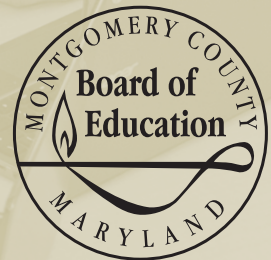


MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Legislative Platform

2016 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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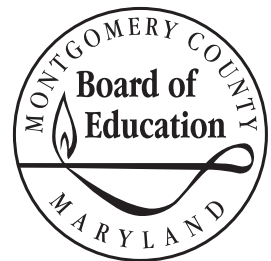
Legislative Platform

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LEGISLATIVE POSITIONS

- Funding/Accountability.....4
- Local Board Authority.....8
- Students10

- Board of Education's
Fiscal Year 2017
Operating Budget Interests....13



■ 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 systems must be adequately funded to prepare our youth to support future economic health. We urge you and the entire Maryland 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 2016 Legislative Session 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, 12,361, has occurred in elementary schools, the equivalent of 17 elementary schools. Over the next six years, we anticipate enrolling another 11,526 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. Providing adequate school capacity will not be possible given the existing state school construction funding stream. State construction dollars are critical. 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 high-quality learning environments.

Adequacy of Education Funding

The Passage of the *Bridge to Excellence in Public Education Act of 2002* (BTE) resulted in a dramatic change to education funding in Maryland. Even during challenging fiscal times, the General Assembly has held the line on education funding. 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 "prekindergarten for all children" initiative and should be on a per-pupil basis, without any off-setting reduction in compensatory education funding.

Common Core State Standards

By unanimous vote in June 2010, the Maryland State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in mathematics and English/language arts (ELA) and literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. These research and evidence-based standards are internationally benchmarked and reflect the knowledge and skills most valued by employers and higher education. The CCSS serves as the foundation for curriculum development and instructional practices designed to ensure all students are prepared for college and careers. This initiative provides a clear understanding and aligns expectations for what each student should know and be able to do at each grade level. The resulting curriculum continues to be a local responsibility (or state-led, where appropriate). MCPS adopted the CCSS and continues to align and refine curriculum across all grade levels. 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 continue the work to provide students with opportunities to achieve the underlying goals and objectives.

■ CAPITAL BUDGET/SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION

State construction funds continue to be inadequate to meet the substantial needs of our burgeoning student enrollment. The total FY 2016 state Capital Budget for school construction was \$318.2 million. MCPS requested \$147.9 million and received \$39.84 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 project completion.

In the 2015 legislative session, the Maryland General Assembly passed the *Capital Grant Program for Local School Systems with Significant Enrollment Growth or Relocatable Classrooms*. This legislation provided a total of an additional \$20 million in state funding for counties that have significant enrollment growth or an average of more than 300 relocatable classrooms over a five-year period. Through this legislation, MCPS received an additional \$5.86 million for our school construction program. Therefore, the total state funding for FY 2016 is \$45.7 million.

Since the 2007–2008 school year, enrollment has increased by more than 16,107 students. Total MCPS enrollment is projected to increase by 11,526 students and will reach 165,378 students by the 2020–2021 school year. Adding the projected 11,526 increase to the 16,107 increase since 2007 results in a total increase of 27,633 students, spanning the 13-year period from 2007 to 2020. This remarkable enrollment growth, coupled with maintenance needs in aging schools, continues to put enormous pressures on school facilities and the Capital Improvements Program.

For the 2015–2016 school year, 378 relocatable classrooms will be in use at schools to address enrollment that exceeds 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 difficult to meet the educational needs of our students.

The Montgomery County Board of Education supports—

- A robust and innovative statewide school construction and renovation funding plan for FY 2017 to address school facility needs.
- Additional legislative action targeted to increase 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 in support of student achievement.
- Developing a mechanism to ensure that locally forward-funded projects remain eligible for state funding, even after the project has been completed.

FUNDING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Changing the state funding process from a project-by-project allocation to a “block grant” allocation to allow Local Education Agencies (LEA) 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 an LEA.
- 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.
- Construction of schools at any lesser standards than previous years.

■ STATE EDUCATION FUNDING

Maryland’s public schools are ranked among the best 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 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. 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 FY 2013 and capped at 1 percent, expired in FY 2015. Currently, schools are back to the 5 percent cap. The language now reads that the target per-pupil foundation amount for the prior fiscal year increases by the same percentage as the lesser of—

- the increase in the implicit price deflator for state and local government expenditures for the second prior fiscal year;
- the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for the Washington-Baltimore metropolitan area, or any successor index, for the second prior fiscal year; or
- 5 percent; or

If there is no increase in the implicit price deflator for state and local government expenditures for the second prior fiscal year or in the CPI-U for the Washington-Baltimore metropolitan area, or any successor index, for the second prior fiscal year, the amount is the target per-pupil foundation amount for the prior fiscal year. In FY 2016, the inflation adjustment was 1.37 percent.

FUNDING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Montgomery County Board of Education supports—

- Full commitment to BTE funding, including the GCEI, compensatory education, and student transportation.
- Mandating full GCEI funding as the Maryland General Assembly did, starting in FY 2017.
- 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 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 (ESOL).
- Reimbursement for students placed by state agencies at the John L. Gildner Regional Institute for Children and Adolescents (RICA).
- Additional funding necessary to implement Maryland’s “prekindergarten for all children” initiative to ensure it is not an unfunded mandate.



■ SPECIAL EDUCATION NONPUBLIC TUITION

Montgomery County Public Schools and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) share the costs for providing services for special education students who are served in nonpublic schools. The program requires local school systems 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 neither subject 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 Maryland 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 systems 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 Maryland 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 Maryland 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. MCPS firmly believes that local boards of education are best positioned to assess operational needs and develop implementing 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.
- Maintaining local decision making around school sizes.

The Montgomery County Board of Education opposes—

- Mandating all public school systems 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. The 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

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 in improving educational attainment and reducing dependency on social services. 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, and responsive to cultural diversity; make a measurable and 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

Thousands of low-income children in Maryland depend on school meals for the nutrition they need to learn and grow. Maryland Meals for Achievement Program provides funding for schools with high concentrations of poverty to provide breakfast to all students, regardless of family income. Of the 86 MCPS schools that are eligible to participate in this program, 78 schools have been selected to participate in SY 2015–2016. Applications were submitted to the Maryland State Department of Education for the 77 schools previously enrolled in the Maryland Meals for Achievement Program, as well as a priority list for those eligible but not in the program. One additional school was selected for the upcoming school year, thus bringing the total to 78.

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. This summer, more than 400,000 meals were served to children in 129 locations throughout Montgomery County.

The Montgomery County Board of Education supports—

- Expansion of the Maryland Meals for Achievement Program 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—

- Limiting the number of eligible schools from participation in the Maryland Meals for Achievement Program.

■ MENTAL HEALTH

Montgomery County Public Schools recognizes that the social and emotional well-being of a student is crucial to academic success in the classroom; the school district's Strategic Planning Framework envisions a classroom where students are equipped to make constructive and healthy decisions that promote hope, personal well-being, and social behavior.

The Montgomery County Board of Education supports—

- Additional funding to expand support for students showing symptoms of mental health illnesses and issues.
- Additional funding for substance-abuse programs.
- Creation of state coalitions, including work groups, to combat suicide through the assessment of prevention policy.

■ 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 system'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 homeschool students be allowed to participate in public school athletics or other extracurricular activities without the inclusion of monetary remuneration.

■ 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.

■ BOARD OF EDUCATION'S FISCAL YEAR 2017 OPERATING BUDGET INTERESTS

THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION is empowered by state laws and regulations to adopt an annual operating budget for Montgomery County Public Schools. Each year, the Board desires to provide an opportunity for a proactive and comprehensive review of the annual operating budget, starting with the adoption of a set of guiding objectives or budget interests. The Board develops and reviews budget interests annually to inform our operating budget development, enhance transparency, and provide the appropriate platform for a full discussion of the operating budget. The Board's desired outcome is to adopt an annual operating budget, aligned with the district's Strategic Planning Framework that maximizes available resources and strives to meet the unique needs of each child in every location in Montgomery County regardless of race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

1. Meet the needs of each individual child, including his/her health and social and emotional well-being, ensuring no child "falls through the cracks."
2. Support challenging opportunities that draw out and maximize the individual strengths of all students by promoting instructional strategies and curriculum that engage students through innovative teaching practices and 21st century physical spaces.
3. Recruit, train, and retain highly skilled staff who are culturally proficient and are reflective of our student population, and support them to create the conditions that support schools and students.
4. Provide multiple pathways enabling graduates to be globally competitive and college and career-ready.
5. Provide a strong start for all students before kindergarten and provide support for students who enroll in Montgomery County Public Schools after kindergarten and are not performing on grade level to help them catch up.
6. Continue to reduce variability of performance outcome data, and differentiate the allocation of resources based on school need so that outcomes are not predictable by race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.
7. Maintain and improve our programs and processes for special education students and English language learners.
8. Focus attention to improve teaching and learning in secondary schools, in particular middle schools, with special emphasis on mathematics and to facilitate implementation of the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards.
9. Expand and support community engagement with a high expectation of customer service in our schools, responsive to the unique needs of our students, families, and communities.
10. Organize, optimize, and promote flexibility in the use of resources.



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