



## OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE


Marc Elrich  
County Executive

Tiffany Ward  
Director and Chief Equity Officer

### MEMORANDUM

January 30, 2024

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) #24-52  
FY24 Capital Budget Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Northwood HS  
Addition/Facility Upgrades (\$9,560,000)

- I. **FINDING:** The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) finds that Supplemental Appropriations #24-52 Northwood HS Addition/Facility Upgrades will advance racial equity and social justice in Montgomery County as it provides resources to address overutilization and increase capacity at Northwood High School and the Downcounty Consortium, which largely serves students of color. Nearly 90% of the students at Northwood HS are Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC). Additionally, 68% of the students attending Northwood were eligible to participate in the Free and Reduced-Priced Meals Program (FARMS) during the 2022-2023 school year<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, this SA also creates an opportunity to advance equitable outcomes for low-income children and their families.
- II. **BACKGROUND:** The purpose of SA #24-52 is to provide funding for cost escalation and to accelerate the FY25 appropriation, which will allow MCPS to sign a construction contract to begin expansion of the school to accommodate the new student population. The expansion of Northwood High School, first introduced in the FY19-24 Capital

---

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

Improvements Program, would increase the capacity to 2,700 students. The planned expansion would add approximately 1,200 seats, which will require additional classrooms, reconfiguration of existing spaces, and upgrades to building systems to accommodate the new student population. <sup>2</sup> This supplemental appropriation will allow MCPS to sign a construction contract including prevailing wage<sup>3</sup> costs, which will have the benefit of maximizing State Aid for this project.

III. **ANALYSIS:** ORESJ has written on public school facility upgrades and level of effort 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:

- REIA #22-63 MCPS Lifecycle Upgrades  
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/22-63.pdf>
- REIA #23-05 FY23 Capital Budget of MCPS Major Capital Projects – Secondary  
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/23-05.pdf>
- REIA #23-12 FY23 Capital Budget MCPS Planned Life Cycle Asset Replacement: MCPS  
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/23-12.pdf>
- REIA #23-83 MCPS HVAC (Mechanical Systems) Replacement  
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/23-83.pdf>

The expansion of Northwood HS will lead to a boundary study to reassign students within the Downcounty Consortium, including Montgomery Blair, Albert Einstein, John F. Kennedy, and Wheaton High Schools. As with Northwood HS, student enrollment in these high schools largely serves students of color, as well as students eligible to participate in the FARMS program. Therefore, students at the schools within the Downcounty Consortium could potentially benefit from the Northwood High School expansion project. The following chart provides demographic data for the Downcounty Consortium High Schools for the 2023-2024 school year.

---

<sup>2</sup> Northwood High School Addition/Facility Upgrades Project Description. Available at:

<https://apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/BASISCAPITAL/Common/Project.aspx?ID=P651907&CID=17&SCID=0>

<sup>3</sup> The Prevailing Wage Law is patterned after the Federal Davis-Bacon and State of Maryland's prevailing wage laws. It requires the prevailing wage be paid to workers on County financed construction contracts. The prevailing wage rate is the rate paid for comparable work in the private sector within the County. The rates are calculated by the State, based on surveys of construction company employers. In the instance where a job classification is not listed, request a rate determination with this Request for Additional Wage Rates form. Available at:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/PRO/DBRC/prevailing-wage-law.html>.

Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #24-52 FY24  
 Capital Budget Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Northwood HS Addition/Facility  
 Upgrades (\$9,560,000)  
 January 30, 2024  
 Page 3 of 3

High Schools	2023-2024						2022-2023		
	Total Enrollment	Two or more races %	Black or Afr. Amer. %	Asian%	Hispanic %	White %	FARMS%*	ELD%**	Mobility Rate%***
Northwood	1744	2.7%	23.5%	4.0%	59.2%	10.5%	67.7%	25.6%	20.6%
Montgomery Blair	3252	4.5%	24.5%	10.5%	38.1%	22.3%	48.6%	18.6%	14.3%
Albert Einstein	2020	4.5%	15.8%	6.2%	50.5%	22.6%	53.7%	19.1%	12.7%
John F. Kennedy	1847	1.6%	21.7%	4.1%	67.9%	4.4%	76.8%	28.2%	18.3%
Wheaton	2721	2.6%	19.6%	10.6%	57.3%	9.7%	65.3%	21.8%	14.3%

Since these schools primarily serve students who often encounter significant systemic obstacles to success, ORESJ supports accelerating funding for the planned addition and facility upgrades. Timely expansion of the facility will not only benefit students, but the 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