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*Improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning. It's Union Work!*

**Testimony Presented to the Montgomery County Council  
Regarding the FY2022 Montgomery County Public Schools Budget**  
by Jennifer Martin, Vice President of the Montgomery County Education Association  
April 8, 2021

Good evening, and thank you for this opportunity to address the council.

I'm Jennifer Martin, Vice President and President Elect of the Montgomery County Education Association. For those of you who don't know me, I'm a proud product of MCPS schools, and the mother of three MCPS graduates. I've been an English teacher here for two decades. Today I'm representing my 14,000 colleagues who educate Montgomery County's children.

The pandemic has highlighted many issues that have plagued our schools for far too long. Our Black and Brown students, special education students, and those impacted by poverty have always faced social and economic barriers to meeting their academic potential. Despite our county's wealth, this opportunity gap has continued to widen each year due to the chronic underfunding of schools.

Our children now are returning to school buildings in need of healing as well as intensive academic supports. Imagine giving every student the support they need to fulfill their potential. To make this aspiration reality, we must provide them with more counselors, more mental health professionals, more investment in special education, more supports to advance their progress, and more resources to address inequities in opportunity.

Now is the time to reimagine our schools as the foundation of a vibrant, welcoming and prosperous county. We must invest the funds to make our dreams for MCPS a reality. And this funding is not just for our children; an increased investment in our schools is also the best way to ensure that our county continues to attract and retain businesses, develop skilled workers, and provide the excellent quality of life for which we are known.

I urge you to fund the county executive's MCPS FY2022 budget. We have an opportunity, not only to recover, but also to make a transformational change in the lives of the children of Montgomery County, and thereby secure a brighter future for us all.