

# A Message from Superintendent Dr. Monifa B. McKnight / Working For You: Together We Stay On Track for Success



Montgomery County Public Schools 1:13 PM



Maryland's Largest School District

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

*Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential*

Dear MCPS Colleagues,

Every week, I write to express my excitement about what I'm seeing, feeling, and hearing in our schools and offices. Smiles, energy and purposeful work in support of our students are alive throughout our district, and because of that, our students are focused and learning. It's exactly what we all strive for as professional educators, and I know you feel the same way.

Because of you, we are on track for success! Thanks to your great commitment, we have real momentum. Every decision I make reflects on what is best for you, knowing you are important leaders, trusted adults and who our students are counting on now for their futures.

Today, I write with both that same excitement and a serious concern. This year, we're entering the negotiation process with all three of the employee associations. These negotiations represent an exciting opportunity to agree upon what you need to continue serving our students well. Indeed, the negotiation process is an important tool in our toolkit to keep the momentum that we have going.

Over many years MCPS leadership and employee association leadership have negotiated for important shared interest-based goals. The first step in this process is to establish how we will collaboratively work together to reach those shared interests by establishing ground rules. With ground rules in place, we can achieve mutual victories. To name just a few important benefits that have been provided: professional development, work-life balance, and, yes, salaries that you deserve. We've done this before, and I'm confident that we'll do it again.

We have started this process with two of our employee associations. **However, an unwillingness on the part of teacher association leaders to agree on basic ground rules is preventing us from moving forward. We have shared our interest in honest and transparent negotiations and offered multiple opportunities for public open**



## **engagement. Negotiators have turned down this offer as not enough.**

Have no doubt, my team and I are working for you. A fair negotiation process is part of how we do so. Over the last year that I served as interim superintendent, we opened conversations on important issues forced on us by pandemic-impacted learning and provided several benefit enhancements for all employees.

The benefits are:

- Step increases for eligible employees in March 2021
- Salary rise of 1.5% for all employees in January 2021
- Retention bonus of \$1,100 for all employees in December 2021
- COVID-19 leave benefit (unusual and imperative leave) not impacting earned annual, sick or personal leave accrued by employees
- Increase of hourly rate for class coverage
- Substitute teacher pay increase
- Piloting a permanent substitute program
- Inclusion of staff development teachers in all schools
- Inclusion of reading specialists in all elementary schools
- Expanding social workers, counselors, and

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- Enhancing employee supports through EAP and Kepro
- In December of this year, a salary rise of 3.35% for all employees

Many of these agreements were reached at record speed, with record outcomes. Our formula was simple: identify shared interests and translate those interests into the benefits, compensations, and working conditions that you deserve to deliver the best results to students.

Moving forward, my team and I will continue approaching these essential conversations with our employee association leaders in good faith. Working together, we will realize better results when we establish meaningful relationships based on trust, which will benefit all future discussions.

I know we will reach an agreeable solution. That is my commitment and firm belief. I ask you to join me in committing to a respectful process that serves all employees to ensure we remain on track for student success.

Thank you for everything you do.