RESOLUTION BY THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION SUPPORTING LOCAL CONTROL OF SCHOOL CALENDARS

WHEREAS, the North Carolina law provides the Montgomery County Board of Education powers of supervision and control of the public schools located within Montgomery County;

WHEREAS, local control over establishing school calendars is an integral component of school system supervision and the administrative powers with which the Montgomery County Board of Education has been vested;

WHEREAS, in 2004 the North Carolina General Assembly set a statewide, mandatory start and end date for all school districts (the school calendar law);

WHEREAS, the North Carolina General Assembly amended the school calendar law in 2012 to further restrict the starting date for schools;

WHEREAS, the mandated school start date is no earlier than the Monday closest to August 26 and the end date is no later than the Friday closest to June 11;

WHEREAS, the school calendar law resulted in school starting no earlier than August 29 for the 2022-2023 school year, and no earlier than August 28 for the 2023-2024 school year;

WHEREAS, a late August start date means the schools within Montgomery County are unable to complete the first semester until mid to late January;

WHEREAS, the school calendar law requires high school students to take first semester exams after the winter break, which negatively impacts students and faculty and further, is an inefficient use of instructional time;

WHEREAS, the school calendar law does not align with community college and university calendars, making it nearly impossible for high school students who graduate at the end of the first semester to enroll in college courses in January because college courses start before or at the same time as high school students complete final exams;

WHEREAS, it is well-documented through multiple studies that children will experience a phenomenon known as learning loss during breaks, which has a disproportionate impact on low-income children;

WHEREAS, with little flexibility built into the calendar, scheduling make-up days is extremely challenging, increasing the likelihood of using unpopular days like spring break and Saturdays as make-up days;

WHEREAS, with little flexibility built into the calendar, scheduling workdays and professional development during the school year for faculty and staff is almost impossible during the Fall semester and remains challenging in the Spring semester, despite the significant increase in areas which faculty and staff are required by law to receive training (e.g., LETRS);

WHEREAS, fall sports and band programs have not changed to coincide with the State-mandated school calendar causing some football and band events to occur before school begins;

WHEREAS, neither charter schools nor private schools are required to follow the school calendar law;

WHEREAS, allowing schools to start earlier in August will not impact the overall length of the summer break as the school year will also end earlier;

WHEREAS, parents overwhelmingly support a school calendar where the Fall semester ends in December;

WHEREAS, local school boards are better equipped to understand the balancing act of meeting the community's needs and maximizing student success;

WHEREAS, restoring local control of school calendars will allow the Montgomery County Board of Education to meet the calendar preferences of Montgomery County's families, educators, and businesses in our community while allowing for innovative experimental approaches to improve student achievement; and,

WHEREAS, on December 12, 2022, the North Carolina House Select Committee on An Education System for North Carolina's Future issued its finding that the current school calendar law is not best suited to the needs of students and educators and that local boards of education should be given greater calendar flexibility; the Select Committee recommended the "General Assembly take action and change the school calendar law."

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Montgomery County Board of Education supports an amendment to the current school calendar law, providing local school boards more flexibility in the start date of the school calendar; and

BE IF FURTHER RESOLVED that:

1. The Chair and Superintendent are authorized to disseminate this Resolution to members of the North Carolina Legislature.

2. The Board encourages parents, students, and other community members to contact their North Carolina Legislators to advocate for calendar flexibility.

3. The Board requests the Montgomery County Commissioners, and other local governments within Montgomery County, to adopt a resolution advocating calendar flexibility.

Adopted by the Montgomery County Board of Education this 6th day of February 2023.

_____

Steven W. DeBerry, Chairman

_____

Dale Ellis, Ed. D., Secretary