

MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

850 Hungerford Drive ♦ Rockville, Maryland 20850

April 29, 2008

The Honorable Mike Knapp, President
Montgomery County Council
Stella B. Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Mr. Knapp:

Pursuant to Section 20-63 of the Montgomery County Code, I am submitting on behalf of the Montgomery County Board of Education, a copy of resolutions adopted by the Board of Education on April 28, 2008, regarding non-recommended reductions of the FY 2009 Operating Budget Request of Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS).

The members of the Board, the superintendent of schools, and I look forward to continuing to work with you and the other members of the Montgomery County Council to develop an operating budget for FY 2009 that continues the tradition of excellence for all children in our schools. Despite the fiscal issues that the county faces this year, the long-term challenges faced by our school system require that we continue to advance the initiatives and standards of excellence that have made our school system one of the models for the nation. I am confident that the County Council will continue to provide the essential financial support that has made this success attainable and planted the seeds of future success for all our children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy Navarro".

Nancy Navarro
President

NN:jp

Enclosure

Copy to:

Members of the County Council
Members of the Board of Education
Dr. Weast
Executive Staff
Mr. Ikheloa
Ms. McGuire

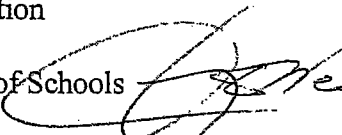
Phone 301-279-3617 ♦ Fax 301-279-3860 ♦ boe@mcpsmd.org ♦ www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

April 28, 2008

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jerry D. Weast, Superintendent of Schools 

Subject: FY 2009 Operating Budget: Non-recommended Reductions

On April 15, 2008, the County Council considered Spending Affordability Guidelines (SAG) for the Fiscal Year 2009 Operating Budget. The Council decided to leave in place the preliminary SAG adopted on December 10, 2007. The SAG allocates \$1,873,300,000 (excluding grants and enterprise funds) to the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). This total is \$104.8 million (5.3 percent) less than the Board of Education's Requested Budget of \$1,978,149,523 (excluding grants and enterprise funds). This is \$53.7 million less than was recommended by the county executive in his FY 2009 Recommended Operating Budget.

As noted in my earlier review of the county executive's recommended cuts, reductions of this magnitude would significantly impact the ongoing efforts of the Board of Education to continue raising the bar for student achievement and closing the gap in student performance by race and ethnicity and for students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, and students challenged by the effects of poverty. Members of the Board are well aware of the changing demographics of our county and the increased demands on our schools for improved performance and accountability, while at the same time meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student enrollment. The Board has adopted and reaffirmed a multiyear strategic plan for MCPS. It is critical to continue the progress we have made in our elementary schools through ongoing funding of our Early Success Performance Plan. We also must build on this success by increasing our investment in middle school reform, continuation of the Middle School Magnet Consortium, and increased hours-based staffing for special education in middle schools.

At the same time, the Board is aware of the financial difficulties that Montgomery County faces this year. The Board's operating budget request is the lowest percentage increase in more than a decade, excluding the mandatory contribution to the Retiree Health Trust Fund. Nevertheless, the reductions implied by the adopted SAG would be unprecedented in total and nearly as great as a percentage as the reductions made during the early 1990s. Such reductions would have a direct and serious effect on the quality of instruction in schools, including a significant loss of

classroom staff. This memorandum provides my recommendations to the Board to comply with the SAG requirements.

Background

In accordance with the Montgomery County Code, Section 20-63, each county agency and the county executive "must provide ...prioritized expenditure reductions that would be necessary to comply with the recommended budget allocation." In accordance with this provision, I am submitting a recommendation for the Board's consideration to comply with SAG. I requested through staff that the Council provide a formal request to the Board of Education to submit a list of potential reductions. County Council staff indicated that it was not necessary to make this request and expects the Board to comply with legal requirements.

If reductions in the MCPS FY 2009 Operating Budget Request of the magnitude suggested by SAG are required as a result of Council action, then it will be necessary to reduce a variety of positions in state Category 1, Administration; Category 2, Mid-level Administration; Category 3, Instructional Salaries; Category 6, Special Education; Category 10, Operation of Plant and Equipment; and Category 11, Maintenance of Plant. The exact number and type of positions would depend on the amount of reductions made by the Council in each state category.

Therefore, I am recommending the following for the Board's consideration and action.

WHEREAS, On April 15, 2008, the County Council declined to modify the preliminary Spending Affordability Guidelines for the FY 2009 Operating Budget as adopted on December 10, 2007; and

WHEREAS, The Spending Affordability Guidelines include an allocation to the Montgomery County Public Schools of \$1,873,300,000 (excluding grants and enterprise funds), \$104.8 million less than the Board of Education's Request of \$1,978,149,523; and

WHEREAS, The Board of Education supports implementation of the negotiated agreements with each of the Montgomery County Public Schools employee associations; and

WHEREAS, Implementation of the strategic plan for the Montgomery County Public Schools requires continuing the funding for the elementary school initiatives that have resulted in significant gains in student achievement and increasing our investment in middle school reform, continuation of the Middle School Magnet Consortium, and expansion of hours-based staffing for special education in middle schools; and

WHEREAS, In accordance with the Montgomery County Code, Section 20-63, each county agency and the county executive "must provide ...prioritized expenditure reductions that would be necessary to comply with the recommended budget allocation"; and

WHEREAS, If the County Council requires reductions in the FY 2009 Montgomery County Public Schools Operating Budget Request of the magnitude implied by the recently adopted Spending Affordability Guidelines, then it will be necessary to reduce a variety of positions in state Category 1, Administration; Category 2, Mid-level Administration; Category 3, Instructional Salaries; Category 6, Special Education; Category 10, Operation of Plant and Equipment; and Category 11, Maintenance of Plant; and the exact number and type of positions would depend on the amount of reductions made by the Council in each state category; and

WHEREAS, Reductions of this magnitude would have a direct and serious effect on schools, including the significant loss of classroom staff; now therefore be it

Resolved, That the Board of Education is aware of the financial difficulties that confront the county, but believes that the magnitude of reductions envisioned by the Spending Affordability Guidelines adopted by the County Council would significantly reduce the quality of education available in the Montgomery County Public Schools; and be it further

Resolved, That the Board of Education reaffirms its support for the implementation of negotiated agreements with its employee associations; and be it further

Resolved, That the Board of Education supports continued funding for the Early Success Performance Plan and expansion of middle school reform initiatives, continuation of the Middle School Magnet Consortium, and expansion of hours-based staffing for special education in middle schools; and be it further

Resolved, That the Board of Education requests the County Council to close the gap between the Board of Education's FY 2009 Operating Budget Request and the County Council's operating budget Spending Affordability Guidelines; and be it further

Resolved, That if budget reductions are required by the County Council, it will be necessary for the County Council to make non-recommended reductions harmful to students and schools, including a variety of positions in state Category 1, Administration; Category 2, Mid-level Administration; Category 3, Instructional Salaries; Category 6, Special Education; Category 10, Operation of Plant and Equipment; and Category 11, Maintenance of Plant; and the exact number and type of positions would depend on the amount of reductions made by the County Council in each state category; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution be sent to the county executive and County Council.

JDW:LAB:MCS:sz