



**Committee:** Joint  
**Committee Review:** N/A  
**Staff:** Essie McGuire, Senior Legislative Analyst  
Vivian Yao, Legislative Analyst  
**Purpose** To receive testimony/final action - vote expected  
**Keywords:** High School Wellness Center, mental health, youth development

AGENDA ITEM #21  
April 19, 2022  
**Public Hearing/Action**

## SUBJECT

Special Appropriation to the FY22 Operating Budget, Montgomery County Government, Department of Health and Human Services, \$3,000,000 to Implement Mental Health and Positive Youth Development Services in Montgomery County Public Schools (Source of Funds: General Fund Reserves)

## EXPECTED ATTENDEES

- Dr. Raymond Crowel, Director, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- Victoria Buckland, Chief Operating Office, DHHS
- Dira Treadance, Chief, Children, Youth, and Family Services, DHHS
- Everett Davis, Acting Chief, Office of Family Support and Community Engagement, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)
- Seth Adams, Director, Department of Facilities Management, MCPS
- Jason Rundell, Management and Budget, DHHS
- Deborah Lambert, Office of Management and Budget (OMB)
- Lindsay Lucas, OMB

## DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

- Expanding the services currently offered by the High School Wellness Centers to all high schools has increasingly been a focus and priority in discussions around increasing mental health supports for students to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic experience.
- Councilmember Navarro raised this issue in multiple Council briefings and worksessions; other Councilmembers, members of the Board of Education, and community stakeholders have concurred with the idea to significantly expand these services.
- On March 7, 2022, Councilmember Navarro sent a memorandum to Council President Albornoz and Education and Culture Committee Chair Rice detailing a proposal to implement wellness centers at all high schools.
- On March 8, 2022, the Board of Education requested \$3.0 million funding in the FY22 Capital Budget and an Amendment to the FY21-26 Capital Improvements Program for relocatable classrooms to implement Councilmember Navarro's expansion proposal. MCPS' request would appropriate this \$3.0 million in FY22 to allow MCPS to move forward with contractual

work this spring, so that the relocatable classrooms can be ready by the start of the 2022-23 school year.

- On March 17, the Health and Human Services and Education and Culture Committees voted unanimously (4-0, Councilmember Jawando absent) to move forward a package of three special appropriations for Council introduction to implement the initial phase of the expansion initiative, intended to focus on providing mental health and positive youth development services in high schools that do not currently have a wellness center.
- The Council introduced the three special appropriations needed to implement the expansion proposal on March 22, 2022. The package of three special appropriations consists of: 1) a special appropriation to the MCPS Capital Improvements Program to support relocatable classrooms to provide additional space for the services in high schools; 2) a special appropriation to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Capital Improvements Program High School Wellness Center and Expanded Wellness Services Project to support space modifications needed to implement the initial expansion; and 3) this special appropriation to the DHHS FY22 Operating Budget to provide mental health and positive youth development services at high schools that do not currently have a wellness center.
- This appropriation will provide \$3,000,000 to respond to urgent mental health and social support needs of high school students and their families in FY22. The services may include behavioral health and support services, youth development and prevention services, case management screening, referral and social services.
- On March 15, 2021, the County Council received a recommendation from the County Executive to approve two FY22 supplemental appropriation requests from Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS); one of which is the \$3 million for relocatables needed to support these expanded mental health support services.
- The County Council is tentatively scheduled to hold a public hearing and consider action on all three special appropriations on April 19, 2022.

**This report contains:**

- Draft Resolution ©1-2
- March 7, 2022, memorandum from Councilmember Navarro to HHS and E&C Committee Chairs ©3-4
- Racial Equity and Social Justice Impact Statement ©5-8

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Resolution No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Introduced: \_\_\_\_\_  
Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_

**COUNTY COUNCIL  
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

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Lead Sponsor: Health and Human Services (HHS) and  
Education and Culture (E&C) Committees

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**SUBJECT:** Special Appropriation to the FY22 Operating Budget  
Montgomery County Government  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Children, Youth and Family Services, \$3,000,000  
Source of Funds: General Fund Reserves

**Background**

1. Section 308 of the County Charter provides that a special appropriation is an appropriation which states that it is necessary to meet an unforeseen disaster or other emergency, or to act without delay in the public interest. Each special appropriation shall be approved by not less than six Councilmembers. The Council may approve a special appropriation at any time after public notice by news release. Each special appropriation shall specify the source of funds to finance it.
2. The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted youth mental health and well-being. Vulnerable youth face significant challenges as a result of the economic impacts resulting from COVID-19 and social isolation arising from the need to prevent the spread of the virus.
3. Councilmember Navarro, supported by other members of the HHS and E&C Committees, proposed expansion of services delivered by High School Wellness Centers to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and support students. The initial phase of this initiative is intended to start up mental health and other support services at high schools that do not currently have a wellness center in operation.
4. This special appropriation provides \$3,000,000 to provide services that may include behavioral health and support services, youth development and prevention services, case management screening, referral and social services.
5. Notice of public hearing was given and a public hearing was held.
6. The County Council declares this request is in the public interest to be acted upon without delay as provided for under special appropriation requirements described in Article 3, Section 308 of the Montgomery County Charter.

**Action**

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

A special appropriation to the FY22 Operating Budget of the Montgomery County Government, Department of Health and Human Services, Children, Youth, and Family Services is approved as follows:

<u>Personnel</u> <u>Expense</u>	<u>Operating</u> <u>Expense</u>	<u>Capital</u> <u>Outlay</u>	<u>Source</u> <u>TOTALof Funds</u>
\$0	\$3,000,000	\$0	General Fund Reserves

This is a correct copy of Council action.

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Selena Mendy Singleton, Esq.  
Clerk of the Council



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND**

**COUNCILMEMBER NANCY NAVARRO  
DISTRICT 4**

**CHAIR, GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND  
FISCAL POLICY COMMITTEE**

**EDUCATION AND CULTURE COMMITTEE**

**MEMORANDUM**

March 7, 2022

**TO:** Gabe Albornoz, President, Chair, Health, and Human Services Committee  
Craig Rice, Chair, Education and Culture Committee

**FROM:** Nancy Navarro, Chair, Government Operations & Fiscal Policy Committee

**SUBJECT:** Proposal to expand Wellness centers to all high schools

It is with great pleasure I transmit to you for the review of your committees on March 17, 2022, my proposal to expand wellness centers to all high schools. This is a matter of immense importance and urgency, given the times we live in and the huge need in our schools for a warm welcoming space that addresses our students needs holistically and in a culturally proficient fashion.

This proposal comes to you after extensive discussion with key staff in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), the Department of Health and Human Services and our own council staff. My thanks go to Council President Gabe Albornoz for his support and leadership, to Dr. Monifa McKnight, MCPS superintendent and her staff, Dr. Raymond Crowel, DHHS director and his staff, and Essie McGuire, Vivian Yao, and other staff for working with me to produce a very comprehensive proposal that responds robustly to the feedback we have gotten from students, parents, and staff of MCPS. I appreciate the valuable feedback I got from the leadership and members of the MCCPTA Mental Health Subcommittee when I met with them. I also wish to thank all my colleagues who have rallied around this worthy project.

These are the broad elements of my proposal:

- The High School Wellness Center (HSWC) proposal will implement both an Interim Phase starting now, through FY 2023, and a Full-Scale Phase over a 5-year period beginning in FY 2024 through FY 2028.

- The Interim Phase will start immediately to stand up Mental Health and Positive Youth Development components of the HSWC model, so that the services will be in place in each high school beginning in the upcoming school year, or earlier, if possible, in some cases. A total of \$10 million in capital funding and \$14.4 million in operating funding will be needed in FY22 and FY23 to implement this phase of the initiative.
- The Full-Scale Phase will implement full HSWC model at all high schools. Funding will be included in the CIP to estimate the build out of all HS Wellness Centers, approximately 4 per year over the five years FY24-28. Funds will be estimated to reserve fiscal capacity to ensure this initiative moves forward and can be funded. The preliminary estimate for this initiative over the six-year CIP period is \$93 million.
- In the coming year, FY23, the department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) will work together to plan and design the first four HSWC to begin construction in FY24, based on the established priority areas. A total of \$3 million is needed in FY23 to begin this work.
- In addition, DHHS and MCPS will work together to conduct feasibility studies of what is needed to implement Wellness Centers across the remaining high schools. Acknowledging that facility conditions and services needed may vary school to school, this will allow for fuller consideration of a more detailed, targeted, and specific plan in the next CIP budget cycle.
- After the review of my proposal by the joint Health and Human Services (HHS) and Education and Committee (E&C) committees on March 17, 2022. I anticipate introducing the appropriate resolutions to provide the funding needed in this fiscal year to begin the Interim Phase initiative, and working with my colleagues through the budget process to include the needed capital and operating funds in the FY23 budget and the CIP to continue to move this initiative forward.

I look forward to a great worksession on March 17 and please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns about this initiative.

Copy to  
Marlene Michaelson  
Essie McGuire  
Vivian Yao

## **Council Sponsored Special Appropriation: Racial Equity and Social Justice**

### **SUBJECT**

- Special Appropriations to:
  - FY22 Operating Budget, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), \$3 million to implement mental health and positive youth development service components of High School Wellness Centers
  - FY22 Capital Budget and Amendment to the FY21-26 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Montgomery County Public Schools, \$3 million for Relocatable Classrooms project
  - Board of Education requested: March 8, 2022
  - FY22 Capital Budget and Amendment to the FY21-26 Capital Improvements Program (CIP), Montgomery County Government, \$2 million for the High School Wellness Center project
- Council introduced: March 22, 2022
- Health and Human Services and Education and Culture Committees reviewed March 17, 2022
- Public Hearing and Action: Scheduled for April 19, 2022

### **Description and Background**

Expanding the services currently offered by the High School Wellness Centers to all high schools has increasingly been a focus and priority in discussions around increasing mental health supports for students to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic experience. Councilmember Navarro raised this issue in multiple Council briefings and worksessions; other Councilmembers, members of the Board of Education, and community stakeholders have concurred with the idea to significantly expand these services.

Councilmember Navarro has outlined the initial stages of her proposal to expand mental health supports across high schools in multiple memoranda. In a January 31, 2022, memorandum, Councilmember Navarro provided the following description of this effort:

“I envision a bold initiative that would set up the wellness centers as soon as possible using existing spaces and/or relocatable classrooms for instance, as we stand up the physical structures. These wellness centers would also house supports from culturally and linguistically proficient resources like the Street Outreach Network, and others identified by Montgomery County Public Schools and the Department of Health and Human Services, as well as community stakeholders.”

These three special appropriations are necessary to begin the implementation of an interim phase of High School Wellness Center (HSWC) service expansion. A subsequent March 7, 2022, memorandum from Councilmember Navarro described the Interim Phase as follows:

“The Interim Phase of the HSWC proposal is intended to provide mental health supports across all high schools no later than the coming school year....The Interim Phase will start immediately to stand up Mental Health and Positive Youth Development components of the HSWC model, so that the services will be in place in each high school beginning in the upcoming school year, or earlier, if possible, in some cases.”

In the current HSWC model, Mental Health and Positive Youth Development Services are offered to all students in the school. These include: individual and group counseling, case management and referral services, extra-curricular opportunities, and mentoring supports. The special appropriations will support the facility, operations, and staffing needed to begin the implementation of these services as soon as possible across all high schools.

## **Data**

The Office of Racial Equality and Social Justice has referenced the following data in analyses of related appropriations for services to support students and families in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS):

As of September 30, 2021, MCPS had a total enrollment of 160,564 students<sup>1</sup>, operating 209<sup>2</sup> schools in the 2020-2021 school year. The majority of MCPS students are students of color with the following distribution by race and ethnicity: 21.8% Black/African American; 14.3% Asian; 32.8% Hispanic/Latino; 25.8% White; .1% American Indian/Alaska Native; 5% two or more races; no students reported being Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Students in MCPS also have diverse socioeconomic characteristics and are represented in the following service groups in 2021: 16.4% were enrolled in English as a Second language (ESOL) programs; 38.7% were in Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) programs; and 12.5% received special education instruction. Trends in MCPS student enrollment reveal that the school system has become more diverse and is largely a socioeconomic and racially segregated system<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> MCPS Data Dashboard. Learning Accountability and Results. “Enrollment: Individual Measures”. Available at: <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/data/LAR-charts/enrollment.html>

<sup>2</sup> “About MCPS”. Available at: <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/about/>

<sup>3</sup> Elaine Bonner-Tompkins. MCPS Performance and Opportunity Gaps. Report Number 2019-4. December 2019. Available at: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Resources/Files/2019%20Reports/OLOReport2019-14.pdf>



Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, students of color experienced disparities in resources, opportunities, and outcomes across educational settings (K-12 and post-secondary)<sup>4</sup>. These disparities are explored in a 2019 Montgomery County Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) report, MCPS Performance and Opportunity Gaps<sup>5</sup>. The report notes persistent disparities across a number of achievement performance metrics by race, ethnicity, and service group status. The analysis also explains the inequities underlying many of these disparities, describing how “concentrated poverty and segregation among MCPS schools and the under-funding of compensatory education and English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs relative to student need”<sup>6</sup> shapes student opportunity. A growing body of evidence suggests that racial, ethnic, and service group disparities have been exaggerated by the pandemic. The US Department of Education explained in a June 2021 report how the pandemic has impacted students of all ages and backgrounds, noting the following challenges for students of color, students with disabilities, and students experiencing the destabilizing effects of new or persistent financial insecurity:

- Live in households where adults are more likely to experience job losses or covid-19 exposure, creating or exaggerating economic constraints and negative health outcomes.
- Disparities in access to mental health services or the full range of academic and wrap around services that a school provides.
- Barriers in access to technology or necessary supports to stay connected to school and educational opportunities.
- Amplification of language barriers for students and households with English-language learners.
- Disrupted educational opportunities for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and;
- Overall, the report noted for all groups slow to non-existent recovery in academic achievement due to preexisting resource and opportunity gaps that produce disparate student performance outcomes.

### **Council Staff Comments**

The purpose and implementation of these special appropriations as stated in the documents outlining the proposal is to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on students and families and to support the increased mental health needs that have arisen in the community and specifically among young people. The proposed expansion of mental health and positive youth development services will support youth across all high schools in the county. The service

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<sup>4</sup> Education in a Pandemic: The Disparate Impact of Covid-19 on America’s Students. US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. June 2021. Available at: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/20210608-impacts-ofcovid19.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Elaine Bonner-Tompkins.

<sup>6</sup> Elaine Bonner-Tompkins.

model and proposed expansion also includes an intentional focus on providing culturally and linguistically competent services to youth disproportionately affected by the pandemic, and to provide access to students and families that may not otherwise have access to mental health and positive youth development services.