

September 28, 2020

Montgomery County Council
Attn: Sidney Katz, Council President
Stella Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Ave
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear President Katz,

The purpose of this correspondence is to formally enter into the council's official record this testimony regarding agenda item #2A presented at the September 22, 2020 session. This item states:

"This special appropriation will provide funding to allow school-age child care providers to open licensed child care programs in public school buildings to support working parents. Child care providers of school-age children need support in order to meet COVID-19 social distancing and safety requirements and keep tuition affordable for parents.

The special appropriation also provides before, during and after school child care to children in low-income working families and children in foster care while MCPS is meeting virtually during the first semester of the 2020-21 school year. Many parents and caregivers do not have the ability to telework and provide supervision for their children as they navigate on-line school. Low-income families and foster families need additional supports so that their children can access virtual learning."

The Source of Funds is Federal Grant Funds.

While we agree with the concept of the appropriation, we respectfully wish to request that preschools and child care centers housed in NONPUBLIC space be included in this special appropriation that is sourced from Federal Grant Funds. We believe these funds are intended to support all businesses who are dealing with the impact of COVID-19 related problems, not just those who rent space from the county. We feel that this is likely just an oversight in the scope of the appropriation and wish to amend the proposed appropriation to simply state:

"This special appropriation will provide funding to allow school-age child care providers to open **and operate licensed child care programs in public school buildings to support working parents. Child care providers of school-age children...."**

In this way, the county council will be recognizing and assisting the hundreds of centers that are providing school age program support outside of public school space. These centers are providing vital services to the residents of Montgomery County including, very significantly, school age child care support. While certainly we believe programs in Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF) are also deserving of these funds, the majority of school age support is being provided by centers outside of MCPS space.

What is also important to state is that these centers, such as ours, who are not operating in public school buildings, who never closed our doors throughout this pandemic, who stayed open as EPCC (Emergency Personnel Child Care) Centers during the county state of emergency and in the months after the "stay at home" order has been lifted, have exhausted every resource available to us. While we continue to stand firm, to support our community, without extending these Federal Grant Funds equally to ALL child care programs (not just those in public school buildings) it is likely many centers will be unable to continue to operate. Worse, without this funding we fear that centers may be tempted (or forced) to begin to take "short cuts" in screening, monitoring, sanitizing, and in student isolation/social distancing protocols. This would have the exact opposite affect from what the Federal Grant Funds were intended to support.

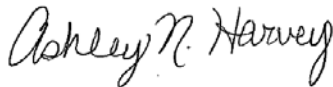
By the Montgomery County Council extending these funds to programs like ours, you will ensure the community at large has space for every child in need and families will continue to have a variety of options when choosing the best child care alternative for their needs.

We hope that you will consider this minor adjustment to the language in the proposed appropriation in order to **EQUALLY** support all child care centers within the county.

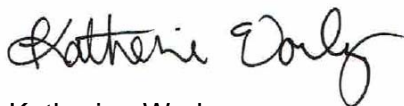
We'd like to thank you in advance for this consideration!



Jill & Jim Worley
The Goddard School in Gaithersburg



Ashley Harvey
The Goddard School in Silver Spring



Katherine Worley
The Goddard School in North Bethesda

cc: Members of Montgomery County Council
Marc Elrich, Montgomery County Executive
Governor Larry Hogan
Dr. Karen B. Salmon - State Superintendent of Schools
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