

Dear County Council Members,

As a mother, when I found out that the county is eliminating the Linkages coordinator position, I was upset. I have 3 children currently in the Montgomery County school system, with one more joining this upcoming year. My children have deeply benefited from the Linkages to learning coordinator programs, from cooking to ballet, and especially STEM. They look forward to the classes and it gives them something to be excited about.

I can't believe that a group of people would want to take away extra learning from students. Especially given that the US has held a steady decline in education over the last few years. You would think that a group of adults would want to give children, specifically the ones that don't come from a ton of money and do not have a lot of opportunities presented to them every opportunity they could to learn. You would also think that a group of adults would understand the critical nature of extended early learning. I guess I give too much credit to people sometimes. Maybe because you all sit in offices you don't understand the impact that these programs have on kids, maybe you don't have children, or maybe your children are older, and you've forgotten how impactful something as simple as learning how to make healthy snack choices, impacts a child for years to come. I'm telling you as a mother, I've seen the benefits of these classes firsthand. I've seen my child light up and come home showing me new dance moves they've learned or ravenously looked up online Newtonian fluids. My kids consistently ask when the next after-school program will be, or if they're going to continue these classes longer. They get bragging rights to their friends about the cool experiments they did, or the new music they learned. They get to show off their newly learned facts to their teachers. My kids actually get excited about learning when they do these things. They look forward to Monday or Thursday after-school so they can be a part of a group of kids specializing in something.

Please don't take that away from them. I would challenge each of you that are making this decision to actually sit down and speak with the children about the impact it's having on them. The Linkages coordinator does good work. Let them continue to do that work.

Tara Linnan