



# MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

*Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential*

850 Hungerford Drive ♦ Room 123 ♦ Rockville, Maryland 20850

March 3, 2020

The Honorable Bill Ferguson  
President of the Maryland State Senate  
H-107 State House  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones  
Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates  
H-101, State House  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Teaching Fellows for Maryland Scholarship

Dear Mr. President and Madam Speaker:

High-quality educational experiences depend on caring and effective teachers and every student deserves a high-quality educational experience. As you consider the State Budget for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2021, we urge you to consider the need to expand incentives for highly skilled and diverse candidates to teach in high-need schools. In particular, we are asking for you to support funding for the Maryland Teaching Fellows scholarship program, which was created in 2014 but never funded. The scholarships are awarded to students who pledge to work as public school K–12 or public prekindergarten teachers in Maryland schools where at least 50 percent of the students are eligible for Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS) services.

In Montgomery County Public Schools, approximately 45 percent of our students are eligible for FARMS services and nearly 30 percent of our schools have a FARMS eligibility rate of 50 percent or greater. An influx of new teachers who have committed themselves to teaching in our most highly impacted schools would greatly benefit the students and families of Montgomery County, as well as all other districts in the state.

HB 1415 was passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor in May 2018. The bill requires that the Governor include annually at least \$2,000,000 in the state budget for the Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education Funding to award Maryland Teaching

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Fellows scholarships. The Commission recommends that such funding be increased annually until a sufficient number of qualified teachers are produced and remain in the Maryland teaching profession. We support that recommendation and ask that you do the same.

Thank you for your consideration and for all you do for Maryland's public school students.

Sincerely,



Shebra L. Evans, President  
Montgomery County Board of Education



Jack R. Smith, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

SLE:JRS:JIC

Copy to:

Members of the Board of Education  
Executive Staff  
Ms. Webb