

Cold Spring Elementary School-Dufief Elementary School-Fallsmead Elementary School
Lakewood Elementary School-Stonemill Elementary School-Travilah Elementary School
Cabin John Middle School-Robert Frost Middle School
Thomas S. Wootton High School

WOOTTON CLUSTER TESTIMONY
REGARDING THE FY 2011 CAPITAL BUDGET
AND THE FY 2011-2016 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM
TO THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
CARVER AUDITORIUM
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2009

Good evening Members of the Board of Education and Montgomery County School Staff. My name is Jennifer Pories, and I'm one of the Wootton Cluster Coordinators.

Despite the state of the union this year, the Wootton Cluster continued to thrive. Just walk into any Wootton Cluster School and you can feel the *patriot spirit*.

It is with this *spirit* that we thank the Board for finally getting the Wootton High School modernization on the CIP schedule for 2018. Planning funds are budgeted for 2014, and we urge you to keep this project on track. Wootton High School was originally built in 1970, the same year the Beatles released their final album "Let It Be". We've been very patient waiting for this modernization, while building conditions have deteriorated and maintenance hasn't kept up with the declining state of our school.

The overcrowding in our halls resembles the beltway during rush hour. Dr. Doran is going to sell HOV passes to the freshman soon, so they can make it to class on time! We have been living with this severe overcrowding of students (365 students overcapacity this year) for a long time!

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The City of Rockville expressed its concern in 2005 when we added the last few portables totaling 9. How long would these temporary solutions solve what appears to be a permanent problem of overcrowding? Wootton is the most overcrowded high school in Montgomery County, and yet the County continues to support major housing development that will dramatically add to our cluster capacity. MCPS projections show that Wootton will hit its least overcrowded year in 2015 at 162 students overcapacity, and this doesn't include students from new developments. Will the 2018 modernization include additional capacity or are the portables permanent? We fully support any opportunity to move up the CIP schedule and take maximum advantage of the current construction market.

There are a severe lack of practice fields and PE classrooms at Wootton due to our 9 portables. The school is in desperate need of painting internally. This cannot wait 8 years until the modernization. We understand the current budget constraints but, we can no longer rely on the "let it be" philosophy. We need to take a more aggressive "taking care of business" approach and get this school in shape!

Maintenance is addressed in the Operating Budget, and it is often difficult to evaluate the adequacy of the CIP without having access to the detail of these items. For example, last year after the Operating Budget was released we were notified that our College Institute Budget was being cut. At Wootton HS this program helps to relieve overcrowding since students go off campus for classes. This past fall, 120 Wootton students participated in the program. We urge you to maintain the level of the College Institute Program in the Operating Budget this year.

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Despite the run down condition of our auditorium facility and equipment, the Wootton *spirit* was felt last spring when the production “Beauty and the Beast” won 3 major Cappie awards including Best Song for “Be Our Guest”, which the cast performed at the Awards Ceremony at the Kennedy Center. Next year, we have a student from Frost MS coming up who was in the Tony award winning cast of “Billy Eliot”. Perhaps we can together do some improvements to make sure that we retain these talented students.

Tilden Holding School finally became the temporary home to the staff and students of Cabin John Middle School late this summer. We urge you to keep the modernization of this and all of the schools in the CIP scheduled for modernizations and additions on track.

Although the Cabin John students were displaced this year, their *spirits* were not tainted. We can’t let the *spirit* of our stakeholders be smothered by the decaying conditions of their environment. Our number one priority is to provide each student with a safe, secure and comfortable facility that is conducive to learning. The Tilden Holding School has yet to meet that criteria. There are leaks in several areas which result in standing water. Graffiti can be found on the outside walls. The HVAC system has not worked properly since we arrived. And this is all after the building was made ready for our use.

Robert Frost Middle School was fortunate to benefit from the increase in the HVAC budget last year. The Wootton Cluster supports the tripling of the HVAC replacement program this year (from \$5million to \$15million).

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Walk through Robert Frost MS and you can hear the *patriot spirit* in their incredible band program. Roughly 1/3 of the students at Robert Frost take band. The critical need is a new musical instrument storage room. The current room is inefficient for storing valuable musical instruments. Additional lighting is needed for safety reasons in front of the building and in the parking lot.

You can feel the *spirit* at Cold Spring ES since the staff and students were told that they were to have a completed gym by 2012. We thank the Board for appropriating this project, and urge you to see that it stays on track. Cold Spring is also scheduled for restroom renovations in SY2013-2014. We ask the Board to support the early completion of the restroom renovation and to make it part of the gymnasium project to take maximum advantage of construction cost savings. In addition, Cold Spring ES has no safe place for students outside the school during inclement weather. We ask the Board to support the inclusion of a front entrance canopy with the gym project as well.

The gymnasium floor at Dufief ES is in very poor condition and we were very pleased to see that the Board included this replacement in 2015.

Fallsmead ES had also requested a new gym floor. Like Dufief, their floor was “poured rubber” a type of floor no longer installed/repared by MCPS and it is in very poor condition. In addition, the health room at Fallsmead needs to have wheelchair access in order to meet ADA compliance. Neither of these items were funded in the fy2011 CIP. Safety is our number one priority and we urge the Board to fund these costs as soon as possible.

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Lakewood ES has a serious safety issue. The configuration of their front entrance does not permit direct vision out the front doors of the school by office staff. This makes it impossible to lock the front doors and buzz visitors inside. There is also no direct route for visitors to come and sign into the office. Last year MCPS Department of Construction provided an estimate of \$60,000 to reconfigure the space to meet our needs. As a safety matter this is a number one priority to our Cluster. This item is not currently included in the FY 2011 Budget. We ask that the Board fund this item as soon as possible.

The staff and students of Stonemill ES are thankful for the promise of a new roof this coming summer. This item is a fy2010 appropriation.

To conclude, we can no longer let things be. It's time to take care of business in the Wootton Cluster! Come catch the ***patriot spirit*** at a Wootton Cluster school!

Summary of Requests to Board of Education from Wootton Cluster FY 2011 CIP Budget Testimony

1. **Wootton High School**
 - a. Keep modernization on track and move up if possible to take advantage of current construction market
 - b. Explore increasing school capacity through addition/modernization
 - c. Provide funds for painting
 - d. Keep College Institute Budget level
 - e. Help us to make improvements in our terribly run down auditorium
2. **Cabin John**
 - a. Keep modernization on track
 - b. Help to make sure that severe maintenance items are taken care of in a reasonable time
3. **Robert Frost MS**
 - a. Provide a new storage room for musical instruments
 - b. Provide additional lighting in front of building and parking lot
4. **Cold Spring ES**
 - a. Move up restroom renovation to make it at same time as gym project and take maximum advantage of construction cost savings.
 - b. Provide funding for a front entrance canopy to be installed at the same time as the gym
5. **Fallsmead ES**
 - a. Provide funding for a new gym floor
 - b. Provide funding for health room to have wheel chair access
6. **Lakewood ES**
 - a. Provide funding for reconfiguration of front entrance/office view