

CLARKSBURG CLUSTER

Clarksburg High School
Rocky Hill Middle School (split articulated)
Neelsville Middle School (split articulated)

Clarksburg Elementary School
Fox Chapel Elementary School
Little Bennett Elementary School
Capt. James Daly E. Elementary School
Cedar Grove Elementary School (split articulated)

The Clarksburg Cluster thanks President Andrews and our esteemed Council members for this opportunity to testify this evening about the new FY2009 Capital Improvement Plan for Montgomery County Public Schools.

Fifteen years ago, Clarksburg began as a “sleepy little town” of 1500 people. Surrounding county residents used to fill up their gas tanks and pack a picnic lunch to explore the beauty of our wonderful farms and country living. Within the last five years, our population has grown to about 9000 and the Master Plan has the area expanding to a city with a population of 40,000! And with that said, let me start off by killing an ugly rumor that Clarksburg's growth has nearly stopped. The 43 portables at our 8 cluster schools prove that our growth is not only in our future but is here *now*! Our requests tonight are for the approximate 6500 students that utilize the nine schools within our cluster.

We thank MCPS for the “forward thinking” put forth on behalf of the Clarksburg Cluster and we request you read their commitment to our cluster. The Clarksburg cluster is excited that Fox Chapel ES restroom renovations will be completed this year and the much anticipated (and needed) 10-room addition has been recommended for funding and completion by August 2011. We are just as excited to open Clarksburg ES #8 next fall. The facility looks great! We appreciate the capital and operating costs associated with the opening of this school, especially during these tight budget times. Now **we can't afford to fall behind**. We need to accommodate the capacity needs with a new middle school and an addition to Clarksburg High School. Our Cluster PTA has stayed in close contact with the developers. As stated earlier, we're expanding and bursting with only 22% percent of the approved residential units in existence. This percentage does not include additional sites within the 15,000 residential units in the approved Master Plan that still require building permits.

Rocky Hill Middle School is bursting at its seams. We house 8 portables with no relief in sight. Portables are utilized in this county as a short term solution and we'd like to keep their usage as such. But, as portables are added, so are the core needs within the facility. Rocky Hill is challenged at lunch, holding four lunches of 300+ students during each lunch. The facility is challenged to supply enough lockers for the growing population. Finally, team teaching is difficult since parts of each grade level or subject teams are located outside the core facility. Looking at our approved housing development in Clarksburg, we truly hope the Board of Education will include a new middle school facility within the upcoming CIP. After spending the past summer on a feasibility study for the new facility, we're certain it's proved itself as a necessity. **Please help find the funding because Rocky Hill Middle School needs relief!** Currently, with all the stars and planets aligned and funding secured, it takes about 5- 6 years to get the school built... if it stays on track. We are very concerned that six years from now, Rocky Hill Middle School will have a parking lot of portables.

In addition to looking to construction to help with our current needs, we've done some forward thinking about the long term school capacity needs within Clarksburg. One startling realization is the Clarksburg Master Plan does not secure an additional high school site. When the city is “built out”, we firmly believe the area will require an additional high school and we encourage you to have planners begin “land deals” provisions with developers *before* all permits have been disseminated and *before* the county has to consider “buying back” land.

Speaking to high school sites, Clarksburg High School is bulging. Well into year number three, we have four (4) portables on our high school site. Our incoming ninth grade class was significantly larger -with 478 students compared to our 260 first graduating seniors and our the projected incoming class is at least 120+ more students that this year's outgoing class- creating the need for more seats in our core facility. This rapid northern expansion has brought new families to our area and these families are exponentially increasing our school population. As one can see from current student enrollment and future enrollment growth projections our families have a wide range of school-aged children and our cluster is certainly feeling the change from Elementary to High School.

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This summer, we received a report from the Dept of Long Range Planning compiled of Montgomery County Cluster PTA needs, and the foremost need came within Maintenance, Preventive, and Routine Repair. MCPS has created a systemic maintenance program to address these needs, yet the Clarksburg Cluster would like this proactive program in place NOW to extend the life of **new** facilities too.

The program should be established at Rocky Hill, Clarksburg HS, Little Bennett, and Clarksburg #8 to ensure all equipment is maintained from its "new state; thus fewer dollars will be required for replacement and repairs down the road. The benefit of this "punch-list" allows principals, building services, county maintenance, etc. to remain proactive vs. reactive to the maintenance needs of their facilities and can be used to keep everyone from the county to the parents informed.

Three feasibility studies were completed last year for our cluster. One study focused on expanding the capacity at the high school by building a much needed addition. Another study focused on the lack of middle school seats with our cluster and the need for an additional middle school. And the third study focused on expanding the elementary school capacity with the cluster. All three studies came about because of the lack of student capacity. We ask this Council to keep a watchful eye on our continued growth. An example of a few new communities we have in the pipeline; the large **county approved** Clarksburg Village has approximately 500 homes built, with 2,654 residential units approved by the Planning Board and the Aurora Hills community continues to rapidly develop with 630 homes built growing to a community of 1330 units.

We are pleased to be a part of Montgomery County's top notch education system but we must implore this council to keep up with the educational infrastructural needs of the Clarksburg. The expanding growth of the Clarksburg area has not stopped.

Growth is here NOW and will continue to be our future over the next 10 years.

If you build it, we will fill it!

This would help the following school needs within our clusters:

Cedar Grove ES requests:

*Replacement of the HVAC unit, particularly the heat pumps in Rooms 6, 8, 10, and 11;
Replacement of the exhaust fan in the kitchen/APR to properly vent the propane;
Replacement /repair of fencing around the playground;
Repainting of bus lanes.*

Fox Chapel ES requests:

Replacement of the HVAC unit

Neelsville MS:

*New gymnasium floor since the floor has 3 large holes, is warped in several place. The floor plates are not meshed with the floor.
Completion of the new gymnasium lights
Security cameras required on the lower level near lockers
New lockers needed. Current lockers have not been replaced since the school opened 28 years ago.
Exterior lights focused on the loading dock. (The loading dock backs up to a large wooded area and is very isolated and vulnerable. It has been vandalized, most recently as July 4th of this year resulting in extensive damage to the rear doors.*

**Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Clarksburg Cluster Coordinators
Jaimie Jacobson, Donna Pfeiffer, and Sonya Leama**