

ROCKVILLE CLUSTER

FY 2011 OPERATING BUDGET TESTIMONY

01/20/2010

Good evening, I am Roy Broussard, the Rockville Cluster Coordinator. Our cluster thanks the members of the Board of Education for your efforts on behalf of our community. We ask you to acquire maximum resources and wisely use those resources in crafting the structure that provides school-based education for our children. We generally support the MCCPTA Operating Budget Compact and Priorities and attempts to maintain real annual Maintenance of Effort (MOE) standards.

The Rockville Cluster is composed of five elementary schools, Earle B. Wood Middle School and Rockville High School. Three of the schools are in Rockville city and four are not. The cluster population mirrors the diversity of the county both in terms of ethnicity and economic condition.

Our top priority is to at least maintain current staff levels. Current class sizes, course diversity, and programs need to be maintained. Rockville High School needs to achieve a student population that allows staffing of IB, AP, Honors, and regular courses in most subject areas. Class size and course diversity are both important and are both tied to staffing levels. This year RHS will award its first International Baccalaureate diplomas and now has an approved Protect Lead the Way (PLTW) engineering academy. These programs and the nationally recognized Journalism Academy are crucial to the health of RHS as a learning entity. Rockville parents, staff and students strongly support keeping the resources needed to maintain or, with added student population, increase class diversity. Wood Middle School and the elementary schools similarly support maintaining the resources needed to execute existing programs.

Staffing is our top concern. Instructional material or specifically the lack of “textbooks” or organized equivalents is also a concern. Parents are asking why there are no textbooks or even organized papers that can be

brought home. They look to help their child, but are unable to piece together material to support such an effort.

My personal experience has been that at the end of a year both of my children have a pile of individual sheets 18-24 inches high. The pile represents the curriculum to which each has been exposed. Within an individual subject pile it is not usually obvious in what order the paper should be placed. Some papers may be linked to text books, some are not. All MCPS curriculum needs to be supported by instructional material that is well organized and available to parents. The Intermediate Math (IM) unit booklets generated by MCPS circa 1997 met one of my children's needs, while the loose leave papers that his brother received 2 years later did not. Especially with larger class sizes it is important that curriculum be supported by organized material. The "textbook" problem is further complicated by the large number of MCPS "close-hold" tests. Students either never see the graded test or cannot bring it home. Parents need to support the execution of the curriculum and to do that they need course material that is available and easily tied to the course curriculum.

Finally, two other valuable probably budget neutral issues. First, MCPS should standardize the manner in which teachers communicate non-grade information on Edline. Homework, test or event information should be consistently entered in the same location in a similar manner. Parents who look at 7, 14, 21 or more sites need to have consistent information formats. Also, a consistent request at parent meetings is for all teachers to put homework and test requirements on Edline before they are required or occur. Secondly, there is a need for male role models, especially Hispanic males, in our schools. Leaving it to colleges is not the answer. We should try to motivate young men in our schools to become teachers in our schools. Creating a more vibrant relationship between Montgomery County law enforcement and MCPS may also help.

The Rockville cluster thanks you again for your efforts and prays that you will maintain your wise ways in tough times.