

Saanvi Lanke

7th Grade Student

Testimony in Favor of Supplemental Appropriation #25-64 to FY25 Operating Budget

Hello Montgomery County Council,

My name is Saanvi Lanke, and I am a Montgomery County Public School student. I'm speaking today in strong support of Supplemental Appropriation #25-64 to the FY25 operating budget, which allocates funding through Title IV, Part A: the Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) Grant. This grant plays a crucial role in supporting student wellness, educational equity, and learning innovation throughout our school system.

A persistent challenge in our county is the unequal distribution of educational resources, especially for students who face medical conditions that prevent them from attending school in person. This grant directly addresses that gap by funding the Blended Learning Program, which provides high-quality, long-term virtual education for students in need. By investing in this program, we're ensuring access to a well-rounded education in a safe and flexible environment, regardless of a student's physical ability to attend school.

My experience with virtual learning during the COVID-19 pandemic showed me that, with the right tools and support, students can thrive in online environments. Even in the face of great uncertainty, Montgomery County provided a reliable and equitable virtual education for every student. Teachers adapted, learning platforms improved, and students stayed connected. For me and many others, this made a difference, not just academically, but emotionally and socially as well.

Today, we have a chance to continue that commitment to equity. This program may not serve the majority of students, but for the students it does serve, it makes all the difference. It keeps them on track, included, and empowered. Funding the

Blended Learning Program means investing in every student's right to learn, no matter the challenges they face. It's a step toward a more inclusive and responsive school system for everyone.

I urge the Council to approve this supplemental appropriation and continue investing in programs that expand access to education, especially for students facing barriers to in-person learning. This funding reflects Montgomery County's values of equity, innovation, and support for every child. Thank you for giving students like me a voice in this process.

Thanks for your time,

Saanvi Lanke