


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

March 5, 2010

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jerry D. Weast, Superintendent of Schools 

Subject: FY 2011 Staff Allocations to Schools

This memorandum is to inform you about the preliminary steps that are being taken to prepare for the possibility that the county executive and the County Council will substantially reduce the Board's requested Fiscal Year 2011 Operating Budget. Our normal process calls for allocations for schools to be made during the first week of March for the following school year. In making these allocations, I believe it is prudent that we plan for significant reductions in allocations because of the difficult fiscal times we are facing. If we do not make this assumption and allocate positions to schools based on the Board's requested budget, and the County Council makes substantial reductions in May 2010, we could have to eliminate hundreds of school-based positions in early June 2010 and begin the involuntary transfer process at a time when teachers and other 10-month employees would be leaving school for the summer. We expect that these allocations will cause significant concerns, but the disruption will be far less than if we had to make these cuts during the summer.

Schools receive their staff allocations for the upcoming year on March 5, 2010. Principals have three weeks to identify teachers and other staff that have to be involuntarily transferred. Position vacancies will be posted by principals at the end of March. The Job Fair for teachers will be held the week of April 19, and the voluntary transfer process will begin on April 23. The voluntary transfer process will continue until May 28, 2010. At that time, the offices of Human Resources and School Performance will begin to place all involuntarily transferred staff members who have not been offered positions during the transfer process. Once all involuntary transfers are placed in a subject or grade level, the voluntary transfer process will reopen. The Office of Human Resources will then begin to hire new teachers from outside Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). Previously, hiring began prior to June using the "open contract" process in which new hires were given a contract, but were not assigned to schools until all involuntarily transferred staff members were assigned to schools. This year, because of the uncertainty of the situation, open contracts will be offered in only a few selected areas of need, such as special education.

If we wait to reduce school allocations until after the County Council takes action on the budget, the allocation, transfer, and hiring processes would begin three months later than usual, and it would be impossible to complete the process by August 2010, when school begins. The uncertainties and anxieties that this would create would have a tremendous impact on our schools next fall. The plan we have initiated is intended to make the process as smooth as possible given

the difficult fiscal constraints. In the event that the County Council does not make reductions to the MCPS budget, it will be much easier to allocate additional positions to the schools in June than it would be to begin reducing schools' allocations at that time.

In the operating budget that I recommended to the Board in December 2009, I included a list of possible reductions that might have to be considered if the County Council did not approve full funding of the budget request. We have used this list of possible reductions as the basis for the allocations that were made to schools this week. We have assumed some of these reductions, but not all of them. Some of the reductions would impact so many staff members that we would not be able to place all of them in positions in the fall, and some of the reductions would have required us to reduce the number of hours of employment for hundreds of staff. Although we may still have to make these reductions in June 2010, depending on the final actions of the County Council, my goal is to keep "Reductions in Force" (layoffs) and the number of staff who lose hours of employment to a minimum. But, this will depend on final County Council action.

Classroom teacher allocation formulas have been adjusted to increase class size by one student per class. This has resulted in holding 252 positions in reserve: 142 in elementary school, 55 in middle school, and 55 in high school. These positions are in addition to the classroom teacher reserve that is held to address schools where enrollment increases result in an unmanageable number of oversized classes. In addition, 80 other teacher positions have been held in reserve. These include special program, staff development, focus, and academic intervention teachers and media specialists. Approximately 30 paraeducator positions also have been held in reserve. Furthermore, a plan is being developed to notify central services staff whose positions might be eliminated so that they may have the opportunity to seek positions in schools during the scheduled voluntary transfer process.

If we ultimately have to eliminate these positions that are being held in reserve, there will be a significant impact on schools. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Larry A. Bowers, chief operating officer, at 301-279-3626.

JDW:LAB:ndm

Copy to:

- Executive Staff
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