

**Before the Montgomery County Council
MCCPTA Testimony
FY 2011 Capital Budget and
the FY 2011-2016 Capital Improvements Program**

February 17, 2010

Good evening, President Floreen and Members of the County Council my name is Kevin David I am one of the Seneca Valley Cluster Coordinators.

The Seneca Valley Cluster fully supports the MCCPTA Resolution on the FY 2011 Capital Improvement Program Budget and FY2011-2016 CIP and we also fully support the MCCPTA testimony given by President Kay Romero.

It is not very often that we come before the County Council in such a good frame of mind. Usually we come here jumping up and down for every penny that we can get, however this year in the light of County Executive Leggitt's proposed CIP Budget we are in a good mood.

The Seneca Valley cluster has been suffering for years with two big issues, overcrowding at our elementary schools and the modernization of the Seneca Valley High School. This proposed budget is a good start in addressing these two areas.

Overcrowding at our Elementary Schools

Three of our four elementary schools are severely overcrowded, with the fourth school operating at capacity. All four of our elementary schools are focus schools and this puts a premium on classroom space. Waters Landing is 130 students over capacity and is projected to increase by 15% over the next four years. S. Christa McAuliffe is 91 students over capacity and is projected to increase by 24% over the next five years. Sally K. Ride is projected to stay overcrowded by 10% and Lake Seneca is expected to remain at 100% capacity. Overall the four elementary schools in the cluster are operating at 112% utilization with a projected 4% increase over the next four years. The passing of the proposed CIP budget would allow MCPS to build an 11 room addition to Waters Landing and would also allow MCPS to begin the planning for a future Seneca Valley Cluster elementary school at Waring Station.

Modernization of Seneca Valley High School

Seneca Valley High School is the fourth high school on the list to be modernized behind Paint Branch, Gaithersburg and Wheaton. Some of the main problems with Seneca Valley High School continue to be lead in the water, asbestos in the ceilings and floors and the layout of the classrooms. To fix these problems Seneca Valley needs to be rebuilt from the ground up and the old school torn down. MCPS has been listening to our concerns and the proposed CIP budget now has both a completion date for the building

and a completion date for the site printed in Appendix E of the Superintendent's Recommended FY2011 Capital Budget.

Growth in Germantown

The County Councils' desire for growth in the Germantown area is understandable given this economic climate. The combination of revenue that can be generated by new businesses plus the savings in capital construction costs is very appealing. However in order to make Germantown the successful community that some are envisioning we must create an attractive environment for residents. The Black Rock Center for the Arts, the new county library, and the Town Center have all helped to make Germantown a better place, but we all know that families choose where to live in Montgomery County based on their schools. Nothing is going to scream "Germantown is the place to be" like great schools.

In closing the Seneca Valley Cluster understands that increasing the Capital Budget in a down year can send a very mixed message to the community that is seeing cuts taking place at ever turn. We also understand that construction costs are at historic lows and many improvement plans that have been pushed back can now be undertaken. With this in mind the Seneca Valley Cluster would like the County Council to approve the County Executive's proposed FY 2011 Capital Budget, a budget proposal that addresses many of our key capital concerns.