

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE COUNTY COUNCIL REGARDING THE FY07
OPERATING BUDGET**

April 18, 2006

by Mark R. Adelman, Chair, Education Committee, Montgomery County Civic Federation

Representing our Education Committee, I am here to offer comments on the FY 2007 MCPS Operating Budget. We all recognize the size of this component of the County budget, its complexity, and the importance of high quality public education. In attempting to make specific recommendations to the Board of Education*, we faced the frustration of so many citizens who are concerned that our resources are not being wisely used. The MCPS budget is, in the opinion of many, needlessly obscure and FAR from transparent. We believe this situation can only be improved by having budget analysts who function, outside of the MCPS administration, to refine the document prepared by MCPS staff, and to answer citizen questions about it. Therefore, we strongly urge you to REDUCE the allocation for the MCPS Department of Management, Budget and Planning (Chapter 7-37**) by two FTE. The funds thus removed from the MCPS budget - which we estimate as some \$200,000 to \$250,000 - should be used INSTEAD to employ two budget analysts to function OUTSIDE MCPS. We would prefer that these positions be added to the staff of the Board of Education. However, if the Board is not receptive to the proffer of funding for two additional staff to help with analysis of the Budget it is expected to evaluate and oversee, we urge you to use the funds to add two additional positions to your own staff. Our major concern is the need to assure that competent staff are added to agencies external to MCPS and that these county employees are clearly charged with working to assure that MCPS budgets are prepared to be as transparent as is possible. These staff should also be charged with functioning to make sure that citizens, who raise reasonable questions about the details of those budgets, are given clear answers, in a timely fashion. Our committee has already begun assembling a list of such questions and looks forward to working with the analysts hired as a result of the funding reallocation we recommend.

** Posted to our website at <http://www.montgomerycivic.org/render.asp?docarticle=000009&doctype=C1>*

***The reference is to the published Superintendent's Recommended FY 2007 Operating Budget. The DMBP (part of the Office of the Chief Operating Officer) budget includes salaries for 14.5 FTE. We were unable to find any specific reference to this portion of the MCPS budget in either the MCPS Operating Budget FY 2007, Adopted by the Board of Education, February 2006 or the County Executive's Recommended FY07 Operating Budget and Public Services Program.*

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