

Quince Orchard Cluster of Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations

November 11, 2010

Brown Station Elementary
Fields Road Elementary
Jones Lane Elementary
Rachel Carson Elementary
Thurgood Marshall Elementary
Diamond Elementary

Lakelands Park Middle
Ridgeview Middle

Quince Orchard High

Testimony before the Montgomery County Public Schools Board of Education Regarding the FY2012 Capital Budget and the FY 2011 -2016 Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

Dear President O'Neill, Dr. Weast, and Members of the Board of Education,

It's a pleasure to meet with you tonight on behalf of the parents of more than 6,200 students attending public schools in the Quince Orchard Cluster. We appreciate your efforts on their behalf, and we support the Superintendent's recommended FY2012 Capital Budget, and the FY2011 – 2016 CIP. We also support the MCCPTA testimony provided last evening, including the need for more specific information regarding the draft Renewal and Modernization policy.

In the proposed CIP, we thank you for:

- The funding necessary to complete the interior modifications for Ridgeview Middle School. We appreciate the Board's continued support in achieving a healthy learning environment that will welcome both students and staff to the school each day. Our only concern is a completion date which has already slid to December 2012, and the construction has just begun.
- Keeping Brown Station Elementary School on schedule for its completed modernization in 2016. We appreciate your recognition of its enrollment growth and your plan to expand its capacity as a part of the modernization. This should help them deal with their 50% over capacity situation.
- Recognizing the increasing overcrowding in our cluster and initiating a feasibility study for a high school addition. We look forward to the discussion.
- Your county-wide attention to restroom improvements. We encourage your continued goal of improving all of them since there is a commonality of interest among all users of the schools.

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While these are important to the Quince Orchard Cluster, we still have two long standing issues that need to be addressed. One of them is the pedestrian safety issue at Thurgood Marshall Elementary School, and the other is the severe case of overcrowding at Rachel Carson. Tonight we raise them again,

not to ask for money, but to ask for action because with growing enrollment these problems only get worse.

We have repeatedly asked for your help on the Thurgood Marshall pedestrian safety issue, and over the years a number of Board members have directed MCPS to research the issue and get back to them. I don't know whether MCPS has ever responded to you, but neither the principal nor the PTA has ever been contacted to discuss it. We again solicit your support in the interest of student safety.

Rachel Carson Elementary School has a program capacity of 639 students and their current enrollment is 885 students. MCPS has long recognized the problem, but abandoned its planned solution a few years ago due to budget constraints. The relocation of 4 ELC classes this year minimally helped Rachel Carson, but placed another cluster school in an over-capacity status. In an effort to improve communications and to identify potential solutions, we would like MCPS to convene a round table discussion on the Carson issue to improve community buy-in on what might be considered a solution.

As always, thank you for your support and the hard work you do for all Montgomery County students. We know it is another tough budget year, and we'll continue to do what we can to secure both County and State financial support. Thank you for looking out for our children!

Sincerely yours,

Jim Keenan
Quince Orchard Cluster Coordinator
