



## **Churchill Cluster Testimony**

**Regarding the Superintendent's Recommended  
FY 2012 Capital Budget and Amendments to the  
FY 2011-2016 Capital Improvements Program**

### **Winston Churchill Cluster**

*Winston Churchill High School  
Herbert Hoover Middle School  
Beverly Farms Elementary School  
Seven Locks Elementary School*

*Cabin John Middle School  
Bells Mill Elementary School  
Potomac Elementary School  
Wayside Elementary School*

**Board of Education Public Hearing  
November 11, 2010**

**Submitted by:  
Janette Gilman  
Hoover PTA President**

## **Thank You for Our Modernized Schools**

Thank you to the Montgomery County Board of Education and Superintendent Weast for your commitment to moving forward with capital improvements and modernizations for our county's schools, even in these challenging fiscal times. We in the Churchill Cluster are excited to see two new schools going up in our neighborhood, Cabin John Middle School, which is already well on its way to an August 2011 opening, and Seven Locks Elementary School, which was torn down over the past several months.

We are proud and grateful for our newly modernized Bells Mill ES, a beautiful school with many special features. The finished product clearly reflected the input received from the staff, the administrators, MCPS experts, and the community. As a community, we live with these buildings day in and day out and appreciate having a voice in decisions that impact our surroundings.

## **Keep Modernizations on Track and on Time**

Now that the momentum is going, we want to encourage you to hold steadfast in keeping the Churchill Cluster modernization projects on track. Any delays will have a domino affect on schools awaiting modernization and on the families impacted by boundary changes timed to the anticipated building schedule. It would be prudent for the Board of Education to take advantage of the current lower prices in the construction industry by keeping projects on schedule while maximizing county dollars.

## **Churchill Cluster Modernizations**

We urge MCPS to finish the following approved, recommended, and/or programmed modernizations as scheduled per the completion dates listed:

- **Cabin John MS Modernization/ August 2011** –Ensure the construction remains on schedule in order to reopen the school by August 2011 as planned. Hoover Middle School is the next middle school scheduled for modernization. Therefore, CJMS must

be completed on time in order for Hoover to move into the Tilden Center on schedule this summer after Cabin John vacates. Hoover administrators, staff, and parents are already preparing for the relocation.

- **Seven Locks ES Modernization and gymnasium/ January 2012** – It is imperative that this modernization, which will increase capacity from 251 to 410, remains on schedule to be in accordance with the approved boundary changes for Seven Locks, Bells Mill and Potomac Elementary Schools and in order to alleviate the overcrowding at Potomac Elementary School. While we were sad to see the old Seven Locks go, its demolition was a healthy sign that this modernization remains on track.
- **Beverly Farms ES Modernization/ January 2013** – Now that this project is accelerated by six months and reassigned to North Lake Center holding facility, any delays would affect Bel Pre ES which follows Beverly Farms on the Holding Facility Schedule.
- **Herbert Hoover MS Modernization/ August 2013** – The HVAC system is in need of replacement; the Hoover community is hopeful that the system will make it through the coming winter and then will breath a sigh of relief as the process of building a new Hoover, starting with the move to the Tilden Holding School, begins.
- **Wayside ES Modernization/ August 2016** – Built in 1969, this building has never been modernized. Additions have alleviated overcrowding, but remain something of a stopgap measure until construction begins.
- **Potomac ES Modernization/ January 2018** – Built in 1949, with updates in 1976 but never fully modernized, this building has HVAC problems and worn facilities. Modernization of Potomac Elementary School remains a priority for this cluster.

### **Accuracy of Enrollment Figures**

Our cluster's enrollment projections tend to project below actuals. We saw with the opening of a new Bells Mill a dramatic influx into that new elementary school facility. Given the ongoing and planned construction for our cluster, the economic climate causing flight from private schools, and the academic achievement level that brings

families to our neighborhood, the accuracy of enrollment figures is paramount. We do not want our schools over capacity upon opening or soon after. The results of the Bells Mills/Seven Locks/Potomac boundary recommendations will be rippling through our communities over the next few years. The effects of these enrollment shifts—and the changed economic climate—need to be very closely monitored and factored into projections and building plans. New housing construction in this cluster is rare and limited; schools should be built to meet the needs of our neighborhoods today.

## **County Wide Projects**

**HVAC.** We enthusiastically support recommendations to increase expenditures for replacements and major improvements to HVAC systems. Churchill High School remains in need of an improved HVAC system. We request that a portion of the funding increase be targeted toward Churchill in order to improve air-quality, air-flow, and major temperature disparities. During a recent fiscal year Churchill had 602 work order hours spent on attempts to fix the HVAC system, that equates to 3.5 hours per school day based on a 180 day school-year. Although Churchill was modernized in 2001, it was the first onsite high school modernization and served as the test ground for future high school onsite modernization projects. The HVAC system was not completely replaced. The portion that was installed was done piecemeal as the building was constructed in phases; the results are ducts improperly connected or never connected. Additionally the ductwork makes a loop throughout the building creating an inefficient system.

Potomac Elementary School also has HVAC issues as evidenced by the 199 work order hours spent on their system in FY 2009. With a modernization more than 8 years away, Potomac will require a substantial expenditure for HVAC repairs. At Hoover Middle School 643 hours were spent in a recent year to maintain the HVAC system. A delay in Hoover's modernization would require a major investment in their HVAC system; a waste of county tax dollars.

**Portable Classrooms.** We are looking forward to a day when portables will not be necessary to accommodate enrollment in our cluster. We support MCPS efforts to lease better quality portables and work steadily in replacing portables in disrepair.

**PLAR.** We also support expenditures for PLAR projects as recommended in the FY 2012 CIP to ensure that our aging equipment is replaced. This upkeep is important in order for our buildings to remain safe and to ensure that our equipment functions at an optimal level of energy efficiency.

**Holding School Conditions.** Holding schools are permanent structures, not temporary facilities. Even though students and staff from varying schools inhabit them temporarily, they must be properly maintained and held to the same standards we expect in our permanent buildings. We thank MCPS for its work on the Tilden Holding Center, and anticipate continued cooperation to ensure that this facility meets code and ensures the health and safety of our children and staff. We want to be assured that the North Lake facility, the future home of Beverly Farms in August of 2011, will be in much better condition than we found the Tilden Center upon the arrival of Cabin John.

## **We support the MCCPTA Testimony**

The Churchill Cluster supports the testimony presented by MCCPTA. We also ask that the Board of Education continue to advocate to our state and county legislators for funding of the FY 2012 CIP and Amendments to the FY 2011-2016 Capital Improvements Program. We pledge to work with you on these advocacy efforts.

Again, we wish to thank you each member of the Board of Education and Superintendent Weast for your support of all the children of Montgomery County and, in particular, our students in the Churchill Cluster. We applaud your commitment to parent involvement, and look forward to continued close work with you and the administrations of our local schools as new construction and modernization moves forward in our hometown.