



April 8, 2024

Council Member Andrew Friedson, President  
Members of the Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Avenue, 6th Floor  
Rockville, MD 20850

RE: KID Museum: FY25 Operating Budget Testimony

Dear Council Member Friedson and County Council Members,

KID Museum supports the County Executive's proposal in the FY25 Operating Budget for our work with students and teachers across Montgomery County. We respectfully request that the Council fully fund the enhanced budget request of \$3.5 million that KID Museum has submitted in order to serve 15,270 students and their families, and 235 teachers, in Montgomery County. Fully funding the student and educator programs means committing to the positive long-term outcomes for our youth and our economy.

As Montgomery County grapples with student under-performance and other challenges, KID Museum is here to assist.

KID Museum is a unique asset in Montgomery County's educational ecosystem, with a proven track record supporting youth engagement in STEM and developing critical skills for the future. Through hands-on, maker-based learning experiences, KID Museum is revolutionizing teaching and learning, and producing measurable results for Montgomery County youth, families and educators.

Montgomery County is at a crossroads with respect to education. Our community's most trusted asset - our public school system - is at risk. Recent data presented to the Board of Education revealed that:

- Only 10% of Black/African-American and 7% of Hispanic/Latino middle school students are proficient in both English and Math;

- Fewer than 3% of Montgomery County 8th graders are proficient in Math today, trailing performance statewide; and
- Teachers are fleeing the profession while chronic absenteeism and truancy are on the rise.

As we face these dismal results, budgets are being cut and financial support for education is at a decline. Montgomery County is at a critical juncture: it is a moment where we need to evaluate how to invest in education to support our youth and to support our economy. Recent analysis of local spending shows that the County has been under-investing in education relative to other services.<sup>1</sup>

Deeply committed to equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion, KID prioritizes reaching youth from populations that are underrepresented in STEM. Last year, 72% of youth served in KID's school programs were from Title I or high FARMS rate schools, and 8 in 10 participants identified as students of color or multiracial. Yet, in the past year, financial support from the Montgomery County Public School System (MCPS) for KID programs was drastically reduced, from \$2.4 million to \$990,000 for SY23-24, and another significant reduction is expected in the coming school year.

While KID Museum is managing through these budget cuts, the demand for our programs has only grown. Last year, KID doubled the number of people served, reaching 30,000 visitors. Programs include deep, multi-session experiences that are embedded in the school day, as well as immersive out-of-school time programs, camps, and family days.

KID offers professional development and training for teachers, and has served as a critical partner to MCPS to support COVID recovery and to accelerate student achievement in STEM and workforce-aligned skills. Nationally, KID Museum is recognized as a best-in-class provider of innovative educational programs that equip youth with skills for the future.

Funding KID Museum's full budget request of \$3.5 million will enable KID Museum to serve 15,270 students and 235 teachers. Thank you for this opportunity to share with you how your investment in KID Museum can make a difference in the lives of more than 15,000 students and their families in our County.

Sincerely,



Cara Lesser  
Founder & CEO

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<sup>1</sup> <https://montgomeryperspective.com/2023/12/28/how-the-county-spends-your-money-medium-term/>