

Testimony before the Montgomery County Council- FY26 Budget- Burnt Mills + L2L

April 8, 2025

Good evening Council President Kate Stewart and members of the County Council.

My name is Bushra and I'm in the 5th grade at Burnt Mills Elementary School, otherwise known as BMES. We are the eagles!

Today I will talk about how we need Linkages to Learning at Burnt Mills.

I came to BMES at 3rd grade. My first day was a Thursday. I was worried about coming to a new school and not knowing anybody.

I was really shy and scared until Carlyn came up to me and said, "Do you want to be friends? I'm new, too. We could play together at recess."

I felt comfortable and less worried.

Burnt Mills is special because they try their best to provide as much as they can- like food bags every other Friday. I help with passing out the bags. Most families who take the bags are immigrants. BMES provides:

- English classes for families,
- yoga classes,

Our school also provides a Cozy Closet. This winter a lot of children didn't have coats. Ms. Brown and Ms. Gordon brought kids to the Cozy Closet in their office to size us with nice coats. Some kids even got gloves! That way we all could play outside for recess.

Also, a blue and green van sometimes comes to support children with therapy. For example, one of my friends lost her biological father. She goes to the van on Fridays and Wednesdays and I think it helps her get her mind off of things.

But the van is not permanent.

We need a permanent therapist to help students and we need a caseworker to help with newcomers and others.

For example, me and my siblings we work together to help my parents to fill some forms and we think and know that other people are struggling to fill out forms, especially for families who do not speak English. We think a caseworker could really help these families.

Members of the County Council, we ask that you support the Executive's recommended \$414,000 for a new Linkages to Learning program at Burnt Mills Elementary School.