

Montgomery County Public Schools
850 Hungerford Drive
Department of Communications
Instructional TV
Rockville, Maryland 20850
(301) 279-3838

April 15, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Amy Wilson, Program Manager

FROM: Dr. Dick Lipsky, Instructional TV Supervisor

SUBJECT: Responses to questions for renewal of cable channel 34

1. Number of PEG channels requested

MCPS requests the use of one additional PEG channel, cable channel 34 for its continued use. We have utilized this channel successfully since 1988. This is in addition to our already assigned cable channel 33 as contained in the original Comcast franchise agreement.

2. Intended use of each requested PEG channel

MCPS Instructional TV Channel 34 is programmed for community events, school system training, community and public information, programs for parents, live Board of Education meetings (30+ each year, 3-8 hours in length) and community forums for the Montgomery County Parents Association. In addition, during this time period, we broadcast more than 400 satellite downlinks which support teachers, students and parents on channel 33 and 9 downlinks on channel 34. We also have been averaging coverage of 20-30 press conferences each year that are aired on cable channel 34.

3. Period of time per day per channel

We request the use of channel 34 for 24 hours a day for 7 days a week. MCPS Instructional TV Channel 34 is currently programmed to support school and community information pertaining to Montgomery County Public Schools. This programming is scheduled from 8 AM -12 midnight, Monday through Friday with Board of Education meetings and TV programs covering such topics as college prep, protecting your child in an emergency, meeting the "Student Member of the Board" candidates forum, demonstrating how new technologies are being utilized in our schools to help provide instructional tools for teachers. Selected programs are re-aired on the weekends.

4. If a full-time channel is being requested, state why a partial day is not adequate to meet community needs.

The dramatic increase of community programming on channel 34 in such topics as multi-ethnic programs in their native languages (*Our Schools Today* in Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, American Sign Language and English and captioning of selected programs) has allowed us to increase both the quality and quantity of programs for multiethnic groups in Montgomery County. In addition we provide a monthly Spanish talk program series called *Diez Minutos* which interviews Hispanic leaders on a wide range of topics involving life here in Montgomery County. Also offered to the public on cable channel 34 is a monthly interview program called *Education Matters* hosted by the Board of Education President, which covers a wide range of local topics affecting education today. Other sample topics of interest covered on cable channel 34 are: security and crisis preparedness called *Code Blue* and *Code Red*, a high school academic competition called *Quizmaster Challenge*, and a news and information program called *Take Ten* that discusses issues about our students, our schools, and our people.

5. Why a Second Channel Is Needed

A full-time second channel is needed due to the increased demand for informational and community programming in our schools and community which is not being met by any commercial or PEG channel. With increased requests for our programming from many school departments on the increase, such as those from the Office of Instructional Programs (OCIP), the Office of Staff Development (OSD) and the Office of Communications (OC), a partial day would not allow us enough time to meet our needs while also providing the necessary outreach programs to the community.

Over the past eight years, by increasing the quality and quantity of our programming on Channel 34, this communications tool has become a great resource for community information and emergency closings pertaining for school-related issues. Since 1999, ITV has tripled the number of locally-produced shows for the community on this channel, thereby reinforcing the need for it use. Partial use of the channel will not adequately address these increasing needs.

Since 2006, thanks to an allocation by the Montgomery County Council, ITV has added more than 50 hours of translated and new programming in foreign languages that are in addition to our current programming mix.

6. Number of hours of programming from January 1, 2007 - Dec 31, 2007.

Locally Produced Programs

	<u>First Run</u>	<u>Repeats</u>
Ch.33	116	198
Ch.34	203.25	4042

Acquired Programs

	<u>First Run</u>	<u>Repeats</u>	<u>Block Acquired (Classic Arts)</u>
Ch.33	92	3789	4564
Ch.34	11	1554.50	
 <u>Text</u>			
Ch.33	0		
Ch.34	2941.75		

7. How has the Channel met the intended use?

The renewal of channel 34 to MCPS since 1988 has produced many positive benefits to the community and by allowed us to demonstrate our responsibilities to the viewing public. We have developed programming for this channel that offers the valuable community information and activities which include Board of Education meetings, press conferences in their entirety, live call in programs (*Homework Hotline Live!*). It is the only PEG channel to offer immediate emergency weather and school closing information immediately. An electronic graphics system helps us display quality graphics for upcoming announcements and community information activities related to MCPS.

8. How any conditions associated with the current allocation have been addressed.

A.) MCPS has made significant strides in addressing all of the recommendations for renewal of its cable channel 34 licensing agreement from a previous application. We have dramatically limited text programming to times during the broadcast day when we are between programs.

B.) MCPS has made a good faith effort to accommodate all parochial and secondary schools on our channels.

C.) We have been diligent in avoiding programming that is duplicative of other channels. The exceptions to this are the State of the County speech given each year by the County Executive.

D.) We have made every good faith effort to offer production and engineering help to any PEG channel requesting our services. We have provided engineering support to other PEG channels when needed.

E.) MCPS considers proposals from Comcast to use our channel. This is addressed on an individual case basis.

F.) We are aware of the county's right to use our channels or change the Comcast agreement within 120 days.

G.)We are aware of the budgetary constraints that we must face as a school system and PEG channel.

In closing, Montgomery County Public Schools looks forward to providing another two years of quality instructional, informational and community-based television programming for all schools and community residents by addressing countywide educational needs through the medium of cable television.

Copy: Ms. Alvez, Director of Communications