

HHS/ED COMMITTEE #2
November 5, 2015
Briefing

MEMORANDUM

November 4, 2015

TO: Health and Human Services Committee
Education Committee

FROM: Essie McGuire, Senior Legislative Analyst *EM*
Linda McMillan, Senior Legislative Analyst *LAM*

SUBJECT: **Briefing –Services and programs for unaccompanied minors and other students with Limited English Proficiency**

Today the Health and Human Services (HHS) and Education Committees will receive a briefing on services and programs for unaccompanied minors and other students with Limited English Proficiency. The following individuals are expected to participate:

- Chrisandra Richardson, Associate Superintendent, Office of Special Education and Student Services, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)
- Laura Newton, Director, Division of School Counseling, Residency, and International Student Admissions, MCPS
- Lori-Christina Webb, Executive Director, Office of the Chief Academic Officer, MCPS
- Karen Woodson, Director, Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs, MCPS
- Uma Ahluwalia, Director, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- JoAnn Barnes, Chief, Children, Youth, and Family Services, DHHS
- Candace Kattar, Director of Programs, Identity, Inc.

The Committees will receive an update from MCPS on international enrollment data and processes; academic supports for students with Limited English Proficiency; and specific resources for staff and families related to children fleeing violence or experiencing other trauma. The Committees will then receive an update from DHHS on the numbers of youth and families served and program impacts. Identity Inc., will also present comments on their observations from working with youth fleeing violence.

Montgomery County Public Schools

MCPS provided the overview information attached on circles 5-17. Council staff highlights the following:

- Total international enrollment of students in MCPS was at a high point in the last school year with 4,128 international students in SY14-15. Enrollment information for the current school year is provided through September 30, and appears on pace to be lower than last year. Currently just under 2,000 international students have enrolled in MCPS this school year.
- Circle 7 shows the top eight countries of origin for international students in the last four school years. El Salvador remains at or near the top in each year, Honduras has been in the top eight in the last three years, and Guatemala in each of the last two years. Ethiopia and China also both appear in the list in all four years.
- MCPS does not necessarily know the immigration status of international students. To enroll in MCPS, a student only needs to be able to demonstrate residence with a legal guardian in Montgomery County, not a specific immigration status. MCPS is aware if a student is placed through the Federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). Circle 9 shows that as of September 30, a total of 51 students were placed through ORR compared with a total of 107 last school year.
- In a memorandum to the Board of Education, Interim Superintendent Bowers provided an overview of resources, programs, and strategies MCPS is using to address the needs of immigrant students who enter MCPS from a wide variety of circumstances. This memorandum is attached on circles 1-4. New steps MCPS has taken include the addition of a second international enrollment site and development of an orientation video and “toolkit” for staff and families.
- The memorandum also describes the range of ESOL services available to students with English language and other academic support needs. Circles 9-11 show that ESOL enrollment continues to increase overall and at every school level.
- A team of 10.7 bilingual ESOL counselors is in place to provide direct counseling and transition services for ESOL students in addition to school-based ESOL counselors. MCPS will discuss additional plans to increase staff’s ability to meet the social and emotional needs of many of the students fleeing violence.
- In a recent report by the Migration Policy Institute, MCPS was highlighted as one of three school districts in the nation taking creative and positive approaches to accommodate the increasing enrollment of unaccompanied minors. The report contrasts the strong efforts of MCPS and the two other districts with some districts that have not provided services or even have reacted negatively. An article from Education Week about the report is attached on circle 18 and excerpts from the Migration Policy Institute report (the Executive Summary and the portion of the report about local district services) are attached on circles 19-24.

Department of Health and Human Services

The Department of Health and Human Services has provided information attached at circles 25-32 on the number of children fleeing violence that have been and are being served through several programs including Care for Kids, School Health Services, Child Welfare Services, Positive Youth Development Services (Youth Opportunity Centers, Wellness Centers, Street Outreach Network), the Latino Health Initiative, and Linkages to Learning. DHHS notes that data is often difficult to collect as children enter programs through many doors and do not always disclose their status.

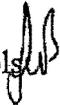
Council staff highlights the following:

- The Federal Office of Refugee Resettlement reports that as of October 23, 2015, 454 unaccompanied minors had been released to sponsors in Montgomery County. These numbers do not include youth that have arrived without a sponsor.
- Care for Kids has enrolled 22% more new children in the first 3 months of FY15 compared to FY16. About 55% of the new enrollees are new arrivals from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.
- School Health Services Teen Pregnancy Case Management reports that in the 2014-2015 school year 17 students self-identifying as unaccompanied fleeing violence were pregnant or had a newborn with 8 reporting that their pregnancies were the result of traumatic events. As of October 15 for the 2015-2016 school year, there are 12 such students that are pregnant or with a newborn or infant.
- From January 2014 through June 2015, 650 unduplicated youth were served through an array of Positive Youth Development and Latino Health Initiative services. The Latino Health Initiative provided intensive navigation services for 140 children that were detained at the border an average of 21 days before being released to parents or guardians. These children need legal services, health care, school enrollment, family reunification, and social services.
- Sixty five parents and 68 children completed family reunification workshops provided by the Latino Health Initiative. Forty-nine percent of the children were 16 to 20 years old, 30% were 10 to 14 years old, 14% were 6 to 9 years old, and 7% were birth to age 4. For 78.5% of children the legal custodian was a parent.
- The Linkages to Learning program continues to help enroll children in MCPS, find sufficient housing for families, access behavioral health services, enroll children in Care for Kids, and access legal assistance. Many families are in need of “almost everything,” such as food, clothes, diapers, and hygiene products.
- Linkages to Learning staff reports that challenges include staying up-to-date on legal issues and proceedings, different immigration outcomes for youth in the same family, lack of eligibility for SNAP and other certain other assistance, and the need for more English classes.

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

August 5, 2015

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education
From: Larry A. Bowers, Interim Superintendent of Schools 
Subject: Immigrant Students (07-14-15-02)

Question

In response to the public comments concerning issues immigrant students are facing at MCPS, Mr. Barclay requested the following:

- A memorandum summarizing the current supports in place at MCPS for immigrant students;
- An update on what MCPS is doing to improve immigrant/international students' experiences and orientation to MCPS schools, and particularly, what schools are doing to inform students of programs, activities and supports available to them.

Response

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) utilizes a variety of orientation, instructional, and intervention strategies to assist students in having positive and successful experiences in school. In addition, to accommodate the increasing numbers of students enrolling from other countries, a substantial redesign of the international enrollment processes was undertaken.

As a part of the redesign of our international enrollment processes and to better assist students and families with their introduction to MCPS, the following strategies have been employed:

- An orientation video welcoming families to MCPS has been created. Parents will have the opportunity to receive information on topics related to enrollment, school bus transportation, use of lockers in secondary schools, school meals, and student service learning groups that meet after school.
- There will be face-to-face orientation sessions for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) families enrolling in MCPS. These sessions will be provided by ESOL Parent Community Coordinators (PCCs) and ESOL counselors.

- MCPS will offer two enrollment locations and the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) immunization clinics at the Rocking Horse Road Center and the Upcounty Regional Services Center. Evening and Saturday hours will be available during peak time at the Rocking Horse Road Center.
- Enhancements to the Rocking Horse Road Center will include clear signage, increased space for the DHHS immunization clinic, and a clinic waiting room.
- High school students will serve as ambassadors at the enrollment centers to interact with young children as they wait for their enrollment appointment or English proficiency testing, allowing these students to earn student service learning credit.
- Adult bilingual community volunteers were recruited through the Montgomery County Volunteer Center.
- MCPS collaborated with the Montgomery County Charles W. Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity to provide an information table at Rocking Horse Road Center where the Division of School Counseling, Residency, and International Admissions; the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs; and a DHHS immunization clinic are housed to provide families with additional contacts and resources in the community.
- Each student will be provided with a backpack with school supplies as a part of the enrollment process in collaboration with the Office of Community Engagement and Partnerships (OCEP).

Unaccompanied youth from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras enrolling in MCPS qualify for participation in the ESOL program, where they receive instruction in English as a new language, as well as parent engagement and counseling supports. ESOL students who enroll in MCPS with limited or no formal schooling also may qualify for the Multidisciplinary Educational Training and Support (METS) program, where they receive additional instruction in basic literacy, numeracy, and academic skills, as well as social emotional supports to facilitate their adjustment to a new school environment.

A key component of the METS program is providing social emotional supports through the ESOL counseling program. A team of 10.7 Full-time Equivalent (FTE) ESOL transition counselors, bilingual in English and Spanish and six additional languages, continues to provide direct individual and group counseling supports to METS students to assist in removing barriers to learning.

In addition to ESOL transition counselors, school-based ESOL counselors, all of whom are bilingual in English and Spanish, are certified school counselors and serve all high schools with ESOL centers. A team of 7.0 FTE school-based ESOL counselors provides a range of supports to deliver an itinerant, bilingual Spanish/English comprehensive school counseling program to assist ESOL students in the areas of acculturation, academic achievement, career/educational

decision making, and personal and social development. To support the families of all ESOL students, the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs has 15.0 FTE ESOL PCCs who are bilingual in English and Spanish, as well as seven additional languages, to work with families and assist them in navigating the school system to support their children.

Spanish-speaking high school ESOL students who have experienced interrupted or limited formal education are eligible for the Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement (SEPA) program. SEPA is a career-based instructional program, specifically structured for Spanish-speaking students who are at least 18 years of age at the start of their first school year and are not likely to meet MCPS graduation requirements by age 21. The SEPA program provides an alternative instructional pathway that allows students to continue their education while preparing for the world of work in the United States and/or the GED. Students select a career program pathway at the Thomas Edison High School of Technology and take courses that help them develop key career readiness skills, including ESOL, reading, mathematics, and College/Career Research and Development. Career pathways include nail technology, restaurant management, construction, and automotive technology.

The Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs also developed an Unaccompanied Youth Toolkit to provide an online resource for all schools to learn about unaccompanied youth in MCPS and how to support them. The toolkit contains essential readings, videos, statistics, and legal guidance, as well as links to MCPS supports for unaccompanied youth, such as METS, SEPA, ESOL counseling, and ESOL parent outreach programs. The toolkit also contains links to community partners in Montgomery County who serve unaccompanied youth and several document libraries with essential information on emotional triggers, social emotional supports, and educational tools that teachers can use in the classroom.

While not specifically developed for immigrant students, the Extended-day programs, a middle school program available for Grade 6, 7, and 8 students, and The George B. Thomas Sr., Learning Academy, Inc. (GBTLA) offer supports to students who are experiencing academic difficulties. The Extended-day programs provide additional instructional time for students who are struggling with academic performance in order to accelerate students' mastery of reading, language arts, and mathematics skills. The core programs of the GBTLA Saturday School offer tutoring and mentoring in reading/language arts, mathematics, and test-taking skills for students in Grades 1 through 12.

Additionally, MCPS partners with Identity, Inc., which provides programs based on the Positive Youth Development model to increase self-esteem, conflict resolution skills, and self-efficacy. MCPS also collaborates with Montgomery College and the Universities at Shady Grove to create the Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success program. This free program focuses on identifying and supporting both students who come from backgrounds that are underrepresented in higher education and those who would be the first in their family to attend college.

MCPS is represented on the Montgomery County Children Fleeing Violence Committee and continues to collaborate with our nonprofit partners to ensure that students and families receive necessary supports. The group is composed of members from many Montgomery County Government and nonprofit community agencies, as well as staff members from Montgomery College and MCPS. The committee was established to formulate a rapid, coordinated, and comprehensive response to address increased numbers of immigrant students.

OCEP continues to work in collaboration with DHHS and nonprofit partners to operate Linkages to Learning Programs in 29 schools with a focus on mental health supports. OCEP provides services for schools, such as a resource bank for schools to obtain speakers or mentors, and Study Circles, which focuses on bringing communities together by addressing cultural and racial differences.

OCEP also offers services for parents and students, including:

- Free workshops through the Parent Academy;
- MCPS Neediest Kids/Bridge to Success to help MCPS students acquire the essential supplies they need to succeed in school;
- Excel Beyond the Bell, which offers safe, quality, and accessible out-of-school programs through the Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families; and
- MCPS GIVE BACK packs, which supplies up to 50,000 backpacks containing school supplies to MCPS students.

If you have any questions, please contact Mrs. Chrisandra A. Richardson, associate superintendent for special education and student services, Office of the Chief Academic Officer, at 301-279-3607.

LAB:MVN:CAR:dab

Copy to:

Executive Staff

Ms. Berner

Mr. Ikheloa

Montgomery County Public Schools

Unaccompanied Youth Presentation

Montgomery County Council Briefing
November 5, 2015



Registration Process for International Students

- Parents/guardians of a student who has not attended a U.S. school any time during the prior two years, must contact the Division of School Counseling, Residency, and International Admissions (SCRIA) to begin the enrollment process.
- Reviews requests for enrollment for all students living with a court-appointed guardian who has an established bona fide residence in Montgomery County.
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) families meet with ESOL Parent Community Coordinators on site during peak times.
- Students placed with relatives/friends in Montgomery County by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) follow the same process.
- Being placed by ORR is considered a hardship.
 - students are approved as nontuition paying students.

Registration Process for International Students

- Registration process
 - Intake review
 - Assessment of English language skills for speakers of other languages by the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs
 - Review immunization records and administer vaccinations
 - Provide referrals for additional medical care at Montgomery County Health Clinics
- Families/students go to their assigned schools for final registration

Enhancements to Summer Enrollment

Formed a project team to provide families with a more consumer friendly international enrollment experience

Response:

- Opened a summer site at Upcounty Government Service Center
- Provided ESOL a face-to-face orientation for all ESOL families with ESOL Parent Community Coordinators or Counselors
- Created online welcome videos in English and Spanish
- Arranged for a family friendly Health Clinic waiting room at Rocking Horse Road Center
- Increased community bilingual volunteer support
 - Student Service Learning Hours
 - Montgomery County Volunteer Website
 - Gilchrist Center

LLS3

Total Enrollment of International Students in MCPS

2010–2011	3,500
2011–2012	3,246
2012–2013	3,286
2013–2014	3,873
2014–2015	4,128
2015–2016	1,973

(July 1–September 30)

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LLS5

Enrollment of International Students in MCPS—Top 8 Countries

2012–2013		2013–2014		2014–2015		2015–2016 (July 1–September 30)	
COUNTRY	NUMBER	COUNTRY	NUMBER	COUNTRY	NUMBER	COUNTRY	NUMBER
United States*	510	United States*	462	El Salvador	636	United States	334
El Salvador	305	El Salvador	397	United States	497	El Salvador	263
Ethiopia	182	Ethiopia	166	Honduras	229	Honduras	77
Cameroon	132	China	143	Ethiopia	185	Brazil	63
Korea	99	Honduras	137	China	132	China	61
Japan	97	India	88	Guatemala	120	Ethiopia	61
China	91	United Kingdom	85	India	114	Guatemala	58
Brazil	83	Brazil	83	Japan	112	India	52

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LS6

Enrollment Trends for Selected Central American Countries

YEAR	EL SALVADOR	GUATEMALA	HONDURAS	TOTAL
2011-2012	305	70	56	431
2012-2013	397	65	137	599
2013-2014	636	120	229	985
2014-2015	769	159	336	1264
2015-2016 July 1-September 30	263	58	77	398
TOTAL				


 MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS Rockville, Maryland
 

Office of Refugee Resettlement Enrollment by Countries

Countries	July 1-September 30, 2015
El Salvador	19
Honduras	14
Guatemala	18
TOTAL	51

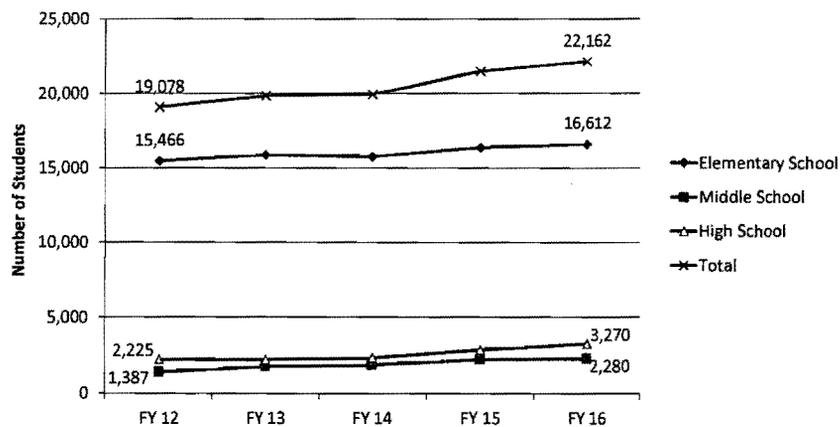

 MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS Rockville, Maryland
 

Office of Refugee Resettlement Enrollment by School Level

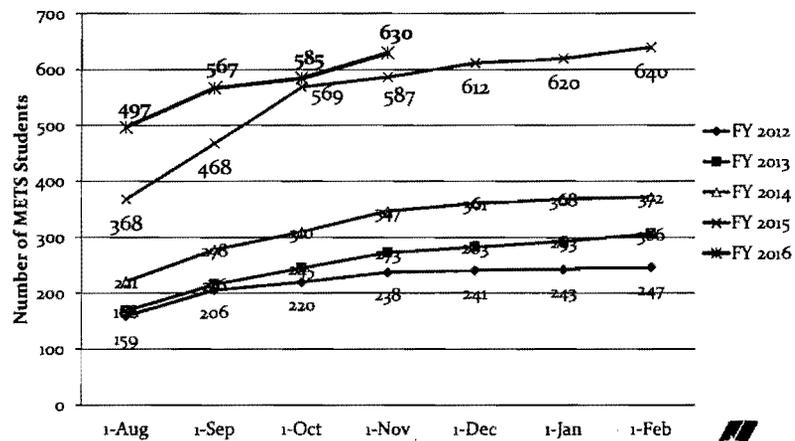
Instructional Level	2014-2015 School Year	July 1- September 30, 2015
Elementary School (K-5)	1	0
Middle School (6-8)	6	0
High School (9-12)	100	51
TOTAL	107	51



ESOL Student Enrollment



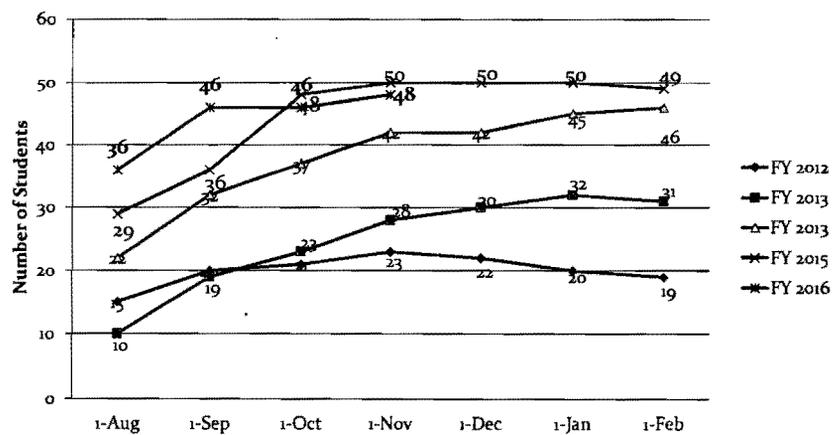
ESOL Multidisciplinary Educational Training and Support (METS) Enrollment



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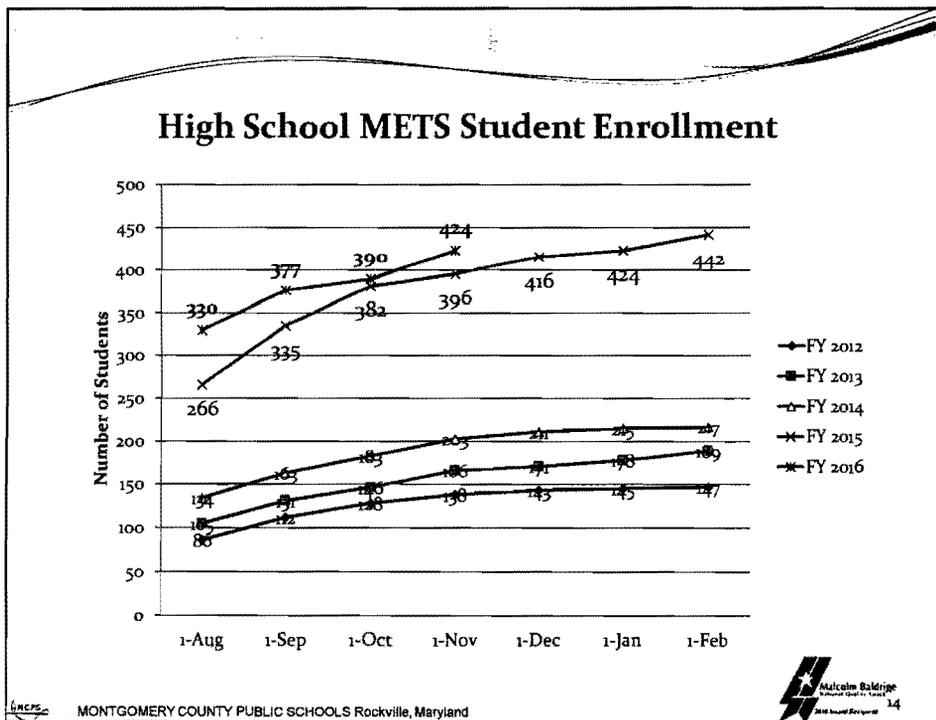
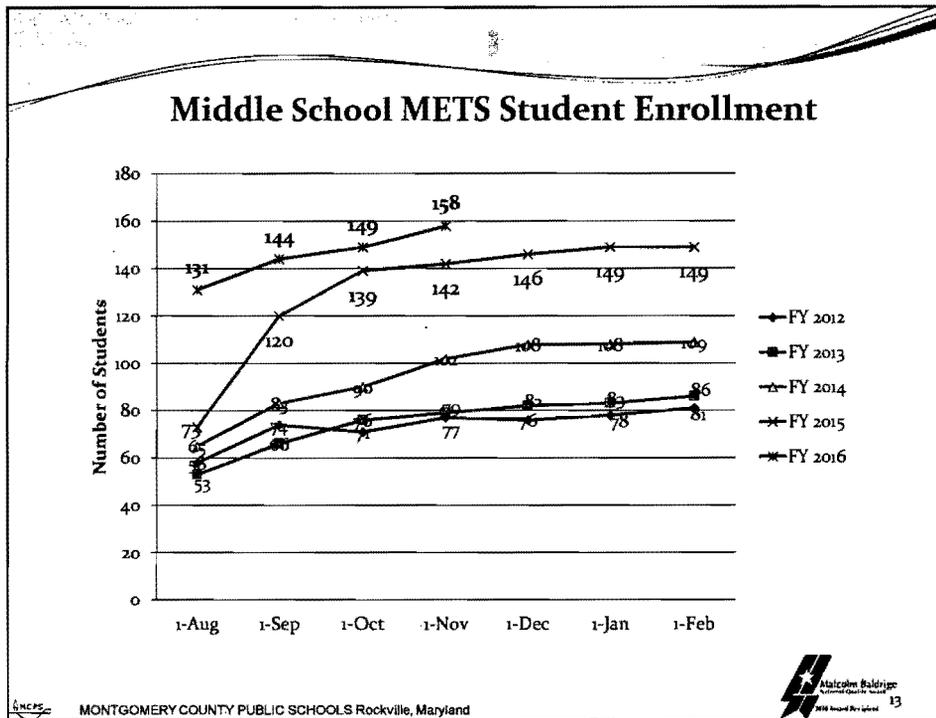
Elementary METS Student Enrollment

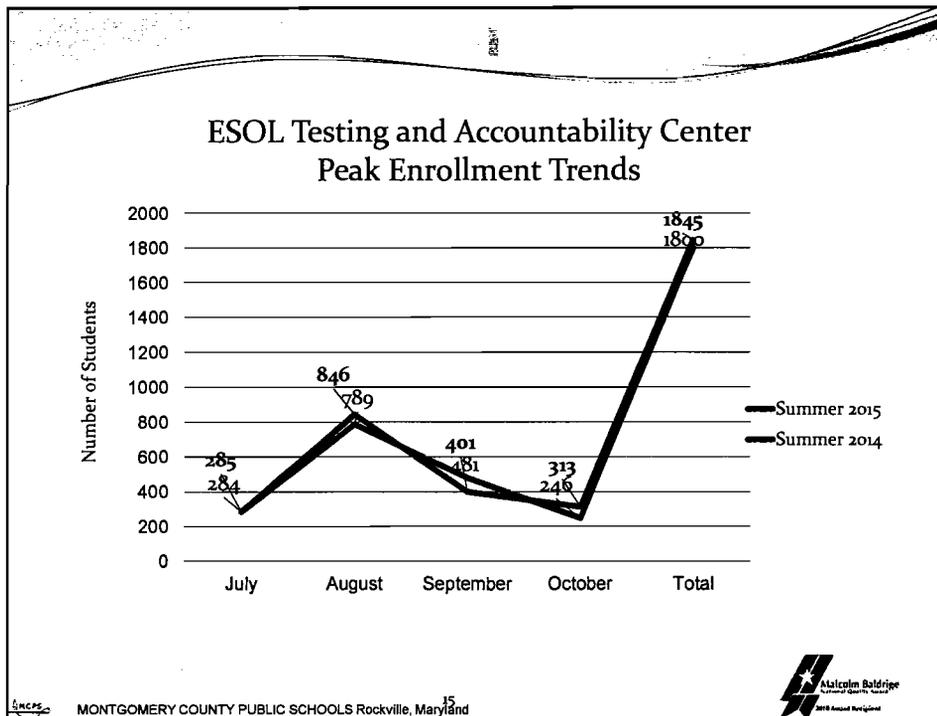


MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS Rockville, Maryland



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Serving our students: ESOL Staffing

An equitable, transparent staffing model is in its second year of implementation

ESOL staffing matched to levels of English proficiency (beginners to advanced)

High priority schools (Title I and Focus Schools) have smaller class sizes, which benefit English Learners

Schools with METS programs receive additional ESOL and paraeducator staffing

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS Rockville, Maryland

Alcalde Baldrige National Quality Award 2010 Annual Recipient

Serving our students: Instructional and Support Services through the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs

- All of the unaccompanied youth from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras enrolled in MCPS qualify for ESOL programs and services
 - instruction in English as a new language
 - parent/guardian engagement and counseling supports
- ESOL students with limited or no formal schooling qualify for the METS program
 - additional instruction in basic literacy, numeracy, and academic skills
 - social emotional supports to facilitate their adjustment to a new school environment

Serving our students: Counseling supports through the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs

- To support the social emotional needs of all ESOL students
 - 10.6 Full-time equivalent (FTE) ESOL transition counselors
 - bilingual in English and Spanish and six additional languages, provide supports to priority schools on a regularly scheduled basis and all schools by referral
 - 7.0 School-based ESOL counselors
 - bilingual in English and Spanish, serve all high schools with METS programs and the two largest ESOL center high schools
- ESOL counselors provide orientation support to newcomer METS and non-METS ESOL students to ease their adjustment to a new school environment and address barriers to learning

Serving our students: Parent/guardian and family outreach supports through the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs

- To support the families of all ESOL students
 - 14.0 FTE ESOL parent community coordinators
 - bilingual in English and Spanish, as well as seven additional languages
 - Provide orientation support to newcomer METS and non-METS ESOL families
 - Assist families in navigating the school system to support their children
- ESOL parent community coordinators serve families in many ways often facilitating communication between school staff members and international parents

Serving our students: Supports through the Department of Career Readiness and Innovative Programs

- Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement (SEPA)
- SEPA students and their families receive a wide range of support to ensure their success
 - small class sizes
 - bilingual classroom support
 - summer programs
 - bilingual counseling
 - assistance with student fees required at the Thomas Edison High School of Technology
 - parent/guardian outreach

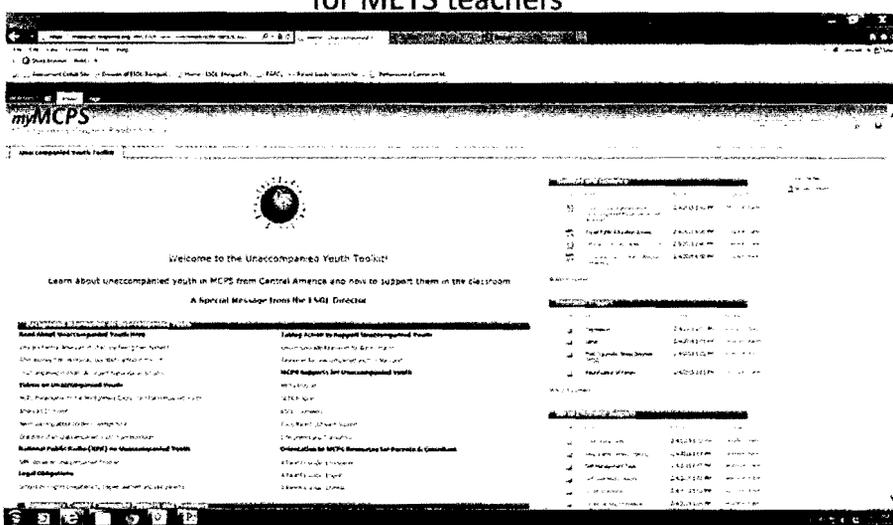
Academic Supports

- Districtwide Mathematics and Literacy Plans
- Cross-functional Instructional Core Teams
- English Language Development Teacher Coaches in 20 Identified Middle Schools
- Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) implemented in 49 Pre-K-12 schools
- Structured Supports in Literacy (*Read 180*)

 Alacorn Baldrige
National Quality Award

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS Rockville, Maryland

Serving our staff: Unaccompanied Youth Toolkit and training for METS teachers



myMCPS

Unaccompanied Youth Toolkit

Welcome to the Unaccompanied Youth Toolkit

Learn about unaccompanied youth in MCPS from Central America and how to support them in the classroom

A Special Message from the S.M.E. Director

Resources for Teachers

- Unaccompanied Youth Toolkit
- Unaccompanied Youth Toolkit Training
- Unaccompanied Youth Toolkit Training Materials
- Unaccompanied Youth Toolkit Training Videos
- Unaccompanied Youth Toolkit Training Slides
- Unaccompanied Youth Toolkit Training Audio
- Unaccompanied Youth Toolkit Training Images
- Unaccompanied Youth Toolkit Training Documents
- Unaccompanied Youth Toolkit Training Links

Resources for Parents & Guardians

- Unaccompanied Youth Toolkit
- Unaccompanied Youth Toolkit Training
- Unaccompanied Youth Toolkit Training Materials
- Unaccompanied Youth Toolkit Training Videos
- Unaccompanied Youth Toolkit Training Slides
- Unaccompanied Youth Toolkit Training Audio
- Unaccompanied Youth Toolkit Training Images
- Unaccompanied Youth Toolkit Training Documents
- Unaccompanied Youth Toolkit Training Links

 Alacorn Baldrige
National Quality Award 2.2

(15)

Serving our staff: Culturally Based Trauma Informed Practices Training

- Children fleeing violence come with significant social emotional needs and may have experienced trauma, requiring new thinking, and a new approach
- Stakeholder work group established to examine curriculum options and professional development plan
- Plans for three tiers of training for MCPS staff members are underway
 - Awareness
 - Skilled
 - Highly skilled

Collaboration with Community Partners

- Children Fleeing Violence work group
- Stakeholder professional development work group
- Department of Health and Human Services
 - Wellness programs
 - Linkages to Learning
 - School based Health Centers
- Identity, Inc.
 - METS students at Parkland and Roberto Clemente middle schools

Collaboration with Community Partners

- Collaboration Council
 - Excel Beyond the Bell
 - George B. Thomas, Sr. Learning Academy, Inc.
- Mental Health Association of Montgomery County
 - METS high schools—small group counseling

DISCUSSION

Education Week's blogs > Learning the Language

Unaccompanied Minors Face Uneven Experiences in U.S. Schools

By Corey Mitchell on October 16, 2015 7:05 AM

The tens of thousands of unaccompanied school-aged children and youths who crossed the U.S.-Mexico border in the spring and summer of 2014 had vastly different educational experiences depending on where they settled, according to a new report from the Migration Policy Institute.

The report makes the case that local school districts have felt the "most visible and immediate impact" of the surge of unaccompanied minors. The students, almost all of them from Central America and many with yearlong gaps in their formal education, represented a new challenge for the schools.

From the need for more English-language-learner services to mental health counseling, the needs of the students are met in some places and rebuffed in others, the report found.

"Anecdotal reports suggest school districts are reacting in significantly different ways, some creating service programs that address the children's particular needs, while others have exercised policies that make school enrollment more difficult," wrote Sarah Pierce, a research assistant with the U.S. Immigration Policy Program at the Migration Policy Institute and the report's author.

The paper cites the work of three school districts, including the Montgomery County, Md., Sussex County, Del., and Dalton, Ga., schools for their efforts to address the needs of the unaccompanied minors, including trauma, interrupted formal education, family reunification, and legal issues.

According to the report, among the accommodations the Montgomery County schools provided were:

- Instructional and emotional support for students with limited schooling and English-language skills
- Bilingual parent volunteers to help families navigate the school system
- Training for teachers and staff in skills related to the needs of unaccompanied minors
- A job skills program for students who will not receive a high school diploma before they turn 21
- Mental health support programs backed by the county government.

Conversely, the report points to New York's Nassau County schools and several districts in North Carolina that have pushed back against the arrival of unaccompanied minors.

A joint investigation by the New York's education department and the state attorney general's office found evidence that some **districts refused to enroll undocumented youths and unaccompanied minors** if they were unable to produce documents demonstrating guardianship or residency in the state.

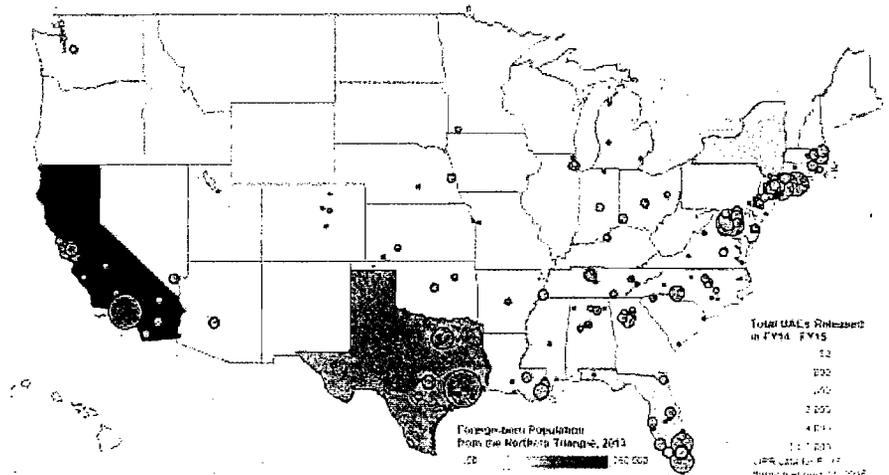
The New York State Board of Regents approved an emergency order last December to ensure that students were able to enroll in the state's public schools regardless of their immigration status. The new policy prohibits schools from asking about the immigration status of students or their families during the enrollment process.

Under federal law, all children, regardless of their immigration status, have the right to enroll in public schools. Federal funding dedicates additional money for schools that enroll students who are English-language learners.

Here's a copy of the Migration Policy Institute report:

[UAC Integration FINAL](#)

Figure 1. Central American Immigrant Populations, by State (2013), and Unaccompanied Child Migrants Released to Family Sponsors, by County (October 1, 2013 - August 31, 2015)



Excerpts From :



Issue Brief

Unaccompanied Child Migrants in U.S. Communities, Immigration Court, and Schools

By Sarah Pierce

October 2015

U.S. IMMIGRATION POLICY PROGRAM

Executive Summary

More than 102,000 unaccompanied children from Central America and Mexico were apprehended at the U.S.-Mexico border by U.S. Customs and Border Protection from the start of fiscal year (FY) 2014 through August 31, 2015. While steadily increasing numbers of unaccompanied minors had been arriving at the border for years, the surge that began in early 2014 caught the attention of a concerned public and policymakers after systems responsible for the processing and care of these children were briefly overwhelmed.

The majority of unaccompanied children (UACs) are from the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, which accounted for more than 76,000 of the 102,000 child migrants. While most of the Mexican children are quickly returned to Mexico, U.S. law provides for different treatment for unaccompanied minors from noncontiguous countries. These children are transferred by the Border Patrol into the custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that is responsible for processing and sheltering the minors, who are simultaneously placed into removal proceedings. The vast majority are released by ORR into the care of a parent, relative, or family friend in the United States while they wait for their cases to progress slowly through the U.S. immigration court system. As a result, the children have tended to be placed in areas of the United States with already high levels of foreign-born populations from the Northern Triangle, presenting a unique challenge to local communities across the country.

The influx of unaccompanied minors has created a difficult situation for the country's already overburdened immigration court system. Despite having been placed on a "priority docket," the children's cases continue to lag. And other types of immigration cases are pushed even further back—individuals with immigration court cases now wait an average of 1,071 days for their first hearing.

For the unaccompanied children, even when their cases are finally heard, the immigration court system has resolved the status for relatively few of them. A review of immigration court data shows that the majority of children show up for their hearings and, of those who attend, 78 percent receive some form of immigration relief. However, 97 percent of children who receive immigration relief do not receive a simultaneous grant of immigration status, meaning they remain unauthorized. Meanwhile, the large majority of removal orders have gone to children who have not appeared for their hearings, and as a result many removal orders have gone unexecuted.

As these cases slowly make their way through the immigration system, the children become further engrained in communities and school districts across the country. While specific

school enrollment data are unavailable and it is not possible to map the policies that every school has put in place to deal with these child migrants, anecdotal evidence suggests that school districts have had disparate reactions to the influx of new students and associated costs. Some have created specialized programs to work with the newcomers, while others have come to different answers whether older students should be enrolled in K-12 classes or adult education, and yet others have pushed back against their enrollment entirely.

Because they are in unauthorized status, unaccompanied migrants are eligible for few public services other than public education. ORR offers some postrelease services, but these are limited to very few migrants. For services such as health care or legal representation, unaccompanied children must depend on proactive service providers, localities, states, or federal programs that create services to meet their specific requirements. The result is a patchwork of services that fails to address many of the extensive needs of this vulnerable population.

The result is a patchwork of services that fails to address many of the extensive needs of this vulnerable population.

I. Introduction

The large numbers of unaccompanied children (UACs) who have arrived at the U.S.-Mexico border over the past two years raise many difficult questions for U.S. communities. The children are released by the federal government to the care of family members or other sponsors in the United States pending their immigration court hearing, but the local communities in which they are placed become responsible for their education and certain other services, with minimal federal assistance. What is the impact of these arrivals on communities within the United States, and how are communities responding thus far?

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) apprehended 102,327 unaccompanied children at the U.S.-Mexico border from the start of fiscal year (FY) 2014 through August 31, 2015. This number included 76,572 minors from Central America's Northern Triangle (El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras)¹ and 25,755 from Mexico.² While unaccompanied children have been arriving at the southern border for years, the number of arrivals began surging in 2014, prompting increased attention from the public and policymakers during the spring and summer of 2014 as the numbers reached their peak.

Most Mexican unaccompanied minors are immediately deported, while Central Americans (and most other nationalities) have the right to contest their deportation and seek relief from removal in immigration court.³ This process can take two years or more, during which time children are typically placed with a parent or other adult relative already in the United States, a family friend, or in foster care.⁴ And while a small number of unaccompanied minors are granted formal relief, most ultimately remain in the United States, often foregoing appearance in immigration court and remaining in unauthorized status.

This brief summarizes the available data and qualitative research on where unaccompanied child migrants are being placed, how they are faring in immigration courts, what types of services are available to them, and how communities are adapting to their arrival.

II. Where Do Unaccompanied Children Settle within the United States?

Figure 1 illustrates county-level populations of unaccompanied minors released to spon-

From the beginning of FY 2014 through August 31, 2015, 77,194 unaccompanied minors were released by ORR to communities throughout the United States.³³ All of these minors are entitled to public education. The child migrants have an array of particular needs, and school districts have had to balance addressing these needs along with those of other students, within resource limitations. Anecdotal reports suggest school districts are reacting in significantly different ways, some creating service programs that address the children's particular needs, while others have exercised policies that make school enrollment more difficult. Because information on unaccompanied children released into particular school districts is not shared with the school districts themselves nor publicly, it is difficult to make broad conclusions on their impact.

Some counties have developed creative approaches to addressing the diverse needs of unaccompanied children, while others have resisted their arrival.

A. Federal Costs

U.S. law guarantees education for all youth, regardless of immigration status; thus, unaccompanied children are entitled to free public elementary and secondary education.³⁴ In general, the costs of educating these children (like other public school spending) fall on local school districts, though several federal programs permit states and local educational agencies to receive additional funds to support the new arrivals.³⁵ For example, Title I, Part A of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) provides assistance to schools with large native and foreign-born low-income populations—more than \$14.4 billion has been allocated to this purpose in 2015.³⁶ These funds are provided for the education of about 21 million children, of whom unaccompanied child migrants make up about 0.2 percent.³⁷ Congressional appropriations for FY 2015 provided an additional

\$14 million for local education agencies to provide services targeted specifically to unaccompanied minors in 35 states that received significant such arrivals.³⁸ However, based on the assumption that about 60,000 unaccompanied child migrants have been placed in U.S. schools since the start of FY 2014, this grant amounts to about \$233 per student—leaving most of the cost to be borne by the local school district.

Immigration status is not a condition of eligibility for the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program, so qualifying unaccompanied minors may receive free or reduced-price meals.³⁹ Apart from these programs, however, the costs associated with the

specific service needs of unaccompanied children are borne by local counties and school districts.

B. Local Costs

Some counties have developed creative approaches to addressing the diverse needs of unaccompanied children, while others have resisted their arrival. Montgomery County, Maryland, for example, has one of the largest concentrations of unaccompanied child migrants: 1,571 such children were released there between October 2013 and August 2015 (see Appendix). The Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) had an enrollment of 153,852 students in 2015,⁴⁰ and has seen Central American student enrollment increase 44.7 percent between the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years.⁴¹

Montgomery County officials have identified several challenges in meeting the needs of the school district's unaccompanied minor students, including issues related to family reunification, interrupted formal education, acculturation, and trauma.

In order to accommodate the needs of this large and growing population, MCPS has tapped into a number of new and existing programs⁴² that include:

- A specialized program of instructional and emotional support for students with limited schooling and English skills
- Bilingual parent volunteers to help families navigate the school system
- An entry-level job skills program for Spanish-speaking students who will not receive a diploma by the time they are²¹
- Professional development courses and resources that train teachers and staff in skills specifically related to the needs of UACs
- Working groups to review the school district response to the needs of unaccompanied minors.

The broader Montgomery County government also has several new and ongoing initiatives to address the needs of these children, including a mental health support program operating in the most affected schools, a cross-sector committee to coordinate the county's response to UAC arrivals, and an agreement with local colleges to support certain at-risk college students.⁴³ The county's Care for Kids program provides affordable primary and specialty health care for children from low-income families who are not eligible for other state or federal health insurance programs.⁴⁴

Some cities and school districts have created or utilized existing transitional programs or "newcomer academies" to ease the transitional process. In San Francisco, the Mission Educa-

tion Center serves newly arrived, Spanish-speaking elementary school students,⁴⁵ and provides one- and two-year programs to help students transfer into mainstream classes. The program is more than 40 years old, but in 2014 its class sizes doubled after the arrival of unaccompanied minors.⁴⁶

Prior to the increase in UAC arrivals, Sussex County, Delaware, had a large Guatemalan population and had established several bilingual programs for students who spoke little English, directed at those of elementary-school age or younger.⁴⁷ In response to the influx of UAC students, teachers in the county's Indian River School District quickly put together a newcomer program for high school students.⁴⁸ During fall 2014, 46 students enrolled in the program.

Similarly, Dalton Public Schools in Whitfield County, Georgia, created a Newcomer Academy, to transition new students to mainstream schools within six months to a year.⁴⁹ The academy is housed on an existing high school campus, and provides classes focused on English literacy, reading, and mathematics.

Other counties and school districts have pushed back against the arrival of unaccompanied children.

Although some districts have utilized specialized programs to work with newcomers, others have struggled with how to serve older, middle- and high school-age students who have limited or interrupted formal education and students who are over the traditional high-school age. New arrivals are a particular challenge, as they may not be able to accrue enough high school credits to graduate by the time they reach the maximum age to be enrolled (usually 20 or 21, but as low as 17 or 19 in certain localities).⁵⁰ Many schools and districts struggle with whether high schools in the K-12 system or adult education are the appropriate placement for these youth.

Other counties and school districts have pushed back against the arrival of unaccompanied children. Several public schools in

New York's Nassau County, home to the fifth-largest population of unaccompanied minors, attempted to bar some children from enrolling for failure to present certain documents related to immigration status⁵¹—even as the New York State Education Department advised that these documents were not required.⁵² This prompted a state compliance review and, eventually, agreements with more than 20 districts (including ones in Nassau County, which is on Long Island) that compelled the districts to stop asking for these documents. An emergency state regulation also clarified the list of permissible documentation that could be used to determine a student's age and residency.⁵³

Several counties in North Carolina have similarly resisted UAC arrivals in the face of rising school costs. In July 2014, the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners, recognizing the county's lack of "excess resources necessary for relief," passed a resolution calling for the immediate removal of unaccompanied children and asked the government to refrain from releasing them in Brunswick County.⁵⁴ Following this, several other North Carolina counties considered and passed identical or similar resolutions.⁵⁵

V. General Assistance for Unaccompanied Minors

Given the outcomes of immigration court hearings to date, most unaccompanied children are likely to remain in unauthorized status in the United States for a long time, and many will experience substantial economic hardship.⁵⁶ While unauthorized immigrant mothers and children are eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, which can provide important support for pregnant and parenting adolescents, and for the national subsidized school lunch

program, they are ineligible for all other major means-tested federal benefit programs, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the Child Care and Development Fund, and direct services from the Developmental Disabilities Councils.⁵⁷

Most unaccompanied children are likely to remain in unauthorized status in the United States for a long time.

Yet the needs of unaccompanied child migrants are extensive. Many have little formal education, are not proficient in English, and have suffered socioeconomic hardship and trauma.

The unique service needs of these children stem from their experiences prior to, during, and after traveling to the United States. The basic needs of many—including for proper nutrition, shelter, safety, stability, and education—went unmet in their home countries.⁵⁸ Many were exposed to or directly threatened by gang violence.⁵⁹ While on their journey to the United States, many endured traumatic experiences, including violence, theft, assault, and extortion.⁶⁰ Upon arriving in the country, unaccompanied minors experience the challenges of living in an unfamiliar culture and reuniting with relatives they have not lived with in years, if ever, or in a smaller number of cases, entering the U.S. foster care system. Many find themselves amid unfamiliar faces; even those reuniting with parents and family members do so after long periods of separation.⁶¹

The high levels of physical and psychological stress place these children at a relatively higher risk for emotional and behavioral consequences, such as depression, hypervigilance, low self-esteem, eating and sleeping disorders, and problems regulating emotions and moods.⁶² If left untreated, unaccompanied children could be at risk for long-term, more serious illnesses, including psychotic disorders.⁶³ Yet the particular needs of unaccompanied children are difficult to address not only because they are unique, but also because culturally competent mental health services are difficult to find.⁶⁴ Even more pressing is the fact that many children do not

Appendix

Table A-1. Counties with the Largest Number of UACs, October 1, 2013 – August 31, 2015

State	County	Total Number of Unaccompanied Minors Released to Sponsors
TX	Harris	5,472
CA	Los Angeles	4,311
NY	Suffolk	2,127
FL	Miami-Dade	2,065
MD	Prince George's	1,883
NY	Nassau	1,861
VA	Fairfax	1,819
FL	Palm Beach	1,791
TX	Dallas	1,621
MD	Montgomery	1,571
NY	Queens	1,343
NY	Union	920
LA	Jefferson	879
NC	Mecklenburg	870
NY	Kings	782
MA	Suffolk	736
VA	Prince William	698
GA	DeKalb	696
FL	Broward	686
NY	Bronx	653
CA	Alameda	618
TX	Travis	613
FL	Lee	586
GA	Gwinnett	539
TN	Davidson	521

Source: Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), "Unaccompanied Children Released to Sponsors by County," accessed October 6, 2015, www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/unaccompanied-children-released-to-sponsors-by-county.

HHS Services to Unaccompanied Minors (Children Fleeing Violence)

Working with Children Fleeing Violence from El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala has impacted our service capacity, but collection of data has been difficult. The majority of the Children have entered our services through the work of the Latino Health Initiative's Navigator assistance. Their report is attached.

In other programs, data is not always clear because the children either do not show their paperwork if they came through the border detention sites, or they do not disclose to our staff that they are part of this group if they arrived in this area on their own without going through Federal custody. In most instances, we are looking at trends at it relates to country of origin. Other programs in HHS report services as follows:

CARE FOR KIDS

For example in the Care for Kids program, our participation increased 30 % in FY15.

	FY14	FY15
Total Children Enrolled	3,024	3,919
Number of New Enrollees	699	1,369

So far in FY16, the Care for Kids Program enrolled 315 new children during the first three months of FY16, which was 22% higher than the same period in FY15. 172 of the new enrollees are new arrivals from El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. Expenses for our providers for the first two months of FY16 were 16% higher than for the same period in FY15.

SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES

School nurses have reported pregnant or parenting teens self-identifying as unaccompanied. These are our statistics for the 2014-2015 school year (FY15) for Teen Pregnancy Case Management by:

There are 17 students (fleeing violence) pregnant or with a newborn

- 3 of the students arrived with infants
- 3 became pregnant after arriving in US
- 9 were pregnant when they arrived in US
- 2 pregnancy conception details unknown- not attending regularly

Eight of the teens reported their pregnancies were a result of traumatic events.

As of October 5, 2015 for the 2015-2016 school year, the high school nurses report 12 student fleeing violence.

- 2 of the students arrived with infants
- 5 became pregnant after arriving in US
- 4 were pregnant when they arrived in US

- 1 pregnancy conception details unknown- not attending regularly
- CHILD WELFARE SERVICES**

We have had only one allegations of abuse/neglect involving an unaccompanied minors in September 2015. Again, it should be noted that our Positive Youth Development staff have encountered other youth that have left the homes of relatives and other sponsors, but these situations are not reported to Child Protective Services.

Child Welfare Services has also seen 7 trafficking cases in the last three month. This has increased with the influx of the unaccompanied minor population, but we cannot make a direct correlation between the two, although the majority of the victims are Latino and the circumstances of being without adult supervision makes these children vulnerable to this crime.

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT (PYD)

Services for Recently Arrived Youth January 2014 - June 2015

Programs	Positive Youth Development (curriculum based programs)	Case Management Services	Mental Health Services	Services Provided	Youth PYD & Mental Health	Youth PYD & Case Mgmt	Youth PYD/Mental Health & Case Mgmt	Unduplicated youth served
Up-County Youth Opportunity Center	87	12	6	96	0	12	3	99
Crossroads Youth Opportunity Center	83	17	11	111	0	17	4	100
Gaithersburg HS Wellness Center	107	66	34	207	6	32	17	135
Watkins Mill HS Wellness Center	93	106	7	206	7	48	7	72
Northwood HS Wellness Center	120	53	63	236	22	17	28	139
MC After School Programs	47	1	1	2	48	48	49	47
SON	42	0	0	42	0	0	0	42
Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator	16	0	0	16	0	0	0	16
TOTAL	595	255	122	916	83	174	108	650

Services for Recently Arrived Youth July 2015 - Present

Programs	Positive Youth Development (curriculum based programs)	Case Management Services	Mental Health Services	Total Services Provided	Youth PYD & Mental Health	Youth PYD & Case Mgmt	Youth PYD/Mental Health & Case Mgmt	Unduplicated youth served
Up-County Youth Opportunity Center	3	3	3	9	0	0	3	3
Crossroads Youth Opportunity Center	5	5	0	15	0	0	5	5
Gaithersburg HS Wellness Center	18	23	13	38	1	12	5	33
Watkins Mill HS Wellness Center	21	16	1	24	1	6	1	23
Northwood HS Wellness Center	13	47	3	116	0	3	1	17
SON	38	0	0	38	0	0	0	38
Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator	5	0	0	5	0	0	0	5
TOTAL	103	94	20	245	2	21	15	124

We are constantly monitoring the data from the Federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). On October 23, 2015, the ORR website reports that 454 Unaccompanied children have been released to sponsors in Montgomery County; 555 in Prince Georges County during the period October 2014 through August 2015. Regionally, Maryland, DC and Virginia, have a large population of children considering that we are not a boarder state. This region exceeds New York City based on the registered children.

	FY2014	FY2015
DC	373	158
MD	3,885	1,497
VA	3,886	1,375
Total	8,144	3,030

Based on the work of our staff and our contract partners, we assert that the ORR numbers are not inclusive of many of the youth that we have served that arrived in Montgomery County without the help of a sponsor.

**Latino Health Initiative
Children Fleeing Violence Project
Fiscal Year 2015**

As a response to the large influx of children entering Montgomery County from various Central American countries, the Department of Health and Human Service (DHHS) Director tasked the Positive Youth Development Initiative and the Latino Health Initiative (LHI) with assisting these children and their families. These two partners have been working with the families of these children to ease the enrollment process into Montgomery County Public Schools, access health care and behavioral health support services, as well as various County and community resources providing legal assistance.

Navigation Assistance:

- From August 2014 to June 2015, the LHI staff and Health Promoters assisted 650 children fleeing violence.
- The LHI deployed eleven Health Promoters to the School Counseling, Residency and International Admissions (SCRIA) to provide information, assist, and refer families to enroll in Care For Kids program and the Maryland Children’s Health Program (MCHP). The Health Promoters reached 510 children, of which 465 were referred to Care for Kids and 45 to MCHP.
- The LHI staff performed follow-up calls to 255 individuals to verify that the referred families were accessing health care services. The below table shows this situation:

Application to Health Care Status	Number of children	Percent of children
Applications submitted and waiting for approval	202	79.2%
Applications approved	37	14.5%
Children enrolled in private insurance	16	6.3%

- The LHI also offered intensive navigation services for school enrollment, health care, social and legal services to an additional 140 children. These children were apprehended trying to cross the southern U.S border and detained at Border facilities for an average of 21 days before to be released to their parents or legal custodians. The below tables and graphs provide a socio-demographic profile on children served by the Latino Health Initiative

Families/Children Served	Number
Number of families served	99
Number of Children served	130
Children living outside of Montgomery County	10

Gender	Percentage
Males	63 %
Females	37%

- The primary needs of these children were legal assistance, access to health care, school enrollment, family reunification, and other social services. The table below gives a better understanding of the services requested and services provided.

Type of Assistance	Number of Children for whom assistance was REQUESTED	Number of Children for whom assistance was RECEIVED	Percent of requests GRANTED
Legal Service	94	82	87%
Health Care	66	61	92%
School Enrollment	25	21	84%
Family Reunification	21	15	71%
Other Social Services	25	14	56%

Family Reunification Assistance:

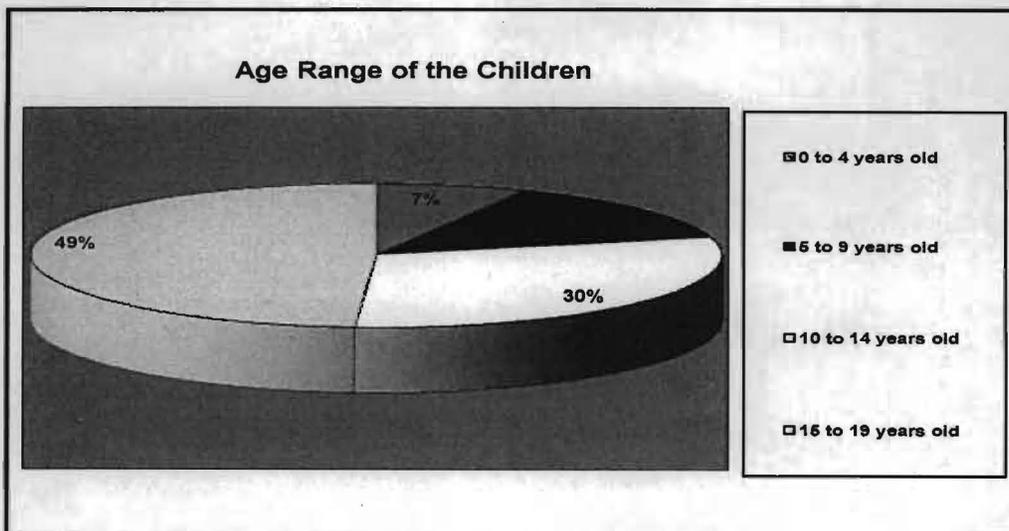
- Internationally-trained behavioral health professionals received trainings on Family Reunification and “La Cultura Cura” to conduct reunification workshops. These workshops consist of a series of four two-hour long group sessions held in Spanish by a cadre of 16 professionals who walked the parents through a process of reconnecting them with their children, thus identifying and helping family members improve communication, solve family problems, understand and handle special family situations due to several years of separation.
- From April to June 2015, the Latino Health Initiative offered nine Family Reunification group sessions reaching 84 parents of 79 children, of which 65 parents and 68 children completed the workshops.

Parents and Children who completed the Family Reunification workshops

LOCATIONS	Parents	Children
LHI - Tuesdays	4	8
LHI - Thursdays	4	5
Gaithersburg HS 1	4	9
Watkins Mill HS/ Family Services	7	8
Gaithersburg HS 2	9	9
Loiderman MS	16	11
Gilchrist Center	9	8
Parkland MS	6	6
Family Services	6	4
TOTAL	65	68

Parents Satisfaction With Workshops	
Satisfaction Survey Question	Percent of parents who marked "Strongly Agree"
Participating in this workshop has given me the tools needed to be a better parent	86%
After participating in this workshop I feel more confident in my parenting role	88%

Some Demographics:



Age	
Youngest	4 months
Oldest	20 year-old
Average	12.7

Legal Custodian	Percentage
Parent	78.5%
Relative	20.0%
Without legal custodian	1.5%

Country of Origin	Percent
El Salvador	57%
Honduras	22%
Guatemala	16%
Others	5%

Fiscal Year 2016

- Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity has provided the LHI with a list of 132 children who were contacted at the School Counseling, Residency and International Admissions (SCRIA) during the FY16 School Year registration needing the already stated assistance - enrollment process into Montgomery County Public Schools, access to health care and behavioral health support services, as well as County and community resources providing legal assistance.
- Between August and September, the LHI staff received 41 phone calls from parents of children recently arrived from the Central American countries, asking also for the aforementioned much needed services.

The navigators are already reaching out to these families to help them connect to necessary services including school enrollment, legal services and other programs for undocumented new arrivals.

**Unaccompanied Minors - Children Fleeing Violence
Linkages to Learning (LTL) and Regional Youth Services (RYS)**

These cases continue to require intensive case management, though the exact types of service varies. In some cases, it is not dissimilar to that required for other undocumented clients, where case managers provide assistance with:

- Enrolling kids in MCPS through the International Admissions Office
- Finding sufficient housing
- Accessing on-site or off-site behavioral health services (referrals to Tree House, etc.)
- Enrollment in Care for Kids
- Accessing legal assistance via the Spanish Catholic Center/other resources.

In other cases, LTL Family Case Managers state that these families are in need of "almost everything," such as food, clothing, diapers, personal hygiene products, etc. Approximately 1/3 of clients of LTL behavioral health caseloads diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder; others struggling with depression related to separation/ reunification, grief, acculturation and "homesickness."

CHALLENGES

- Difficult for providers to stay up to date on legal issues on visas/petitions, knowledge of what is happening in the countries clients are fleeing from, territories where gangs are present in the county, and knowledge of county gang information (hard to stay abreast of the shifting landscape, which can vastly affect ongoing trauma/impact and outcomes for these families).
- Lack of eligibility for food stamps and limited health insurance options pose serious barriers when families are struggling financially (especially if the parents unable to work due to legal status).
- Different outcomes for multiple youth in same family (i.e. one child deported, another not, even with same history/reasons for fleeing – impact on family).
- Lack of reunification-competent/trauma-competent behavioral health resources (families that suffered lengthy separations struggling with issues for quite a while despite counseling services).
- Some staff report clients are open/forthcoming at first but then become more "closed" with the providers after hearing in the community that it is "best not to talk about their situation".
- Legal services still desperately needed to help with immigration issues.
- Need for more English language classes to help with acculturation.
- Extensive case management needs have had large impact on RYS program; lots of time dedicated to finding basic resources (food/clothing/appropriate housing/ healthcare). The scope of the contracts is set up for information and referral and not for intensive case management.

	Clients (Youth/Parents) Served		
	FY14	FY15	FY16 to date
Linkages to Learning	36	200	85
Regional Youth Service Centers	11	36	10