

Before the Montgomery County Board Of Education

FY 2011 Operating Budget Testimony  
Poolesville Cluster

Sarah Defnet  
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Good evening. My name is Sarah Defnet and tonight I am here to share the Poolesville Cluster's comments and priorities for the FY 2011 Operating Budget. The Poolesville Cluster supports the proposed FY 2011 Operating Budget, and generally supports the priorities detailed in the FY 2011 MCCPTA Operating Budget compact. While priorities should always drive our spending, ensuring they remain our focus during budgeting becomes that much more important in a challenging economy.

We have considered Dr. Weast's proposed areas of reduction for the FY 2011 Operating Budget, should budget reductions become necessary, and have included our cluster's comments and prioritization of those reductions in attachment #1. While our list ranks the recommended cuts in order of most desirable (if there is such a thing) to least desirable, there may be other areas we should be considering that are not on this proposed list – or other combination approaches that spread the burden more widely rather than asking particular populations, programs or schools to shoulder more than their fare share. And while the presentation of the OP Budget, gives many views of the numbers, even with the great enhancements that have been made in the presentation over the last few years, it is still difficult for stakeholders to identify line item cuts that don't directly impact student instruction without intimate knowledge of the numbers and how they are actually implemented within the school system. For example, we have heard discussions in the media about resources being used to promote our school system outside the state of Maryland, or participate in National conferences, and support other public relations and professional activities but the amount we spend is not clear. While financial support in these areas may have been doable in a strong

economy they simply may not be possible in today's economy - yet it is not easy to determine how much is actually spent supporting these activities to know how much could be saved by scaling back. Thus, the list in attachment #1 simply identifies our priorities for the proposed cuts, and our reaction to the proposed cuts, but we clearly don't believe that this is a comprehensive list of possibilities and suggest that there may be other areas that we should consider to preserve our gains in the classroom.

We again stress this year that as the budget gets tighter and staff allocations are reconsidered, that the outcome of enrollment-based decisions continue to be scrutinized for smaller schools to ensure that the resulting decision does not unintentionally impact programming unfairly. We must continue to offer the same core curriculum and services to all MCPS students, regardless of school size.

In the coming months difficult decisions will have to be made. The Poolesville Cluster supports the Superintendent's recommended Operating Budget, and we appreciate the sacrifices everyone continues to make and to that end we will participate fully with MCCPTA to ensure we receive the funding we need to support this budget. Thank you for your tireless efforts, to provide a world class education for all Montgomery County children.