



# MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

*Dedicated to providing a high-quality education for every child*



**Brenda L. Wolff**  
President  
District 5



**Karla Silvestre**  
Vice President  
At-Large



**Judith R. Docca**  
District 1



**Shebra L. Evans**  
District 4



**Lynne Harris**  
At-Large



**Scott Jofthus**  
District 3



**Rebecca K. Smondrowski**  
District 2



**Arvin Kim**  
Student Member



**Monifa B. McKnight, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent of Schools

## *About Us and How We May Help You*

The Montgomery County Board of Education is the official educational policy-making body in the county. The Board is responsible for the direction and operation of the public school system. Our mission is to provide leadership and oversight for a high-quality educational system with community-supported goals, policies, and resources committed to benefit our growing and diverse student population.

The Board consists of seven county residents elected by voters for a four-year term and a student elected by secondary school students for a one-year term. Board members are elected countywide but run at large, or from the Board district in which they reside.

**Our Vision:** We inspire learning by providing the greatest public education to each and every student.

In this brochure, we would like to let you know about the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Education, how to become involved in public education, and how we may be of service to you and your children.

## Standing Committees

There are five standing Board committees. The committees and their members are as follows:

### Communication and Stakeholder Engagement

Identifies a broad spectrum of communication and engagement practices for possible piloting and implementation in Montgomery County Public Schools.

**Shebra L. Evans (Chair)**  
**Karla Silvestre**  
**Rebecca K. Smondrowski**

### Fiscal Management

Reviews issues pertaining to the management and audit of Montgomery County Public Schools' fiscal, capital, and human resources, including the Board's operating budget, the Capital Improvements Program, staffing plans, and allocations.

**Lynne Harris (Chair)**  
**Judith R. Docca**  
**Scott Joftus**

### Policy Management

Works with the superintendent and staff to develop draft policy to present to the full Board.

**Rebecca K. Smondrowski (Chair)**  
**Judith R. Docca**  
**Shebra Evans**  
**Arvin Kim**

### Special Populations

Reviews issues and instructional programs designed to meet the needs of special populations that require special education services, gifted and talented instruction, alternative programs, ESOL services, and multilingual support.

**Judith R. Docca (Chair)**  
**Rebecca K. Smondrowski**  
**Karla Silvestre**

### Strategic Planning

Provides a forum to consider the long-range direction of the school system; evaluates approaches to long-range planning; and makes strategic planning recommendations to the Board.

**Karla Silvestre (Chair)**  
**Lynne Harris**  
**Scott Joftus**  
**Arvin Kim**

## Advisory Committees

The Board also has the following advisory committees: Ethics Panel, Collaboration Board for Career and Technology Education, and the District Committee on Assessments.

## Meeting Times

Committee meetings are advertised on the Board of Education's website: [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/boe](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/boe). The public may attend the committee meetings but may not participate in discussions.

## The Board's Roles and Responsibilities

The powers and mandatory duties of the Board of Education are defined in the *Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland* and Title 13A of the *Code of Maryland Regulations*. The Board's primary responsibilities, aligned to support the strategic plan of the school system, include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Selecting and appointing the superintendent of schools.
2. Formulating and interpreting policies.
3. Adopting operating and capital budgets.
4. Making decisions on educational, budgetary, facility, and financial matters (including authorization of legal settlements).
5. Establishing curriculum guides and courses of study.
6. Making a continuous appraisal of the educational and administrative management of the school system.
7. Establishing school boundaries.
8. Communicating with citizenry, staff, and students.
9. Acting in a quasi-judicial capacity, in particular, deciding appeals.
10. Advancing a legislative agenda.
11. Appointing personnel.

## ***How are the Board's roles and responsibilities different from those of the superintendent?***

- ❖ The Board sets policies and the superintendent interprets and implements the policies.
- ❖ The superintendent recommends the capital and operating budgets, but the Board makes the final determination on the budgets that are submitted to the County Council and county executive.
- ❖ Upon appeal by a parent, the Board reviews decisions made by the superintendent.
- ❖ The Board appoints personnel. The superintendent assigns personnel and provides for their professional development.
- ❖ The Board holds legal title to property and enters into contracts for services. The superintendent monitors the provision of goods and services required under the contract.

## ***Board Meetings and Participation***

The Board usually conducts two business meetings per month, except for the months of August and December during which the Board is in recess, as well as the months in which the Board holds hearings on its capital and operating budgets.

These meetings are usually held at the Carver Educational Services Center in Rockville, Maryland. Agenda and meeting materials are posted on the Board's website: [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/boe/meetings/index.aspx#calendar](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/boe/meetings/index.aspx#calendar).

Individuals interested in providing comments may sign up online at [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/boe/community/participation.aspx](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/boe/community/participation.aspx)

The sign-up period typically opens to the public one week before a business meeting at 6:00 p.m.

**Speakers are encouraged to email their testimony in advance to [boetestimony@mcpsmd.org](mailto:boetestimony@mcpsmd.org), fax it to 301-279-3860, or deliver to the Board of Education Office.**

In addition to special public hearings, the Board holds hearings on the annual operating budget, the capital budget, and school boundaries.

General guidelines for these public hearings are as follows:

1. Whenever possible, a public hearing will be scheduled one month in advance.
2. Please visit the Board's website at [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/boe/community/participation.aspx](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/boe/community/participation.aspx) for the most up-to-date information about hearing notices and online registration.

## ***The Budget Process***

The Board must review and approve the operating budget and capital budget for the school system each year.

### **Capital Budget**

#### **By June 1**

Cluster representatives send the superintendent proposed solutions, priorities, or concerns the cluster has identified for its schools.

#### **Early October**

The superintendent holds a public work session with the Board to review enrollment trends and facilities planning issues.

#### **Mid-October**

The superintendent releases recommendations on boundary studies and/or planning studies that were conducted the previous spring.

#### **Early November**

The superintendent publishes a recommended six-year Capital Improvements Program (CIP) or amendments and one-year capital budget.

#### **November**

The Board holds a work session at which members may propose alternative solutions to boundary changes. The Board also holds public hearings on facilities and boundary proposals, with decisions scheduled prior to the end of November.

#### **December–January**

The county executive reviews the Board's CIP request and makes recommendations to the County Council.

## **February–May**

The County Council reviews the requested CIP.

## **Spring**

The superintendent releases recommendations for winter boundary studies and deferred items (if any). The Board of Education holds work sessions and hearings before taking action on recommended winter boundary studies (if any).

## **May**

The County Council approves the CIP and the Capital Budget.

\***Note:** December–early May—Hearings and decisions occur regarding the state CIP.

## **Operating Budget**

### **December**

The superintendent recommends the budget's adoption to the members of the Board.

### **January**

The Board holds public hearings and work sessions to secure additional information on the recommendations of the superintendent and on items the Board itself is considering.

### **March 1**

The Board must adopt and submit the budget to the county executive and County Council on this date each year.

### **June 1**

The County Council must decide the amount of appropriations for each state category in the school system budget.

## **June**

The Board makes adjustments to the budget to conform to County Council action and to reflect the final judgment of the Board on expenditure priorities.

### **July 1**

The school system's new operating budget takes effect.

## ***Ombudsperson—How the Board Office May Help You***

The ombudsperson is appointed by the Montgomery County Board of Education and is considered an independent or neutral party who seeks to resolve school-related problems as quickly and efficiently as possible, especially for those for which a formal resolution process does not exist.

The ombudsperson has the authority to access all files, with your permission. All employees of the school system are directed to cooperate with the ombudsperson.

Although the ombudsperson is available to answer questions regarding formal appeals, the ombudsperson does not generally intervene in such cases.

You may contact the ombudsperson at 240-740-3030.