

Maryland General Assembly Session

2019

Legislative Platform

MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION



Montgomery County Public Schools, Rockville, Maryland



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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*“Education is not the filling of a pail,
but the lighting of a fire”*

~ WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

In Montgomery County, we believe in—

- ▶ **INVESTING** in early childhood.
- ▶ **PREPARING** all students to be college, career, and community ready.
- ▶ **WORKING TOGETHER** with families and communities.
- ▶ **PROVIDING** equitable opportunities to all students.
- ▶ **SUPPORTING** physical, social, and psychological well-being for all students.
- ▶ **CREATING** a safe and secure environment for all students.
- ▶ **PRESERVING** local autonomy over education.
- ▶ **FULLY FUNDING EDUCATION.**
- ▶ **PROTECTING** Montgomery County Public Schools from any and all negative effects from statewide public education funding reforms.



Investing in early childhood

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (MCPS) believes that investment in early childhood education is both essential and wise, to ensure success for every student. An analysis of studies about the economic value of prekindergarten (pre-K) showed that “children who participate in pre-K do better academically, physically, and socially throughout their lives.”¹ This includes attaining higher education levels and larger salaries over the course of their lives. MCPS is a significant partner in Montgomery County’s early childhood efforts, which ensure that family-focused programs and services for young children are neighborhood-based, effective, responsive to cultural diversity, make a measurable and positive difference in children’s well-being, and help prepare them for success in school.

MCPS believes that special emphasis should be placed on early childhood programs for students with disabilities and those who have experienced trauma. Research indicates that it is imperative to provide as many early interventions in full-day settings, as early as possible, to students with disabilities and those who may have experienced trauma. As we continue to provide comprehensive, research-based services to young children, we believe in providing simultaneous social and emotional support.

The Montgomery County Board of Education supports—

- ▶ Universal prekindergarten services.
- ▶ Statewide initiatives that foster 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 subsidies and copayments for parents.
- ▶ Efforts that protect the safety, health, and well-being of children in child care.

¹Wat, A. (2007). Dollars and Sense: A Review of Economic Analyses of Pre-K. *Pre-K Now*; Washington, D.C. (page 27). Article available here: www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pes_assets/2007/pewpkndollarsandsensemay2007pdf.pdf.



Preparing all students to be college, career, and community ready

Curriculum and Assessments

THE MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION 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 Maryland State Board of Education-determined 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.

MCPS believes in building a strong foundation for all students. In 2010, MCPS Curriculum 2.0 was developed to support students' critical and creative thinking skills, as well as essential academic success skills. In an effort to continuously provide better learning materials for students, MCPS is engaged in a curriculum-selection process to select the most up-to-date instructional materials to support learning. We are upgrading the existing MCPS curriculum for the elementary grades in a way that will better engage students and teachers, and dedicate more learning time to subjects such as the arts, information literacy, science, social studies, and physical education.

MCPS is committed to producing a challenging and comprehensive middle school program that provides the basis for continuous improvement in teaching and learning. Such a program includes high expectations for academic achievement for all students and an environment that is supportive of the social, emotional, and physical development of students in Grades 6, 7, and 8.

Additionally, MCPS strives to create opportunities and pathways for all students. In addition to offering a comprehensive high school program, a number of high schools have created signature programs that integrate a specific focus or distinguishing theme with the skills, concepts, and instructional strategies of some portion of a school's curriculum. The theme or focus becomes the vehicle for teaching the traditional high school curriculum in a fresh, interesting, and challenging way.

The Montgomery County Board of Education supports—

- ▶ Maintaining the authority of local boards of education to determine educational policy, curriculum, additional graduation requirements, and administrative functions.
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Additional and incentive funding for coding and computer science classes throughout the pre-K–12 educational continuum.
- ▶ Additional funding for expanding career and technology education (CTE) programs.

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.
- ▶ Efforts to expand charter school authority beyond local school boards.
- ▶ Efforts to weaken academic or fiscal accountability requirements.

Working together with families and communities

MCPS BELIEVES that education is the responsibility and purview of the school system and the community, collaboratively. Family and community engagement is a top priority in Montgomery County.

MCPS sponsors regular Parent Academy Workshops. Designed to “inform, educate, and inspire families.” These workshops help to empower families as advocates and partners in their children’s education.

Parents testify regularly to the MCPS Board, participate in stakeholder groups around system policy and decision making, and serve as ambassadors to the community for the public school system. MCPS believes this continued partnership and collaboration is vital to the success of all students.

The Montgomery County Board of Education supports—

- ▶ Including family and community stakeholder voices in policy decisions.
- ▶ Encouraging parents to be involved in their children’s schools.
- ▶ Supporting and partnering with parent-teacher associations throughout the local school system.

The Montgomery County Board of Education opposes—

- ▶ Any initiatives or mandates that do not include stakeholder input.
- ▶ Any efforts to decrease funding for translation (both written and oral) services.



Providing equitable opportunities to all students

THE MISSION of Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) is to ensure that every student has the academic, creative problem solving, and social emotional skills to be successful in college, career, and community, regardless of his or her background. While many of our students achieve at the highest levels, not all have had the opportunities, support, and resources needed to meet their full potential. MCPS is committed to addressing disparities in student outcomes by closing gaps in opportunity and achievement for all students, in all classrooms, in all of our schools. This means allocating adequate funding to schools, creating cross-cluster programs, offering magnet and other specialized programs, and ensuring that all students have the resources necessary to learn and thrive in MCPS.

Students come to school with many external concerns, which may include being hungry, tired, sick, or lacking support. In MCPS, we work to remove institutional barriers for students and create a program that works for each individual student.

Nutrition

Thousands of low-income children in Maryland depend on school meals for the nutrition they need to learn and grow. The Maryland Meals for Achievement program provides funding for schools with high concentrations of poverty to provide breakfast to all students, regardless of family income. The MCPS 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—

- ▶ Increased state funding for specialized programs, including career and technology education (CTE) programs, to make them more readily available to all students.
- ▶ Ensuring that any chosen accountability system is implementable and focused on rigor for all, eliminating disparity based on race and economic circumstances. Also, it must focus on meaningful progress for English Learners and special education students that supports teaching and learning.
- ▶ 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 MCPS Summer Food Service Program.

The Montgomery County Board of Education opposes—

- ▶ Mandating increases in specialized programs without funding.
- ▶ Decreasing funding for one group, while increasing funding for others.
- ▶ Limiting the number of eligible schools from participation in the Maryland Meals for Achievement program.



Supporting physical, social, and psychological well-being for all students

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS RECOGNIZES that the social and emotional health and well-being of students are critical to, and precursors for, promoting opportunities to learn and support academic success in the classroom. Promoting learning environments where all students have the skills to make constructive and healthy decisions that promote and support hope, personal well-being, and social behavior aligns with the MCPS core values of learning, relationships, respect, excellence, and equity.

The Montgomery County Board of Education supports—

- ▶ Creating and funding a comprehensive suicide-awareness, prevention, intervention, and postvention model to support students and reinforce effective coping and help-seeking strategies.
- ▶ Additional funding to expand training of staff members and support for students showing signs and symptoms of mental health illnesses and concerns.
- ▶ Additional funding for substance-use awareness and education, interventions, and supports.
 - ▶ Investigation into a recovery school model to support the academic success of students who are in recovery from any substance misuse.
 - ▶ Creation of staff member training on substance-use awareness and signs.
- ▶ Additional funding to expand training for staff members on trauma-informed schools and care.
- ▶ Additional funding to expand restorative justice supports to promote and support culture and climate in school, and address the disproportionate suspension of Black or African American, Hispanic/Latino students, and students receiving special education services.
- ▶ The continued promotion of an atmosphere of respect and nondiscrimination for all students and staff members, regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, marital status, socioeconomic status, intellectual ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical characteristics, or disability.



Creating a safe and secure environment for all students

SAFETY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS has become increasingly important as threats to security at the national and local levels have taken on new meaning. The prevention of disruption and violence always has 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.
- ▶ An increase in the \$250 fine for drivers who illegally pass stopped school buses.

The Montgomery County Board of Education opposes—

- ▶ A statewide approach that limits a school system's ability to respond to unique and unusual circumstances pertaining to the safety and security of students.



Preserving local autonomy over education

Local Control

THE MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION establishes, through regulations, broad statewide policies and mandates. Local boards of education are responsible for establishing policies and procedures for the public schools within their jurisdiction.

By retaining decision-making authority at the local level, boards of education can best balance educational practices, by using available resources, appropriate public input, and measures of accountability. Such authority includes, but is not limited to, school calendars, curriculum, testing, staffing, and procurement issues.

The powers and mandatory duties of the local boards of education are defined in the *Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland* (Art. § 4-101 through § 4-108). The Board's primary responsibilities, aligned to support the strategic plan of the school system, include but are not limited to, making decisions on educational, budgetary, facility, and financial matters. As stated in the law, "each county board shall seek in every way to promote the interests of the schools under its jurisdiction."

The Montgomery County Board of Education opposes—

- ▶ Executive, legislative, and/or agency actions and proposals that would reduce or circumscribe local board authority or create unfunded mandates.



Fully funding education

Investing in our Children's Future

THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION believes that today's investments in MCPS are crucial to a prosperous economy, strong business growth, and students' ability to compete for good jobs in a global, high-tech economy. School systems must be adequately funded to prepare our youth to support future economic health. We urge 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.

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 Maryland General Assembly has held the line on education funding. Maryland's Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirement, along with the BTE funding paradigm, ensures that the goals of adequacy, equity, and excellence are met. State aid must be sustained to keep pace with rising standards for student performance.

In 2016, House Bill (HB) 1415 created the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education, chaired by William Kirwan and colloquially referred to as the Kirwan Commission. The Commission is tasked with reviewing the current funding formulas and determining if they are still adequate. Although MCPS has submitted a letter with supports and concerns to the Commission, we implore the General Assembly to not pass legislation without attached funding, to maintain the autonomy of local boards of education, and to support the growing needs of low-income students, English Learners, and students with disabilities. It is critical that any legislation coming from these recommendations include cost formulas that clearly indicate inputs and provide increases in the state operating aid.

Capital Budget/School Construction

STATE CONSTRUCTION FUNDS continue to be inadequate to meet the substantial needs of our burgeoning student enrollment. Limited state funding has forced Montgomery County to forward-fund critical capital projects and then await state reimbursement, which sometimes is not made until years after project completion.

Since 2008, nearly 15,000 seats have been added to increase school capacities through new school openings and expansion of existing schools; however, our school system continues to be significantly behind in meeting elementary school space needs. Without adequate school-construction funding, MCPS will be forced into an overreliance on relocatable classrooms, while increasingly aging and less-than-adequate facilities will become the norm.

The Montgomery County Board of Education supports—

- ▶ Full commitment to funding any legislatively mandated Kirwan Commission recommendations, including the Geographic Cost of Education Index (GCEI), compensatory education, and student transportation.
- ▶ Mandating full GCEI funding as the Maryland General Assembly did, starting in FY 2017.
- ▶ Annual inflation adjustment.

CONTINUED...

Fully funding education CONTINUED

- ▶ Additional funding through state technology grants for schools with technology deficits that may cause extended testing schedules.
- ▶ Exempting school buses that are used to transport public school students from any toll or fee charged for traveling on state roads.
- ▶ A robust and innovative statewide school construction and renovation funding plan for FY 2020 to address school facility needs.
- ▶ Additional legislative action targeted to increase state school-construction funding.
- ▶ Expanding the state's bonding capacity to meet Maryland's growing school facility needs.
- ▶ Revising current standards for the Interagency Committee square footage allowances 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.
- ▶ Changing the state-funding process from a project-by-project allocation to a "block grant" allocation to allow Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to have 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 percentage.
- ▶ Any initiatives or mandates that do not include additional state allocations.
- ▶ Any attempts to increase the local share of tuition for special education students served in nonpublic schools.
- ▶ Any attempts to cut funding for English Learner students.
- ▶ 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.

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 the continually growing population of English Learners.
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Altering the definition of full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment used to determine Maryland State education aid to public schools by including children enrolled in half-day prekindergarten (multiplied by 0.5) and in full-day prekindergarten.
- ▶ Additional funding to support programs for unaccompanied minors.
- ▶ Restoring the 80/20 cost-sharing formula of the Nonpublic Tuition Assistance Program.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

WHO ARE WE? 2018-2019
OUR SCHOOL SYSTEM

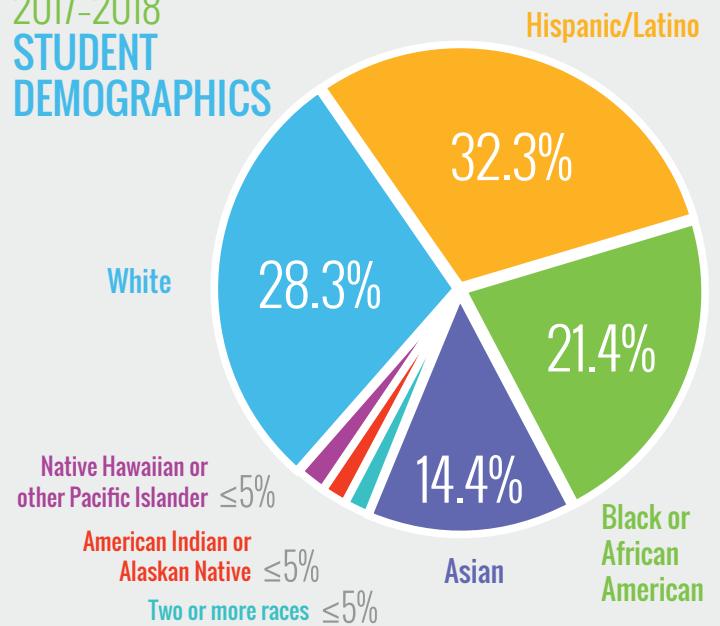
163,000 STUDENTS*





205 SCHOOLS  **STUDENTS***

*unofficial count as of October 2018

134 ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS **40** MIDDLE SCHOOLS **25** HIGH SCHOOLS
1 CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER **5** SPECIAL SCHOOLS **1** ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

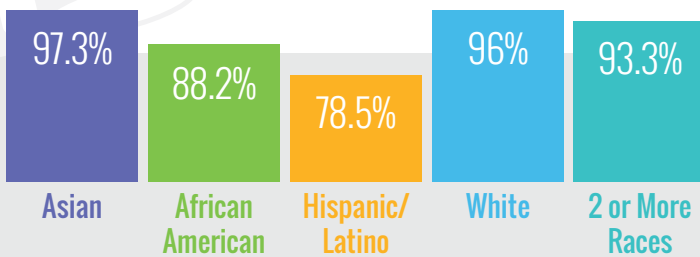
2017-2018 STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



 SIZE 14TH LARGEST school system in the United States, Largest in Maryland	 ENROLLMENT +23,801 2017: 161,546 2007: 137,745	 BUSES 100,000 MILES A DAY = more than 4 times around the equator / 1,307 Buses	 FACILITIES 25 MILLION square feet of school and office space to clean and maintain
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2017 MCPS GRADUATION RATE OVERALL 89.5%

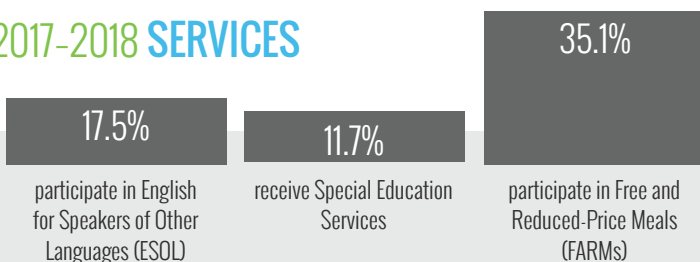
MCPS overall graduation rate **ABOVE** national and state average.



TOP 5 LANGUAGES 2017-2018

English	67.8%
Spanish: Castilian	14.8%
Chinese	9.3%
Amharic	0.99%
French	0.93%

2017-2018 SERVICES



OUR WORKFORCE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

24,246



For more information about this document, please contact:
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