

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

August 11, 2021

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Monifa B. McKnight, Interim Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Virtual Academy Option for Unaccompanied Minors (06-10-2021-02-C)

During the *Final Adoption of the Fiscal Year 2022 Operating Budget* discussion, Board members requested the following information.

Question C

Ms. Silvestre requested information regarding any discussions that have been held regarding the use of the Virtual Academy for the unaccompanied minors entering the system. Has this system been tested to ensure that this is a viable option for these incoming students? Has anyone spoken with CREA students and staff regarding the viability of the use of the Virtual Academy for the incoming unaccompanied minors?

Response

As unaccompanied minors enter the system, the virtual academy is one option for consideration as they are enrolled and specific student needs are determined, alongside in-person options and wrap-around supports. Factors used to determine the best match and instructional placement for each student include social emotional needs, academic programs and support, and needed services. The virtual academy is staffed with a full counseling and ESOL team, and is continuing to hire to support the needs of special education students who have applied to the academy. In addition, the virtual academy has incorporated a wide range of courses, scheduling flexibility, and social emotional learning curriculum in order to meet the unique needs of each student, and specifically unaccompanied minors.

In the case of the Career Readiness Education Academy (CREA), virtual program options continue to be available as they were in 2020–2021. Since CREA currently operates only from two sites, Thomas Edison High School of Technology and Seneca Valley High School, part- or full-time virtual options will continue to address barriers associated with distance, travel, and having programs at scale. This includes customized schedules within and beyond the traditional school day to meet the needs of unique circumstances.

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Stephanie S. Sheron, chief of strategic initiatives, at 240-740-5652, or via e-mail.

MBM:SSS:PC:sjk

Copy to:
Executive Staff
Ms. Webb