

Highlights of Testimony to the Montgomery County Council
RE: MCPS Proposed Operating Budget
Gaithersburg Cluster
Presented by Valerie Rivers
April 16, 2009

Elementary Schools in Cluster: Gaithersburg Elementary, Goshen Elementary, Laytonsville Elementary, Rosemont Elementary, Strawberry Knoll, Summit Hall, Washington Grove

Middle Schools: Gaithersburg Middle, Forest Oak

Our cluster would like to highlight a few areas of concern:

- **Cuts to the College Institute program at Gaithersburg High**
 - Program is a partnership between local colleges and select high schools
 - Targeted at high achieving students
 - Provides students with additional challenges and a taste of college course work
 - Overall strong positive response to this program
 - Concerned how cuts will affect the program's viability and continued success

- **Cuts to media specialists and media assistants**
 - More than just "librarians" – Information technology specialists training students on using computers, books, periodicals and other resources to evaluate and solve problems and understand challenges

- **Possible county projects might compete for construction funds and delay the Gaithersburg High Modernization**
 - Public safety training facilities and some other government operations considered being moved to a single location at the former General Electric / Edison Tech Park property in Gaithersburg.

- **Increased bullying and harassment at the middle school level**

Gang "recruitment" is also a concern.

 - As these concerns increase, the Operating Budget proposes cuts to middle school counselors
 - Would like to research the possibility of additional security, consider Education Facility Officers (EFOs) at middle schools
 - Importance of gang prevention and bullying awareness education

- **Schools that are near the ICC corridor.**
 - Discussion of possible negative effects of increased car pollution on children's health when schools are near highways or high traffic areas.