

Maryland's Largest School District

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential

Dear MVA Families,

First and foremost, I would like to thank those of you who have connected with me by email or in person. It has been great getting to know many of you and hearing your stories. Although somewhat strained because of the circumstances, this has been a great way to reacclimate to Montgomery County and MCPS. Thank you! I also want you to know that your child is important to me and that serving your family has been a high priority for me in the month that I have been back in MCPS.

At our recent listening session with the MVA families, I heard firsthand the challenges faced by some of our medically fragile students who are unable to attend in-person classes at their assigned schools. I want to acknowledge and appreciate your courage in sharing your stories. My interactions with you have highlighted a need for a solution that ensures that our medically fragile students can continue their education in a manner that accommodates their unique health conditions and learning needs. I also heard from you how many of the elements of a virtual learning environment were beneficial and an improvement over some of our existing other programs.

Thank you for your patience while I have taken in this information and worked with my team to develop solutions **within our means**. I also want to apologize for the delay and note that this is work that should have been done before the decision to close MVA was made in the Spring. The Board of Education acted in good faith with the understanding that this work would take place; it did not—this is not their fault but our fault in MCPS.

To be clear, the Montgomery Virtual Academy was cut in the FY 2025 budget and creating an identical program or restarting this program is not an option.

When considering other options, many have pointed out that Home and Hospital Teaching (formerly called "Interim Instructional Service" or "I.I.S.") is not intended to replace the MVA and you are right. This program is intended to be short-term and is targeted for students with specific medical needs. Though this may not be a good fit for some of our MVA families, it is a good fit for some students who require temporary services with flexible and limited engagement. We will keep this program intact so that Home and Hospital Teaching can continue to perform the function it was designed to do. This is a good option for some.

All of that said, I have a proposed solution to better address the needs of some medically fragile students who need longer-term support outside of a comprehensive school setting.

To address the expanded need of some medically fragile students, which will serve many MVA families, I am pleased to announce our intention to expand offerings to include a hybrid virtual learning opportunity in addition to Home and Hospital Teaching. The hybrid virtual learning program is being designed to primarily deliver instruction in a synchronous virtual learning environment (not identical but similar to MVA) with periods of asynchronous work throughout the school week.

Before you get too excited, there are still several logistical hoops to jump through on my end.

1. We will be seeking approval from the Board of Education to enhance our existing program offerings to include this option. This will also require funds to be appropriated from the County Council. I apologize that this is not a quick process.
2. In order to plan appropriately and to budget, we will need interest data from potential participants (yes, you'd need to fill out an interest form) because the number of participants will determine how the program is staffed and financed. Link to interest form [here](#).
3. Schedules, staffing, and logistics must still be worked out and fine-tuned. And then set into motion. Hiring a team and setting that team into action is also not a quick process. This step can also only be done with funds appropriated from the County Council.
4. Once we have staff, curricula, and logistics worked out, we will then have a formal application process.

Since this programmatic expansion is under development, our target would be to fully launch at the start of the second marking period. It will take some time for us to follow the steps outlined above and provide the level of quality that our students deserve. A more detailed project timeline will be shared by the end of August.

I also want to be clear that this proposed solution is not going to work for every former MVA student. This new program is designed to serve only those with a demonstrated medical need.

I have appreciated your engagement in our listening session and [the feedback you provided](#) in the subsequent feedback form and over email. I know we can provide a better and more differentiated learning environment for our county's students whose medical status necessitates a different approach. We are working to establish a high-quality educational program that will ensure their academic progress, regardless of their circumstances.

For families of former MVA students who are returning to in-person learning and have concerns or questions, please contact your school counselor or school administrative team. As a reminder, Home and Hospital Teaching will be available for students who qualify during the first marking period. Families can access the Home and Hospital Teaching

applications [here](#). For those interested in the hybrid program that we have proposed to start in the second marking period, we would encourage you to look at Home and Hospital Teaching for the first marking period.

[Program Interest Form](#)

Sincerely,

Thomas Taylor, Ed.D., M.B.A.
Superintendent