



Testimony - In Support with Amendments  
Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) Operating Budgets - MCPS  
Pia Morrison  
President, SEIU Local 500  
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Council President Fani-González and members of the Montgomery County Council:

I am proud to serve as President of SEIU Local 500, representing thousands of educational support staff in Montgomery County Public Schools—the people who make our schools run every single day.

I am here today to speak on behalf of paraeducators, bus drivers, food service workers, building service staff, security staff, family engagement specialists, administrative staff in central office, and all the educational support professionals whom you may never see.

We recognize that this budget reflects an investment in our school system, however, we must be clear: a growing budget does not automatically mean stronger support for students—especially when frontline staff are stretched thinner every year.

From the moment a student leaves home to the moment they return, our members are there. Not just between the bells. Our members are cleaning and securing schools before their doors ever open and long after they close for the day.

Our bus drivers are the first to greet students each morning—but driver shortages and long routes are making it harder to get students to school safely and on time.

In our classrooms, paraeducators support students with the greatest needs—but too often, they are asked to cover multiple students or classrooms at once, making it harder to deliver the individualized support students deserve.

Family engagement specialists connect schools with families—especially those navigating language barriers or economic challenges—but when those positions are reduced or stretched across clusters, families lose access to trusted support.

Our security staff are on the front lines of keeping schools safe, de-escalating conflicts and responding to crises—but too many schools still lack consistent, adequate coverage.

Our building service workers ensure schools are clean, safe, and functional—but as buildings grow and demands increase, staffing has not kept pace.

Our food service workers make sure students are fed and ready to learn—but they are being asked to serve more meals, to more students, often with fewer hands.

And all the other amazing support staff positions that serve MCPS every single day behind the scenes, including central office staff who ensure that payroll, hiring, transportation, and compliance systems function—but increasing demands without sustainable staffing create delays that impact every school. A prime example was the delay in paychecks over the summer and at the start of the school year for our members, resulting in late bills, damaged credit, and sadly, even evictions.

Across all of these roles, the story is the same: the work is growing, but the workforce is not keeping up.

At a time when student needs are more complex than ever—academically, socially, and emotionally—this is not the moment to reduce or dilute the very staff students rely on most.

If we want safe schools, supported students, and strong outcomes, we must invest in the people who make those outcomes possible.

So we urge the Council to fully fund the County Executive's proposed budget and take the necessary actions to raise the revenue needed to truly support public education. Our students and school staff deserve a budget that meets the real demands we see every day in our schools.

Because at the end of the day, our students don't experience the budget on paper—they experience the people in their schools.

And we, the members of SEIU Local 500, are those people.

Thank you.