

Tosha M. Dyson

Hi, my name is Tosha Dyson, I am a parent of a 5<sup>th</sup> grade student at Maryvale Elementary school. I am also the mother of a pre school toddler. I am here to present the case for the Title 1 program for Maryvale Elementary School. I live in the community and represent a number of parents in the community. I am concerned about the risk that is being taken with the English program (EP) students at Maryvale. The Title 1 program is designed to provide financial assistance to schools with a high number of poor children to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards. With that said, Maryvale Elementary is a community based school that is not focused on the community. Where majority of the students attend or have attended this school, live within the community which is made up of low income families. An astounding 68.8% of our students receive free and/or reduced meals. Yet this community does not have access to the resources that Title 1 schools have. Maryvale has never been a Title 1 school, but seems that with a FARMS academic average at just above 30% proficiency in reading and math, that it should fall under the eligibility guidelines to provide academic support and learning opportunities in reading, mathematics, preschool, after school programs and summer programs.

Title 1 is funded to public schools with the highest percentages of children from low-income families. In our case the French Immersion (FI) program hides the true nature of the needs of the (EP) students. If the FI program was not there or the EP student numbers were separated from the FI numbers you would see that Maryvale qualifies for the Title 1 program.

Maryvale Elementary community population is increasing and has changed from it being a senior populated area to one populated with the children of the baby boomers who now have elementary aged children. MCPS had the foresight to see the need for social services in this community by providing for Linkages to Learning to come into the school to provide special services to at risk children and their families. However, Linkages cannot provide the academic support needed for this community. This is why having Title 1 at Maryvale is so important to this community because we need an Extended Learning Opportunity program during the summer and we do not have a summer school program for our children. Our children do not have after school programs available to them through the school. MCPS does not fund staffing for homework clubs to help assist our children to reach their academic goals; currently a small one is being funded by a private corporate community grant who also funds a summer literacy club where 55 students were enrolled in the summer of 2007. Why

is it that our taxes are not serving our students? The need is there but MCPS is not responding adequately. We are also in need of staff resources for our children, for example; ESOL for our Hispanic speaking families, reading and math resource specialists,

smaller class sizes and GT programs to identify those talented students in disadvantaged situations. This year we lost the staff position for the PADI program specialist!

And last but not least, it is well documented that a hungry child is not a ready learner. At Maryvale, only children, who are approved for free lunches, qualify for free breakfasts. Many students, who need it, for whatever reason, do not qualify for FARMS. The failure on the part of this school system to guarantee that all students are ready to learn is unacceptable, especially when there is a Maryland Meals For Achievement (MMFA) program right here in the state and we're ineligible because we are not at 40% FARMS. Well we are at 68.8% FARMS in the Maryvale school community! We want to know what your plans are to insure that we achieve the academic success that is needed to meet the Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) for EP students. The first item on the FY 2008/2009 MCPS strategic plan is "Ensure success for every student" and parents of the English program at Maryvale would like to know why you are ignoring the need for programs like Title I and MMFA that have a proven track record of providing needed additional support to achieve this success.