

**Bethesda-Chevy Chase Cluster
Bethesda-Chevy Chase HS
Westland MS
Bethesda ES*Chevy Chase ES*North Chevy Chase ES
Rock Creek Forest ES*Rosemary Hills PS
Somerset ES*Westbrook ES**

**Testimony on the MCPS FY 2008 Operating Budget
Montgomery County Council
April 8, 2008**

**Testimony on the MCPS FY 2008 Operating Budget
Montgomery County Council
April 9, 2008**

Good evening, President Knapp and members of the Montgomery County Council. I am Joy White representing the Bethesda Chevy Chase Cluster, and I am pleased to be here tonight testifying in support of FULL FUNDING for the 2008 Operating Budget for Montgomery County Public Schools.

Montgomery County Schools have created an environment [that fosters](#) success for all students. We are here to urge you fully fund the 2009 budget so we can continue to engage and enrich the instruction of our students, [and](#) to increase their high levels of achievement.

MCPS, with the support of the State of Maryland and the County Council, embarked upon initiatives [starting](#) in 2001 to reduce class sizes, improve student performance through math and reading acceleration, and shrink the achievement gap between white and minority students. These and more recent initiatives, such as placing assistant principals in elementary schools, and middle school reform are all extremely important to ensure that in even in tough times MCPS will provide a world class education for our children and prepare the County work force for the future.

You all know well the challenges we face in reaching such a multicultural population, as we have in Montgomery County. [Following the leadership of Superintendent Weast](#), our educators have helped us narrow the achievement [gap](#). For example, more and more students each year are enrolling in AP and IB courses at B-CC High School and almost 70% of our eighth graders

at Westland Middle School are taking Algebra. 80% of our kindergarteners can read before they enter 1st grade.

As parents and residents, we should all take pride in these accomplishments. This is why Montgomery County is such an attractive place to live—the quality of our schools is an important magnet for a growing families and employers.

We know the County, and the state of Maryland, are currently facing a revenue problem that's not likely to get better in the near term. While the Council is making funding choices, however, we urge you not to be penny wise and pound foolish.

Let's continue to build upon the successes we've gained over the past several years in reducing class sizes in all of our schools. Let's continue the middle schools reform initiative, so that schools next in line for participation in future years, such as Westland Middle School, can take advantage of the initiative to make improvements. Let's ensure that students attending our middle schools are prepared to handle the rigorous high school curriculum MCPS provides.

Let's provide the support needed for our minority students to close the achievement gap with their white peers. Let's ensure that all students and have the instructional support and attention they need to pass their HSA's and graduate on time.

Let's continue the plan to ensure that all eligible schools are assigned Assistant principals to help our principals provide the leadership needed to support teachers and help students excel.

And to build on the future, let's not allow drastic funding cuts to lead to class sizes of 27 or more for our youngest learners at Rosemary Hills Primary School and elsewhere. We know that if our children don't have a positive experience at the start of their educational careers, it will be harder to reach and motivate them in higher grades.

Let's attract the best teachers to the B-CC community, despite the high housing costs. Let's make sure that our teachers, many of whom cannot afford to live in the County, can still afford to make the long drive into the County to educate our kids.

And finally, let's provide those teachers with the support and training they need to help our children succeed under this very rigorous curriculum.

We urge you not to retreat on your commitment to make our schools even stronger and allow every child to reach his or her full potential.