

Why CMS and its budget matter to every Mecklenburg County citizen

The superintendent's 2015-2016 CMS Operating Budget Recommendation supports strong public education by providing increased literacy supports for students, more competitive pay to attract and retain the best educators and support staff, and more student support services to address social and emotional challenges that can impede academic success. Whether you have children in CMS or not, we all benefit from good public schools. Here's how:



- **Workforce development.** By educating all children – economically disadvantaged children, affluent children, children with disabilities and children who show great academic promise – strong K-12 public education helps build the local and regional workforce needed to attract and retain businesses that spur economic growth.
- **Economic growth through education.** Education is the best opportunity to break the cycle of poverty for families throughout Mecklenburg community. A high school diploma is also an economic stimulus. Research* shows high school graduates earn more and spend more than non-graduates, contributing to individual prosperity and economic growth.
- **Economic growth through employment and business attraction.** With more than 18,000 full- and part-time employees, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is one of the largest employers in Mecklenburg County. Eighty-three percent of our employees live and pay taxes in Mecklenburg County. As CMS thrives, so does the ability of its employees to contribute to the local economy. Strong public schools help to make the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area a highly desirable destination for high-growth companies which bring new employment opportunities for residents.
- **Better housing values.** Strong public schools can positively impact housing values.

For more information about the CMS operating budget, go to www.cms.k12.nc.us and click on the **2015-2016 Budget/Capital Plan Information** tab in the Spotlight section (lower left side of the homepage).

*Source: The Alliance for Excellent Education, in a study funded by State Farm Insurance, examined the economic impact of the 53,800 students who didn't graduate from high school in North Carolina in 2010. The study found that if half of those students had graduated high school, North Carolina's economy would have benefited by \$211 million in increased earnings, \$168 million in increased spending, \$412 million in increased home sales, \$25 million in increased auto sales and 1,900 new jobs.

Fast facts

Did You Know?

- ❑ Students who are not reading on grade level by third grade are **4x** more likely to drop out of school
- ❑ In recent years, North Carolina has fallen from No. 25 in average teacher salaries to No. 42, according to rankings for 2014-2015 compiled by the National Education Association. This puts North Carolina in general and CMS in particular at a competitive disadvantage nationally.
- ❑ The average teacher salary in North Carolina is lower than in any of our neighboring states, putting us at a competitive disadvantage locally.
- ❑ A CMS employee making \$35,000 a year has seen a net salary decrease of about 4% since 2008 due to rising health and benefit costs. This is before the impact of inflation.
- ❑ Over 80% of CMS employees reside and pay taxes in Mecklenburg County but one-third of our employees make less than the Mecklenburg County living wage.*
- ❑ Our current ratios for counselors are effectively: one counselor to 525 elementary students, one counselor to 380 middle school students and one counselor for 395 high school students. The recommended average for all three levels is one counselor to 250 students. CMS psychologists serve two to three times more students than recommended.
- ❑ North Carolina ranks 42nd in the nation in per-pupil spending, according to rankings for 2014-2015 compiled by the National Education Association. At \$8,620, North Carolina trails the national average of \$11,732 per student.
- ❑ CMS' per-pupil funding from the county is effectively \$57 lower now than in FY09 (from \$2,524 in 2008-2009 to \$2,467 in 2014-2015) once you back out the money that passes through CMS to fund charter schools.



* Living wage of \$19.76 per hour based on <http://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/37119>