



Committee: Directly to Council
Committee Review: N/A
Staff: Nicole Rodriguez-Hernandez, Legislative Analyst
Purpose: To receive testimony/final action - vote expected
Keywords: #MCPS

AGENDA ITEM #10
December 14, 2021
Public Hearing/Action

SUBJECT

Supplemental Appropriation to the FY22 Operating Budget, Montgomery County Public Schools, \$251,233 for the Early Childhood High-Quality Inclusion Policies and Practices Grant (Source of Funds: Federal funds)

EXPECTED ATTENDEES

None

COUNCIL DECISION POINTS & COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

None

DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

The County Council will receive testimony and consider action on a supplemental appropriation to the FY22 Operating Budget, Montgomery County Public Schools, \$251,233 for the Early Childhood High-Quality Inclusion Policies and Practices Grant. The source of funds is a Federal grant.

SUMMARY OF KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- The Board of Education requested this appropriation on October 19. The County Executive recommended this appropriation on November 10. The Council introduced the appropriation on November 30.
- This supplemental appropriation is needed because MCPS received notice from the Maryland State Department of Education of this supplemental appropriation under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, Part B.
- MCPS will utilize these funds to increase the inclusion and engagement of prekindergarten-age students with disabilities in general education classes. These students will have the opportunity to learn kindergarten readiness skills and social and emotional learning experiences within general education using evidence-based practices and instructions.

This report contains:

County Executive Transmittal, Draft Resolution, BOE Transmittal

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OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

M E M O R A N D U M

November 10, 2012

TO: Tom Hucker, President
County Council

FROM: Marc Elrich, County Executive 

SUBJECT: Supplemental Appropriation #22-24 to the FY22 Operating Budget
Montgomery County Government
Montgomery County Public Schools
Early Childhood High-Quality Inclusion Policies and Practices Grant, \$251,233

I am recommending a supplemental appropriation to the FY22 Operating Budget of Montgomery County Public Schools in the amount of \$251,233 for the Early Childhood High-Quality Inclusion Policies and Practices Grant. This appropriation will fund general education opportunities for prekindergarten students with disabilities.

This increase is needed to enhance the services offered to prekindergarten students with disabilities by Montgomery County Public Schools. Specifically, the funds will support two positions that will coordinate with prekindergarten teachers at ten schools with high enrollment of prekindergarten students with disabilities so that they can participate with their prekindergarten peers meaningfully.

I recommend that the County Council approve this supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$251,233 and specify the source of funds as Federal funds.

I appreciate your prompt consideration of this action.

ME:rh

Attachment: Supplemental Appropriation #22-24

Cc: Jennifer R. Bryant, Director, Office of Management and Budget

Resolution No: _____
Introduced: _____
Adopted: _____

COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

By: Council President at the Request of the County Executive

SUBJECT: Supplemental Appropriation #22-24 to the FY22 Operating Budget
Montgomery County Government
Montgomery County Public Schools
Early Childhood High-Quality Inclusion Policies and Practices Grant, \$251,233

Background

1. Section 307 of the Montgomery County Charter provides that any supplemental appropriation shall be recommended by the County Executive who shall specify the source of funds to finance it. The Council shall hold a public hearing on each proposed supplemental appropriation after at least one week's notice. A supplemental appropriation that would comply with, avail the County of, or put into effect a grant or a Federal, State or County law or regulation, or one that is approved after January 1 of any fiscal year, requires an affirmative vote of five Councilmembers. A supplemental appropriation for any other purpose that is approved before January 1 of any fiscal year requires an affirmative vote of six Councilmembers. The Council may, in a single action, approve more than one supplemental appropriation. The Executive may disapprove or reduce a supplemental appropriation, and the Council may reapprove the appropriation, as if it were an item in the annual budget.
2. The County Executive has requested the following FY22 Operating Budget appropriation increases for Montgomery County Public Schools:

<u>Personnel Services</u>	<u>Operating Expenses</u>	<u>Capital Outlay</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Source of Funds</u>
\$176,838	\$74,395		\$251,233	Federal Funds

3. This increase is needed because funds are available to enhance the services offered to prekindergarten students with disabilities by Montgomery County Public Schools. Specifically, the funds will support two positions that will coordinate with prekindergarten teachers at ten schools with high enrollment of prekindergarten students with disabilities so that they are able to participate with their prekindergarten peers meaningfully.
4. The County Executive recommends a supplemental appropriation to the FY22 Operating Budget in the amount of \$251,233 for the Early Childhood High-Quality Inclusion Policies and Practices Grant and specifies that the source of funds will be Federal funds.
5. Notice of public hearing was given, and a public hearing was held.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland, approves the following action:

A supplemental appropriation to the FY22 Operating Budget of Montgomery County Public Schools is approved as follows:

<u>Personnel Services</u>	<u>Operating Expenses</u>	<u>Capital Outlay</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Source of Funds</u>
\$176,838	\$74,395		\$251,233	Federal Funds

This is a correct copy of Council action.

Selena Mendy Singleton, Esq.
Clerk of the Council



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE


Marc Elrich
County Executive

Tiffany Ward, Director
Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice

MEMORANDUM

November 4, 2021

To: Jennifer Bryant, Director
Office of Management and Budget

From: Tiffany Ward, Director
Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice 

Re: Supplemental Appropriation: High Quality Early Childhood Inclusion #22-24

- I. **FINDING:** The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) finds that Supplemental Appropriation #22-24 is likely to advance equity for prekindergarten students with disabilities and their families, but limitations in the data make it difficult to determine to what extent this supplemental will also advance racial equity. The creation of two inclusion coach positions brings Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) into further alignment with the vision laid out in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B, and will expand early childhood educational opportunities for children with disabilities. High-quality early childhood inclusion, as with other efforts to advance equity, will also create benefits for non-disabled early learners.
- II. **BACKGROUND:** Supplemental Appropriation #22-24 will provide \$251,233 to the MCPS FY22 Operating Budget to enhance services offered to prekindergarten students with disabilities in MCPS by expanding opportunities for inclusion in general education environments. The funds will support two positions, known as inclusion coaches, that will coordinate with prekindergarten teachers at ten schools with high enrollment of prekindergarten students with disabilities. The goal of this funding is aligned with the goals of the IDEA, Part B, “providing a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment for children with disabilities, ages 3 through 21.”¹

¹ Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. State Formulas. Available at: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/state-formula-grants/>

There is a well-documented and growing body of evidence supporting the inclusion of children with disabilities in general education early-learning/prekindergarten environments. A 2015 (rereleased in 2017) joint policy statement from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Education explains the legal, scientific, and social justice basis for expanding high-quality disability inclusion policies and practices in early childhood programs². From “degrees of belongingness”³ to accessing early childhood curriculum⁴, research points to a number of benefits of inclusion for early learners with disabilities. Specifically, spending more time in general education classes is linked to fewer days absent from school, higher reading and math test scores, higher probability of employment and higher earnings⁵.

Principles underlying inclusive high-quality early childhood opportunities are “access”, “participation”, and “support”⁶. As with other policy areas, advancing equity accrues benefits to all. Strategies that embody these principles create significant benefits for the academic, social, emotional, and physical well-being of students with disabilities as well as their non-disabled peers⁷.

Within the larger context of education equity, there are also concerns about the ways in which racial bias in education systems can lead to students of color being misidentified as needing special education, then being placed in more restrictive settings and experiencing harsher discipline—all linked to the intersectionality of race and special education⁸. A National Center for Learning Disabilities report cites research from the Century Foundation explaining that, “placement decisions that segregate students only work to exacerbate achievement gaps, as researchers have found that students in general education classrooms have better academic and employment outcomes than students placed in separate spaces”⁹.

² US Department of Health and Human Services and US Department of Education. Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs. Originally released September 14, 2015 (rereleased on January 5, 2017). Available at:

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ecd/policy_statement_on_inclusion_of_children_with_disabilities_in_early.pdf.

³ Mary Beth Bruder, Ph.D. and Michael J. Guralnick, Ph.D. Administration for Community Living Blog. Why Early Childhood Inclusion Improves Outcomes for Children with Disabilities. September 17, 2015. Available at: <https://acl.gov/news-and-events/acl-blog/why-early-childhood-inclusion-improves-outcomes-children-disabilities>

⁴ Readiness Matters: 2019-2020 Kindergarten Readiness Report. The Maryland State Department of Education and Ready at Five. March 2020. Available at:

https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/4/200178_ready5_book_web.pdf

⁵ Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs.

⁶ Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. What is Early Childhood Inclusion?. Available at: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci/about>

⁷ Readiness Matters: 2019-2020 Kindergarten Readiness Report.

⁸ National Center for Learning Disabilities. Significant Disproportionality in Special Education: Current Trends and Actions for Impact. October 2020. Available at: https://www.nclld.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2020-NCLD-Disproportionality_Trends-and-Actions-for-Impact_FINAL-1.pdf

⁹ Significant Disproportionality in Special Education: Current Trends and Actions for Impact.

Despite the guarantees of IDEA, Part B there are still many students with disabilities and families in the US that experience barriers to accessing inclusive high-quality early childhood programs and “too many preschool children with disabilities are only offered the option of receiving special education services in settings separate from their peers without disabilities.”¹⁰ Further, some Critical Disability Studies scholars suggest that existing definitions of ‘inclusion’ used to encourage disability-inclusive classrooms are limited, and that the real aim should not stop at enhancing inclusion strategies but should aim to “detect, understand and dismantle exclusion as it presents itself in education”¹¹. While full exploration of this critique is beyond the scope of this racial equity impact assessment, it is useful to view early childhood disability inclusion as an important, but intermediary step towards creating truly equitable and socially just educational opportunities for children with disabilities.

In Maryland, a lack of inclusion has contributed to disparities in kindergarten readiness¹² among students with disabilities. The 2019-2020 Readiness Matters Report for Maryland shows disparities across all domains of readiness between children with and without disabilities, reporting that 19% of kindergarteners with a disability demonstrated readiness, compared to 50% of their non-disabled peers¹³. The disparities are similar to those experienced by Black and Hispanic children—42% and 26% respectively demonstrated readiness, while 60% of White kindergartners demonstrated readiness¹⁴. Montgomery County 2019 data show that 12% of children with identified disabilities demonstrated kindergarten readiness compared to 58% of children without disabilities¹⁵, this gap is wider than it is at the state level¹⁶.

Expansion of high-quality inclusive educational opportunities is the responsibility of federal, state and local early learning policies and systems. At the local level, special attention is given to building the capacity of staff and ensuring they have “competencies in culturally and linguistically responsive practice, and positive attitudes and beliefs about inclusion and disability” along with “a strong understanding of universal design and universal design for learning”¹⁷. There are a variety of staff development approaches; inclusion coaches are

¹⁰ Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs.

¹¹ Nicole Eilers. Critical Disability Studies and ‘Inclusive’ Early Childhood Education: The Ongoing Divide. *Journal of Disability Studies in Education*. July 2020. Available at: https://brill.com/view/journals/jdse/1/1-2/article-p64_64.xml?language=en#d22851984e813. Original quote referenced is from Slee, R. (2013). How do we make inclusive education happen when exclusion is a political predisposition? *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 17(8), 895–907.

¹² The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) is a developmentally appropriate assessment tool administered to incoming kindergarteners that measures school readiness across four learning domains. Administered by kindergarten teachers at the beginning of the school year, the KRA looks at the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to be successful in kindergarten. For more information, see about the KRA: <https://dataexplorer.readyatfive.org/#/main>

¹³ Readiness Matters: 2019-2020 Kindergarten Readiness Report.

¹⁴ Readiness Matters: 2019-2020 Kindergarten Readiness Report.

¹⁵ 2019 Maryland Kindergarten Readiness Data. Subgroup Demographics & Readiness. Available at: <https://dataexplorer.readyatfive.org/#/main/county/Montgomery>

¹⁶ 2019 Maryland Kindergarten Readiness Data. Compare Readiness by Subgroup. Available at: <https://dataexplorer.readyatfive.org/#/main/compare-subgroup>

¹⁷ Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs.

referenced in state level strategies for California and Minnesota¹⁸. In Montgomery County, the proposed inclusion coaches will consult with staff members and provide job-embedded coaching to both special and general education teachers and paraeducators on strategies and accommodations that will enable students to access the curriculum and school environment.

III. **DATA ANALYSIS:** The 42nd annual Report to Congress on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act¹⁹ contains data about who is served under IDEA at the state level, including the education settings of 3–5-year-old children served in Maryland under Part B. Based on available data, 6.6% of 3–5-year-old children in Maryland were served by IDEA, Part B in 2018, this is up from 5.6% in 2009.

The racial/ethnic makeup of 3–5-year-old students served under IDEA, Part B, in Maryland, 2018 is as follows:

American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic /Latino	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White	Two or more Races
9.3%	6.9%	7.1%	6.7%	13.7%	6.4%	5.3%

Source: U.S. Department of Education. 42nd Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. 2020. Available at: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/42nd-arc-for-idea.pdf> Exhibit 59.

The distribution of educational settings for the 3-5-year-old students served under IDEA, Part B in Maryland, 2018 is as follows:

Educational environment	Percentage of children ages 3 through 5 served under IDEA, Part B	Percentage of children ages 3 through 5 served under IDEA, Part B who are English Language Learners
At least 10 hours per week and majority	52.9%	57.3%
At least 10 hours per week, majority elsewhere	6.6%	4.1%
Less than 10 hours per week and majority	6.7%	3.1%

¹⁸ Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs.

¹⁹ U.S. Department of Education. 42nd Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. 2020. Available at: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/42nd-arc-for-idea.pdf>

Educational environment	Percentage of children ages 3 through 5 served under IDEA, Part B	Percentage of children ages 3 through 5 served under IDEA, Part B who are English Language Learners
Less than 10 hours per week, majority elsewhere	4.1%	1.1%
Separate class	18.1%	24.1%
Separate school	2.0%	0.6%
Residential Facility	Percentage was non-zero but less than 0.05	0.0%
Home	.4%	0.6%
Service provider location	9.1%	9.0%

Source: U.S. Department of Education. 42nd Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. 2020. Available at: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/42nd-arc-for-idea.pdf> Exhibit 60 and 61.

This data is useful in understanding the current scope of early childhood disability inclusion at the state level—more than half of students ages 3-5 served by IDEA, Part B are engaged in a regular early childhood program; the same is true for English Language Learners. The data at the County-level reveals a different picture. According to information provided at the time of this analysis, the percentage of students with disabilities aged 3-kindergarten served in regular early childhood settings the majority of the day was 36.92%. The target for Montgomery County was 65.10%. Using comparable state-level data (highlighted above), the percentage of children 3-5 served under IDEA, Part B in regular education environments was 52.9%. The gap between the state and county on this metric demonstrates how existing activities in Montgomery County cannot be considered totally inclusive or having achieved free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment for prekindergartners with disabilities. Monitoring and shrinking this gap, paying particular attention to potential racial and ethnic disparities, will help determine whether strategies in addition to inclusion coaches are necessary. Data provided at the time of this analysis include the demographic composition of prekindergarten students with disabilities who will be served in the 14 schools and centers included in the grant. Data about the entire population of prekindergarten students with disabilities, disaggregated by race (across each of the 14 schools and centers) was not available at the time of this analysis.

Racial or ethnic composition of students with disabilities in Head Start/pre-K classrooms (general education classrooms)

Demographic group	Number of prekindergarten students with disabilities in general education classrooms	% of prekindergarten students with disabilities in general education classrooms
Asian	151	13.8%
Black/African American	376	34.3%
Hispanic/Latino	379	34.6%
Two or more races	51	4.7%
White	139	12.7%
Total	1096	100.0%

Source: Data provided in MCPS response to REIA inquiry.

This data show that more than two-thirds of students with disabilities who will now be integrated into general education classrooms are Black or Latino. However, because there isn't data about the total population of prekindergartners with disabilities disaggregated by race/ethnicity, ORESJ cannot determine whether the above distribution by race/ethnicity is proportional or comparable to the racial/ethnic composition of the overall population of prekindergarten students with disabilities (particularly in the 14 schools and centers related to this grant). We, therefore, cannot determine whether expanded inclusion of prekindergarten students with disabilities in general education classes is also racially equitable. If these data were available, and indicated a racial or ethnic disproportionality, further inquiry would be needed to determine whether the disproportionality reflects the complexity of inequities facing students of color with disabilities and their families and is therefore an example of increased access, or whether the disproportionality is a result of potential misplacement (as discussed in the background section).

It is important to note that available data do not speak to the experiences of prekindergarten students with disabilities, and therefore no conclusions can be drawn about baseline or existing levels of inclusion for prekindergarten students with disabilities. Collecting and tracking this type of qualitative data can strengthen practitioners' understanding of whether general education placement and inclusion coach interventions are resulting in experiences of greater inclusion for prekindergarten students with disabilities, particularly those of color who because of racial inequities experience additional barriers to educational opportunity.

cc: Ken Hartman, Director, Strategic Partnerships, Office of the County Executive
Dr. Monifa McKnight, Interim Superintendent, Montgomery County Public Schools

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

October 19, 2021

MEMORANDUM

To: The Honorable Marc Elrich, County Executive
The Honorable Tom Hucker, President,
Montgomery County Council

From: Monifa B. McKnight, Interim Superintendent of Schools 

Subject: Transmittal of Board of Education Agenda Item #11.9

Recommended Fiscal Year 2022 Supplemental Appropriation for Early Childhood High-Quality Inclusion Policies and Practices Grant under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B Grant.

BOE Meeting Date:  October 5, 2021

Amount:  \$251,233

Type of Action:  Approval

MBM:ESD:RR:mz

Attachment

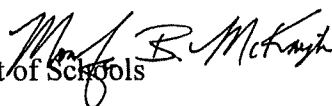
Copy to:
Mr. Reilly
Montgomery County Office of Management and Budget

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

October 5, 2021

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Monifa B. McKnight, Interim Superintendent of Schools 

Subject: Recommended Fiscal Year 2022 Supplemental Appropriation for Early Childhood High-Quality Inclusion Policies and Practices Grant under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B Grant

Recommendation in Brief

Authorization is requested to receive and expend, subject to County Council approval, a Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 supplemental appropriation of \$251,233 for the Early Childhood High-Quality Inclusion Policies and Practices Grant under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, Part B Grant.

Background

The purpose of this grant is to foster and facilitate high-quality, inclusive practices for three- and four-year-old students with disabilities. In addition, it offers Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) the opportunity to create systemic change while providing professional learning through job-embedded coaching.

Support of Board of Education Mission

The Early Childhood High-Quality Inclusion Policies and Practices Grant opportunity aligns with MCPS strategic priorities of learning, accountability, and results for students with disabilities, and community partnerships and engagement while assuring equity, access, and opportunity for achievement of academic, functional, and behavioral outcomes specific to MCPS' children and youth with disabilities and their families.

In collaboration with the Maryland State Department of Education, MCPS will increase the inclusion and engagement of prekindergarten-age students with disabilities in general education classes. This collaboration provides prekindergarten students with disabilities the

opportunity to learn kindergarten readiness skills within general education using evidence-based practices and instruction. They also will have increased opportunities to engage in the same social and emotional learning experiences afforded their general education peers to maximize each student's success and prepare them for their kindergarten year and beyond.

In addition, the grant activities will promote racial equity and social justice through the lens of equity and culturally responsive practices, resulting in perspectives, instruction, and interventions that promote equal access to learning and success for all students.

Use of Funds

Funds will be used to provide for:

- Special education instructional salaries
- Fixed charges

Recommended Resolution

WHEREAS, Montgomery County Public Schools has received notification from the Maryland State Department of Education that it will receive an additional \$251,233 for the Early Childhood High-Quality Inclusion Policies and Practices Grant under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, Part B; now therefore be it

Resolved, That the interim superintendent of schools be authorized to receive and expend, subject to County Council approval, an FY 2022 supplemental appropriation of \$251,233 for the Early Childhood High-Quality Inclusion Policies and Practices Grant under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, Part B grant in the following categories:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Positions</u>	<u>Amount</u>
06 Special Education	2.0	\$176,838
12 Fixed Charges		\$74,395
<u>Total</u>	<u>2.0</u>	<u>\$251,233</u>

And be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the county executive and County Council; and be it further

Resolved, That the county executive be requested to recommend approval of this resolution to the County Council.

MBM:ESD:RR:jp