPA program help me plan for my future?**

5. **What are my options if I choose not to participate in SEPA?**

---

1. Can I graduate from high school?

MCPS students must meet the following requirements in order to graduate and earn a diploma from MCPS by the end of the year in which they turn 21:

- Course Credits: Students must earn a total of 22 total course credits. The MCPS document "Graduation Requirements for Secondary Schools" lists the specific courses that students must pass.

- Student Service Learning: Students must earn service learning hours by participating in volunteer service. The number of hours that are required varies depending on when the student enrolls in MCPS.

- High School Assessment Exams (HSA): The student must pass all state exams in Algebra, Government (NSL), Biology, and English 10. The exams are given in English.

While the SEPA program can assist students in planning for post-high school work and other educational opportunities, it is a career readiness program focused on building entry-level job skills, not a high school diploma preparation program. To ensure proper placement in the program, students will be monitored routinely to make certain that they meet eligibility requirements for continued participation in the SEPA program. Upon completion of the SEPA program, it is expected that SEPA students will discontinue enrollment in an MCPS high school, prepared to seek employment in their career field of study.

For more information about graduation requirements, please see the document "Graduation Requirements for Secondary Schools," available in English, Spanish, and other languages.

2. If I do not graduate, can I still get a high school diploma? Can I go to college?

Students who do not have a high school diploma can take workforce development, GED preparation, or other non-credit classes at Montgomery College if they meet requirements for admission.

Students who not graduate from high school with a diploma may obtain a Maryland high school diploma by passing the GED tests. Individuals are able to take the GED tests in Maryland when they meet <u>all</u> of the following criteria:

- Must be at least 16 years of age.
- Must be a Maryland resident for at least three months.
- Must have withdrawn from high school for at least six months.
- Not a high school graduate.
- Have a Maryland Motor Vehicle Identification Card, License, or Learners Permit or an active military ID.

These criteria are set by the state of Maryland. *Criteria may be different for other states or in the District of Columbia.* Montgomery College and other adult education institutions offer GED preparation classes. The school counselor and/or Parent Community Coordinator (PCC) can assist students in finding more information about GED preparation classes.

SEPA is a career readiness program focused on building entry level job skills, not a high school diploma preparation program. Upon completion of the SEPA program, it is expected that SEPA students will end enrollment in an MCPS high school, prepared to seek employment.

3. What do I need to know and be able to do in order to pass the GED?

- The Maryland GED has five sections: Language Arts: Writing; Language Arts: Reading; Social Studies; Science; and Mathematics.

- You may request to take the GED in English or Spanish. However, <u>all</u> examinees also must take the Language Arts and Writing Skills Tests in English. The Writing Skills Test consists of both an essay and multiple-choice questions.

Students who are interested in taking the GED should contact a GED preparation program to find out what courses they will need to prepare for the test. SEPA students may be required to take ESOL classes to improve their English proficiency before enrolling in a GED preparation class.

4. How will the SEPA program help me plan for my future?

The SEPA program helps students develop skills for life and work. In the SEPA program students will:

- Improve their ability to speak, understand, read, and write English.

- Improve their literacy and oral communication skills.

- Develop critical mathematics skills essential for entry level job skills.

- Develop an understanding of how to find and be successful in a job in the U.S.

- Learn skills for a career field.

- Develop a professional portfolio that includes work samples, a Certificate of Participation in the program, a resume, and a list of specific competencies learned.

- Learn to set goals for work and education.

- Interact with English-speaking classmates.

The SEPA program also can assist eligible students with learning about work-study internships/training and post-high school opportunities.

5. What are my options if I choose not to participate in SEPA?

- Students that have been identified as eligible for SEPA should understand that they will most likely not meet HSA requirements and earn 22 credits for graduation before the end of the school year in which they turn 21.

- Students are referred to SEPA only when the program is highly recommended by the school's ELL team and other ESOL staff members. If a student or the student's parent or legal guardian chooses to decline this recommendation and the student decides not to enroll in the SEPA Program, the parent/legal guardian should contact the school's PCC or the ESOL Resource Teacher.

- If the student does not enroll in the SEPA program, he or she will stay enrolled at the assigned home school. The student will continue to take ESOL and other classes.

- If a student begins SEPA and withdraws from the SEPA program, and it is clear that the student will not meet HSA requirements and earn 22 credits for graduation by age 21, the student will be:

    o Expected to end enrollment in an MCPS high school.

    o Withdrawn from SEPA program classes at Thomas Edison High School of Technology.

- If a student begins SEPA and withdraws from the SEPA program, and the ELL team concludes that the student may be able to meet HSA requirements and earn 22 credits for graduation by age 21, the student can be:

    o Enrolled at the assigned home school and continue to take ESOL and other classes necessary for graduation.

    o Withdrawn from SEPA program classes at Thomas Edison High School of Technology.

Appendix C

Student Survey
SEPA Summer Career Exploration Program 2009

The Office of Shared Accountability (OSA) is conducting an evaluation of the SEPA program. We want to know what you think about the SEPA Summer Career Exploration program. Please complete this survey to share your ideas with us. Please do not write your name on the survey.

1. Please check your grade for the 2009–2010 school year.

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

For the next section, please indicate your opinion about each statement. Check only one box per row.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
1. I learned new job skills in the SEPA classes.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
2. I learned about important safety rules.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
3. I learned new vocabulary in English.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
4. I feel more confident using my English in school.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
5. Expectations about attendance and behavior were clear.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
6. The instructors of the SEPA course(s) were patient and helpful.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
7. Having teachers who speak Spanish helped me better understand what I needed to learn and do.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
8. The classes were interesting.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
9. The purpose of the SEPA program has been clearly explained to me.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
10. I plan to participate in SEPA this school year.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

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

    ❑ Restaurant Management   ❑ Automotive Technology
    ❑ Nail Technology   ❑ Construction

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

    ❑ Very satisfied   ❑ Satisfied   ❑ Dissatisfied

    ❑ Very dissatisfied   ❑ Not sure/no opinion

13. What are ways we can make the SEPA program better for students?

Thank you for completing the survey!

Appendix D

SEPA Student Survey
2009–2010

The Office of Shared Accountability (OSA) is conducting an evaluation of the implementation of the Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement (SEPA) program. We want to know what you think about the SEPA program—please share your thoughts with us by completing this brief survey. Your answers will be kept confidential.

Please indicate your school and grade for the current school year:

Home School: _____

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

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.
Check only one box per row.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
1. The career classes help prepare me with knowledge and skills I need for a job.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
2. I feel more confident using English in school.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
3. I am able to get additional help for classes if I need it.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
4. At my home school, SEPA instructors treat me with respect.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
5. At my home school, expectations about attendance and behavior are clear.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
6. At my home school, expectations about classwork and homework are clear.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
7. At Edison, instructors treat me with respect.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
8. At Edison, expectations about attendance and behavior are clear.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
9. At Edison, expectations about classwork and homework are clear.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
10. The paraeducators (classroom assistants) at Edison are helpful.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Please answer the following questions about each of your classes. There are three questions about *each* class—please check one of the boxes for each question.

Class:	1. How useful was the class?			2. How interesting was the class?			3. Were you able to understand the information that was taught?		
	very useful	useful	not very useful	very interesting	interesting	not very interesting	Yes, I understood most or all	I understood some	No, I did not understand
SEPA ESOL	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Reading	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Math	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Career program classes at Edison	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Please answer the following questions about the SEPA Program. Use the back of this page if you need more space.

1. What helped you the most in your classes at Edison?

2. What is the most important thing you have learned in the SEPA program?

3. What are ways we can make the SEPA program better for students?

4. Overall, how satisfied are you with your SEPA experience during this school year?   [Check one and then please explain]
   э Very satisfied   э Satisfied   э Dissatisfied   э Very dissatisfied
   Please explain:

Thank you very much for completing the survey!

Appendix E

SEPA Parent Survey
2009–2010

The Office of Shared Accountability (OSA) is conducting an evaluation of the Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement (SEPA) program. We want to know what you think about the SEPA program—please share your thoughts with us by completing this survey. Your feedback will help us learn how the SEPA program can best meet the needs of students and their families. Your response will be confidential.

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements by checking the box.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/ Doesn't Apply
1. The teachers in the SEPA program communicate with me about my child's progress.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
2. Staff involved with SEPA help me understand my child's school progress.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
3. I have opportunities talk with my child's teachers about the SEPA program.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
4. SEPA provides me with an opportunity to become more involved in my child's school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
5. I am kept informed about programs that are related to my needs.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

6. Overall, how satisfied are you with the *academic* program that your child receives in SEPA?

☐ Very satisfied   ☐ Satisfied   ☐ Dissatisfied   ☐ Very dissatisfied   ☐ Not sure

Please explain:

_____

_____

7. Overall, how satisfied are you with the *career* program that your child receives in SEPA?

☐ Very satisfied   ☐ Satisfied   ☐ Dissatisfied   ☐ Very dissatisfied   ☐ Not sure

Please explain:

_____

_____

8. How is SEPA helping your child?

_____

_____

_____

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

_____

_____

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

11. Has involvement in the SEPA program made a difference in your child's plans for the future? Please explain.

12. How can the SEPA program better meet your student's needs? Please tell us how the program can be more helpful to your child.

13. Did you attend any family or parent workshops offered by SEPA? ☐ yes   ☐ no
If yes, was the workshop you attended useful for you?
If no, what prevented you from attending?

14. Are you familiar with the SEPA "Safety Net" Providers Program? ☐ yes   ☐ no
    Have you used the program to find service providers for your family? ☐ yes   ☐ no
    If yes, please describe your experience.

15. Will your child be participating in the SEPA program next year? ☐ yes   ☐ no
    Please explain, why or why not.

15. Is there anything else you would like to add about the SEPA program?

Thank you for completing the survey!