

Anita Lampel  
Jews United for Justice (JUFJ)  
Bethesda, MD  
Montgomery County, MD  
[www.jufj.org](http://www.jufj.org)



**JUFJ Testimony in Support of the Supplemental Appropriation to MCPS FY 2022  
Operating Budget Trauma and Behavioral Health Grant  
Tuesday, November 30, 2021**

My name is Anita Lampel, and I live in District 1. I have a Ph.D in psychology and have worked extensively with schools, the juvenile justice system, and traumatized youth. I am testifying on behalf of Jews United for Justice, in support of the Supplemental Appropriation to the Montgomery County Public Schools FY 2022 Operating Budget. This funding will allow MCPS to significantly expand the mental health and related support it offers to students.

The Jewish concept of *b'tzelem Elohim* refers to the notion that all people are created in the Divine image. Destroying a life is akin to destroying a world, and as we recover from the ongoing pandemic, we must prioritize the wellbeing of each and every student in our school system.

The last two years added to the adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) of young people across the county, and most impacted Black, brown and LGBTQ+ students, as the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice explains in the special appropriations packet. Our children are returning to schools traumatized by the impact of COVID, including deaths within their families, loss of parents' jobs, and the shut-down of schools and loss of support from teachers and peers.

Jews United for Justice and our allies know that some parents want armed police in schools again as the solution to dealing with this trauma. But all the research shows that police are not the answer. Your own Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice's superb analysis emphasized that increased mental health and trauma support services are effective, and what is needed to reduce racial inequities in our schools.

You know the incredible work that student leaders did last year and continue this year to lift up the need for non-police-based supports in schools. Their voices are joined by parents, teachers, and community leaders. This is the time to fully fund culturally-competent and trauma-informed social workers, restorative justice programs, and non-traditional support programs for our youth. We urge your support for this racially equitable, effective, and impactful approach.

Thank you.