

President Stewart, Vice-President Jawando, and esteemed member of the County Council,

I am Anita Lampel, a resident of Bethesda, Maryland, in District I. I am a member of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Synagogue and the Women's Democratic Club. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of myself in support of fully funding the Montgomery County Public Schools budget request and supporting the property tax increase necessary to do this. I take this position as a homeowner who will pay the increase, as a citizen with no children in MCPS, and as a person who values each and every child MCPS serves.

I am very concerned about restorative justice positions in MCPS. I have submitted testimony on this to you in prior years. The restorative justice program is effective, reducing repeat offenses by almost 80% and suspensions of young Black children by 20% in our schools that have implemented the program fully. That alone is worth the cost—suspended children are more likely to reoffend than children offered other ways to deal with their problem behavior. These restorative justice positions should not be folded into others, because restorative justice requires special training and commitment.

At Bethesda-Chevy Chase, children who were flagged as needing support did NOT get that support. But adults have called for metal detectors and punitive measures, like increased police presence, instead of asking for the money for HELP. Please see the paragraph above to remind yourselves that appropriate assistance REDUCES repeat offenses.

For years the community has called for other approaches to discipline, the approaches that are supported by the state's plan that highlights use of restorative justice, and by study after study that proves its effectiveness.

While you are not responsible for how MCPS spends its money, you are responsible for providing the funds that allow MCPS to meet its obligations, in thoughtful and proven ways, to all of our children, especially those struggling. A fully funded MCPS will be able to provide counseling and restorative justice.

Thank you,  
Anita Lampel