

On Tuesday, November 8, HCEA's representative council (our policy making body) unanimously passed the following resolution:

HCEA cannot support the use of a seven period, fifty minute per period schedule consistently applied in the middle schools of the Howard County Public School System because HCEA opposes:

- The elimination of reading classes,
  - Gross inequities in planning time and teaching load between teachers,
  - The understaffing of related arts in middle schools,
  - The use of administrative planning time for increased instructional responsibilities.
- 1) The report presented to the Board of Education on December 8, 2011 states, "Since 2003, the HCPSS has seen tremendous progress for all students in reading proficiency." ***Are the gains attributable to our current middle school program and the expertise of our reading teachers?***
  - 2) The report presented to the Board of Education on December 8, 2011 states, "Shanahan and Shanahan (2008) note that while the majority of middle school students have mastered the first two levels of literacy, many are unable to progress to the highest level because disciplinary literacy has not been a curricular focus." ***As HCPSS moves toward linking teacher evaluations with test scores, will teachers focus their efforts on disciplinary literacy, or content knowledge?***
  - 3) The report presented to the Board of Education on December 8, 2011 states, "The principals gathered questions and concerns and shared them with Division of Instruction leadership. Secondary Curricular Coordinators held over forty meetings with interested middle school staff to discuss how the proposed program changes would impact their subjects." ***When did these meetings occur, and by what means was the feedback communicated to the Division of Instruction?***
  - 4) The report presented to the Board of Education on December 8, 2011 states, "Any reassigned teachers will, of course, receive training and support as they transition to teaching new subjects." ***When will this occur? How can adequate training be offered prior to next fall, when this is proposed to take effect?***
  - 5) The report presented to the Board of Education on December 8, 2011 states, "The current requirement that all students take a stand-alone reading course limits the flexibility of student schedules and the ability of administration to provide differentiated instruction." ***Is scheduling flexibility a higher priority than reading achievement?***
  - 6) The report presented to the Board of Education on December 8, 2011 states, "Although all staff receive 50 minutes of individual planning time daily, concerns surrounding the equity of planning time exist for some staff." ***How/when will staff with the contractual minimum of planning time attend IEP meetings, collaboratively plan, examine data (CFIP, etc)?***
  - 7) In your opinion, ***is 50 minutes of planning time sufficient for secondary teachers in the HCPSS?***