

Good evening distinguished Members of the County Council. My name is Ellie Kleinman and I am a school counselor at MCPS's highest FARMs-rate elementary school, New Hampshire Estates, in Silver Spring.

Constituents don't always see the clear connection between votes and outcomes. For example, last year at this time, this body did not vote for the full 10 cent per hundred dollar property tax increase that was proposed by County Executive Elrich. Instead, a 4 cent per hundred dollar increase was passed. And this year Mr. Elrich's budget proposal doesn't even fully fund the budget request proposed to the Council by the School Board.

Admittedly no one wants to pay higher taxes. As a constituent myself and an employee of MCPS, I certainly don't, but I understand that you get what you pay for.

Seeing and hearing about the impact of your vote from last year, and now projecting how the continued underfunding of MCPS will affect future outcomes for

our students, including the very poorest of our students, disturbs and saddens me.

Why? Because I see when high-need special education students don't get the 1:1 paraeducator support, or special programs they need. I see the impact that has not only on those students, but also on their classmates and others in the school building.

I see when our special educators work for free, hours into the night when they should be spending time with their families. They make these sacrifices because they don't have enough staff to support their students and complete their paperwork during the workday. To make matters worse, one of our existing positions is scheduled to be cut for next year.

I see when we don't have enough school psychologists, and the impact that has on the workload of psychologists on loan to schools like ours who haven't had a school psych in two years.

I see when our school's speech pathologist is so overloaded that she can barely get all of her

documentation done while trying to support 60+ students whom she has to see twice-weekly.

I hear when other school counselors are so bogged down with 504 plans (some managing as many as 50 per year) that they can't possibly meet the mental health needs of our students who so desperately need those supports.

This is what I see. And as someone who graduated from MCPS, I ask myself, can't we do any better to ensure we are supporting the educational needs of our children?

Our students and many from across MCPS benefitted from a program called CARES Tutoring funded by ESSER funds. The tutoring program was discontinued a year prematurely as a result of your decision not to pass the 10 cent property tax increase last year.

At New Hampshire Estates, we have data showing how CARES Tutoring significantly improved reading levels for students with the lowest reading levels in the school. Just cutting that tutoring program alone had to

negatively impact thousands of other students across MCPS just like our school.

My fellow educators protested outside tonight to ensure that the needs of ALL MCPS students will be met by the decisions that you make today.

Let's not shortchange our students' future now to save a few dollars, when we know that giving them the best education we can is essential to securing their future and enabling them to contribute to the economic engine of Montgomery County when they grow up.

Thank you.

# CARES TUTORING DIBELS DATA 2022-2023

