

EMBARGOED UNTIL 12:01 AM, MONDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2005

(Can appear in Monday morning paper or broadcast)

Released by Maryland Tax Education Foundation

MEDIA ADVISORY

“Montgomery Has Cost Advantage in Public Education Over Similar Counties, but Excess-Over-Inflation Spending Soars, with Little Change in Test Scores.”

WHAT: In an innovative new study, MTEF compares Montgomery County’s public school spending with ten similar counties nationwide. The SAT testing service doesn’t release most countywide data, so MTEF used other sources to aggregate district/school scores, for the first “apples to apples” comparison.

- MCPS is a relative bargain in delivering better SAT scores as compared to similar counties in CT, NJ and NY. Its per pupil costs are \$2600 less (adjusted for local cost of living) and its scores are higher.
- However, after adjusting for inflation and enrollment growth, the County spends 30% more than in 1997, an extra \$330 million per year.
- Despite the extra spending, the advantage in SAT scores remains flat and the performance on state tests is inconsistent.
- The demographics of the County’s SAT test takers have changed little.
- Similar counties are increasing per pupil spending faster than inflation.

WHO: **Jeff Hooke**, MTEF chairman and study co-author, said, “MCPS is a relative bargain for taxpayers, but costs are rising quickly. Massive extra spending hasn’t moved the needle on test scores.”

Mihai Sturdza, co-author said, “We were unable to find a link between higher per pupil spending and better SAT scores among the counties.”

Tom Firey, of the Cato Institute and the Maryland Public Policy Institute, said, “Debate over improving public education focuses so much attention on allocating money that sometimes we forget to ask whether the money produces the desired results. This study highlights significant local and national trends that merit further scrutiny.”

WHERE: Best Western Hotel (Conference Room)
1251 West Montgomery Avenue (Route 28)
Rockville, MD 20850, Phone: 301-424-4940
(only 1.5 miles from downtown Rockville, just over I-270)

WHEN: Monday, October 17 at 10 AM. Presentation begins promptly.

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