

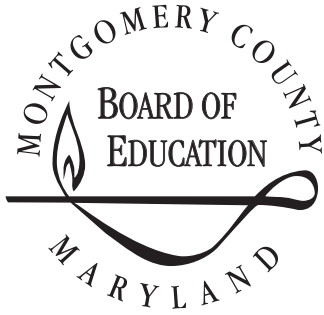


The Citizens Budget FY 2009

Montgomery County Public Schools

Rockville, Maryland





VISION

A high-quality education is the fundamental right of every child. All children will receive the respect, encouragement, and opportunities they need to build the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be successful, contributing members of a global society.



montgomeryschoolsmd.org

Check out the MCPS Web site for more detailed information about the FY 2009 Recommended Operating Budget.

Board of Education

Mr. Steve Abrams

Mr. Christopher S. Barclay

Ms. Shirley Brandman

Ms. Sharon W. Cox

Dr. Judith R. Docca

Ms. Nancy Navarro

Mrs. Patricia B. O'Neill

Mr. Ben Moskowitz
Student Member

Visit the Board of Education Web site at
www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/boe

School Administration

Dr. Jerry D. Weast
Superintendent

Mr. Larry A. Bowers
Chief Operating Officer

Dr. Frieda K. Lacey
Deputy Superintendent of Schools

December 13, 2007

Members of the Board of Education
Montgomery County Public Schools
850 Hungerford Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Members of the Board of Education:

I am pleased to present you with my recommended FY 2009 operating budget for the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). This budget was developed collaboratively with the three employee associations, and for the first time, with the leadership of the Montgomery County Council of PTAs. The community forums, online exchanges, and feedback we have received from parents, students, and staff across the county have played an important role in shaping this budget. It reflects the Board's commitment to continue the comprehensive reform we began eight years ago. And, it builds on the investments we have made that are preparing our students to meet the most rigorous standards so they can be productive members of society.

We are mindful of the very difficult fiscal environment confronting our community and we continue to take steps to spend in the most efficient manner. This includes zero-based budgeting that has saved taxpayers \$75 million since 2001, including savings and reductions of \$10.6 million in this year's budget. We have been careful to recommend funding for only a few targeted initiatives that are aligned with our strategic plan, *Our Call to Action: Pursuit of Excellence*, and that will keep our reform efforts moving forward. Consider the results so far:

- 93 percent of kindergartners can read simple text compared with 39 percent six years ago.
- 48 percent of fifth graders are taking sixth grade math or higher compared with just 2 percent in 2001.
- 68 percent of eighth graders are taking algebra compared with 36 percent in 1999. The national average is 42 percent.
- 72 percent of all high school students are enrolled in at least one Honors or Advanced Placement (AP) course and MCPS students significantly outperform the state and the nation on AP tests.
- African American students in MCPS passed more AP tests than in any other system in the country, except for New York City, which has nine times more African American students.

The total recommended budget for FY 2009 is \$2.1 billion, an increase of \$126.2 million over this year's budget. This includes an additional \$16 million to meet the health care needs of future retirees that we will ask the County Council to provide. With this cost excluded, the budget will increase by \$110.2 million, 5.6 percent above FY 2008.

This budget includes \$10.2 million in initiatives, focusing on the next phase of middle school reform, continuing support for the Middle School Magnet Consortium, enhancing support for special education, and assisting schools through the addition of counselors, elementary school assistant principals, and parent outreach specialists. State and county revenue shortfalls, unanticipated increases in enrollment, and continuing expenses, such as the skyrocketing cost of utilities and diesel fuel for school buses, have required us to scale back on some of our plans. However, we are adapting our budget to meet these demands.

We are fortunate to be a part of a community that places such a high value on education. I appreciate the steady leadership the Board has provided, as well as the support we have received from our county executive, County Council, and state legislators. The progress we have made would not be possible without your advocacy and commitment. This recommended operating budget will enable us to make the necessary economic adjustments without sacrificing the quality that our community expects and our children deserve.

Respectfully,



Jerry D. Weast, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

A Vital Investment – For Today and For the Future

Washington Post

December 4, 2007

Montgomery Hits A Testing Milestone For Black Students

1,000 AP Exams Passed, a National First

Black students in Montgomery County high schools passed 1,062 Advanced Placement tests this year, making the school system the first, along with the New York City public schools, to cross the thousand-test threshold.

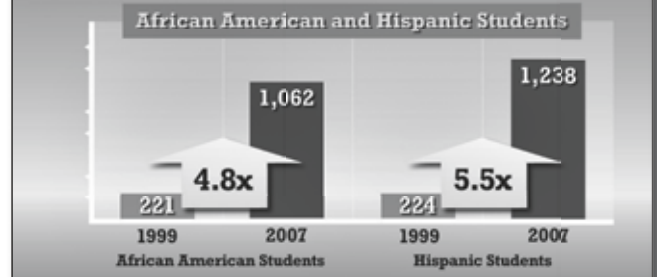
A Washington Post analysis of 2006 AP data among large school systems found that only New York City's black students passed more tests than Montgomery's, though the Montgomery school system has far fewer black students.

There are few more potent or promising words in the English language than the word "investment." It holds out both the prospect of great reward and the potential for risk, even as it lays the groundwork for future achievement. To this end, no word better encompasses the strengths, needs, accomplishments, and potential of the schools and students of Montgomery County. There exists no

more valuable a commodity than the education acquired by the young people of this community in our county public schools. And, there is no greater resource in helping these students to achieve that education than the teachers and staff who work so hard to inspire them and strengthen the schools. Moreover, as a number of recent studies confirm, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) delivers high student performance at a low cost. *Forbes* magazine this year ranked Montgomery County Public Schools fifth in the nation in terms of the value provided by the school district to the county's residents. And just two years ago the Maryland Tax Education Foundation, an independent think tank, concluded that MCPS provides taxpayers "a relative bargain" in terms of achievement-per-student cost.

The success we have achieved in our school system is remarkable. Upon graduation, each of the nearly 140,000 students who attend Montgomery County schools will have many individual successes to show for their hard work. The academic and extracurricular accomplishments of our students is noteworthy, from the many National Merit Scholars, to the record numbers of students taking Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and Honors courses, to the many students earning distinction and awards for excellence in the arts and music, debate and forensics, community service, and athletics, to name a few. The majority of our graduates go on to college, and many will earn advanced degrees. Still other MCPS students will join the workforce after graduation. For all of these students, their education is an investment that reaps obvious and immediate benefits.

Number of AP Exams Scoring a 3 or Higher by MCPS Students



Investing to Benefit the Community

Just as important are the economic, safety, and social dividends that our investment in education provides all of the residents of Montgomery County. Many MCPS graduates will stay or return here to live, becoming essential and productive members of the community. Indeed, Montgomery County has the highest number in the state of residents in the state who possess college or graduate degrees. This year alone, 168 former MCPS students began teaching in our schools. These and many other former students are a critical part of a growing, thriving Montgomery County, helping to raise real estate values and contribute to our increasingly knowledge-based economy. This factor becomes even more important during times of economic slowdown, when the benefits resulting from this home grown talent are even more striking.

A high-quality education not only increases earnings and productivity within a community, but, as research confirms, reduces the incidence of social problems that can strain



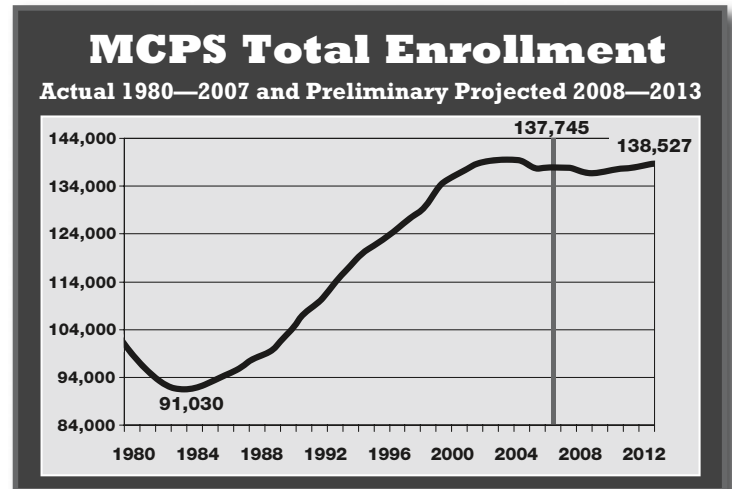
local economies. Well educated and fully employed communities are less likely to encounter the kinds of problems that can tear at their social and economic fabric. And there's yet another major benefit to the community as a whole from our investment in education – it helps us adapt and grow even stronger as the makeup of our community and school change. The rich diversity of Montgomery County schools affords our children a unique opportunity not only to learn about the world, but to live and experience other cultures. Our students are developing important skills for success in an increasingly global society.

An Investment for Changing Times

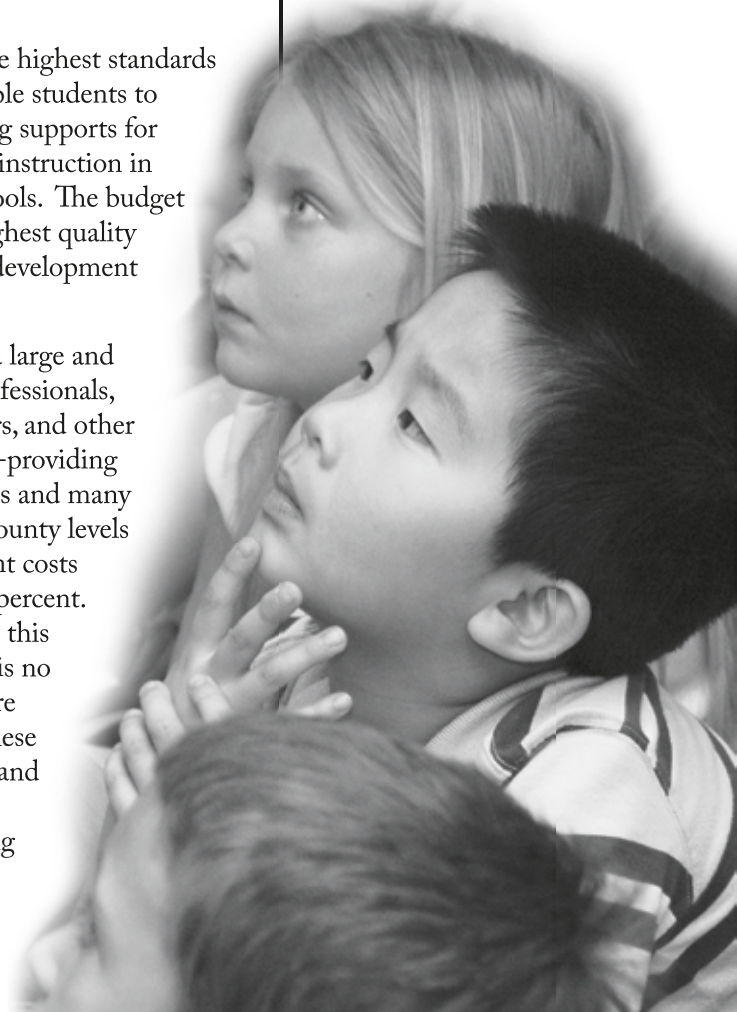
One of our primary focal points is ensuring that our students are prepared for the higher level of skills and knowledge they will need to be successful in college and competitive in the workforce. Our emphasis on rigorous coursework, tied to national and international standards found in Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs, lays the foundation for the continued vibrancy of our schools in the years to come. At the same time, we must be able to meet the growing needs of a community and student body that is increasingly diverse, racially, economically, and educationally. By targeting resources to programs proven to make a difference, we can continue to close the achievement gap for African American and Hispanic students and improve the performance of special education students.

The recommended budget reflects our continuing efforts to meet the highest standards of education. These include developing innovative courses that enable students to accelerate their learning, enhancing classroom technology, expanding supports for special education students, and a variety of other efforts to improve instruction in the classroom and pave the way for continued excellence in our schools. The budget also reflects our continued commitment to recruit and retain the highest quality teachers and other staff and provide them meaningful professional development opportunities.

The MCPS budget encompasses the diverse and ongoing needs of a large and well-run organization comprising more than 21,000 committed professionals, including bus operators, building service workers, principals, teachers, and other staff. It is a system larger than that of many cities. Like any service-providing organization, we have significant long-term and continuing expenses and many budgetary challenges, including revenue shortfalls at the state and county levels that impact our investment in education. Health care and retirement costs for staff continue to rise and inflation has increased to more than 3 percent. Enrollment that was expected to decline by more than 700 students this year has instead remained at last year's level. Next year's enrollment is no longer projected to decline, and that will result in an increase of more than 1,500 students above the previous projections for FY 2009. These unanticipated increases mean that MCPS will face many necessary and unavoidable costs for everything from staffing to transportation. In addition, the number of limited English proficient students requiring English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services has increased by more than 2,500 students in the last two years, and the



The rich diversity of Montgomery County schools affords our children a unique opportunity not only to learn about the world, but to live and experience other cultures. Our students are developing important skills for success in an increasingly global society.



A Vital Investment . . .

number of students eligible for free and reduced-priced meals increased by more than 4,800 students during this same period. Expenditures for diesel fuel for school buses and tuition payments for special education students who require nonpublic placement also are exceeding budgeted estimates.

Public input helps to shape FY 2009 budget

- 440 participants attended two forums in the fall
- 79 individuals testified
 - 42 parents
 - 20 community members
 - 14 students
 - 3 staff members
- 110 feedback cards submitted
- 19 online surveys completed

Next year's recommended budget reflects additional expenses of \$14 million for enrollment changes, inflation, and other cost increases, which means we have to make some difficult short-term choices. Although 75 percent of all spending is in schools, we have managed to target most reductions for the central office and support operations. Building a fiscally prudent budget that enables us to sustain our academic progress and achievement is a challenging process, with no perfect answers. That's why a solid understanding of the value of our investment in education is particularly important this year when considering the superintendent's recommended \$2.1 billion budget. As we move forward and scrutinize the best options, we will continue to solicit public input and feedback.

Investing through Public Engagement

Public engagement and collaboration are critical components of the school system's efforts to fulfill the Board of Education's ambitious agenda to strengthen education. At the core of this plan's success are our three employee associations, the support of the PTAs and other parent groups, and the backing of business and community groups and individuals. To enhance this interaction, we continue to make unprecedented efforts to provide information to, and gather information from, the community, to listen to the voices of the people who live here, and to solicit and receive public feedback. To enable members of the community to better understand how resources are used and recommendations are made, and to encourage broader participation and transparency in the process, MCPS has posted on its Web site and distributed in other ways, a variety of publications that allow the entire operating budget to be scrutinized.

The meetings and public forums on the budget, strategic plan, and middle school reform; online exchanges; mass distribution of feedback cards in six languages, and other efforts to collect the input of parents, students, and staff have played an important role in shaping this budget. The feedback we received on improving staff quality, strengthening middle school, school counseling, and parent outreach services; expanding gifted and talented programs; and increasing staffing for special education in the least-restrictive environment is clearly reflected in the recommended proposal. For instance, members of the community were clear in their desire to continue middle school consortium funding. This budget reflects that. Similarly, comments we heard during the planning process led directly to our recommendation to hire additional bilingual parent community coordinators and elementary school counselors. In short, this is a budget that reflects the goals and desires of the community that the school system serves.

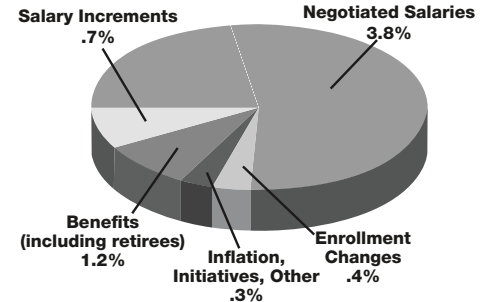


Comments heard during the planning process led directly to our recommendation to hire additional bilingual parent community coordinators and elementary school counselors.

A Budget that Keeps Pace with Present and Future Needs

In developing this budget, we focused our resources on efforts to sustain and accelerate the gains we have made in boosting student achievement and closing the achievement gap. The superintendent's FY 2009 recommended operating budget totals \$2,111,237,124. This is an increase of \$126,219,505 above last year's budget. We will be asking the County Council to provide \$16 million of that amount to meet the health care needs of future retirees. With this cost excluded, the budget will increase by \$110.1 million, or 5.6 percent. The budget includes an increase of \$89.3 million for salaries, including \$14.2 million for annual salary increments, and \$75.1 million for the cost of negotiated agreements with three employee unions. There is an increase of \$7.3 million for benefits for existing and retired employees. The effects of inflation and other cost increases required to

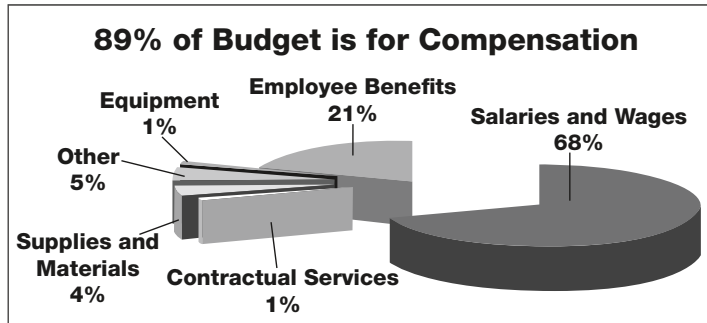
FY 2009 Operating Budget \$126.2 million increase 6.4% increase



FY 2009 SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDED OPERATING BUDGET SUMMARY OF BUDGET CHANGES (\$ in millions)

ITEM	AMOUNT	ITEM	AMOUNT
CURRENT FY 2008 OPERATING BUDGET (Nov. 2007)	\$1,985.0		
ENROLLMENT CHANGES		PROGRAM REDUCTIONS	
Elementary/Secondary	1.6	Central Services Reductions	(4.4)
Special Education	4.5	Support Operations Reductions	(2.0)
ESOL	1.4	School Based Reductions	(3.4)
Transportation/Food Service/Facilities/Plant Ops	1.0	Inflation Adjustments	(0.8)
Benefits for Staff	1.6	Subtotal	(10.6)
Subtotal	10.1		
		INITIATIVES	
		Elementary Assistant Principals	1.1
NEW SCHOOLS		Elementary Guidance Counselors	0.5
Elementary/Secondary	(2.5)	Least Restrictive Settings - Elementary Special Education Students	0.6
		Elementary School Lunch Hour Aides	0.4
		Elementary Focus Schools	0.6
EMPLOYEE SALARIES		Middle School Reform	3.0
Negotiated Agreements	67.0	Middle School Magnet Consortium Schools	1.2
Benefits for Negotiated Agreements	8.1	Expansion of Middle School Magnet Consortium	0.8
Continuing Salary Costs	12.6	Special Education Hours-Based Staffing for Middle Schools	0.9
Benefits for Continuing Salary Costs	1.6	Poolesville High School Whole School Magnet & Extended Day	0.1
Subtotal	89.3	Other High School Improvements	0.2
		Parent Community Coordinators	0.4
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS AND INSURANCE		Other Improvements	0.4
Employee Benefit Plan (active)	6.7	Subtotal	10.2
Employee Benefit Plan (retired)	1.0		
Retirement	(0.8)	OTHER	
Tuition Reimbursement	0.9	Retiree Health Trust Fund	16.1
FICA/Self-insurance/Workers' Compensation	(0.5)		
Subtotal	7.3	RECOMMENDED FY 2009 BUDGET	\$2,111.2
		Less enterprise funds	(54.7)
INFLATION AND OTHER		Less grants	(78.8)
Utilities	0.1		
Special Education Including Non-public Tuition	3.1	SPENDING AFFORDABILITY BUDGET	\$1,977.7
Transportation	1.7		
Facilities/Plant Operations/Maintenance	0.2	REVENUE INCREASE BY SOURCE	
Inflation	1.7	Local	98.4
Technology	0.4	State	27.4
Food Service	(1.4)	Federal	(0.2)
Other	0.6	Enterprise	0.4
Subtotal	6.4	Other	0.2
		TOTAL REVENUE INCREASE	\$126.2

A Budget That Keeps Pace . . .



maintain current service levels add \$6.4 million to the budget. Initiatives to improve student achievement total \$10.2 million, including \$5.9 million targeted at middle school programs, \$3.2 million for elementary schools, \$0.4 million to enhance high school programs, and \$0.7 million for programs serving all school levels. There is a total of \$10.6 million in reductions in the base budget. The majority of the budget—89 percent—is invested in our workforce. This investment in our employees is the foundation of our children's future success.

The Montgomery County Public Schools receives 74 percent of its operating budget revenue from the county, 20 percent from the state of Maryland, 3 percent from the federal government, and 3 percent from enterprise fund activities and all other sources. In FY 2009, an increase of \$98.4 million in local funding will be needed. We anticipate an increase of \$27.4 million in state aid, including \$18.4 million related to the Geographic Cost of Education Index, which adjusts the amount of basic state aid to reflect the higher cost of education in some districts.

FY 2009 OPERATING BUDGET INITIATIVES

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>FTE</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Elementary Schools:		
Counting LRE A Special Education Students in General Education Enrollment	10.00	\$602,187
Lunch Hour Aides	16.00	432,008
Assistant Principals	10.00	1,078,880
Increase Number of Focus Schools by 3/Realign \$ for 4 Schools	6.25	573,789
Guidance Counselors (5 Elementary, 1 ESOL)	6.00	529,092
Subtotal	48.25	3,215,956
Middle Schools:		
Middle School Magnet Consortium (MSMC)	14.75	1,222,934
Middle School Reform - Expand to 9 Additional Schools	23.40	2,988,126
Expansion of MSMC courses to Other Middle Schools	1.00	744,871
Hours-Based Staffing for special education at 3 Additional Middle Schools	17.75	923,102
Subtotal	56.90	5,879,033
High Schools:		
Support for ESOL Students with Interrupted Education	2.60	163,711
Poolesville High-Whole School Magnet & Extended Day-Phase in Grade 11		120,960
IB Diploma Program at Kennedy & Seneca Valley High Schools		79,310
Subtotal	2.60	363,981
Other:		
Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports - 15 more schools		173,862
Parent Community Coordinators	6.00	444,491
Professional Learning Communities Institute	1.00	88,183
Subtotal	7.00	706,536
TOTAL	114.75	\$10,165,506

Investing Wisely – Budget Transparency, Efficiency, and Accountability

As any financial advisor knows, one of the best ways to ensure a good return on an investment is to make sure that you know all there is to know about that investment. We strive to give every resident a voice in the budget and to make it as transparent as possible. The budget represents a shrewd and targeted use of the limited funds available in order to maximize student and community benefits.

The school system's strategic plan, which is reviewed and revised annually through extensive public outreach and participation, maximizes productivity through the setting of consistent goals and strategies. Resources are carefully evaluated for applicability to those goals in order to prevent waste. And expenditures are considered alongside targeted reductions and realignments in order to spend in the most efficient manner. As a result of these efforts, including zero-based budgeting, we have saved Montgomery County taxpayers \$75 million since 2001, which we have been able to redirect into the classroom and educational improvement initiatives. Similar types of savings have enabled MCPS to return nearly \$40 million to the county over the last 4 years.

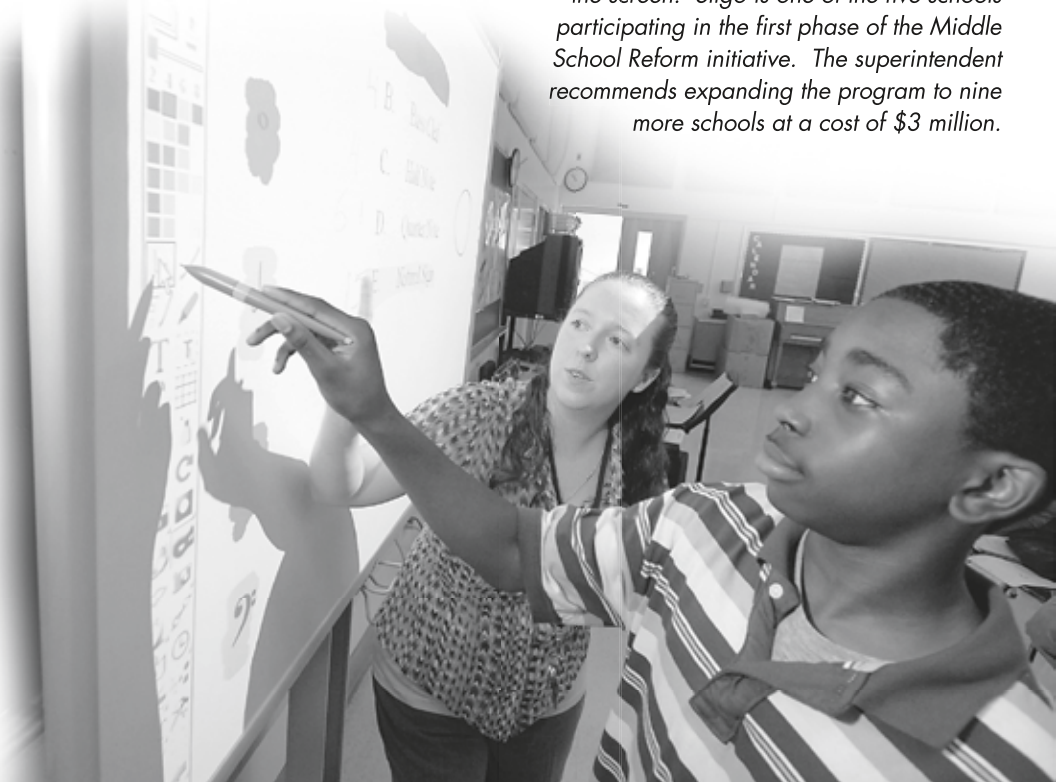
Some reductions have had to be made in programs, although the majority has been taken from the central office and support operations. This year's budget has \$10.6 million in savings and reductions. MCPS already has one of the lowest percentages of central administrative costs, 2.1 percent, in the entire state, and we continue to make use of a variety of innovative approaches to streamlining processes and eliminating waste. One such tool, the Process Design and Improvement Process model, has led to a significant improvement in food services. The MCPS Call Center, which handles community calls in both English and Spanish, saves time and money by increasing convenience for parents and reducing staff time spent answering basic questions. And the Copy Plus program has centralized copying throughout the school system, saving time and allowing teachers to focus on teaching.

Time and again, Montgomery County Public Schools has demonstrated the highest level of performance excellence. Last year, we were selected as a finalist for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, one of only 15 organizations nationwide, including corporations, nonprofits and government agencies, to achieve this honor. And, as several studies have recently noted, the education provided by MCPS is a relative bargain, delivering high academic results at a low per student cost. We know that in order to succeed in the classroom, we need to succeed as a business, by being responsive, accountable, efficient, and transparent to the residents of the community that we serve.

FY 2009 Operating Budget Reductions and Efficiencies **\$10,631,231**

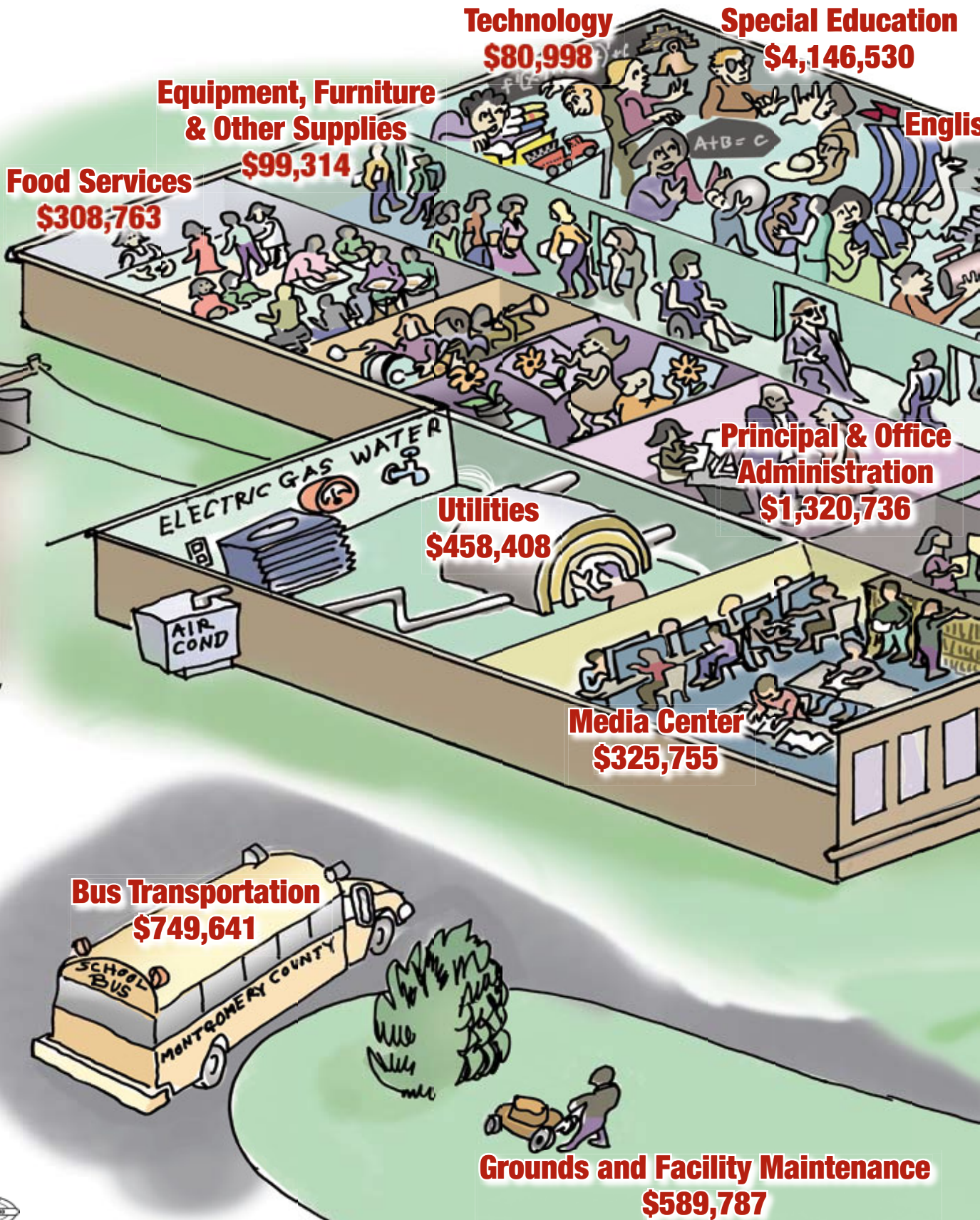
Central Office	\$4,367,462
Support Operations	1,983,468
School-based	3,488,982
Inflation	791,319

Sligo Middle School choral music teacher Elizabeth Khan uses a new interactive white board with student Darwin Akwo-Mboe, who uses a wireless mouse pen to move items on the screen. Sligo is one of the five schools participating in the first phase of the Middle School Reform initiative. The superintendent recommends expanding the program to nine more schools at a cost of \$3 million.



Overview of an MCPS High School

This illustration presents the typical annual costs to maintain one of the 25 high schools within



TOTAL: \$19,015,646

MCPS.

Extra Curricular Activities & Sports
\$420,191

Spanish Language Learners
\$411,139

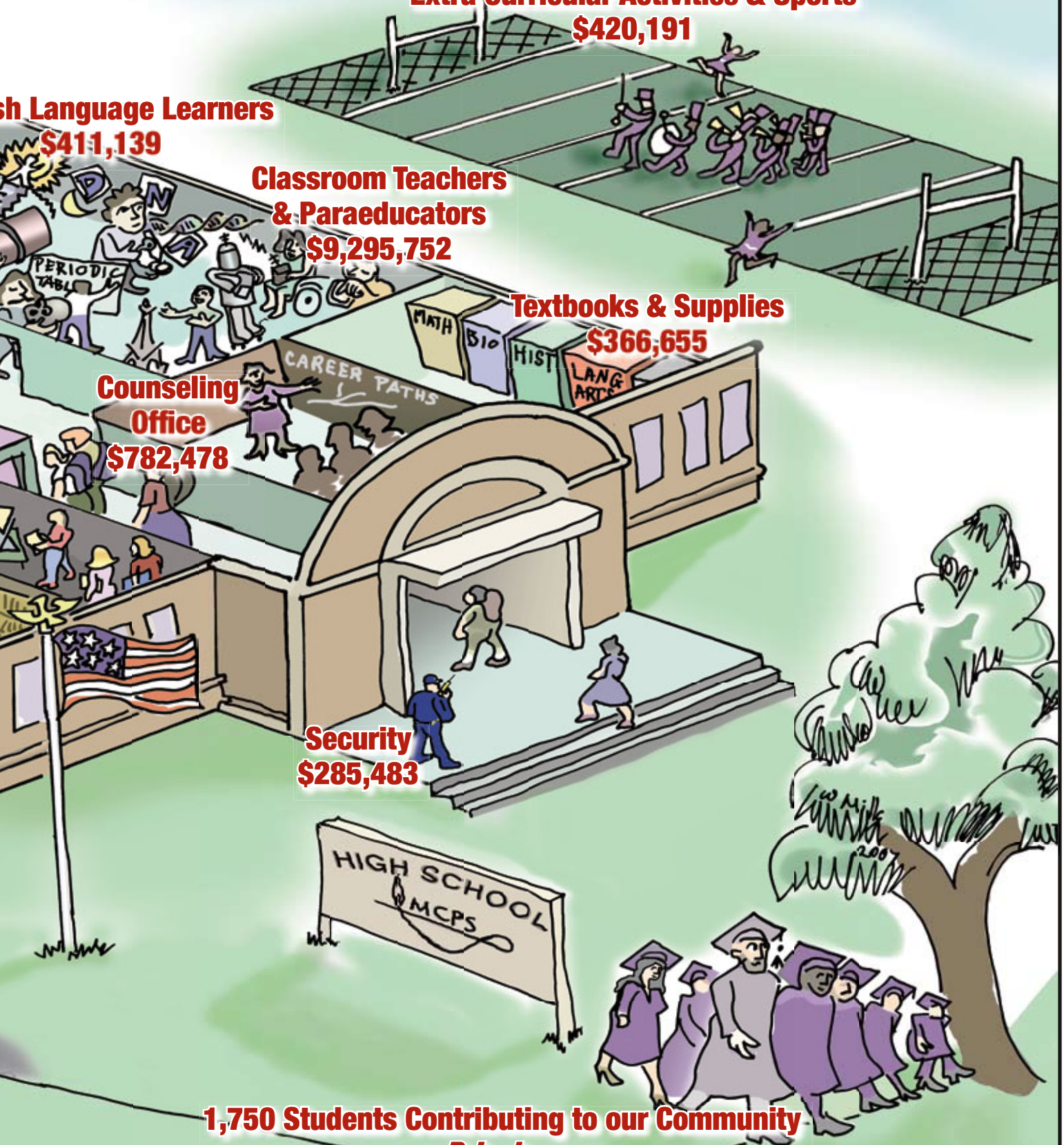
Classroom Teachers & Paraeducators
\$9,295,752

Textbooks & Supplies
\$366,655

Counseling Office
\$782,478

Security
\$285,483

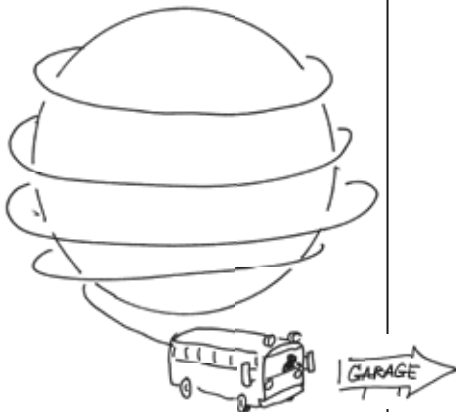
1,750 Students Contributing to our Community
- Priceless -



MCPS by the Numbers

MCPS Record of Success

- 93 percent of kindergartners are reading simple text compared with 39% six years ago.
- 48 percent of 5th graders are taking 6th grade math or higher compared with 2 percent in 2001.
- 68 percent of Grade 8 students are taking Algebra compared with 49 percent last year and 36 percent in 1999. The national average is 42 percent.
- 72 percent of all high school students are enrolled in at least one Honors or AP course.
- The percentage of AP exams taken by MCPS students that earned scores of 3 or higher was 73.7 percent compared with 63.1 percent for Maryland and 57.2 percent for the nation.



- 20 million** – Number of miles driven per year by MCPS buses to transport students
- 43** – Number of trips to the moon and back it would take to equal 20 million miles
- 33,000** – Dollar increase in the MCPS budget for every penny increase in bus fuel prices
- 17,000** – Number of school bus stops for MCPS students
- 9,506,197** – Number of lunches served to MCPS students each year
- 1,906,000** – Annual number of servings of fresh fruit for MCPS students
- 1,065,000** – Number of servings of baby carrots for MCPS students each year
- 19,234** – Number of gallons of homemade soup produced by the MCPS Central Production Facility last year
- 16,048** – Number of MCPS students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) in 2007
- 10,194** – Number of MCPS LEP students in 2000.
- 37,000** – Number of MCPS second graders who have heard the National Philharmonic Orchestra at Strathmore over the last four years as part of the MCPS music program.
- 61** – Percentage of the Maryland State Jazz Ensemble made up of MCPS high school instrumental music students
- 1,730,400** – Number of sheets of construction paper used in MCPS schools last year
- Chicago** – Where you could end up if you walked from Rockville on a path made out of these sheets laid end to end (655.5 miles)
- 91 million** – Total amount of scholarship money awarded to MCPS high school students entering college this year
- 24.5 million** – Total cost of 215,846,705 kilowatts of electricity used last year
- 499,884** – Number of ounces of paint issued for art classes last year (3,905 gallons)
- 294** – Number of MCPS National Board Certified teachers
- 64,882** – Total number of years of postsecondary schooling of MCPS teachers
- 240,000** – Number of rolls of toilet paper used in MCPS schools last year
- 14,204** – Number of miles that toilet paper would equal if unrolled
- 52,000** – Number of MCPS parents who are PTA members
- 1** – Rank of the size of the MCCPTA in the state of Maryland
- 24,208** – Number of Advanced Placement (AP) tests taken by MCPS students in 2007, more than in any previous year
- 2,093** – Number of AP tests taken by African American MCPS students in 2007.
- 1** – Number of school systems in the nation that had a higher number of African American students passing AP tests.
- 68** – Number of MCPS National Merit Scholarship award winners in 2006-07.
- 34** – Number of National Merit scholarship award winners in 1999-2000
- 1,393,488** – Number of pencils distributed to students by MCPS last year

Investing in Innovation for Success – From Pre-K to Graduation

The \$2.1 billion FY 2009 recommended MCPS operating budget includes funding for a wide range of needs, from integrating innovative learning technologies into the curriculum so that our students will remain on the leading edge, to keeping our classrooms warm. Supporting this budget furthers one primary goal—enhancing our students’ and schools’ ability to meet the most rigorous standards, raise achievement levels, and graduate productive members of society.

The cornerstone of our schools’ success is our workforce. We continue to attract the best teachers to our classrooms -- even as the recruitment competition with other school systems for these individuals intensifies. We’re able to do this because we compensate our teachers at the highest levels and provide them with the support and professional development they need to be the best at their jobs. This year, 68 MCPS teachers achieved the gold standard for the profession, earning certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, by far the largest number of any county in Maryland, bringing our total to 294. We know you can’t scrimp on the important stuff. That’s also why, whenever possible and appropriate, we introduce innovative learning technologies to the curriculum. We won’t waste money and we will use what we know works, employing quality teaching and research-based programs that can have an immediate and significant impact on student achievement.

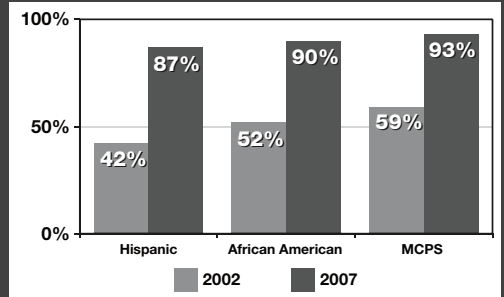
The Early Years—Laying the Foundation

The investment MCPS has made in full-day kindergarten has already made a meaningful difference. This year, we are building on this success. Study after study has shown that the early years are critical for laying a solid foundation for learning. Early involvement is particularly important in addressing the achievement gap between children from more and less affluent families. Often, our most vulnerable children lag behind their peers even before they begin kindergarten and, consequently, can remain behind throughout the rest of their schooling. When these young children have access to quality early childhood learning programs, however, we see the gap shrink and eventually disappear. It allows these children to start the traditional school schedule on an equal footing with their peers and helps improve overall achievement and learning. In short, it is a wise investment.

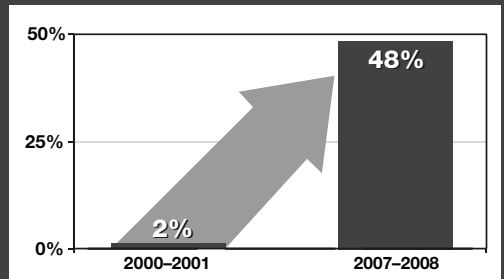
Our Early Success Performance Plan has achieved remarkable success in elementary schools by improving academic achievement and narrowing (and in some cases even eliminating) the achievement gap. Last year’s results on state tests which are mandated by the federal No Child Left Behind Act show that 96 percent of our elementary schools made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Other indicators are equally promising. Nearly half of all fifth graders take Grade 6 or higher math, an important marker for subsequent success.

This year, additional support is being targeted to students who need the most help. We are expanding our focus schools initiative, which addresses the needs of schools most impacted by poverty by lowering class size in the early years and through other special staffing support. These are proven methods for increasing achievement, particularly in high-needs classrooms. We also are providing additional counseling for students in the early years, particularly for those who may face challenging home situations, through the increased numbers of elementary school counselors.

93% of Kindergartners are Reading



5th Grade Students Enrolled in 6th Grade Math or Higher



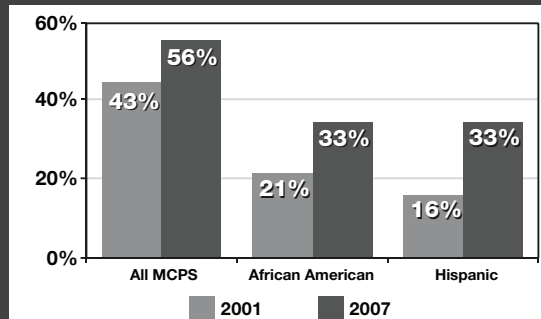


The FY 2009 recommended operating budget also builds on what we know works to strengthen school safety, discipline, and productivity. To help address a recurring issue of playground safety and insufficient recess coverage, the budget increases the number of lunch hour aides by 16 positions. And, as part of a multiyear MCPS initiative, this year's budget is adding 10 more elementary school assistant principals to the 30 added over the past two years. Assistant principals are essential in ensuring a safe and secure educational environment, and enabling the principal to focus on instructional leadership and educational achievement.

Middle School – Investing to Engage Students

After years of planning, this year marks the beginning of the exciting and challenging roll-out of our comprehensive strategy to strengthen curriculum, teaching, and learning in our 38 middle schools. These schools play a key transitional role for students as they begin to shape their views and set their academic, personal, and even professional goals. This year's budget is actually the second year of funding for this high-impact initiative, which will include an accelerated curriculum in science and English, as well as an improved school leadership structure and increased professional development for teachers. As with our elementary school reform initiative, which has already made a significant difference in raising the bar for students, the Middle School Reform initiative will have a special focus on closing the achievement gap for African American and Hispanic students, English language learners, students with disabilities, and students impacted by poverty.

Grade 8 Students Completing Algebra 1 or Higher



The FY 2009 recommended budget expands the Middle School Reform initiative to nine additional schools, at a cost of \$3 million.

This includes 57 positions (23 new and 34 realigned) to support the initiative. The funding will allow the hiring of new literacy coaches and math content specialists, as well as expanded professional development and training, and new rigorous curriculum and supporting materials.

A second important piece of the middle school initiative is the Middle School Magnet Consortium (MSMC). This exciting effort, built around innovative school themes, has had federal grant support that ends in FY 2008. This budget includes an additional \$1.2 million to extend certain elements of the program for another year. Initial evaluation data shows significant improvement in student achievement and a high degree of satisfaction at each of the schools that are part of the consortium.

The Middle School Reform initiative includes \$700,000 for FY 2009 to build on the success of the MSMC, and expand instructional program offerings to more middle schools. Schools will be able to choose from 21 new courses that have been field tested in the MSMC or Phase I middle schools of the Middle School Reform. Six of these courses will count for high school credit, including new courses in English and science. Students will be able to study robotics, information technology, and performing and fine arts.

The Middle School Reform initiative also involves strong parental involvement, and this year we have initiated a Parent Academy to help parents learn how to become more involved in their children's education and to enhance their advocacy skills. The Parent Academy offers free workshops to parents on a wide range of topics in several languages. The relatively small financial investment required, as a result of volunteer community partners at the program's core, will help parents be more effective partners in their children's education.



The good news is that MCPS is launching the Middle School Reform initiative from a strong base. Many of these students already are achieving at high levels. For instance, eighth graders this year are enrolled in accelerated math courses in record numbers, a critical predictor of success in higher level math in high school. Our state AYP results for middle school over this past year demonstrated improved performance, with 71 percent of schools making AYP. Similarly, African American and Hispanic middle school students continue to score better on state-mandated reading and math tests than their peers across the state. While we still have a long way to go, particularly in middle school, to fully close the achievement gap, we are making progress. The initiative will provide additional targeted interventions to students who need extra support. In this way we can raise the quality of teaching and learning in those schools for all students and set the stage for success in high school.

Strengthening High Schools

If middle school is a key transition point for students, high school sets the stage for what they will do after graduation. The rigorous and varied curriculum in our schools, combined with student excellence on a variety of assessments and other markers, has led *Newsweek* magazine, for the fourth year in a row, to include every eligible MCPS high school in the top three percent of all schools in the country (and five in the top 100 schools), in its annual ranking of the nation’s high schools. And this year three MCPS schools were included in the first-ever ranking of the nation’s best 100 high schools by *U.S. News and World Report*. Their ranking considers both AP test performance and performance in reading and math on state tests.

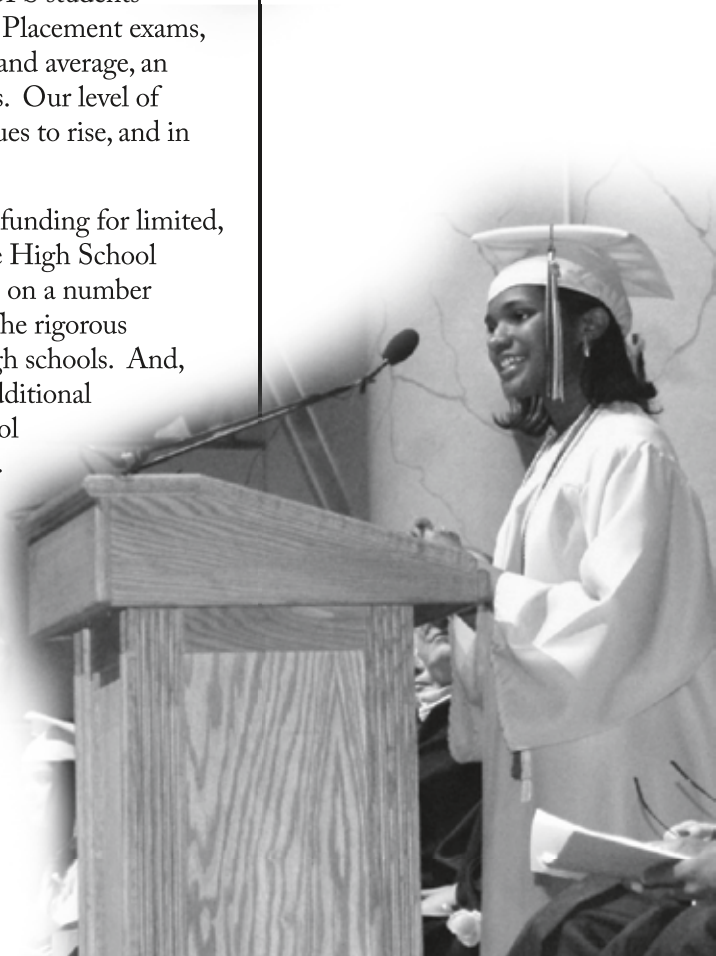
While these kinds of rankings are impressive, the attention they garner is the result of quality programs and demonstrated achievement. For instance, MCPS students outperformed their peers in Maryland and in the nation on Advanced Placement exams, with scores that were triple the national average and double the Maryland average, an indication of the high level of learning taking place in our high schools. Our level of participation in, and achievement on a variety of measures, also continues to rise, and in many categories, is among the best in the nation.

The MCPS budget is designed to further these achievements through funding for limited, but highly targeted and proven, initiatives for students. The Poolesville High School Magnet program, which serves highly able students and which focuses on a number of math and science themes, will be expanded this year to Grade 11. The rigorous International Baccalaureate Program is being added to two MCPS high schools. And, in an effort to provide even more accelerated learning opportunities, additional college level programs will be made available to the county’s high school students under an agreement with the University System of Maryland. Additionally, a joint effort between MCPS and the National Institute of Standards and Technology will help graduates of MCPS schools have the necessary science, technology, engineering, and mathematics skills to compete successfully in the global economy.

U.S. News and World Report names three MCPS high schools among the top 50 high schools in the nation.

- Thomas S. Wootton – 34th
- Walt Whitman – 40th
- Winston Churchill – 42nd

These were the only schools in Maryland cited by the magazine in its ranking of America’s 100 best high schools.



Investing In and Meeting the Needs of Special Populations

An important strength of the MCPS system is the diversity of its student population. Each year the face of the county changes, with increasing numbers of students from foreign lands and with unique educational needs. Our students now come from 163 countries and speak 134 different languages. Currently, 1 out of every 9 MCPS students benefits from an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program. This year, we are projecting an increase of 1,330 students. The program makes a difference. The school system's continuing focus on helping these students learn English, providing translation services, strengthening staff development, and expanding parent outreach provides critical support for the students and the community at large. And it is reflected in improved academic achievement as well. For instance, the number of ESOL kindergarten students who met the state reading benchmarks rose a remarkable 60 percent between 2002 and 2007, to 88 percent of the students meeting that standard.

MCPS will expand the hours-based staffing initiative [for special education] to three more middle schools at a cost of \$900,000 to bring the total number of schools with this staffing to 16.

Yet an array of challenges continues to confront students who are new to the country and to the school system. And the system is working to address these needs. The Middle School Reform initiative includes a number of additional strategies to meet the diverse needs of these students, including special education and ESOL programs, with a particular focus on those schools not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress benchmarks under the No Child Left Behind law. An exciting program that was begun last year as a pilot, the SEPA (Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement) program will continue to provide an innovative curriculum that helps students with limited formal schooling in their own countries, learn English, math, and entry-level job skills.

Support for students with disabilities continues to be a major area of attention in the MCPS budget. Nearly one out of every eight MCPS students benefits from the special education program. This year, we are projecting an increase of 211 students. As more special education students are successfully included in the general education classroom we have to be mindful of class sizes, especially in core curriculum areas. This budget includes additional staffing allocations at the elementary level to ensure that special education students who are in general education classes for more than 80 percent of their day are included in the class size calculations for regular classroom teachers, in addition

to the special education staff allocated to schools for these students. Special education teachers and paraeducators will continue to work closely with special education students and coordinate with general education teachers. MCPS also will expand the hours-based staffing initiative to three more middle schools at a cost of \$900,000, bringing the total number of schools with this staffing to 16. This initiative is designed to provide additional staffing based on the hours of service needed for students with disabilities. This year, the initiative will include nine additional special education teachers and nine paraeducators. Happily, we continue to see very positive results. Scores on Maryland state assessments for special education students continue to rise. Grade 3 special education students, for example, increased reading proficiency from 30 percent in 2004 to 65 percent last year. And, the number of students with disabilities who passed the English High School Assessment increased by more than 16 percentage points, from 28.6 percent in 2006 to 44.9 percent in 2007.

One of the central pieces of our educational strategy has been to address the issue of race and to turn it into a non-issue, both academically and socially.



Two years ago, MCPS “put race on the table” with a specific goal – to create a school system where student achievement is no longer predictable by race. Though we have some distance to go, we are making great progress.

One key way we are working to achieve this is by raising minority participation in AP and IB classes. These challenging classes raise the standards that students learn at and go a long way to preparing them for future success. Unfortunately, though the numbers are way up, the percentage of minority students remains lower because the overall number of students taking these classes has also increased. Another positive sign is that MCPS students continue to get higher test scores on the Maryland School Assessment, with African American and Latino students making significant gains over the last five years. Again, though there is still an achievement gap, it is closing, as minority students scores are rising more quickly. Still other evidence that our strategy of raising expectations for students is working to close the achievement gap is evident in the historically large gains in the number of African American and Hispanic students who are taking the SAT.

Rigor + Access + Equity = Success

Nivardo Candanedo, ESOL parent community coordinator, works with Edwin Diaz-Castro as part of Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement program. The pilot program at Wheaton High School and Thomas Edison High School of Technology is designed to help older Latino students with limited formal schooling learn English, math, and entry-level job skills. The FY 2009 budget recommendation would add 2.6 positions to expand the program to an additional school.



Conclusion – Securing Our Investment

“Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it.”

—Marian
Wright Edelman

The residents of Montgomery County are fortunate to have a world-class school system that not only benefits its students, but the entire community. No matter how successful a school system is, however, nor how much support it gets from the community, there are always new challenges, opportunities for improvement, and, unfortunately, additional costs. This year is no different. Higher than projected enrollment increases, inflation, and skyrocketing energy costs require us to adapt our budget to meet these demands. But because we have a strong program in place that has both addressed ongoing issues and long-term planning, we can adjust without sacrificing the quality that Montgomery County residents have come to expect.

Not every community reaps the kinds of advantages we do from our successful education system, either in terms of the individual benefits it provides students or the broader dividends it brings to the residents of the community as a whole. Too often we take those benefits for granted and forget that in order to ensure continued success we must maintain our high level of commitment and investment.

The 2009 budget reflects that investment in the form of targeted, ongoing, and enduring educational initiatives that will continue to raise standards, close the achievement gap and prepare our students to live successful and meaningful lives. It is a budget that takes into account some unexpected costs, but addresses them in the most positive way possible to ensure continued progress for our school system. And it is a budget that reflects the link between a strong community and the exceptional educational opportunities for the individuals who comprise that community. As the great educator John Dewey once said, “Education is not preparation for life. Education is life itself.”

Loiederman Middle School student Rockzana Flores spoke in support of the Middle School Magnet Consortium at the community forum on October 11, 2007. The superintendent recommends adding \$1.2 million to extend program elements another year after the federal grant ends.



Fiscal Year 2009 Operating Budget Timeline

Board of Education Community Forums	September 20, 2007 October 11, 2007
Superintendent's Operating Budget presentation	December 13, 2007
Sign-up begins for Board of Education public hearings	December 20, 2007
Board of Education public hearings	January 9 & 16, 2008
Board of Education budget work sessions	January 23 & 24, 2008
Board of Education action	February 5, 2008
Board of Education budget transmittal to County Executive/County Council	March 1, 2008
County Executive recommendations presented to County Council	March 15, 2008
County Council budget hearings	April-May 2008
County Council budget action	May 22, 2008
Final Board of Education action to approve FY 2009 Operating Budget	June 10, 2008

Operating Budget Documents

The Montgomery County Public Schools publishes and posts on its Web site a variety of publications that involve different ways of looking at the operating budget. Together, these documents enable citizens to understand how MCPS resources are used and what is recommended in the Operating Budget. MCPS is continually trying to improve the transparency of these budget documents. Below are details of the information available on the MCPS Operating Budget.

Call to Action: Pursuit of Excellence – The MCPS strategic plan, approved by the Board of Education, includes detailed multiyear strategies and initiatives implemented through the operating budget.

Program Budget – Summarizes the operating budget in more than 100 major programs across departments and offices. This year, the Program Budget references strategies and initiatives in the strategic plan and ensures that all strategies and initiatives are identified by program.

Recommended Operating Budget – Shows budget resources by office, department, and other units. It includes references to the units that carry out each program, describes in detail the work of each unit, shows all budget changes, and includes performance measures for each operating unit, a glossary of budget terms, an index of all items, and a section describing how to understand the budget. Often called the management budget.

Citizens Budget – Provides a brief introduction to the operating budget and includes details of major proposals included in the recommended budget, as well as summary statistical information about the operating budget.

Budget Fact Sheets and Summary Charts – Provide budget information on particular issues and charts showing revenue and expenditure trends.

Personnel Complement – Provides a detailed listing of all positions requested in the budget. Both the Program Budget and the Recommended Operating Budget include personnel complements organized by program and unit, respectively.

Budgeted Staffing Guidelines – The Program Budget and the Recommended Operating Budget include budgeted staffing guidelines for regular education and special education. These guidelines govern the allocation of personnel resources by school and special education disability.

Schools at a Glance – Provides a variety of information for each school, including programs from the Program Budget that are implemented at each school and personnel and expenditures budgeted for each school. A separate document, Special Education at a Glance, is published to show special education resources at each school.

All of these publications are available on the MCPS Web site at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/budget/



**Published by the Department of Communications
for the Department of Management, Budget, and Planning**

1336.08 • Editorial, Graphics & Publishing Services • 12/07 • 9,000