



...Our First Priority

**Montgomery County Association of Administrative & Supervisory Personnel
Montgomery County Education Association
Service Employees International Union, Local 500**

Testimony to the Board of Education
FY 2010 Operating Budget
October 16, 2008

Good evening, President Navarro and Members of the Board of Education. I am Rebecca Newman, President of MCAASP, and with me this evening are Merle Cuttitta, President of SEIU, Local 500, and Doug Prouty, Vice President of MCEA. We are jointly presenting testimony on the FY2010 Operating Budget.

We want to thank you, Mrs. Navarro, and the Board for your support and leadership during budget deliberations with the County Council last spring. Your work produced a budget that:

- preserved class size,
- supported the continuation of programs aimed at the success of all students, and
- prioritized the funding of employee contracts including salary and benefits.

As union leadership representing 21,000 employees, we have worked collaboratively with you and the system leadership to prioritize student achievement as our number one priority. We have jointly acknowledged that achieving this goal is dependent on a well-trained and high functioning workforce.

We understand, as do you, the fiscal situation facing MCPS and Montgomery County for the coming year. We also understand that planning for the FY 2010 Operating Budget will not be business as usual. As we have worked with you collaboratively for the past several years, we are committed to continuing that collaboration in the challenging times ahead. We are asking that you, as the system elected leadership, continue to commit to that collaboration as well. That means a continued focus on and commitment to the employees that are responsible for the positive student results and safe school environment within which children learn. Without a workforce that is respected, valued, and supported, these continued gains in student achievement and our continued reputation as one of the best school systems in the nation will not be possible. We believe that there are specific commitments that are necessary for the continued success of MCPS. These are the areas that we hope you will continue to commit to and work with us and the community to achieve:

1. A commitment to maintain, as much as possible, class size initiatives;
2. A commitment to continue health benefits for all of our employees, benefits that provide care and support to them and their families;
3. A commitment to protect our current employees in MCPS ; and,
4. A commitment to putting our employees first as the best and only way to ensure that our students are always first.

We are asking you to pledge your energy and determination to work with us to bring these priorities back to both the students and employees of Montgomery County. Thank you.