

The School Improvement Plan

I first saw mention of the School Improvement Plan on various school websites when researching the public school system for my children. It seemed overwhelming, convoluted, and way, way over my head at the time. I knew nothing of the analysis of data gathering, had no idea what a writing rubric was, nor did I understand BCRs, MAP-Rs, TN2s, ALPs, or who Fountas and Pinnell were. Click. Close. In the end, it was surely Mrs. Guevara at the front desk, with her friendly smile and calming reassurance that Wayside was definitely an amazing school and *THE* place to be that narrowed down our house search.

Four years later, settled and happy in the Wayside Community, I finally turn my attention back to the School Improvement Plan. SIP, as it's known in the MoCo world of acronyms, is simply that – it's a sip. It's a taste of the much bigger plan that the faculty spend hours reviewing, revising, and redoing for the sake of providing a thorough education and continuous improvement in achievement for our children. The School Improvement Plan is an ever-evolving, ever-changing document. It is a continuous work in progress.

All MCPS schools are required to develop this plan to guide instruction and school leadership during the school year. The procedures for SIP, along with the Board of Education's parent involvement policy, call for increased parent/community involvement in development and review of the plan.

Here's the deal though, many parents either don't know anything about the SIP or are just plain afraid of it. The Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations and the Board of Education concur that parents need not be afraid and, in fact, need to get more involved in the process of writing and implementing this essential plan that helps guide instruction and school leadership.

Lori Marks, Pam Kanstoroom, and I had the pleasure of working with the whole staff over the summer to review the past SIP and revise for the current school year. It is quite an impressive process. Mrs. Kim, along with the entire Wayside faculty, spend hours in moving from personal action plans to team action plans to school-wide action plans. We all walked away with new understanding of how Wayside analyzes, interprets, and implements changes to the curriculum.

The vision, the mission, and the leadership of the school are spelled out in this plan. Please take a look and familiarize yourself with the variety of focus topics directly related to your child's education. Ask questions, provide feedback, get involved,...and, when confused, go and talk to Mrs. Guevara. She always steers you right.

Wayside Elementary School's School Improvement Plan can be found on Mrs. Kim's Principal's page.

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/waysidees/principal/principal.shtm>.

For more information on how to get involved, please see the School Improvement Plan Parent's Handbook <http://www.mccpta.com/SIPHandbook.pdf>