

BUDGET BRIEF

Montgomery County Public Schools Improving Student Achievement and Closing the Gap

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Superintendent Joshua P. Starr has recommended a \$2.4 billion operating budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016, which includes \$103.6 million in additional spending. Most of this increase will simply allow MCPS to provide the same services to a growing number of students and fund ongoing salaries, benefits, and operational costs. Dr. Starr is recommending \$8.2 million in strategic investments aimed at closing the achievement gap and preparing students for success in the 21st century.

Among these investments are programs and initiatives aimed at improving student performance and narrowing, and ultimately closing, the gap.

A MULTIYEAR STRATEGY

This is the third year of a multiyear budgeting strategy that makes specific investments in areas that will allow MCPS to manage its continued growth; narrow, and ultimately close, achievement gaps; and foster innovation to prepare students for the future. Over the past two years (FY 2014 and FY 2015), MCPS has made significant investments in gap-closing strategies, including—

- » Placing more than 50 additional English language arts and math teachers in secondary schools to lower class sizes and provide more individualized instruction in these core subjects;
- » Adding 17 elementary mathematics teachers to improve early-grade math instruction;
- » Adding 10.5 positions to improve the performance of English language learners in middle school; and
- » Increasing allocations for staff development teachers in middle and high schools.

INVESTING IN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Among the new investments Dr. Starr is recommending to improve student performance and narrow the achievement gap are—

- » \$339,000 for 5 content coaches who will work in 10 elementary schools to improve math understanding and achievement in elementary schools, which is aligned with the superintendent's five-point plan to improve math teaching and learning;
- » \$1.15 million, including nearly 7 positions, to continue implementation of strategies to improve the performance of middle schools;
- » \$255,550 to fund 6 positions to improve Interim Instructional Services to students who need temporary instruction outside of the school due to illness or other circumstances;
- » More than \$36,000 to increase training in the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol—or SIOP—model, a proven, research-based method for addressing the academic needs of English language learners; and
- » \$159,230 to add 2 instructional specialists to the Equity Initiatives Unit, which provides support to schools in developing the cultural competence of teachers and staff and equitable practices in the school.

GET INFORMED, STAY ENGAGED

You can learn more about the Superintendent's Recommended FY 2016 Operating Budget and how you can participate in the budget process by visiting the MCPS website at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org.