



**Commission on People with Disabilities  
Meeting Summary Minutes  
April 10, 2024**

**\*\* MEETING WAS HELD VIA ZOOM \*\***

**Welcome and Approval of March 2024 Meeting Minutes**

Karen Morgret, Acting Chair, convened the meeting. A motion was made to approve the March 2024 Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the March 2024 Meeting Minutes were unanimously approved as written. Approved minutes are available online at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd).

**Transition Services Update – Patricia Cochrane, Supervisor, Transition Services, Department of Special Education Services, Office of Special Education, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)**

**PowerPoint presentation:** [https://montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CPWD/Minutes/MCPS\\_CPWD\\_Presentation\\_April2024.pdf](https://montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CPWD/Minutes/MCPS_CPWD_Presentation_April2024.pdf)

**Transition Services:** [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/special-education/programs-services/transition-services-unit/](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/special-education/programs-services/transition-services-unit/)

The PowerPoint presentation was reviewed. [View MCPS data](#)

- Total enrollment is 160,489
  - 50.3% participate in FARMS (free and reduced-price meals service)
  - Total enrollment by race
    - American Indian or Alaskan Native (AM) - less than 5.0%
    - Asian (AS) - 13.9%
    - Black or African American (BL) - 21.7%
    - Hispanic/Latino (HI) - 35.3%
    - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Island (PI) - less than 5.0%
    - Two or more races (2+) - 5.1%
    - White (WH) – 23.9%
  - 51.9% of students are male; 47.9% of students are female
  - 18.6% are EMLs (emerging language learner) – significant number of international students entering the school system
  - 92% attendance rate
  - 15% mobility rate – which impacts services provided in special education
  - 0.4% suspension rate
  - 12.6% are enrolled in special education services
    - More males are enrolled than females - working with the state to identify why
    - Least restrictive environment – Of the 12.6% of students enrolled in special education – 68.6% of those students spend between 15% to 20% of their day in a resource room; 9.8% of those students spend 20% to 40% of their day outside of general education classroom; and 21.6% those spend 40% to 80% of their day outside of the general education classroom.
- Total enrollment is expected to level off over the next several years, although special education enrollment is expected to increase.
- 115 languages spoken

**MCPS Special Education data included in the Commission's 2023 annual report** (source: Maryland State Department of Education - Special Education/Early Intervention Services Census Data 10/2022):  
[https://montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CPWD/Minutes/CPWD2023AnnualReport\\_MCPSDATA.pdf](https://montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CPWD/Minutes/CPWD2023AnnualReport_MCPSDATA.pdf)

**MCPS and the "Blueprint" Rollout** - [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/blueprint](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/blueprint)

The "Blueprint Law" was intended to enhance and improve state and local investments in, and school system operations in twenty- four MD jurisdictions on behalf of one million students, Pre-K through Grade 12. The ultimate goal is to make Maryland a high performing and world class system that is nationally and internationally competitive, over the next ten years. Policy and funding recommendations were designed to move schools forward in a comprehensive way. The Blueprint Law required each jurisdiction in Maryland to submit a comprehensive Blueprint Implementation Plan by June 15, 2022. The work of MCPS and its partners, such as offices within the Department of Health and Human Services, childcare providers, and local colleges and universities, are all reflected in various aspects of the Blueprint Policies. Blueprint Governance includes representation from the Office of the County Executive, Office of the County Council and MCPS. A process has been established that will work to engage stakeholders and gather feedback and input that will be used to help develop recommendations for the Montgomery County Blueprint Plan Submission. Governance at the state level rests with a newly formed Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB), in conjunction with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Preschool education services are already seeing improvements: [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/blueprint/#childhood](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/blueprint/#childhood)

**Special Education Services:** [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/special-education/](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/special-education/)

Website lists all services available. It was reported that 4,500 students with Autism receive services. Recently, every teacher in MCPS was informed that they will be teaching students who have Autism in some capacity at some point during their career. Parents can apply for the Autism Waiver, which currently has an extensive waiting list, although the State was able to cut the list in half last May.

Publications:

- [Special Education Process](#)
- [Parental Rights and Procedural Safeguards Notice](#)
- [Individualized Education Program \(IEP\)](#)
- [Secondary Transition Planning](#)

**Transitioning Youth:** [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/special-education/programs-services/transition-services-unit/Transitioning-Youth-Information/](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/special-education/programs-services/transition-services-unit/Transitioning-Youth-Information/)

- Aware that the transition period is a challenge for families, especially when leaving entitled services for eligibility-based services.
- Working to overcome barriers for families new to the United States.

The floor was opened to questions.

- **Is data available on how many transitioning youth that are eligible for DDA funding have a gap in services from the time they graduate until they start receiving services? Gaps in service can be detrimental and have a profound effect on the family. It can also put the individual at risk of becoming ineligible due to the time length of the gap.** Data pre-COVID, during COVID, and post-COVID has been a challenge due to many providers offering virtual services and not operating fully. Also, many families opted out of services. MCPS does track the data and their goal is to have transitioning youth ready before June when they exit the school system. DDA has their own transition timelines. Families are notified that providers may not be able to take individuals as of July 1. Karen Morgret reported providers are often in a holding pattern until DDA can make an approval. It was suggested that the County provide gap services funding. DORS may have funding for individuals seeking employment and can provide job coaching and other employment services during the summer if there is a gap before DDA services begin. Betsy Luecking, Staff, said the federal government will match state dollars and there

is no limit to the match. It is more important that advocates and the County put more pressure on DDA and the state to access more Medicaid funding that is the primary source of funding of people being supported by DDA

- **Do students with disabilities, especially high school students, receive education on the ADA and their rights?** MCPS does work with students on ADA and accommodations. Self-advocacy is a focus during the transition plan and diploma bound students. A summer program on self-advocacy is also available. It was suggested that educating the ADA should be added as an additional pillar on the website. Self-advocacy training is mostly done in a resource classroom. There is no set curriculum. Beginning this August, a self-advocacy component will be added to IEPs.
- **Are IEPs for high schoolers with disabilities led by the students?** Students are always invited, but sometimes parents do not want the child present. There are 27 high schools and it does depend on the school as well, although MCPS does try to reinforce the need.
- **Concerns regarding 50% of students eligible for FARMS and how those students are able to access other essential needs including clothing and backpacks or how they can afford to participate in school sports.** Students receive meals two to three meals per day. FARMS impacts the whole school. MCPS is an extremely diverse school system in terms of differing abilities, income, poverty and race. MCPS is committed to doing what is best for students across the board. Special Education Services is committed to making sure students receive the best education and are prepared for life after school.
- **Concern for transition services specifically for students with complex medical needs and nursing services not being available due to obstacles within DDA. What does the school system do to help these families? Medically fragile children in transition are a smaller group.** Parents are educated about nursing services post-school. Most families opt for self-direction which allows for more flexibility. Skilled nursing services are always a challenge. MCPS does work with families to prepare them for what comes next, especially for students at Steven Knolls and Longview.

#### **Chair Update: Overview of Fiscal Year (FY) 25 Operating Budget Testimony, New Member Interviews**

Karen presented the Commission's FY25 operating budget testimony before the County Council last night. Testimony included supporting full funding of the developmental disability supplement and the County's pedestrian safety program. The Commission also thanked the Council for the creation of the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Commission (IDDC).

Commissioners interested in being a part of the interview selection committee should contact Karen or Betsy. Interviews of new applicants will be conducted in the coming months.

#### **Update – Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Commission (IDDC) – John Whittle, Commissioner and Liaison to IDDC**

IDDC participated in a Transitioning Youth Resource Fair held at Montgomery College on April 7.

The next IDDC meeting will be held April 18. They will be having their first election of officers. IDDC also submitted FY25 testimony in support of the increase for the developmental disability supplement.

#### **Ex-Officio Member Updates**

Matt Barkley, Department of General Services, reported the Department of Justice (DOJ) has issued a final rule under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to ensure the accessibility of web content and mobile applications (apps) for people with disabilities. This final rule clarifies the obligations of state and local governments to make their websites and mobile applications accessible. Chris Daniels, Manager III, Technology and Enterprise Business Solutions (TEBS) has been asked to present before the Commission at an upcoming meeting about the County's plan for the implementation of this ruling. TEBS is developing a mandatory training for web content publishers on ensuring website accessibility. April is Fair Housing month. The County donated land to Habitat for Humanity for single family homes featuring universal design. Construction is anticipated to begin this summer. The U.S. Department of Transportation is proposing to strengthen its rule implementing the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) to ensure passengers who use wheelchairs can travel safely and with dignity. The proposed rule would require that airlines do better in accommodating

passengers with disabilities by setting new standards for prompt, safe, and dignified assistance, mandating enhanced training for airline employees and contractors who physically assist passengers with disabilities and handle passengers' wheelchairs, and outlining actions that airlines must take to protect passengers when a wheelchair is damaged during transport. Public comments can be filed until May 13, 2024: <https://www.regulations.gov/document/DOT-OST-2022-0144-0225>.

Denise Isreal, Department of Transportation (DOT), reported DOT collaborated with WMATA to provide a travel training for students with cognitive disabilities at the Rock Terrace School. DOT also participated in the Transitioning Youth Resource Fair and gave out information about County programs and assisted with applications for reduced fair cards. DOT will be participating at the Active Aging Expo on April 24 to be held at Bohrer Park in Gaithersburg as well as a virtual Transition Times session also on April 24 from 7pm to 8pm. DOT in partnership with Department of Recreation will be offering free senior SmarTrip® cards during the presidential primary from May 2 through May 9 at five recreation centers.

Angelisa Hawes, Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL), reported sensory friendly story times will be held April 14 and May 5 at the Brigadier General Charles E. McGee Library in Silver Spring. Participants must register to attend. The same library will be hosting a 'Read to a Dog' event on May 11 where children will have the ability to read out loud to a dog to improve their reading skills. Registration is not required for this event.

Angela Luskey, Department of Recreation, reported the new Silver Spring Recreation Aquatic Center is now open. Therapeutic Recreation will be hosting a family swim on April 21.

Legislation passed in the Maryland General Assembly:

- **House Bill 1069 - Workgroup for the Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing** - Establishes the Workgroup for the Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing to study and make recommendations regarding certain services, programs, advocacy, outreach efforts, and other items to improve the quality of life of individuals who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing; and requiring the Workgroup to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by June 1, 2025.
  - Bill was sponsored by Delegate Aaron Kaufman, former Vice Chair of the Commission
- **Senate Bill 790 – Maryland Medicaid Employed Individuals with Disabilities** - Requires the Maryland Department of Health to provide Maryland Medical Assistance Program services for individuals under the Employed Individuals with Disabilities Program in accordance with certain requirements; prohibiting the Department from limiting eligibility to receive services under the EID Program based on certain criteria; and repealing certain provisions of law relating to the Employed Persons with Disabilities Program.
  - Passed with the following amendment: That, on or before December 1, 2024, the Maryland Department of Health shall report to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Health and Government Operations Committee, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, on the fiscal and operational impact of the following: (1) implementing an Employed Individuals with Disabilities Program that serves individuals age 65 and older, including options of eliminating or increasing the age cap with enrollment; and (2) establishing a premium contribution for EID Program services that is based on an applicant's earned and unearned income.”

## Commissioner Updates

None

## Public Comments

No member of the public signed up to speak.

Meeting Adjourned – 7:35pm

**Attendees**

**Commissioners Present:** Myra Coffield; Kaylee Davis; Tonya Gilchrist; Karen Goss; Samuel Korper; Cindy LaBon; Ricardo Lopez; Karen Morgret, Acting Chair; Lisa Quinn; Richard Shermanski; Jeneva Stone; Teresa Villani; John Whittle

**Commissioners Absent:** Sammi Hampton; Coni Nepomuceno; Avner Shapiro; Melissa Wyman

**Non-Voting Ex-Officio Members Present:** Matthew Barkley, ADA Title II Compliance Officer, Department of General Services; Patricia Cochrane, Montgomery County Public Schools; Rebecca Grayson, Housing Opportunities Commission; Candace Groudine, Human Rights Commission; Angelisa Hawes, Montgomery County Public Libraries; Denise Isreal, Department of Transportation; Angela Luskey, Department of Recreation

**Non-Voting Ex-Officio Members Absent:** Jennene Blakely, Montgomery Parks; Karen Hochberg, Office of Human Resources

**County Staff Present:** Dr. Patrice McGhee, Chief, Aging & Disability Services, Department of Health and Human Services

**Commission Staff Present:** Betsy Luecking, Staff Liaison; Carly Clem, Program Specialist II

**Public:** Jenny Carver (Sign Language Interpreter); Addy Eubanks (Sign Language Interpreter); Pat Sheehan; Deborah Rozell; Cindy Buddington

**Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities  
May 2024 Meeting and Events Calendar**

Full Commission Meeting – Wednesday May 8  
6pm to 7:30pm to be held via Zoom – link to be announced

Steering Committee Meeting – Wednesday May 15  
5:30pm to 6:30pm to be held via Zoom – link to be announced

Submitted by: Carly Clem, Program Specialist II  
Betsy Tolbert Luecking, Community Outreach Manager