

Council Members.

As we face proposed tax increases to fund MCPS, we must demand fiscal honesty. Dr. Taylor is currently pushing a regional model that will cost tens of millions annually, yet the proposal is built on a foundation of significant mathematical underestimates. It appears the strategy is to gain approval now and ask for "emergency" funding later once the programs are "too big to fail."

I want to highlight four areas where this budget ignores reality:

1. Drastic Underfunding of Program Basics The budget allocates only **\$1,500** for fees, field trips, and outreach per program. For context, putting on a single high school musical costs more than that. Currently, boosters at Einstein pay **\$6,000** just for regional competitions, and the Blair Magnet Foundation spends over **\$30,000** annually to support regional STEM events. Under this new model, smaller programs will be starved of resources, and the "nationally recognized" quality MCPS is known for will be dismantled.

2. Unrealistic Launch Costs The budget sets aside only **\$108,000** for development and outreach across **100 new programs**. To put that in perspective, Project Lead The Way (PLTW) curriculum alone costs **\$3,200**—and that doesn't even include the necessary teacher training. We are setting these programs up for a mediocre launch.

3. The Transportation Math Error MCPS is budgeting **\$50,000** per new bus route for regional programs. However, their own boundary study documentation lists the actual cost of a new route at **\$125,000**. Furthermore, the plan relies on a single bus from high school to high school. This "regional access" is a myth for any student who cannot travel 4 miles to reach the designated hub. We are trading efficiency for inequity.

4. Hollow Administrative Support Finally, for the first year, they have budgeted only **0.5 FTE**—a part-time position—to coordinate multiple complex programs like SMCS, Digital Tech, and Visual Arts. Currently, successful programs like IB and Magnet have full-time coordinators and administrative secretaries {2 FTE?}. Expecting one person to manage four distinct programs in 20 hours a week is not a plan; it's a recipe for administrative collapse.

We cannot approve a budget based on "best-case scenario" numbers that contradict the district's own data. MCPS must return with a realistic, transparent budget before the County commits millions of taxpayer dollars to a model that risks dismantling what actually works in our schools.

Thank you.