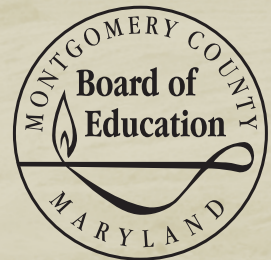


MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

# Legislative Platform

2015 Session of the  
Maryland General Assembly





## **VISION**

*We inspire learning by providing the greatest public education to each and every student.*

## **MISSION**

*Every student will have the academic, creative problem solving, and social emotional skills to be successful in college and career.*

## **CORE PURPOSE**

*Prepare all students to thrive in their future.*

## **CORE VALUES**

*Learning  
Relationships  
Respect  
Excellence  
Equity*

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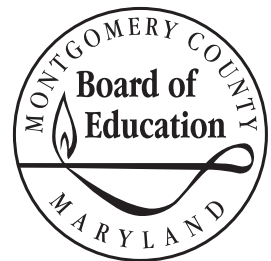
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# Legislative Platform

**2015** Session of the  
Maryland General Assembly

## LEGISLATIVE POSITIONS

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## ■ INVESTING IN OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE

THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION believes that today's investments in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) are crucial to a prosperous economy, strong business growth, and students' ability to compete for good jobs in the global, high-tech economy. School districts must be adequately funded to prepare our youth to support future economic health. We urge you and the entire General Assembly to remain vigilant against the potential negative impacts of unfunded mandates. These include significant additional workload burdens with no accompanying source of revenue as well as unintended consequences of well-intentioned legislation. We look forward to a successful 2015 legislative season in which children's welfare continues to be paramount.

### **Long-range Planning and Capacity Issues**

MCPS continues to experience a burgeoning increase in enrollment and diversity along racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic lines. In seven years, from 2007–2014, we have gained 16,107 students. Most of this enrollment increase has occurred in elementary schools, the equivalent of 22 elementary schools. Over the next six years we anticipate enrolling another 11,500 students! At the same time, we are severely challenged by limited capacity in our school facilities and will have to make significant expenditures in the capital and operating budgets to accommodate these student enrollment increases. Significant additional state construction dollars are critical and providing adequate school capacity will not be possible, given the existing state school construction funding stream. Over the years, MCPS has sought to balance the fiscal difficulties facing the county with the need to address our overcrowded schools and aging facilities and infrastructure. We are committed to working with our local county government and our local state delegation to address our tremendous needs in the most responsible way possible, while continuing to provide our students with an adequate learning environment.

### **Adequacy of Education Funding**

The Passage of the *Bridge to Excellence in Public Education Act of 2002* (BTE) resulted in a dramatic change in education funding in Maryland. Even during challenging fiscal times, the General Assembly has held the line on education funding, as evidenced by having annually provided \$5.7 billion in education aid since 2008. Maryland's Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirement, along with the BTE funding paradigm, provides assurance that the goals of adequacy, equity, and excellence are met. To keep pace with rising standards for student performance, state aid must be sustained. Additional funding is also necessary to implement Maryland's pre-K for all children initiative and should be on a per-pupil basis, without any offsetting reduction in compensatory education funding.

### **Common Core State Standards**

Governor Martin O'Malley and former State Superintendent Nancy Grasmick committed Maryland to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). This initiative provides a clear understanding and expectation of what each student should learn and master as well as the basis for developing a set of standards that is common across states. The resulting curriculum continues to be a local responsibility (or state-led, where appropriate). MCPS already has implemented a curriculum aligned with the CCSS. As these standards are being implemented across Maryland and within our school district, we must ensure that this is not an unfunded mandate and that resources are available to bring to fruition the underlying goals and objectives. Readiness for administering the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) exams remains a concern, especially with regard to technology requirements and demands.



### ■ CAPITAL BUDGET/SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION

State construction funds continue to be inadequate to meet the substantial needs of our burgeoning student enrollment. The total FY2015 state Capital Budget for school construction was \$325.3 million. MCPS requested \$162.9 million and received \$39.95 million. Limited state funding has forced Montgomery County to forward-fund critical capital projects and then await state reimbursement, sometimes not made until years after the project completion.

Last year, a legislative initiative was introduced by Montgomery, Prince George's, and Baltimore counties to increase the state school construction funding. Like the successful Baltimore City initiative, the bill included \$20 million from the state of Maryland to leverage a \$40 million investment by the county. These funds would have supplemented the county's share of new state authorizations for school construction. The \$60 million revenue stream could have supported bonds of up to \$750 million, which would have helped fund construction projects over the next five years. The failure of this initiative to be enacted resulted in a one-year delay of many capacity and revitalization/expansion projects. Enactment this year could allow these projects to be restored to their original schedule

Enrollment since 2007 has increased by almost 16,100 students. Total MCPS enrollment is projected to increase by more than 11,500 students over the next six years. Between 2007 and 2020, enrollment is projected to increase by more than 27,500—more growth than that of Anne Arundel, Howard, Frederick, and Baltimore



counties combined. No other school district has seen the kind of student growth that Montgomery County has experienced. This remarkable enrollment growth, coupled with maintenance needs in older schools, continues to put enormous pressures on school facilities.

For the 2014–2015 school year, 401 relocatable classrooms will be in use at schools to address enrollments that exceed capacity, with more anticipated in the coming years. Without adequate school construction funding, MCPS will be forced into an over-reliance on relocatable classrooms, while increasingly aging and less than adequate facilities will become the norm, making it hard to meet the educational needs of our students.

### **The Montgomery County Board of Education supports—**

- A robust and innovative school construction and renovation funding plan for FY2016 to address school facility needs.
- Legislative action targeted to increasing state school construction funding for systems with extreme enrollment growth.
- Expanding the state’s bonding capacity to meet Maryland’s growing school facility needs.
- Revising current standards for the Interagency Committee square-footage allowances for new and revitalized/expanded schools to eliminate the penalty for building additional classrooms intended to reduce class size to support student achievement.
- Developing a mechanism to ensure that locally forward-funded projects remain eligible for state funding, even after the project has been completed.
- Changing the state funding process from a project by project allocation to a “block grant” allocation to allow local education agencies flexibility in funding local capital projects.
- Changing the Public School Construction Program to address inequities in funding needs related to the size and location of a local education agency.
- Establishing incentives for green and energy-efficient school construction.

### **The Montgomery County Board of Education opposes—**

- Any reduction in the state and local cost-share formula.
- Any change to the threshold requirements for prevailing wages.

### ■ STATE EDUCATION FUNDING

Maryland's public schools are ranked number one in the nation. The *Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act of 2002* (BTE) represents the resources invested to support this achievement. Full funding of the BTE, including the Geographic Cost of Education Index (GCEI) and the annual inflation factor, is needed to sustain successful programs and services for our students.

To keep pace with rising standards for student performance, including the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), state aid must be sustained. The BTE, conceived to ensure adequacy and equity in education funding, has led to increased student performance in Maryland. The CCSS initiative, agreed to by the state of Maryland, has significant budgetary impacts, which are yet to be accounted. Since 2008, the BTE targeted funding level has been maintained. However, the inflation factor, while reinstated in FY2013 was capped at 1 percent and is set to expire in FY2015.

#### **The Montgomery County Board of Education supports—**

- Full commitment to BTE funding, including the GCEI, compensatory education, and student transportation.
- Mandating GCEI funding.
- Annual inflation adjustment.
- Per-pupil funding allocation for students attending prekindergarten, without any offsetting reduction in compensatory education funding.

#### **The Montgomery County Board of Education opposes—**

- Any retreat from funding identified in BTE.
- Additional state mandates, unless accompanied by sufficient and ongoing state funding.

In addition, meeting the needs of our rapidly expanding diverse student population requires recognition of the additional resources needed to both meet educational needs and fulfill mandated monitoring and reporting requirements.

#### **The Montgomery County Board of Education also supports—**

- Additional funding to support English for Speakers of Other Languages
- Reimbursement for students placed by state agencies at the Regional Institute for Children and Adolescents (RICA).
- Additional funding necessary to implement Maryland's pre-K for all children initiative, to ensure it is not an unfunded mandate.



### ■ SPECIAL EDUCATION NONPUBLIC TUITION

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) share the costs of providing services for special education students who are served in nonpublic schools. The program requires local school districts to pay 300 percent of the average per-pupil cost and, since 2010, 30 percent, rather than 20 percent, of any amount in excess; MSDE is required to fund the remaining 70 percent, rather than 80 percent. The Nonpublic Tuition Assistance Program has been beneficial in supporting our obligation to provide appropriate services to students who require intensive special education services.

#### **The Montgomery County Board of Education supports—**

- Restoring the 80/20 cost-sharing formula of the Nonpublic Tuition Assistance Program.

#### **The Montgomery County Board of Education opposes—**

- Any attempts to increase the local share of tuition for special education students served in nonpublic schools.

### ■ PUBLIC FUNDING FOR PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Nonpublic schools are subject neither to state accountability measures nor to the same legal requirements as public schools, such as those set out in special education laws and teacher certification regulations. With the increasing unmet needs in public schools, state funds must be targeted to address the needs of public school students in Montgomery County and throughout the state.

#### **The Montgomery County Board of Education supports—**

- Strong accountability for all public dollars spent on education.

#### **The Montgomery County Board of Education opposes—**

- Appropriation of public funds for private and parochial schools.
- Direct aid to private and parochial students.
- Tuition tax credits, vouchers, or tax credits as a means of reimbursing parents who choose to send their children to private or parochial schools.
- Continuation or expansion of providing textbooks to private schools.

## LOCAL BOARD AUTHORITY

THE MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION *establishes, through regulations, broad statewide policies and mandates, with local boards of education responsible for establishing policies and procedures for the public schools within their jurisdiction. While the General Assembly has a role in crafting Maryland's Education Article, any unfunded requirements should be discretionary or authorizing, rather than mandatory. By retaining decision-making authority at the local level, including for operational issues such as school calendars, a board of education can best balance educational practices, available resources, public input, and accountability.*

### ■ CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENTS

In creating the state board and local boards of education, the General Assembly has delegated to them the responsibility for development of content standards, curriculum, and assessments. The state board establishes standards and the local boards adopt and implement locally developed programs with local funding to ensure that these standards are met and students are prepared to meet graduation requirements. The state and local boards of education can best balance educational practices and available resources to ensure that all students, schools, and school districts are held accountable for their work.

#### **The Montgomery County Board of Education supports—**

- Maintaining the authority of local boards of education to determine educational policy, curriculum, graduation requirements, and administration.
- Retaining decision-making authority at the local level.

#### **The Montgomery County Board of Education opposes—**

- Any efforts by the General Assembly to legislate curriculum or assessments, firmly believing that this role belongs to local boards of education in conjunction with the state board.



### ■ CHARTER SCHOOLS

In 2003, the General Assembly enacted legislation that created a charter school program. While the Maryland Public Charter School Act establishes an alternative means within a public school system to provide teaching and learning, there remains the need for a strong accountability system to ensure that any public charter school funds are appropriately spent.

#### **The Montgomery County Board of Education supports—**

- Reaffirming that the sole authority for establishing public charter schools is vested in local boards of education, with an appropriate procedure for appeals of local decisions.

#### **The Montgomery County Board of Education opposes—**

- Efforts to expand charter school authority beyond local school boards.
- Efforts to weaken academic or fiscal accountability requirements.
- Any attempt to deprive charter school employees of the rights and responsibilities of other public employees.

### ■ SCHOOL OPERATIONS

Maintaining local board authority on educational policies and administration is essential to the success of our public schools. We firmly believe that local boards of education are best positioned to assess operational needs and develop implementation plans that best balance educational practices, academic needs of students, available resources, and community interests.

#### **The Montgomery County Board of Education supports—**

- Maintaining local decision making around school calendars.
- Maintaining local decision making around school start times.
- Maintaining local decision making around school staffing.

#### **The Montgomery County Board of Education opposes—**

- Mandating all public school districts begin the school year after the Labor Day holiday.
- Mandating school start times for public schools.
- Mandating staffing ratios.

THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION is committed to providing a high-quality, world-class education that ensures success for every student through excellence in teaching and learning. A high-quality education is the fundamental right of every child. Montgomery County Public Schools is steadfast in ensuring that all students will receive the respect, encouragement, and opportunities they need to build the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be successful, contributing members of a global society.

### ■ EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) believes that investments in early childhood education are both essential and wise to ensure success for every student. A longitudinal study by the National Institutes of Health concluded that investing in early childhood education can yield impressive economic benefits, including an 18 percent return on investment. MCPS is a significant partner in Montgomery County's Early Childhood Initiative, which ensures that family-focused programs and services for young children are neighborhood-based, effective, responsive to cultural diversity, make a measurable, positive difference in children's well-being, and help prepare them for success in school.

#### **The Montgomery County Board of Education supports—**

- State fiscal support for any expansion of local prekindergarten services.
- Statewide initiatives fostering school readiness through the provision of high-quality early childhood programs, including child care.
- Efforts that encourage the provision of an array of services by a variety of agencies.
- Efforts to ensure affordable child care co-payments for parents.
- Efforts that protect the safety, health, and well-being of children in child care.



### ■ NUTRITION AND HEALTH

Thousands of low-income children in Maryland depend on school meals for the nutrition they need to learn and grow. Maryland Meals for Achievement provides funding for schools with high concentrations of poverty to provide breakfast to all students, regardless of family income. Most recently, of the 10 schools that are eligible to apply for the program and are not in the program, only one was approved for the program in FY2015. As a result, 75 of the 85 eligible schools have now been selected to participate in the program. Applications were submitted to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) for the currently enrolled schools, as well as a priority list for those eligible but not in the program. Additionally, the Summer Food Service Program ensures that children in lower-income areas continue to receive nutritious meals during the summer months when school breakfasts and lunches are not available.

#### **The Montgomery County Board of Education supports—**

- Expansion of Maryland Meals for Achievement as an entitlement, to include all eligible schools that choose to apply.
- Efforts to increase federal funding for the Summer Food Service Program

#### **The Montgomery County Board of Education opposes—**

- Statewide approach that limits a school district's ability to respond to unique and unusual circumstances.

### ■ SAFETY AND SECURITY

Safety in public schools has become increasingly important as threats to national and community security have taken on new meaning. The prevention of disruption and violence has always been a key component of long-term effective school safety strategies. The pursuit of a safe environment must be tempered by a balanced emphasis on the protection of individual student rights.

#### **The Montgomery County Board of Education supports—**

- Innovative initiatives and funding that speak to strategies that ensure a safe and secure learning and working environment for students and staff, including those that address gang prevention and involvement and promote targeted interventions to reduce gang activity.

#### **The Montgomery County Board of Education opposes—**

- A statewide approach that limits a school district's ability to respond to unique and unusual circumstances.



## ■ HOME SCHOOLING

Maryland law recognizes home instruction as an alternative to public school enrollment and as a means for students to receive regular, thorough instruction. Currently, home school students are expressly authorized to participate in public school standardized testing.

### **The Montgomery County Board of Education opposes—**

- Any requirement that home school students be allowed to participate in public school athletics or other extracurricular activities.

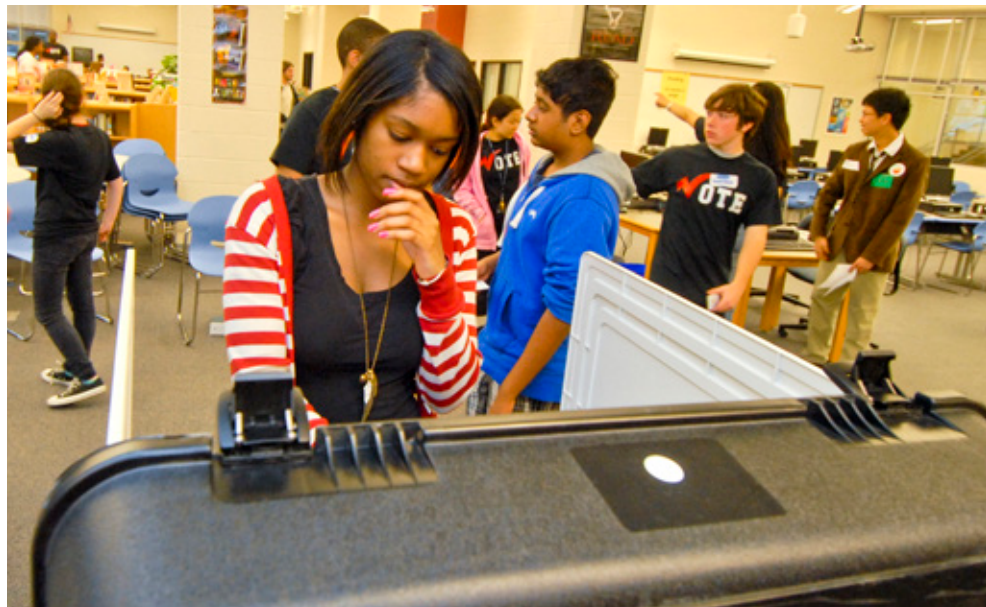
## ■ STUDENT MEMBER OF BOARD OF EDUCATION

The position of student member of the board of education (SMOB) is established by the Annotated Code of Maryland, with rights varying from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Some jurisdictions have SMOBs with extremely limited powers, while, in at least one instance, the SMOB has the same powers as the adult elected member of the board.

With the exceptions of boundary changes, capital and operating budgets, collective bargaining, negative personnel matters, and school closings, the Montgomery County SMOB has a vote equal to those of the seven adult board members. The SMOB has a vote on issues such as administrative appointments and policy, as well as a vote on the appeals that the board decides in its quasi-judicial role.

### **The Montgomery County Board of Education supports—**

- Local legislation expanding the SMOB's voting rights to be equal to those of adult Board members, with the exception that the SMOB shall not vote on negative personnel matters.







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