

THE NORTHEAST CONSORTIUM

A Consortium of the Blake, Paint Branch and Springbrook Clusters

Comments on the FY 2013 Capital Budget and the FY 2013-2018
Capital Improvements Program

**On behalf of The NEC Middle Schools
November 14, 2011**

**Benjamin Banneker
Briggs Chaney
William H. Farquhar
Francis Scott Key
White Oak**

Good Evening Superintendent Starr, President Barclay and members of the Board.

My name is Reva Gambrell. I am the Springbrook Cluster Coordinator and I will be speaking on behalf of the five middle schools of the Northeast Consortium (NEC): Benjamin Banneker, Briggs Chaney, William H. Farquhar, Francis Scott Key, and White Oak.

As I move through my testimony tonight you will notice some clear differentiation between the needs of each of the Middle Schools. Although each school has different needs, none of these needs are luxuries – they are all necessities. We need to address all of the concerns so that our teachers and students can focus on what they can control – teaching and learning.

An important component to an effective learning environment is the physical location where the learning takes place. The NEC middle school community has seen recent construction including Frances Scott Key middle school. We are very grateful for our beautiful new school.

We thank you for this support. However, there is still more work to be done.

The most immediate concerns are related to **maintenance issues and safety**.

Under the Restroom and Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning category:

Restrooms and HVAC

- **Briggs Chaney** – At **Briggs Chaney (BCMS)** the **HVAC** is difficult to maintain and to regulate. This has been an issue for the past 10 years. The school requests

repairs to ensure their school has an environment conducive to teaching and learning. We want this to be programmed.

- At **BCMS bathrooms** have a ventilation issue. The boy's restrooms have recurring plumbing backups. Students frequently note the bathroom issues as a problem in the school climate survey. We need this to stay on schedule for FY15.
- **White Oak —White Oak requests gymnasium locker room improvements. The gymnasium locker room has many blind spots that make it difficult for students to be monitored. The locker bathrooms don't have stalls. This is a huge issue for White Oak.** Although currently programmed for FY15, this is an unacceptable way for our children to ready themselves for class participation.

Under the Security and Safety category:

Security and Safety

- **Briggs Chaney** – At **Briggs Chaney** there is a need for **outside security cameras**. There have been a few incidents of graffiti vandalism for which police reports were filed and cases remain open. We ask the Board to look at ways to differentiate between a safety necessity and luxury item. We ask that the Board look across MCPS and ensure that safety items are not a differentiation characteristic between our MCPS schools. Let's not compromise safety. We want this to be programmed.
- **White Oak** – We request that the following items for White Oak stay on track for a FY12 evaluation:
 - **It is worth mentioning again, that White Oak needs gymnasium locker room improvements that are also a safety issue.** They have many blind spots that make it difficult for students to be monitored. The locker bathrooms don't have stalls. This is a huge issue for White Oak.
 - **White Oak's main office** needs to be remodeled - right now there is a door that is not well monitored because it is located where there are no secretaries. The conference room is too small for meetings and may need a wall to be broken in order to combine it with one of their offices.
 - In addition, **White Oak would like to switch the nurse's office with counseling offices.** In order to do this, they will need a bathroom in the counseling office area and walls added to the nurse's office. Having the counseling office in the front of the school where the nurse's office is currently will improve security and access in the building. At the movement they have to escort families to the counseling office located near classrooms and far from the main office to prevent them from wandering around the building.

- **White Oak would like to break a wall between two rooms on the first floor to support their new courses.** They have technology and robotic courses that need the same space. However, the rooms are next to each other and the teacher cannot monitor both at the same time. Breaking a wall between those rooms will allow the necessary monitoring.
- **White Oak** also has a keyboard lab next to the music room that needs a wall or window opening to help with monitoring.

Banneker – Banneker has been assigned a FACT score and we request that there be no delays with the modernization. However, the modernization date is so far out (approximately 2023) that this schedule will not alleviate problems with the school layout. Also portables have been pushed back despite being a good way to alleviate this problem. We ask that this request be put on the slated ‘for programming’ sooner rather than later.

With regards to **Farquhar MS**, The Northeast Consortium fully supports the testimony provided by the Sherwood Cluster.

Thank you for the opportunity to represent our schools. Your dedication to our school system is much appreciated and we value your efforts during these difficult fiscal times on our behalf. We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with you for the benefit of all the students in Montgomery County.

Respectfully,

The Northeast Consortium Cluster Coordinators

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