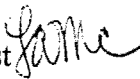


**MEMORANDUM**

December 4, 2014

TO: Health and Human Services Program  
Education Committee

FROM: Linda McMillan, Senior Legislative Analyst 

SUBJECT: **Unaccompanied Minors/Children Fleeing Violence**

On July 29<sup>th</sup> the Council received a briefing on the issue of unaccompanied minors/children fleeing violence who enter the United States and locate in Montgomery County. At this session, the joint Committee will receive updates on the number of children who have located in Montgomery County, the number that have registered for Montgomery County Public Schools, known or expected impacts on programs and services, and the efforts of the Office of Community Partnership's Children Fleeing Violence Crisis Workgroup. At the July briefing, time did not allow the Council to hear from non-profit partners who are working to support these children. Following updates from MCPS, DHHS, and the Office of Community Partnerships, the joint Committee will receive comments from Catholic Charities, the National Center for Children and Families, and Identity.

The following individuals are expected to participate in this briefing:

- Chrisandra Richardson, Associate Superintendent, Office of Special Education and Student Services, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)
- Uma Ahluwalia, Director, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- Nestor Alvarenga, Office of Community Partnerships
- Jacqueline Rishty, Senior Program Manager, Catholic Charities Immigration Legal Services
- Celia Rivas, Immigration Services Coordinator, Catholic Charities Immigration Legal Services
- Sheryl Brissett Chapman, Executive Director, National Center for Children and Families
- Diego Uriburu, Executive Director, Identity, Inc.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement reports that for Federal Fiscal Year 2014, 3,645 unaccompanied children were released to sponsors in the State of Maryland. Of those, 1,117 were placed in Montgomery County and 1,328 in Prince

George's County. Attached at © 1-3 is a November 18, 2014 letter from County Executives Isiah Leggett and Rushern Baker to Governor O'Malley asking for the State's assistance in providing adequate resources to ensure that each child's wellbeing is addressed in an appropriate manner. The letter notes existing programs that provide these types of supports. For Montgomery County these include programs such as Care for Kids, Linkages to Learning, and Positive Youth Development Programs. The County Executives are requesting that \$1 million be provided to each County to help support these efforts.

As background, the July 29<sup>th</sup> presentation from MCPS is attached at © 4-26, from DHHS at ©27-34, and from OCP at ©35-40. At the July 29<sup>th</sup> session, the Council was informed that 107 Unaccompanied Minors enrolled in MCPS through the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) process, with most of these youth enrolling in high school. The children were from El Salvador (53), Honduras (34), and Guatemala (20). As of July 18<sup>th</sup>, 66 children had enrolled for the 2014-2015 school year through the ORR process.

November 18, 2014

The Honorable Martin O'Malley  
Office of the Governor  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Governor O'Malley:

We are writing to express our unwavering support for the leadership you have provided in our State's assistance to Central American youth fleeing violence. We are proud that Maryland is taking the lead in this humanitarian crisis and hope that your commitment to these vulnerable children will extend beyond your tenure as Governor of Maryland.

Prince George's and Montgomery Counties have absorbed the impact to a greater degree than other jurisdictions in Maryland. Together our two counties have the largest foreign-born population in the State and are home to over 320,000 people of Hispanic and Latino origin. The federal Office of Refugee Resettlement reports that between January and September of this year, over 2,000 children from Central America arrived in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties. We fully understand that many of the children fleeing violence will eventually find stability and permanence here. We seek your assistance in ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to assure that each child's wellbeing is addressed in an appropriate manner.

Over the years, both Prince George's and Montgomery County governments have focused their respective attention on welcoming immigrant populations from across the world and have marshaled community and government resources to ensure that most of the basic needs of these residents are met. Montgomery County Public School system reports that over 28% of its population is of international origin, while Prince George's County Public School system reports that over 26% of its student population is of international origin. In fact, between the two jurisdictions, we anticipate that our 2014-2015 enrollment data will show an increase of close to 3,100 students whose countries of origin were from El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. We cannot emphasize enough that we want every student to have an equal opportunity to succeed and believe it is important to provide appropriate services to these youth as they transition into our country and culture.

In Prince George's County, we have many supports currently in place to assist in this effort. Recently, as a part of the Transforming Neighborhoods Initiative (TNI), which focuses on improving challenging indicators within six targeted communities, we launched with the Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS), a partnership designed to mitigate social issues and concerns that prevent youth academic success. This partnership is referred to as TNI@School. TNI@School currently focuses on 28 schools serving TNI communities and provides a suite of interventions focused on improving several leading indicators of academic success, including but

not limited to: academic interventions, increasing graduation rates, decreasing dropout rates, safe afterschool enrichment programming, school-based behavioral health services, and community resource coordination. Examples of these interventions and services include:

- Restoration of full-day Pre-Kindergarten in a total of 21 schools
- Department of Social Services Community Resource Coordinators, whose roles are to connect children, youth, and families to services and support systems, serve as a liaison for the Prince George's County Department of Social Services and PGCPS for foster youth placed in their assigned schools, and support school administrators and staff in mitigating social factors affecting student performance in school
- In-school behavioral health services
- Post-secondary preparation interventions
- Mentoring and student support
- Summer programming.

In Prince George's County, we are working closely with Dr. Kevin Maxwell, Chief Executive Officer of Prince George's County Public Schools, and his executive team to identify schools with an increased population of newly arrived Central American children seeking refuge, and will deploy services to ensure students are connected to the services, systems and supports for which they are eligible as mentioned above. However, these supports are in addition to the needs of students, families, and residents we are currently serving with existing funding. Last school year, PGCPS reports 179 students from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras enrolled as children seeking refuge (who were not living with a parent or legal guardian). This number is likely to approach 2,000 by the end of November, and is likely to continue to increase given the large immigrant populations of both counties.

Similarly, in Montgomery County we are working closely with our school superintendent, Dr. Joshua P. Starr on providing services to the Central American children seeking refuge. Programs serving these youth include, but are not limited to:

- o Care for Kids Health Services
- o Child and adolescent behavioral health services
- o Linkages to Learning
- o School-Based Health Centers
- o Maternity Partnership
- o Suburban Washington Resettlement Center
- o Community Health Promoters
- o Neighborhood Opportunity Network
- o Positive Youth Development works in schools and communities to offer vulnerable youth an alternative to gang involvement. Without targeted intervention, these new immigrants are at high risk for gang recruitment and human trafficking.

As we continue our efforts, we require State assistance in providing funding for necessary resources that will allow these children to have access to necessary ongoing behavioral and other health services, as needed. Additionally, we wish to deploy culturally appropriate staff or contractors to conduct a one-time, abbreviated home study to ensure that each child who is not living with a parent or legal guardian has been placed in a safe environment. These children also require legal services in order to effectively establish their immigration status so as to enhance the likelihood of stability in their lives. Also, we wish to provide translation services and to conduct culturally appropriate training to school, health, human services, public safety, and other staff who regularly interact with the children and their families. Current estimates show that each County will need approximately \$4 million in Fiscal Year 2015 to create capacity in these programs to address the needs of these new immigrants.

To address this critical need we are facing, we ask the State to partner with us and provide \$1 million each to Prince George's and to Montgomery County of the \$4 million referenced above to provide the services and resources that support these youth. We believe that with this funding, we can increase the likelihood of stabilization of these young people and their families, and that we can begin to address some of the residual trauma that caused these children to flee.

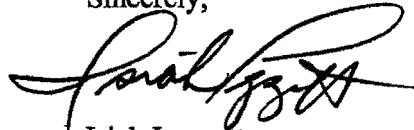
We anticipate your favorable response and welcome an opportunity to further discuss our needs. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Rushern L. Baker, III  
County Executive  
Prince George's County

Sincerely,



Isiah Leggett  
County Executive  
Montgomery County



# Montgomery County Public Schools

## Unaccompanied Youth Presentation

County Council Briefing  
July 29, 2014

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# Registration Process for International Students

- Parents/guardians of a student who has not attended a U.S. school any time during the prior two years, must contact the Division of School Counseling, Residency, and International Admissions (SCRIA) to begin the enrollment process.
- SCRIA reviews requests for enrollment for all students living with a court-appointed guardian who has an established bona fide residence in Montgomery County.
- Students placed with relatives/friends in Montgomery County by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) follow the same process.
- Being placed by ORR is considered a hardship.
  - students are approved as nontuition paying students.



# Registration Process for International Students

- Registration process
  - Intake review.
  - English assessment for speakers of other languages by the Division of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)/Bilingual Programs.
  - Rocking Horse Road Health Clinic to review immunization records.
  - Referrals to the Dennis Avenue Health Clinic for unaccompanied minors.
- Families/students go to their assigned schools for final registration.



# Total Enrollment of International Students in MCPS in the past four years

2011	3,500
2012	3,246
2013	3,286
2014	3,873

# Enrollment of International Students in MCPS – Top 10 Countries

FY 2011		FY 2012		FY 2013		FY 2014	
COUNTRY	NUMBER	COUNTRY	NUMBER	COUNTRY	NUMBER	COUNTRY	NUMBER
El Salvador	344	United States*	510	United States*	462	El Salvador	636
United States	323	El Salvador	305	El Salvador	397	United States	497
Ethiopia	164	Ethiopia	182	Ethiopia	166	Honduras	229
India	111	Cameroon	132	China	143	Ethiopia	185
Cameroon	111	Korea	99	Honduras	137	China	132
China	104	Japan	97	India	88	Guatemala	120
Korea	90	China	91	United Kingdom	85	India	114
Japan	75	Brazil	83	Brazil	83	Japan	112
Honduras	73	India	81	Cameroon	81	Brazil	107
Brazil	71	Peru	72	Japan	80	Peru	88

\* Students entering the U.S. after a two-year absence or students born to U.S. citizen outside of the country.



# Enrollment Trends for Selected Central American Countries

- Increasing trend in enrollment in MCPS of Central American students, specifically from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

YEAR	EL SALVADOR	GUATEMALA	HONDURAS	TOTAL
2010-2011	344	47	73	464
2011-2012	305	70	56	431
2012-2013	397	65	137	599
2013-2014	636	120	229	985
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,682</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>2,479</b>

# Unaccompanied Minors Enrolled in MCPS 2013–2014 School Year

- A total of 107 unaccompanied minors enrolled through the ORR process.

Quarter	Number
First	25
Second	28
Third	25
Fourth	29



# Unaccompanied Minors Enrolled in MCPS 2013–2014 School Year

- The majority of the students were enrolled in high school.

School Level	Number
Elementary	1
Middle	6
High	100
Total	107



# Unaccompanied Minors Enrolled in MCPS 2013–2014 School Year

- Most of the students were from El Salvador followed by Honduras and Guatemala:

Country	Number
El Salvador	53
Guatemala	20
Honduras	34
Total	107

# International Student Enrollment 2014–2015 School Year

## TRENDS OF ENROLLMENT FOR CENTRAL AMERICA

WEEK ENDING	EL SALVADOR	GUATEMALA	HONDURAS	TOTAL
7/4/2014	2	0	5	7
7/11/2014	16	6	10	32
7/18/2014	18	1	8	27
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>66</b>

# MCPS Supports – SCRIA

- SCRIA – Rocking Horse Road Center supports for summer peak enrollment.
- Hired additional temporary part-time bilingual summer staff members help to assist with enrollment.
- Held a collaboration meeting with other MCPS units and School Health Services.
- Provided families with additional contacts and resources in the community via Montgomery County Charles W. Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity table.



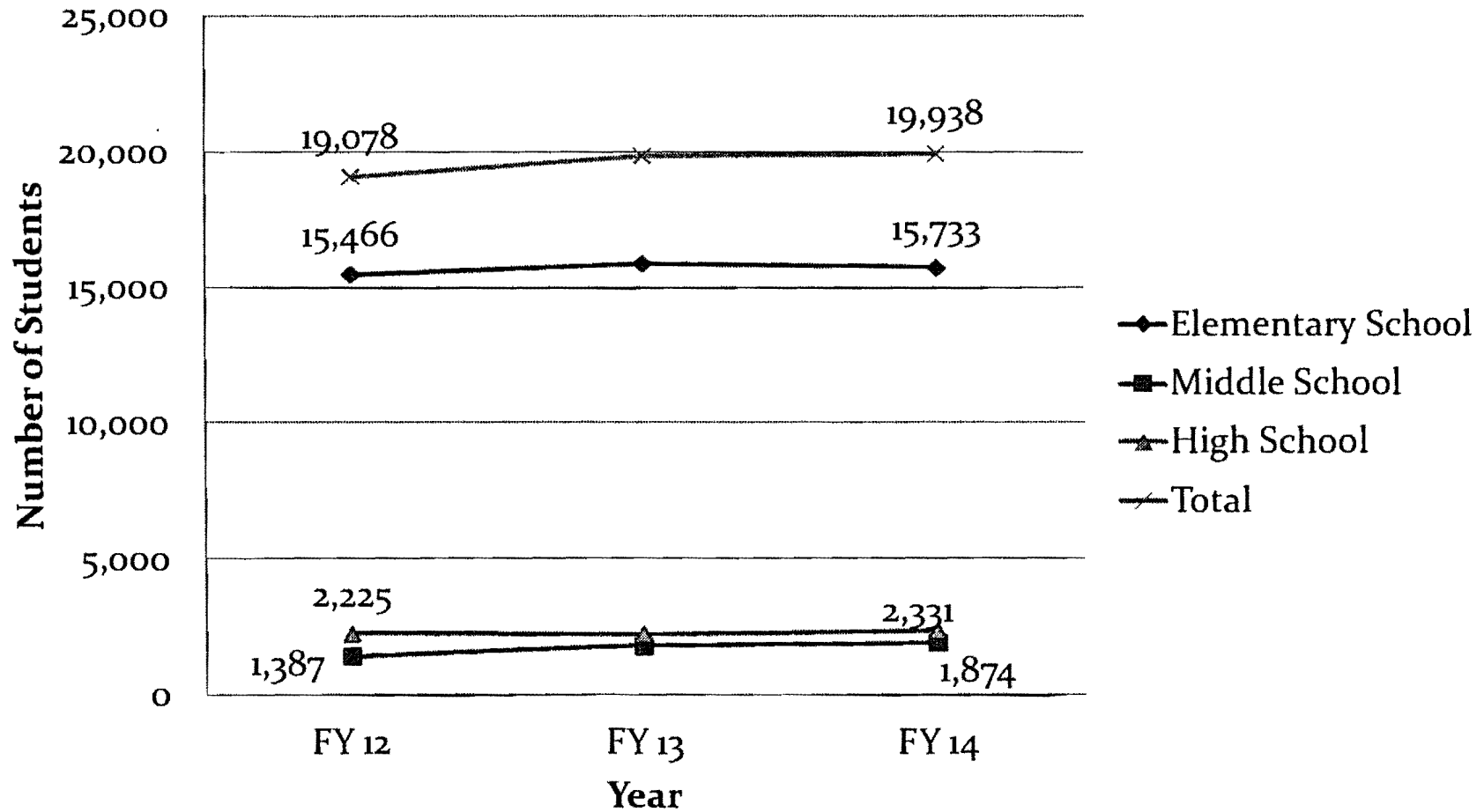




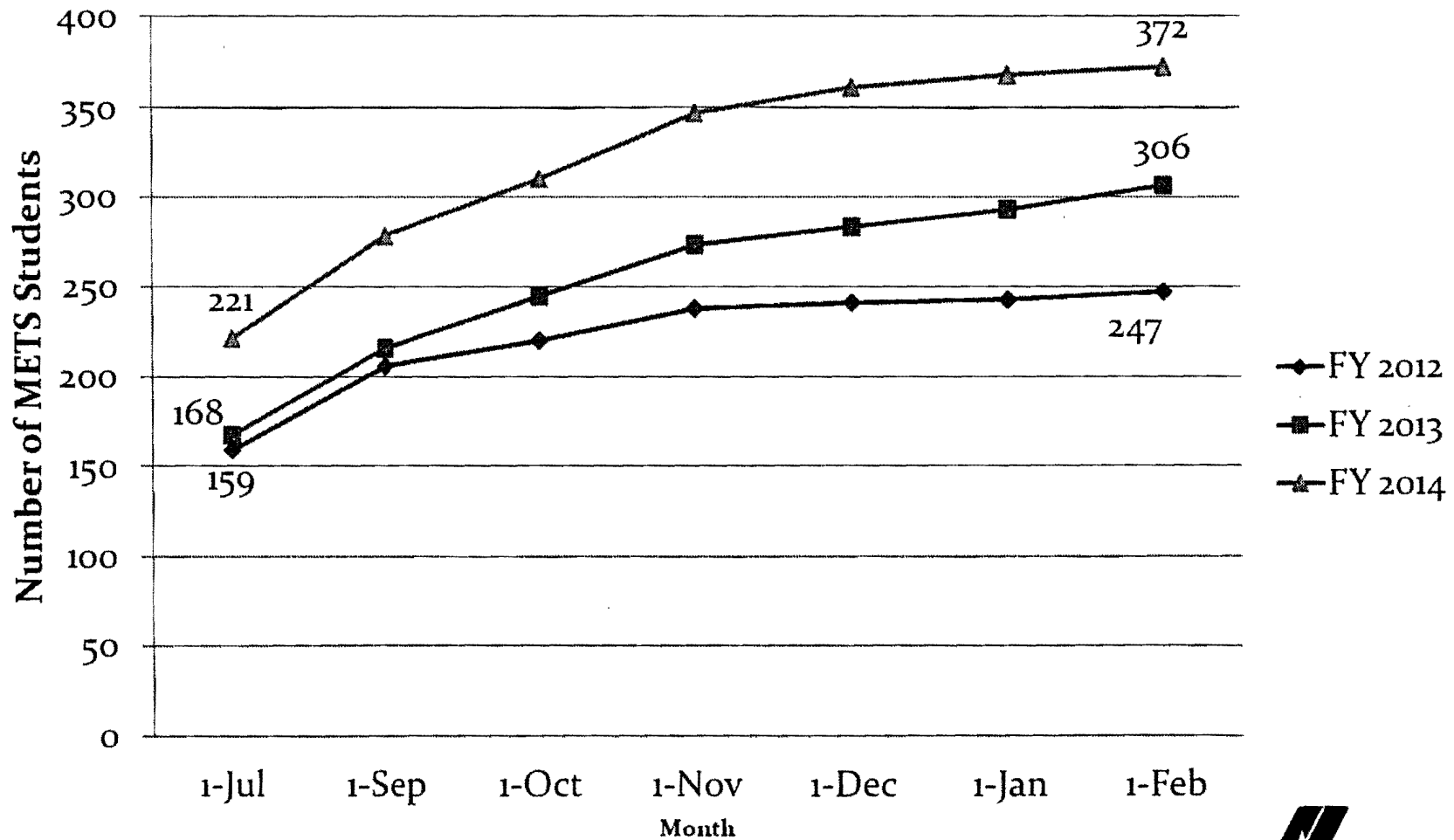
## MCPS Supports – SCRIA

- Informed all school registrars about the immigration updates and registration procedures for unaccompanied youth.
- Provided middle and high school resource counselors with updated information regarding unaccompanied youth.
  - contact SCRIA for any questions/concerns regarding enrollment.

# ESOL Student Enrollment




# ESOL Multidisciplinary Educational Training and Support (METS) Enrollment





# ESOL Staffing

- An equitable staffing model is being implemented for the first time in 2014-2015 school year.
  - Schools with more ESOL students at the beginning levels of proficiency in English receive more generous ESOL staffing.
  - Schools with more ESOL students at the advanced levels of proficiency in English receive less staffing.



# Support through the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs

- All of the unaccompanied youth from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras enrolled in MCPS qualify for ESOL programs and services.
  - instruction in English as a new language
  - parent engagement and counseling supports
- Students with limited or no formal schooling qualify for the Multidisciplinary Educational Training and Support (METS) program.
  - additional instruction in basic literacy, numeracy, and academic skills
  - social emotional supports to facilitate their adjustment to a new school environment

# Support through the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs

- Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement (SEPA)
  - Career readiness program focused upon building entry-level job skills for 30 Spanish-speaking high school ESOL students who have experienced interrupted or limited formal education.
  - Spanish-speaking ESOL students with interrupted or limited schooling who will not earn a high school diploma before the end of the year in which they turn 21 are eligible for participation in SEPA.
- SEPA students and their families receive a wide range of support to ensure their success.
  - small class sizes
  - bilingual classroom support
  - summer programs
  - bilingual counseling
  - assistance with student fees required at the Thomas Edison High School of Technology
  - parent outreach

# Supports through the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs

- To support the social emotional needs of all ESOL students
  - 10.7 Full-time equivalent (FTE) ESOL transition counselors
    - bilingual in English and Spanish and six additional languages.
  - 7.0 School-based ESOL counselors
    - bilingual in English and Spanish, act as certified school counselors, and serve all high schools with ESOL centers.
- ESOL counselors provide individual and group counseling services to ESOL students to ease their adjustment to a new school environment and address barriers to learning.

# Supports through the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs

- To support for the families of all ESOL students
  - 15.0 FTE ESOL parent community coordinators
  - bilingual in English and Spanish, as well as seven additional languages
  - assist families in navigating the school system to support their children
- ESOL parent community coordinators serve families in many ways often facilitating communication between school staff members and international parents.



# Collaboration with Community Partners Office of Special Education and Student Services

- Department of Health and Human Services
  - Fostering Connections
  - Culturally based trauma training by Mr. Luis Cardona, Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator
- Identity, Inc.
  - METS students at Gaithersburg and Watkins Mill high schools
- Mental Health Association of Montgomery County
  - Youth Mental Health First Aid training



# Office of Community Engagement and Partnerships Additional Community Supports

- Linkages to Learning (28 locations)
  - In partnership with Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services and Montgomery County non-profit agencies, to provide integrative services including:
    - Community Education and Development
    - Social Services
    - Behavioral Health
    - Health Services
- School-based Health Centers at nine locations
  - On-site nurse practitioners and pediatricians
  - Health promotion
- Wellness Centers at three locations

# Office of Community Engagement and Partnerships Additional Community Supports

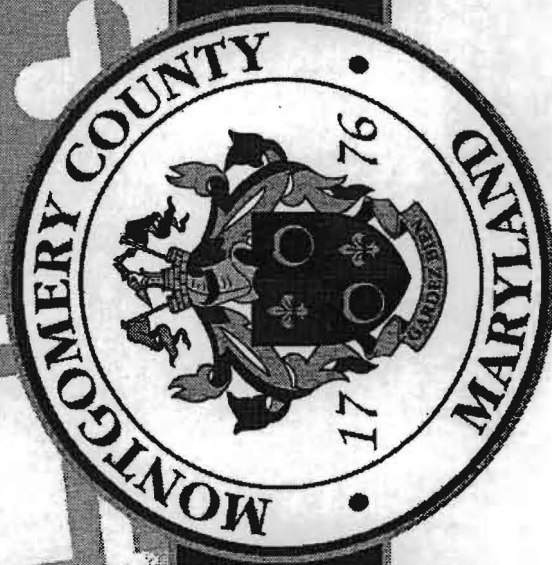
- Parent community coordinators
- Additional partnerships include:
  - Kennedy Cluster Project
  - Watkins Mill Project
  - Excel Beyond the Bell—Montgomery County Collaboration Council
  - National Center for Children and Families—Neediest Kids



# DISCUSSION



# Children Fleeing Violence - Unaccompanied Minors - A status report on current efforts



*A Presentation by Uma S. Ahluwalia  
Tuesday July 29, 2014*



# Response to Humanitarian Crisis

## Executive Branch Response:

“We must do everything possible to help vulnerable children in partnership with federal and state partners” – Mr. Leggett in providing direction to his cabinet directors. HHS has been directed to lead these efforts;

## State Government Response:

Governor O’Malley has clearly stated his commitment to ensuring that Maryland is poised to help and has met with Faith and Community Leaders and directed his cabinet to ease all regulatory and administrative burdens to achieve his stated commitment.



# Statement of the Problem

**There are three ways in which children are coming to Montgomery County:**

- ❖ They are reaching the border and are placed in federal custody and in turn are distributed to shelters across the country
- ❖ They are placed with sponsors by the Federal Government – mainly parents, relatives or fictive kin – 2025 placed in Maryland with Sponsors per ORR data with the total including DC and VA adding up to 4,626
- ❖ They are coming under the federal radar screen and reunifying with parents, relatives or fictive kin – there has been a steady stream of these children coming in already. We have seen impact in our schools, in Care for Kids, SON, etc



# Meeting the Needs of these Children and their Families

- If the children remain in federal custody either pending the identification of a sponsor and placement with said sponsor or there is no sponsor, the federal government is responsible for their care and all associated costs – reference the Federal RFP
- If the children are placed with sponsor then the sponsor is responsible for their care and their maintenance – all federal support is withdrawn – and often families turn to local schools, local government and local resources for services and supports
- If the children arrive on their own without being known to the federal government then again their de facto sponsor is responsible for their care and often rely on local resources.





# Services and Supports Needed

- Education
- Health
- Mental health – especially culturally based trauma informed treatment services
- Housing
- Food
- Immigration and legal services to support families
- Acculturation and Socialization
- Positive integration
- Income supports needed



# Impact on Local Government

- Budgetary
- Access to care and services – adequacy of provider networks, language and cultural capacities, pathways to care
- Meeting complex needs of children who experienced severe trauma, violence and human trafficking
- Vulnerability of families they are reuniting into and pathways to support them
- Strain on existing resources to meet additional demand and ability to serve existing need of domestic populations and that of these new arrivals – creates pressure



# Actions to Date

- Creation of a working group to prepare for surge and coordinate response – hear more about that from OCP staff
- Schools are already seeing a surge and will speak to how they are responding and preparing for the continued growth in enrollment from these groups
- HHS and other public and non profit agencies are preparing to respond to the federal RFP and to meet sheltering demands for these children



# Actions to Date Continued

- Public and Private social services are already responding to the surge and stepping up to meet need – Eg., Care for Kids
- HHS under Luis Cardona is taking the lead to develop an asset map and best practices for addressing needs of these children and their families
- Advocacy at the State and Federal levels to understand local impact and support local efforts



# OCP Presentation



# Children Fleeing Violence Crisis Workgroup

## Purpose:

- To help ensure that Montgomery County has a comprehensive and coordinated response to the crisis among the public, nonprofit, and private sector organizations serving immigrants in the County.



# Membership

- **County:** Councilmember Nancy Navarro, OCP/Gilchrist Center, HHS, MCPS, MCPD, Recreation
- **Nonprofits:** Catholic Charities, Identity, CASA de Maryland, Collaboration Council, LAYC/Maryland Multicultural Youth Center, Family Services, Inc.
- Latin American Advisory Group
- Montgomery College
- Office of Congressman Chris Van Hollen
- Office of Governor Martin O'Malley
- Embassy of El Salvador



# Critical areas of need for the children

- Legal assistance
- Mental health/ Trauma cases assistance
- Health and Human Services
- School Enrollment (expedite process if possible depending on case)





# Gilchrist Center:

- The Gilchrist Center's mission is to serve adult residents of Montgomery County seeking county services and basic English and computer instruction. While the Center does serve adult clients who are seeking assistance for their children, we have not as yet identified unaccompanied immigrant children seeking assistance from the Center in 2014.
- However, the Center staff has seen in recent years an increase in requests by youth aged 16-21 for English as a Second Language education.



# August 2014 Plan

- The Gilchrist Center will be conducting outreach to residents who are new to Montgomery County, MD and the country at the International Admissions Office at MCPS throughout August. The Center will be providing information about and referrals to programs and services offered by government agencies and community organizations.



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