

Legislative Platform 2011-2012

Adopted November 22, 2011

Funding for public education should be a top priority both at the State and County level. Our children must receive a high quality education with all the necessary supports to achieve and succeed both within school and after graduation. A redefined curriculum, qualified teachers, technology, and a safe environment are just a few necessities to achieve a quality education. In order to support our children's educational opportunities, Montgomery County Council of PTAs supports the following positions.

- The principle of Maintenance of Effort – County governments should maintain their investment in the local school system and not rely on State funds to replace their own contribution. Maintenance of Effort does not provide for inflation or new initiatives. It is simply the lowest level of funding to maintain current services. Our elected leaders should strive to increase their investment to achieve improvement in schools rather than simply seek to limit their investment.
- State Penalty – Should the county not meet its obligations and underfund the school system below a Maintenance of Effort level of funding, the State penalty should be imposed upon the County Government. Currently, the school system is forced to absorb the state penalty in the year following that which the school system was underfunded. This places undue burden on the school system struggling with decreased funding.
- Maintenance of Effort Waiver Process – Currently, a county may opt not to file a waiver to underfund a Maintenance of Effort funding level. When this occurs, the Maintenance of Effort level “rebases” or automatically decreases to the level determined by the County Government (not the Board of Education), regardless of previous funding experience.
 - The waiver should be mandated for those County governments who adopt a budget that does not meet Maintenance of Effort.
 - The waiver approval process should take into account a variety of factors to include the county Board of Education's *support* for a lower Maintenance of Effort level.
 - The waiver approval process should allow for potential and explicit cost efficiencies as sufficient argument for approval.
 - The waive approval process should review the history of county funding and allow some flexibility for one-time larger investments in a specific year in order to provide incentives for county support for education.
- State Capital Improvement Funding – State funding should be adequate, timely, and distributed equitably based on student enrollment in each district.
- Funding Responsibility for Maryland State Teacher Retirement – We oppose any consideration of shifting the funding responsibility for the teacher retirement program onto county governments at this time. County governments are currently struggling and adding this burden at this time is inappropriate and of questionable value.
- Curriculum Authority - We recognize the state's authority to set minimum standards; however, we support the current authority of local Boards of Education to determine curriculum as this provides us with the best opportunity to advocate and share concerns with regard to our children's instruction. We also support the development of optional curriculum by the State. However, any mandated curricula by the State should be accompanied by the funding needed to implement them.