

Seneca Valley Cluster

**Seneca Valley High School
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School
Roberto Clemente Middle School**

**Lake Seneca Elementary School
S. Christa McAuliffe Elementary School
Dr. Sally K. Ride Elementary School
Waters Landing Elementary School**

Comments to
The County Council
For

FY 2012 Operating Budget

Prepared by: Kevin David, Seneca Valley Cluster Coordinator
April 5, 2011

Good evening President Ervin and members of the County Council. My name is Kevin David and I am one of the Seneca Valley Cluster Coordinators.

As a county we pride ourselves as a leader in education, but action speaks louder than words. For the third straight year our county is looking to waiver the Maintenance of Effort law. What message does that send to our children?

Class Size

To be leaders in education we must look after our most vulnerable students. Our cluster has higher than the county average in FARMS rates. Each elementary school is a focus school and three of the four schools are overcrowded by 20% or more. The suggested cuts would increase class size for the third straight year and completely wipe out the gains it took MCPS ten years to achieve. Increasing class size will result in a negative impact on our most impressionable and at risk students. Action speaks louder than words.

Middle Years Programme

In keeping with the direction of MCPS Seneca Valley High School has successfully implemented the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program. The IB program has become the focus of our cluster and we want to make this program one of the reasons families want to move to Germantown. However recent budget cuts and suggested cuts have made it impossible for our cluster to implement the much needed Middle Year Programme in our Middle Schools. If we are to continue to be leaders in education our incoming high school students need to be properly prepared for the rigors of the IB program. Action speaks louder than words.

Safety

To be leaders in education our students must feel safe. Nothing has highlighted our budget difficulties like the loss of the EFO program. This 10 year program was cut last year and replaced with a trimmed down SRO program. This program change has created a "Perception is Reality" issue among our schools. There seems to be an increase in bullying at the elementary and middle school level and an increase in fighting at the high

school level. Proposed cuts could completely eliminate this program and totally change the safety landscape of our schools. Action speaks louder than words.

Staff Development

As a leader in education we know high-performing teachers are the key to high-performing students. These teachers are most likely the second most influential role models students will encounter other than their parents and in the case of some students they may be the only role model. Due to past budget reductions we have asked our staff to keep up with technological advancements and rapidly changing teaching techniques as well as to take on increased workloads. Proposed budget cuts would reduce staff development positions by an additional 28%. Action speaks louder than words.

Opportunities Lost

Proposed budget cuts have our current and future students faced with the elimination of after school activities, outdoor education and possibly summer school.

Students only have one chance at K-12 education. Any decision that reduces their chance for success can set them back years. We need to maintain our high quality education system and invest in the future of the county, our children

Allow our current and future students the same opportunities that our past students have had. These opportunities missed become opportunities lost. Action speaks louder than words. Pass an MOE budget