



OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Tiffany Ward
Director and Chief Equity Officer

MEMORANDUM

March 10, 2023

To: Jennifer Bryant, Director
Office of Management and Budget

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

Re: Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #23-83
Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) HVAC (Mechanical Systems)
Replacement (MCPS)

- I. **FINDING:** The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) finds that Supplemental Appropriation #23-83 HVAC Replacement MCPS has the potential to advance racial equity and social justice in Montgomery County as it provides resources for the replacement of heating, ventilating, air conditioning (HVAC), automated temperature controls, and plumbing systems in facilities largely serving students of color. Over 75% of the students at four of the five schools programmed for HVAC upgrades or replacement are children of color. Additionally, over 55% of the students attending four of the five schools were eligible to participate in the Free and Reduced-priced Meals Program (FARMS) during the 2022-2023 school year¹. Therefore, this SA also has the potential to advance equitable outcomes for low-income children and their families.
- II. **BACKGROUND:** HVAC Replacement: MCPS provides funding for a level of effort (LOE) project that is needed to replace aging HVAC infrastructure and reduce the backlog of HVAC projects systemwide. The purpose of SA #23-83 is to fund HVAC equipment upgrades or replacements countywide at school locations, which include: Watkins Mill

¹ FARMS primarily serves children categorically eligible based on participation in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, status as low-income, homeless, migrant, runaway, or foster children, participation in Head Start program or based on household income and family size. Additional informant is available in the National School Lunch Program fact sheet. Available at: <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/NSLPFactSheet.pdf>.

High School, Gaithersburg Middle School, Brookhaven Elementary School, Meadow Hall Elementary School, and Monocacy Elementary School. While these are FY24 construction projects, the SA is needed in FY23 to allow time far enough in advance for planning, bidding, and contract award. Due to disruptions in the supply chain that are causing longer than normal lead times in mechanical equipment delivery, these tasks must be accelerated to prevent the projects from falling behind schedule.

III. **ANALYSIS:** ORESJ has previously analyzed public school facility upgrades and replacement LOE projects. Specifically, REIA #23-05 provides further details regarding the benefits of improved school buildings for BIPOC and low-income children. Our full analysis can be found in the following REIA’s:

- Supplemental Appropriation #22-63 MCPS Lifecycle Upgrades
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/22-63.pdf>
- Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #23-05 FY23 Capital Budget of Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Major Capital Projects – Secondary
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/23-05.pdf>
- Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #23-12 FY23 Capital Budget Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Planned Life Cycle Asset Replacement: MCPS
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/23-12.pdf>

The following chart provides demographic data for the 2022-2023 school year, showing that four of the five schools programmed for HVAC replacement largely serve children of color, as well as children eligible to participate in the FARMS program. Additionally, over 25% of students in these four schools receive English Language Development services.

Schools	Asian	Black/ African American	Hispanic/ Latino	White	Two or More Races	Participate in Free and Reduced- price Meals System (FARMS)	Participate in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
Watkins Mill High School	8.2%	22.8%	60.8%	5.6%	2.3%	66.1%	28.5%
Gaithersburg Middle School	6.2%	21.4%	57.1%	10.7%	4.6%	56.6%	25.1%
Brookhaven Elementary School	9.0%	22.8%	59.5%	4.6%	3.6%	65.2%	33.9%
Meadow Hall Elementary School	5.9%	12.4%	57.2%	17.8%	6.2%	55.1%	33.8%
Monocacy Elementary School	4.8%	0.0%	16.7%	71.4%	16.9%	16.9%	7.1%
Montgomery County Public Schools	13.8%	21.7%	34.7%	24.4%	5.1%	44.0%	19.0%

Source: Data on MCPS student demographics and service group characteristics is available here:
<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/planning/cipmaster.aspx> and
<https://ww2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/campaigns/Strategic-Planning-FY22-25/>

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Since these schools primarily serve children who often encounter significant systemic obstacles to success, ORESJ supports accelerating funding for the planned HVAC replacement. Timely replacement of the aging HVAC infrastructure will not only benefit children, but staff and the communities these schools serve will benefit as well.

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