

Highland View E.S. PTA -- ACTION ALERT

Need 50 Letters By Friday, January 29th

- Alert:** Help Protect Staff Resources and Funding for Our Neighborhood Schools
- Action:** Contact Members of the Board of Education (BOE) and County Executive
- We need 50 letters sent to the Board of Education before their budget working sessions start next week.
- Your stories make a difference! Please communicate a personal experience with staff resources at HVES that have helped your child succeed at his/her level. Consider sharing your positive experiences of both enrichment acceleration and/or intervention support to help your child.
- Timeline:** With budget planning sessions underway, now is the time to advocate.
- Email:** Members of the Board of Education at **boe@mcpsmd.org**
- Members of the County Council at **county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov**
- County Executive Ike Leggett at **ocemail@montgomerycountymd.gov**
- Please send copies to our Cluster Rep at Jennifer@hikingalong.com*
- Message:** Highland View is the smallest neighborhood k-5, non Title I school in the Down County Consortium and cannot be expected to serve diverse populations with fewer staff resources while meeting the same performance expectations. The Superintendent's Recommended Operating Budget for FY2011 suggests cuts that would disproportionately hurt small schools serving vulnerable populations. Further reducing staff will directly impact our school's ability to serve all kids at their level – this is unfair and irresponsible as it undermines the achievements and successes made in closing the achievement gap.

- More Talking Points / Key Messages on Page 2 -

REMINDER: Next PTA Meeting with Update on Budget Timeline on Feb. 2nd at 7:15pm

Additional Messages / Talking Points

1) We have Title I needs without the funding and infrastructure support that goes to Title I schools. Our staff is stretched thin after last year's staff cuts.

Background: Three years ago Highland View lost its Title I status -- not because our school population's poverty rates went down -- but rather because the poverty rates in Montgomery County rose significantly. When we lost the resources and staff supports that are provided to Title I schools, our students needs did not change.

We have 40% FARMS – students who qualify for Free and Reduced Meals; 109 of 350 receive ESOL services; 20% Mobility rate – students enter and leave during the year; High number of students with LEP - Limited English Proficiency.

2) Using enrollment as the cutting measure is misguided as it assumes an equal playing field of need across the county and we know this is not the case. Student needs and academic diversity at HVES is greater than many larger elementary schools in more affluent parts of the county.

Background: The proposed cuts penalize small schools without looking at program and vulnerable population needs. This recommendation by Superintendent Weast undermines our historic investments in promoting excellence for all students and closing the achievement gap.

Academic Intervention, Reading Specialists, Staff Development Teachers, Special Program Teachers, Media Assistants, and Guidance staff play a vital role in ensuring smaller and differentiated classes that serve the breadth of need and academic diversity at HVES – both above and below grade level students deserve to be enriched and challenged. This year only K reading and 5th graders enjoy acceleration.

3) If the budget has to be cut, spare the classroom and focus on administrative and central office expenditures which are too high.

Background: While the shortfall is unknown, analysts believe the County could lose between 300 and 600 million dollars in revenue this year. When looking for areas to become more efficient, it is the responsibility of the School Board to oversee the Superintendent's administrative and central office expenditures that do not reduce the teachers and staff resources that support classroom instruction. These managers and central office program staff are not regularly evaluated nor are they held to the same performance standards that we expect of our principals, teachers and staff who serve in the classroom.

Need Help or Have Questions? Contact HVES PTA President Amber Khan
Phone: 301-758-7275 or choprakhan@gmail.com