

BUDGET BRIEF

Montgomery County Public Schools Investing in English Language Learners

The Montgomery County Board of Education has recommended a \$2.3 billion Operating Budget for next school year (2014–2015). The budget is a 4 percent increase over this year’s budget and is just 2.5 percent above the minimum funding level required by state law. This budget will allow MCPS to continue to provide all students with access to a world-class education while managing its enrollment growth. The budget also invests strategically in key areas that will allow MCPS to narrow the achievement gap and prepare students to thrive in their future.

One area of strategic investment is improving the achievement of English Language Learners.

THE NEED

This year, about 13.6 percent of MCPS students receive English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services. This number has grown by more than 35 percent in just six years.

While the achievement of our ESOL students has improved in some areas, there are still significant gaps in performance that must be addressed. Some of the largest gaps are seen in middle schools.

For instance, by the end of Grade 8, nearly 60 percent of MCPS students passed Algebra 1 with a grade of C or higher. However, for ESOL students, it was just 19 percent.

THE PLAN

The Board’s budget request includes \$500,000 for the addition of 8 ESOL positions to keep up with expected growth in this area.

The Board also plans to invest \$1.45 million to begin a multiyear effort to address the performance of ESOL students. The funds will be used for 10.5 positions that will be shared among 21 middle schools with the highest ESOL populations.

These positions will assist the schools in personalizing instruction, analyzing data, and developing lesson plans to engage ESOL students, especially those who have started to show proficiency in English but aren’t demonstrating proficiency in core academic areas, such as reading and math.

GET INFORMED, STAY ENGAGED

You can learn more about the Board’s budget proposal on the MCPS website at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org, search “Operating Budget.” The budget is now in the hands of the Montgomery County Executive and the Montgomery County Council. Share your thoughts with them:

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- » **Montgomery County Council:** county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov, 240-777-7900