



# Montgomery Knolls Elementary School

**“Where Learning is Magic”**

**807 Daleview Drive**

**Silver Spring, MD 20901**

**(240) 740-0840**

*Office of the Principal*

Name: Arienne Clark-Harrison

Senate Bill: SB394 - Adding a Principal to the Maryland State Board of Education

Position: Support

Dear Senator Kramer and members of the Senate Education, Energy, and Environment (EEE) Committee -

My name is Arienne Clark-Harrison and I am honored to be here today representing Montgomery County Public Schools Principal's voice. I testify here today as a veteran educator with 25 years in education as an assistant teacher, classroom teacher, assistant principal, and principal. I have served Montgomery County Public Schools for the last 15 years, the last 7 of which has been as the Principal of Montgomery Knolls Elementary School. I serve on the Montgomery County Association of Administrators and Principals (MCAAP) Board of Directors as the Elementary Cabinet Vice Chair. I am also a member of the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals. I proudly reside in Wheaton, MD in Montgomery County with my husband. I have been a Maryland resident since 2002. I am here in support of senate bill 394 to include a sitting principal on the Maryland State Board of Education.

As we enter the implementation phase of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, bringing to fruition "the transformation of public education...into a world-class education system", it is critical that ALL voices critical to this work and its imperative success have a designated seat at the table. I am proud that teacher voices, students voices, and parent voices are included on the Maryland State Board of Education. They are crucial stakeholders that must be heard. Yet, I am curious as to why the principal's perspective has yet to be added to this list. Much like the other stakeholders who hold a seat on the Board, principals serve as "boots on the ground" advocates who integrally know what is required to ensure that schools are high-functioning organizations that are focused on teaching and learning. Yet, unlike the other stakeholders, principals bring a broader perspective, the "big picture" if you will, of what it takes to ensure that schools have the resources that they need - finances, staffing, curricular materials, building operations, safety and security protocols - to ensure that teachers can focus on teaching and learning, to ensure that parents feel secure in trusting schools with their most precious resources (our students), as well as ensuring that students receive a world class education.

With the changing social pressures that our children face - the negative impacts of social media, increased access and abuse of legal and illegal substances, and mental health and well-being needs - as well as the continued academic recovery from disruptions caused by the pandemic, our schools are central to addressing societal needs and Principals are on the front line of understanding the impacts on our children and proactively leading communities through these tough situations. With frontline knowledge and experience in addressing these challenges and the big picture of how schools operate, Principals are key community leaders who provide both insight and innovative solutions. As a principal, my role has always been to "improve the quality of education for all children in Maryland, especially those who have been historically underserved," as stated on MSDE's website for the Blueprint of Maryland. Principals seek to be a part of the solution, and yet their voices are not included on the Maryland State Board of Education. At least not yet? Why should there not be a seat for this critical stakeholder?



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Therefore, I urge you to support senate bill 394 and ensure that the principal's unique perspective is elevated to the Maryland State Board of Education.