

As Chair of the Education Committee, I'm proud this year's budget reflects a prodigious shift in not only the way we shaped it but the close collaboration with our education partners in doing so. The FY17 Budget was able to achieve putting education first, providing the resources needed for Montgomery County Public Schools and Montgomery College to address the prevailing needs of lowering class size and closing the achievement gap. At the beginning of this year, I hosted, along with MCPS Interim Superintendent Bowers and Montgomery College President Dr. Pollard five Education Budget Forums held throughout the county. These forums reinforced what we knew was important to our county and its' residents: reducing class size, addressing the achievement gap and contending with our school capacity issues.

Montgomery College is a gem of our county and our state and one of the best community colleges in the nation! Serving more than 60,000 students, our community college works valiantly to ensure students continue to receive a quality education and meet the growing needs within our county. I am so pleased that this budget has added \$4.5 million to the college for programmatic enhancements that include: I-BEST scholarships for job training and skill enhancement courses to support workforce readiness; ACES expansion to two more high schools so an additional 240 students can get the support they need to apply for and succeed in college; and Achieving the Promise Initiative that will help close the achievement gap for an additional 400 students by providing them faculty mentors and coaches to help them accomplish their education goals. This budget has also allowed Montgomery College to move forward with its much needed Takoma Park/Silver Spring Math and Science Center, ensuring that their campus has the capacity to provide students with the latest technology and resources they need in this field.

The collaboration with both Montgomery College and Montgomery County Public Schools has reflected how passionate we all are to give our students every opportunity possible to succeed in their education. MCPS has experienced 8 years of record enrollment growth, and the problems of overcrowded classrooms, our long-standing achievement gap and inadequate infrastructure needed to be addressed. It is a great school system that will be even greater as a result of this budget. This year's operating budget includes \$36 million in programmatic enhancements that include critical areas such as: increased number of teachers to reduce class size, additional Chromebooks, and more counselors, paraeducators, and focus teachers. The Council has committed to funding our schools a significant and unprecedented \$89.3 million over MOE to help our school system implement these changes needed. We also maximized our resources to address our badly needed school capacity issue, replace aging, worn out physical infrastructure, heating and cooling systems, and roof replacement.

This budget is a comprehensive one, and ensures that our county's most critically needed services received increased funding so that they can provide the best level of service possible for everyone. Those providers who work daily with our most vulnerable residents will receive an increase in funding to continue to provide the high quality work they do. We have enhanced our weekend food/smartsack program so we can reach more kids in need of weekend meals outside of school. In 2015, we reached a

historical first of zero veteran homeless in our county, and we have made sure in this budget to continue funding to ensure it stays this way.

Our public service departments have also seen an increase in funding to ensure they remain at health and strong levels. This year's budget includes additional police officers, fire and rescue personnel, increased paramedic capacity and restoration of staffing at various area fire stations. It is our obligation to ensure that our law enforcement and fire and rescue personnel remain a strong viable group to keep our communities safe and secure.

I am proud of what we have been able to accomplish this budget year, and I give thanks to Montgomery College, Montgomery County Public Schools, all of our unions, and parent and community organizations for their unwavering dedication and commitment in their partnership with us to do what it takes to make this historic budget come to fruition. That partnership made this budget possible; in fact it was the only way we could have achieved it.