



Fiscal Year 2022 Operating Budget

**SENATE EDUCATION, BUSINESS & ADMINISTRATION
SUBCOMMITTEE**

&

HOUSE EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

March 4, 2021



Class of 2020

The Maryland School for the Deaf, a diverse, bilingual community, in partnership with families provides an equitable and exemplary education in a nurturing, engaging, and challenging environment to ensure our students achieve personal excellence and become responsible lifelong learners.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Maryland School for the Deaf (MSD) provides educational and developmental services for the State's deaf and hard-of-hearing children and youth. The School, founded in 1867, serves this population through its two campuses located in Frederick and Columbia.

MSD is an independent State agency governed by its 19-member Board of Trustees, which is appointed by the Governor and approved by the Senate. 87% of the School's operating budget is provided from State general funds, while the remaining 13% is provided through federal grants, various special funds (e.g. employee food sales, out of state tuition and County Participation fees) and reimbursable funds (Enhanced Program of Services) from the Maryland State Department of Education. Students who are residents of Maryland attend MSD at no cost. Students from outside Maryland may be admitted on a tuition basis.

MSD utilizes the Maryland State Curriculum and the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards offering its graduating high school seniors the Maryland State High School diploma. In 2018, MSD went through the accreditation process for the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA) and received a recommendation for full accreditation through May 2026.

The School's instructional programs operate on a 180-day school year, from the end of August through mid-June. Extended School Year (ESY) programs and enrichment camps are offered at MSD during the summer months. Approximately 20% of the Frederick campus students and 22% of the Columbia Campus students reside at the School during the week, returning to their homes on weekends and during school breaks.

MSD's Frederick Campus provides a comprehensive elementary/secondary school program, with separate departments for Elementary (pre-K through Grade 5), Middle (Grades 6-8), and High School (Grades 9-12). The Frederick Campus also offers a Career and Technology program, which provides students with career skills, including computer and technical courses. The Special Needs program is also offered at Frederick for students with additional learning and behavioral disabilities.

The Columbia Campus also provides a comprehensive elementary/secondary school program for Elementary and Middle School-age students that include Special Needs educational programs.

MSD's Family Education and Early Childhood Department (FEECD) works with families of deaf and hard-of-hearing infants and toddlers to develop early language skills for their children. Because the optimum time for language development is from birth to age three,

children given early communication training have a much greater opportunity for social and academic development in later years. MSD's FEECD teachers work with approximately 70 children and their families throughout Maryland, through in-home and group sessions, to help ensure that these children will be prepared to learn at grade-level when they enter school.

The Program of Enhanced Services serves deaf students with other moderate to severe disabilities. Generally, students in this program require educational and developmental services of a more extensive and individualized nature. There are currently 49 students receiving enhanced services in the current school year.

As of January 29, 2020, student enrollment (representing 21 of 23 counties, and Baltimore City) reached 471 students.

On March 13, 2020 MSD responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by closing for in person instruction and within a few weeks began educating students virtually. MSD distributed laptops, Chromebooks and iPads to students and staff for use at home to continue operations.

February 16, 2021, MSD welcomed the first group of returning students to campus for hybrid learning, including some students that stay in the residence halls. MSD is educating students three days per week on campus and two days per week virtually to allow for disinfecting of the buildings two days per week. This first group of students will be followed by additional students every two weeks until all students are provided the opportunity for hybrid learning. MSD, also, is providing virtual instruction for families that want their child to remain in virtual instruction through the current school year.

THE SCHOOL'S MISSION

The Maryland School for the Deaf, a diverse, bilingual community, in partnership with families provides an equitable and exemplary education in a nurturing, engaging, and challenging environment to ensure our students achieve personal excellence and become responsible lifelong learners.

MSD BELIEF STATEMENTS

We believe that

- Our students learn best in a bilingual environment in which American Sign Language and English are used.
- Each student is a valued individual with unique physical, social, emotional, and intellectual needs.
- Students have a right to a safe, caring, and engaging learning environment.
- Early and ongoing language acquisition is vital.
- Students are challenged to achieve their highest academic and career potential.
- Quality education and open communication is a shared responsibility between the school, its students, their families, and the community.
- Ongoing parent education and access to resources and services are essential to student success.
- Students learn in a variety of ways and have opportunities to grow and access services that support their learning styles.
- Diversity is valued and increases students' understanding and respect of different people and cultures.
- Cross-curricular literacy instruction is essential to student success.
- Our students develop academic and social behaviors through systematic application of evidence-based strategies.
- Access to and competency with current technology is essential for student learning.
- Student life and extracurricular activities promote wellness and personal growth.

GOALS

I. Students achieve their developmental potential.

Maryland School for the Deaf provides an unsurpassed level of experience, expertise, and dedication in the education and personal development of deaf and hard-of-hearing children and youth. And while MSD already serves almost 6 out of 10 deaf students in the State, it is our goal to continue to develop programs and services that will best serve the needs of all deaf and hard-of-hearing students in Maryland. The School has already implemented its Program of Enhanced Services for deaf students with additional moderate to severe disabilities. During the 2013-2014 School Year, MSD (in partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education) established a day program for elementary-age deaf students with autism spectrum disorder. MSD had also implemented Spoken English (as a language of instruction) classes for children who have cochlear implants as well as children who are hard of hearing. A Work-to-Learn program serves high school students who meet specific requirements for vocational rehabilitation services. Through this successful partnership between MSD and the MSDE Division of Rehabilitation Services, participating MSD Students receive training and support as they gain work experience.

With its convenient, centrally located two-campus configuration, MSD is well-positioned to pursue and achieve this goal by providing deaf students and their families with the best of both worlds—a progressive, enriching, state-of-the-art program dedicated to and focused on their special educational and developmental needs, and the proximity to allow most students to live at home and participate as members of their local community.

MSD offers two types of curriculum to its students. The first follows the Maryland State Curriculum and the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards. Students following this program are eligible to receive the Maryland State High School diploma. The second is a Life-Based Education Curriculum, which allows options for students to receive the Maryland State Certificate of Program Completion. Students receiving Enhanced Program services may follow a High School diploma or a Life-Based Education path. Students with severe developmental disabilities receive services based on their individual needs.

II. Establish communication for parents and their children in the Family Education and Early Childhood Department.

The Family Education and Early Childhood Department (FEECD) serves deaf and hard of hearing students from birth until their fifth birthday. Family educators who have skills necessary to deal effectively with the linguistic, social-emotional, and academic needs of this population provide services to parents of deaf and hard of hearing infants

and toddlers. Emphasis is placed on establishing communication between children and their parents using a bilingual approach. This means that the languages of instruction are American Sign Language (ASL) and English. Concepts and language are taught as early as possible since the prime time for language acquisition is between birth and three years of age. Children and their families are encouraged to consider the use of amplification as appropriate as well as speech therapy in order to develop all communication opportunities for the child.

In addition to providing individual home visits on a regular basis throughout the state, the department also sponsors regional parent meetings. In order to facilitate communication between parent and child, ASL instruction is offered during home visits and on campus at no cost to the parent during the school year. FEECD offers weekly parent meetings at both Frederick and Columbia during the school year. While the parent meeting occurs, the youngest children (birth to 24 months) may participate in infant/toddler playgroups with FEECD staff. Two-year-old and three-year-old classes are offered at both campuses throughout the week. Speech teachers work with children in individual and group sessions as appropriate for the child's age and developmental level.

The three-year-old classes have been expanded to a full day for children with an MSD Individualized Education Program (IEP). The children are immersed in language rich environments to ensure important gains in language acquisition are achieved. The program expansion allows for deeper daily instruction to provide these young learners with solid school readiness skills in the areas of language, literacy, mathematical thinking, early science and social studies. These young learners will enter Pre-kindergarten and then Kindergarten ready for the rigors of the College and Career Ready Standards.

Family engagement is a key factor in student achievement. The full day program for three-year-olds includes many opportunities for families to engage and support their child's early learning via parent support meetings, home visits, conferences with teachers and daily communication.

III. Provide quality educational and developmental services.

MSD is licensed by the Department of Human Resources for residential services. The license requires that all student life staff receive training in CPR/First Aid, blood-borne pathogens, child development, identifying and reporting child neglect and abuse and other courses for a total of 40 hours each year. The School will continue to provide training to staff to enable a safe and nurturing environment for its students. All residential staff must be certified by the Maryland Department of Health (COMAR 10.57.03). Residential Child and Youth Care Practitioners (RCYCP) must take a training program and pass an examination to obtain initial certification. They are then required to complete 20 Continuing Education Units every two years to renew their certification.

MSD offers a tuition reimbursement program to assist teachers in obtaining their educational requirements for certification and to obtain highly qualified status. This program is being utilized to provide education to staff to fill administrative positions for forecasted vacancies. The School is being proactive in succession planning to meet the future needs as senior staff begins to retire.

MSD's Master Plan identifies capital projects needed to provide MSD's future students with state-of-the-art program facilities. The Frederick Campus Veditz Building Renovation project is in the design phase. The project provides an updated, state-of-the-art Career Technology Education Program at MSD. The risk analysis is underway for the Emergency Mass Notification System for the Columbia Campus. This Emergency Mass Notification System will provide life safety improvements to the MSD Columbia Campus.

MSD recognizes that the world is changing and to prepare students for the future, the MSD curriculum includes innovative computer technology and media equipment. By becoming literate with computers, students leave MSD with skills that are valued in today's job market. In the current fiscal year, MSD switched to laptop computers, iPads and Chromebooks in order to provide quality technology for staff and students. This change to laptop computers was necessitated by the COVID pandemic to assist with virtual and hybrid learning.

IV. Faculty Pay Plan

MSD develops and recommends a faculty pay plan every three years as required under COMAR 8-313 uniform pay plan for teachers and personnel. The plan is based on the average salaries of public school teachers and other professional personnel in Frederick and Howard Counties. MSD submitted a plan for review and approval as required with the Fiscal Year 2020 submission.

The MSD faculty is required to have the same certification and education as any public school faculty in the State of Maryland. MSD must remain competitive to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers.

The revised pay plan was implemented over a two-year period, Fiscal Years 2020, and 2021, in order to fund it within the school's minimum funding formula. The Faculty Pay Plan will next be reviewed in Fiscal Year 2023.

CONCERNS SURROUNDING SCHOOL CLIMATE AND OVERSIGHT

The Senate Budget and Taxation Committee and the Education Subcommittee of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee requested MSD provide a report to address follow-up questions regarding issues of school climate and oversight raised during a joint hearing on October 8, 2020. MSD has taken the following steps to address these concerns:

1. MSD formed community workgroups during the summer of 2020 to address diversity concerns on its campuses, and to address equity concerns between the Frederick and Columbia campuses.
2. MSD hired an independent consulting firm to provide an evaluation of the equity and inclusion at MSD on each campus and between campuses.
3. MSD hired a Chief Diversity Officer as part of its top leadership team to assist with prioritizing diversity and inclusion on the campuses and to promote a culture of inclusivity.
4. MSDE is working with MSD to review policies, procedures and practices.
5. MSD is working to develop more opportunities for students on both campuses to interact with each other to assist with the transition from the Columbia Campus to the Frederick Campus for high school.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

MSD concurs with the Governor's allowance.