

County Budget Cuts Will Reduce Staff Services, Jobs

By AMANDA KABONERO
News Managing Editor

Interim MCPS Superintendent Larry Bowers announced March 16 that over 400 positions will be cut in anticipation of shortfalls in the county budget due to decreased state funding.

The Montgomery County Board of Education proposed a \$2.39 billion budget for next school year but there was concern regarding whether the county council will be able fund the entire budget. As a result, MCPS preemptively cut 370 school-based positions and 40 central services positions.

"While I am hopeful that the County Council will be able to fully fund our budget, we must prepare for the possibility that we will have to make additional reductions to our budget request," Bowers said in a press release.

According to Principal Billie-Jean Bensen, RHS did not see drastic cuts. Nonetheless, Bensen said media and English departments did see cuts to hours for key positions in their support staffs. The county has allocation formulas for each position based on the size of a school, and the formula for media and composition assistants were changed. Hours were cut for both positions, which Media Specialist Sherry Weiss believes will have a drastic impact on the RHS library.

"It's going to have a very broad negative impact. We will be closed after school totally because there's no staffing," Weiss said.

Weiss is also concerned as to whether or not she will continue opening the library before school since she usually oversees up to 170 students along with Media Assistant Pauline Bamdad, whose position was changed from full-time to half-time.

Weiss said that she and other high school media specialists in the county want the Board to know that a comprehensive high school media program needs a full-time media assistant, which only requires the restoration of four

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Camila Torres-- The Rampage

From left: Media Specialist Sherry Weiss talks to student aides senior Lisa D'Souza and junior Avery Eng. IMC hours will be cut due to budget shortages.

Flushing Protocol Fixes Water Quality

By XAVIER RIVERA
Contributing Editor

The newly-implemented water flushing protocol appears to be working, with lead levels from RHS drinking fountains now meeting the levels within EPA safety limits. The flushing protocol began on March 4 following a Feb. 12 story published in the Rampage that found high levels of lead in water from several RHS drinking fountains.

The Board of Education wrote a letter March 24 to Senator Karen Montgomery, who inquired about the issue after reading the Rampage article. The letter included the new test results, which sampled water after the flushing protocol had been followed for nine days. RHS maintenance workers have been running the water for 15 minutes every morning, as the EPA recommends

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Students Visit Sister School in Beijing

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Rachel Bargeski-- The Rampage

RHS students (gathered left) visit the Summer Palace in the Forbidden City, located in Beijing, China during their spring break trip. Nine students and one teacher took the opportunity to learn about Chinese culture and make friends abroad.

Teen Parents Blossom Juniors Remain Optimistic About Their Child's Life After Discovering Daughter Has Genetic Disorder

By GRETA ANDERSON
Editor-in-Chief

"Yeah, I have a daughter. I'll show you some pictures; ... I'll tell you life stories; ... I'm not going to hide her, because I'm proud to have her. I got pregnant and I had a daughter."

In August of 2014, the summer before her junior year, 16-year-old Marianne Demelletes gave birth to her daughter, Aliyah Ward. She and her boyfriend, junior Ronnie Ward, found out three months later that Aliyah has Trisomy 18, a rare genetic disorder that causes carriers to have an extra chromosome.

The disorder occurs in around one out of 6,000 births and most babies born with full Trisomy 18 do not live past their first birthday, according to the Trisomy 18 Foundation. Aliyah struggles with holes in her heart, breathing troubles, slow growth and underdeveloped motor skills. However, she has been diagnosed with partial Trisomy 18, which means she can live a full life with some disabilities.

"It's a rare condition. You can't compare her with other babies," Demelletes said. "There are Down Syndrome babies, and you can find them anywhere. ... But Trisomy 18 babies, they're so rare that you can't ... tell what's going to happen."

Aliyah's disorder is not noticeable in her facial features or behavior. Because her development has been delayed, one would only know she has



Meklit Bekele-- The Rampage

Juniors Marianne Demelletes (left) and Ronnie Ward (right) with their eight-month-old daughter Aliyah. She was diagnosed with Trisomy 18 at three months.

Trisomy 18 by asking her age. At eight months old, Aliyah has just started lifting her head on her own, whereas a healthy baby would be sitting up and crawling. She also had surgery to insert a gastrostomy tube through her abdomen Feb. 18 to deliver nutrients directly to her stomach.

Since the surgery, she has doubled her birth weight from six to over 12 pounds and is more energetic and active during the day, while before she would sleep for hours at a time.

"She's lovely; she's interacting. She's delayed, but she'll catch up," Demelletes' mother Marilou Johnson said. "It's a challenge, but she has sup-

port ... we're thinking positively."

During Trisomy 18 awareness month in March, Demelletes reached out to the Class of 2016 Facebook group and junior Jonathan Garcia to get support and to inform her classmates about Aliyah's disorder. Over 40 students wore blue March 18 to display their support for the family and read the link Demelletes provided on her Facebook post to learn more about the disorder.

"I was actually really surprised ... I didn't think that many people would actually care about it," Demelletes

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News

Alumnus Kevin McHale (2005) was arrested April 1 for repeatedly flashing and verbally harassing young girls. 2



Features

Junior Dwayne Henry, "Dope Dreamz," was featured in this year's Montgomery County High School Cypher. 12

Sports

Co-Ed volleyball clinched the 3A/2A title with a 5-0 division record for the first time in 17 years. 20

