

April 1, 2025

Laura Ellis
Media Specialist
Wheaton High School

Dear Members of the Montgomery County Council,

I am the media specialist at Wheaton High School, and I do encourage you to pass the budget to fully fund Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS).

I am concerned that MCPS does not have a consistent student Chromebook policy. The 2024-2025 school year is the first that MCPS provided guidance for the pricing of lost and damaged Chromebooks by students. This has been helpful, but each school uses this information to set their own standards, and student obligations.

The responsibility and work student Chromebook distribution was assigned to media center personnel without any professional development or guidance. Student Chromebook distribution greatly interrupts delays, and limits media specialists from collaborating with teachers, delivering instruction, and completing required and necessary tasks.

MCPS has also designated several No Work Now Pay days for media assistants, which hurts them financially. It also hurts school library programs because of the work they cannot get done, due to student Chromebook distribution. There has always been important work that media assistants could do when teachers are working on grades and students are not in school, but not having those days has become even more critical when providing support for media specialists, teachers, and students.

MCPS has reduced central office School Library Media Programs (SLMP) staff in response to meet budget demands in the past, which has delayed getting MCPS evaluated resources approved and to schools. SLMP cannot take additional cuts at this level because it would greatly extend the already long process of getting MCPS approved books to our schools.

School Library Media Program personnel are greatly committed to our schools and students. We have embraced our evolving roles in response to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future law, and want any line item of the budget, student Chromebooks to be specific, that may have unnecessary costs due to misuse, and other institutional constraints, to be addressed so the negative financial impact can be reduced.

Thank you.