

**Montgomery County Association of Administrators and Principals
Montgomery County Education Association
Service Employees International Union, Local 500**

**Testimony to the Board of Education
FY 2010 Operating Budget
October 15, 2009**

Good evening, President Brandman and Members of the Board of Education. I am Doug Prouty, President of MCEA, and with me this evening are Joanne Smith, Vice President for the Elementary Chapter of MCAAP, representing Rebecca Newman, President of MCAAP, and Merle Cuttitta, President of SEIU, Local 500. We are jointly presenting testimony on the FY2010 Operating Budget.

We want to thank you, Mrs. Brandman, and the Board for working with us to protect the employees of MCPS during the budget process last fall and winter. We also appreciate your publicly acknowledging the sacrifice made by our members in agreeing to forego the negotiated salary increase for the current school year, which amounted to \$89,000,000. That sacrifice was made in the interests of the students of MCPS and the county as a whole.

This economic crisis has affected everyone. The employees of MCPS interact every day with students whose lives have been most affected. As we enter into contract negotiations, it is imperative that we recognize the stress this causes on top of the demands mandated by NCLB and the reduction of resources necessitated by the budget cuts over the past two years. Our work together this year should focus on ways that we can reduce that stress. We will need to be creative and open to new ideas, processes, and structures in order to achieve this goal. Some of these will involve utilizing new technologies to communicate necessary information to or get feedback from people in the field in ways that value the one asset we cannot increase-time.

This work is, of course, based on our shared priority of student achievement for all of the students of MCPS. We have jointly acknowledged that achieving this goal is dependent on a well-trained and high functioning workforce.

An important part of maintaining a high functioning workforce is the extent to which educators feel ownership over the decisions that most affect their work. The teacher gauging the levels of understanding in her classroom; the building service worker figuring out the best way to prepare the building for the next day; the principal planning for a community meeting to inform parents of school policies- all of these employees know best how to make their work most effective. They know how to tailor their work to the needs of their audience. We need to trust them, and continue, to the greatest extent possible, to provide them with the tools they need to continue to hone their abilities and expertise.

With that in mind, we look forward to our work together to shape a budget and negotiate contracts that focus on the well being of your employees and your students.