

TESTIMONY APRIL 8, 2024 COUNTY COUNCIL ON MCPS FY25 PROPOSED BUDGET-  
STEVEN SILVERMAN

President Friedson and Members of the County Council:

While I usually lobby you for a client, I have no client today, but I am here on behalf of many others to urge you to focus on the lack of progress on getting third graders to read at grade level.

The failure to help third graders read at grade level precedes Covid. In 2023, 57% of all 3rd graders could read at grade level; 49% of African American children, 33% of Latinos; 81% of whites; 79% of Asians. In 2018, it was 47% overall; 35% African American; 26% Latino; 71% Asian; and 66% white. Not exactly much progress.

Here are just some of the recent overall test results for our Title I schools. At Arcola elementary, only 39% of ALL students could read at grade level at the end of 3rd grade.

Burnt Mills: 35%. Daly: 46%. Gaithersburg: 34%.

Leleck: 34% Contrast that with Bradley Hills: 92%.

Much of the discussion recently about MCPS has focused on accountability.

But now, the discussion has moved to how much money MCPS is going to get, not about getting specific results. That's not accountability.

Racial equity and social justice focus is also part of the annual budget process. So why not focus on the MCPS budget too?

25 years ago Jerry Weast was the first Superintendent to publicly acknowledge the achievement gap. In response, we implemented K-2 class size reduction in all Title I schools, reducing class size from 27 to 1 to 17 to 1 to start addressing that gap.

While you can't dictate programs to the Board of Education, you do control the purse strings. The County Executive's proposed MCPS budget is \$132m above maintenance of effort. Is this going to be another year where the only discussion is how much money MCPS gets instead of what results they achieve?

So why not withhold \$10 million from the MCPS FY 25 budget and appropriate that money when MCPS and the Board come back to the Council with a program targeted to get third grade kids to read at grade level at our Title I schools? \$10m is  $\frac{1}{3}$  of 1 percent of the proposed \$3.3B MCPS budget.

I don't pretend to know what program should be implemented. But, there are dozens of programs around the country that have been implemented to help kids to read.

I recently received a newsletter from a Councilmember who said that budgets are moral documents, signaling our values. So I ask you: what could be more in line with our morals and values than providing all our kids the chance to succeed?

March 12, 2024

VIA EMAIL ONLY

The Honorable Marc Elrich  
Montgomery County Executive  
Executive Office Building  
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear County Executive Elrich,

We, the undersigned, are very concerned about the lack of reading progress being made by MCPS students, starting in third grade and continuing into upper grades. The status quo is not working, especially given the obvious losses to learning that occurred during Covid remote learning.

We are asking you to be a change agent in your budget submission for MCPS for the coming fiscal year.

We need a strong message from you to MCPS that it's long past time they made the improvement of reading scores a major priority. We need your leadership at this critical time.

In Montgomery County as a whole, only 57 % of third graders are reading at or above grade level according to the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program results. That number, however, masks the even more alarming rates in many of our County's schools. At Arcola Elementary, the number is 39%-- at Joann Leleck Elementary, 34%.

According to a national study, "Double Jeopardy: Third Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation," children reading below grade level in third grade are four times less likely to graduate high school. Add family poverty to the mix and the results are even worse.

And, of course, this problem affects Latino and African American kids to an even greater extent than white and Asian children. Overall 49% of African-American children and 33% of Latino children achieve third grade reading proficiency. It's 81% of white children and 79% of Asian children.

We know that significant learning loss took place in County schools due to the pandemic.

Present fourth graders were then in kindergarten or first grade. Results indicate that, barring some change, they will catch up with where they should have been then in four more years, when they are eighth graders.

If this isn't the definition of an emergency for the Montgomery County Public Schools -- and the County in general -- we don't know what is.

Twenty years ago, the County Executive, County Council, Superintendent and the School Board got together before passing a budget to make sure the system implemented smaller class sizes. Our kids' education was too important to be just the work of the school board.

MCPS hired a consultant in Fall,2023 to provide support for elementary school reading at 9 schools at a cost of \$950,000. Why wouldn't we extend it to at least our 35 Title I schools or design a different program to get results?

Last Spring, you and the Council approved a budget that was \$158m above MOE with **no strings attached to ensure the money was being targeted**. And now, MCPS is asking for over \$150m more for 2024-25.

**You and the Council can make sure that money is focused on helping kids to read by requiring MCPS to enact a targeted program as part of their budget.** It doesn't require more money; it just requires targeting the resources they already have. You and the Council control the purse strings; MCPS can come up with the program that would have a sense of urgency lacking today. We are happy to work with you, the Council and the Board to assist our kids.

If we are truly about racial equity and social justice, nothing is more important than helping all our young children down a path toward success. If we don't, then shame on us.

That's why we are asking you to demonstrate commitment and leadership in your recommendations about the MCPS budget request to the County Council.

Sincerely,

Steven Silverman

Gail Ewing

Nancy Floreen

Michael Knapp

Michael Subin

Chris Barclay

Judy Docca

Barbara Ebel

Stewart Edelstein

Sol Graham

Jason Green

Wilma Holmes

Frieda Lacey

Yamina Leggett-Wells

Agnes Leshner

Teresa Wright

CC:

County Council

Board of Education

Monique Felder, Interim Superintendent MCPS

Essie McGuire, Council Staff

## Elementary School End-of-Year Grade 3 EOL Attainment Results

	Total Grade 3 Students	Literacy	Mathematics
		All Grade 3 Students	All Grade 3 Students
		Percentage Met	Percentage Met
ARCOLA ES	121	38.8	35.5
ASHBURTON ES	146	75.3	78.8
BANNOCKBURN ES	95	93.7	94.7
BARNSLEY ES	103	75.7	78.6
BAYARD RUSTIN ES	126	68.3	64.3
BEALL ES	83	84.3	80.7
BELLS MILL ES	107	82.2	85.0
BELMONT ES	54	90.7	≥95.0
BETHESDA ES	119	81.5	79.0
BEVERLY FARMS ES	105	91.4	90.5
BRADLEY HILLS ES	77	92.2	≥95.0
BROOKE GROVE ES	70	61.4	62.9
BROOKHAVEN ES	50	60.0	54.0
BROWN STATION ES	90	41.1	45.6
BURNING TREE ES	83	77.1	74.7
BURNT MILLS ES	98	34.7	42.9
BURTONSVILLE ES	96	61.5	63.5
CANDLEWOOD ES	63	71.0	71.0
CANNON ROAD ES	69	55.1	60.9
CARDEROCK SPRINGS ES	56	92.9	89.3
CARSON ES	113	78.8	81.4
CASHELL ES	59	79.7	74.6
CEDAR GROVE ES	63	81.0	90.5
CHEVY CHASE ES	76	67.1	78.9
CLARKSBURG ES	138	74.6	83.3
CLEARSPRING ES	81	60.5	65.4
CLOPPER MILL ES	58	51.7	31.0
CLOVERLY ES	72	70.8	70.8
COLD SPRING ES	40	80.0	≥95.0
COLLEGE GARDENS ES	84	76.2	78.6

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		Percentage Met	Percentage Met
CRESTHAVEN ES	153	40.5	45.1
DALY ES	93	46.2	32.3
DAMASCUS ES	60	61.7	56.7
DARNESTOWN ES	65	66.2	75.4
DIAMOND ES	116	87.9	87.9
DREW ES	57	46.4	51.8
DUFIEF ES	52	73.1	69.2
EAST SILVER SPRING ES	81	65.4	70.4
FAIRLAND ES	84	57.1	59.5
FALLSMEAD ES	90	82.2	84.4
FARMLAND ES	141	81.6	82.3
FIELDS ROAD ES	74	45.9	51.4
FLOWER HILL ES	75	42.7	33.3
FLOWER VALLEY ES	86	76.7	75.6
FOREST KNOLLS ES	77	68.8	71.4
FOX CHAPEL ES	96	55.2	61.5
GAITHERSBURG ES	95	33.7	37.9
GALWAY ES	116	58.6	56.0
GARRETT PARK ES	133	86.5	84.2
GEORGIAN FOREST ES	75	49.3	45.3
GERMANTOWN ES	53	43.4	47.2
GIBBS ES	87	85.1	83.9
GLEN HAVEN ES	98	46.9	40.8
GLENALLAN ES	86	58.1	59.3
GOSHEN ES	65	78.5	70.8
GREAT SENECA CREEK ES	90	54.4	54.4
GREENCASTLE ES	119	47.9	41.2
GREENWOOD ES	82	78.0	85.4
HARMONY HILLS ES	110	38.2	35.5
HIGHLAND ES	88	63.6	61.4

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HIGHLAND VIEW ES	58	74.1	60.3
JACKSON ROAD ES	105	50.5	56.2
JONES LANE ES	69	75.4	81.2
KEMP MILL ES	64	32.8	28.1
KENSINGTON PARKWOOD ES	102	80.4	74.5
LAKE SENECA ES	59	45.8	32.2
LAKEWOOD ES	78	80.8	75.6
LAYTONSVILLE ES	51	76.5	74.5
LELECK ES	142	33.8	34.5
LITTLE BENNETT ES	118	69.5	73.7
LUXMANOR ES	121	73.6	90.1
MARSHALL ES	108	57.4	64.8
MARYVALE ES	93	23.7	72.0
MATSUNAGA ES	109	76.1	84.4
MCAULIFFE ES	73	52.1	53.4
MCNAIR ES	134	74.6	68.7
MEADOW HALL ES	66	45.5	53.0
MILL CREEK TOWNE ES	68	69.1	80.9
MONOCACY ES	24	79.2	79.2
NORTH CHEVY CHASE ES	80	82.5	90.0
OAK VIEW ES	107	57.0	46.7
OAKLAND TERRACE ES	79	69.6	75.9
OLNEY ES	124	77.4	88.7
PAGE ES	112	44.6	66.1
PINE CREST ES	136	64.7	55.9
PINEY BRANCH ES	191	80.6	83.2
POOLESVILLE ES	103	80.6	78.6
POTOMAC ES	89	88.8	86.5
RESNIK ES	91	51.6	47.3
RIDE ES	70	44.3	45.7

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RITCHIE PARK ES	57	87.7	89.5
ROCK CREEK FOREST ES	105	60.0	81.0
ROCK CREEK VALLEY ES	58	70.7	70.7
ROCK VIEW ES	93	45.2	41.9
ROCKWELL ES	82	79.3	80.5
ROLLING TERRACE ES	98	49.0	44.9
ROSEMONT ES	87	67.8	50.6
SEQUOYAH ES	75	61.3	60.0
SEVEN LOCKS ES	68	89.7	91.2
SHERWOOD ES	90	67.8	66.7
SHRIVER ES	109	51.4	43.1
SINGER ES	110	55.5	55.5
SLIGO CREEK ES	101	35.6	80.2
SNOWDEN FARM ES	114	80.7	86.0
SOMERSET ES	64	87.5	84.4
SOUTH LAKE ES	129	46.5	50.4
STEDWICK ES	100	47.0	38.0
STONE MILL ES	75	86.7	82.7
STONEGATE ES	87	69.0	69.0
STRATHMORE ES	164	55.5	53.0
STRAWBERRY KNOLL ES	79	63.3	87.3
SUMMIT HALL ES	57	54.4	54.4
TRAVILAH ES	80	88.8	91.3
TUBMAN ES	76	40.8	38.2
TWINBROOK ES	52	55.8	30.8
VIERS MILL ES	67	55.2	46.3
WASHINGTON GROVE ES	58	70.7	60.3
WATERS LANDING ES	128	59.4	60.9
WATKINS MILL ES	105	45.7	40.0
WAYSIDE ES	84	92.9	≥95.0



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		Percentage Met	Percentage Met
WELLER ROAD ES	126	52.4	40.5
WESTBROOK ES	95	86.3	80.0
WESTOVER ES	48	81.3	77.1
WHEATON WOODS ES	74	55.4	66.2
WHETSTONE ES	102	47.1	47.1
WIMS ES	74	78.4	90.5
WOOD ACRES ES	107	88.8	92.5
WOODFIELD ES	46	89.1	91.3
WOODLIN ES	83	61.4	65.1
WYNGATE ES	128	89.8	94.5