

Annie Tulkin  
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Operating Budget Testimony

Good afternoon. My name is Annie Tulkin. My daughter is a 2nd grade student at New Hampshire Estates Elementary school, a Title 1, K-2nd grade community school in Long Branch. NHE has an economically disadvantaged rate of 91%, which is the highest poverty rate of any school in the county. NHE feeds directly into Oak View, where my daughter and her peers will attend 3rd-5th grade. Oak View and 3 other schools have lost their Title 1 status for next year. At Oak View, this equates to a loss of approximately \$400,000. It means the loss of summer programs, paraprofessional support, literacy, STEM, and math programs, and parent programs. This is a HUGE loss for our families and our community.

Many of the council members were able to join us this past Friday night when around 120 people gathered at the Long Branch Recreation Center to share our deep concern about the loss of Title 1 funding for our school. We shared the ripple effects this has in our community, as our school is the center of community, providing educational opportunities, enrichment, support and more, for students and parents alike. We shared personal testimonials from parents and teachers, and a 5th grade student talked about how this loss of essential learning supports will affect her and her friends directly.

So, how did this happen? This year, MCPS used different data inputs for Title 1, opting to use Direct Certification, from federal benefits like SNAP, instead of a Free and Reduced Meals FARMS data, which is based solely on household income. Many of our families do not receive federal benefits for a variety of reasons. We believe that this resulted in severely undercounting undocumented immigrants in our community and it over-represented students in Oak View's Center for Enriched Studies, magnet program, which draws in students from 6 other schools. There were 4 schools that lost Title 1 and the publicly available MCPS data shows that those schools have a higher FARMS rate and much higher percentage of English Language Learners than the 6 schools that gained Title I. While the new formula brought needed resources to 6 new schools, it left behind possibly most underserved and marginalized students. This is an equity issue.

We understand that the council cannot allocate funds to specific schools. However, you may be able to provide additional funds to MCPS and urge them to use these funds to support bridge funding for the schools that lost Title 1 while also encouraging MCPS to thoroughly investigate and evaluate the data inputs used for Title 1.

Our community is asking for:

1. A review of the Title 1 formula to ensure the data inputs that MCPS uses are getting the most accurate numbers to achieve an equitable impact and \$400,000 in replacement funding to maintain current staffing levels in the upcoming school year at Oak View and we are asking for bridge funding for the other schools that lost Title 1 status, while the data inputs and equity issues are being reviewed.

Thank you for listening.