



Montgomery County Public Schools

April 27, 2012

Dear Staff,

Last night the Montgomery County School Board met for several hours to determine how to bridge the \$4.2 million gap in the school division's budget for next year. This is a difficult process, as not a single item being considered for reduction is painless. Every single one has an effect on this division.

The result of last night's meeting is a set of School Board recommendations for meeting the budget shortfall. These updated recommendations are available online at http://www.mcps.org/Budget_Files/ProAdju042712.pdf. The number of staffing reductions in this list is significantly reduced, and we remain optimistic that all staffing reductions can be handled through attrition.

Many of the School Board's recommendations are similar to what was sent to you two weeks ago. However, there are changes, including two items that would potentially affect many employees.

The first is a two-day furlough for all employees. The furlough days would be unpaid leave days that were previously identified as either instructional days or employee workdays. This action would save half of a million dollars in the division budget. This is equal to eight and a half staff positions. We are still ironing out the details of how a furlough would happen, but the intention is for the furlough to be as painless as possible for all employees. A furlough plan would be determined by the School Board following their approval of a final list of budget reductions.

During their deliberation, the School Board identified the temporary closure of Auburn Middle School as an item to move to recommended status. This proposal involves transporting sixth and seventh grade students to Christiansburg Middle School and sending eighth grade students to Auburn High School. No staff member would lose their job as a part of this scenario. The move would be temporary until Auburn Middle School students can enter their new school in 2014. This temporary scenario would save more than five staff positions for next school year and five again in 2013-2014 as the division continues to realize the savings of not having the building open.

There are a number of recommendations to accomplish closing the \$4.2 million budget gap, none of which are final. The School Board will meet again on Tuesday, May 1, to discuss their recommendations and to adopt a budget for public hearing. The public hearing will be held on Tuesday, May 15, at 7 p.m. and the Board is expected to approve a final budget at that time. Information regarding the budget and budget reductions is available on the MCPS website at <http://www.mcps.org/Budget.html>. I encourage you to stay informed throughout this budget process.

Although we are facing a huge task in bridging the \$4.2 million shortfall, the 12 cent tax rate passed by the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors prevented us from experiencing crippling budget reductions. We still have a large gap to fill, but I know that we can all work together to ensure our students are protected from these challenges.

I thank you for your continued focus on quality education for our students during this trying time. You prove every single day that it is our people who make this school system great!

Sincerely,

Brenda B. Blackburn
Superintendent