

**Bethesda-Chevy Chase Cluster
Bethesda-Chevy Chase HS
Westland MS
Bethesda ES*Chevy Chase ES*North Chevy Chase ES
Rock Creek Forest ES*Rosemary Hills PS
Somerset ES*Westbrook ES**

**Testimony on the MCPS FY 2011 Operating Budget
Montgomery County Council
April 8, 2010**

Good evening, President Floreen and members of the Montgomery County Council. I am Joy White representing the Bethesda Chevy Chase Cluster, and I am proud to be here tonight testifying in support of full funding for the FY 2011 Operating Budget for Montgomery County Public Schools.

Parents are well aware of the looming budget shortfall that will adversely impact our nationally recognized schools. Once again, county and MCPS employees will have to forego cost of living increases. We have read that the County Executive and the Council are looking for creative ways to maintain a basic level of county services with less funding than in previous years.

We encourage you to exploit whatever creative means necessary to support education funding in Montgomery County Schools, because when the economic situation improves, we need young citizens who are prepared to take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves.

The County Executive's own budget proposal for 2011 supports a funding level \$142 million less than what the Board of Education requested to educate 1,500 more students than this year. This is an area of serious concern to families in the BCC Cluster. Almost all of our cluster schools are over 100% capacity; elementary schools in the BCC Cluster are projected to be at 137% overcapacity next year.

MCPS with County support over the past decade has made great strides in reducing the achievement gap between white and minority students. We are convinced that MCPS efforts to reduce class size has played a major role in giving all students the attention they need to succeed under the rigorous MCPS curriculum. Yet, promised cuts threaten to erode the quality MCPS is known for. Will we allow these gains to be eroded now in the coming decade?

Aging school buildings holding more and more students with fewer teachers is a recipe for less effective learning. We want to have the confidence that our elected officials on the Council will do their best to ensure that our children can continue to receive a high quality education in spite of the budgetary challenges presented by today's economic situation. We encourage you to think outside the box: work together with MCPS and other county agencies to pool resources commonly used by schools and communities, open dialogs with employee unions to find alternatives to staffing cuts, explore ways with MCPS to make other adjustments in the budget that don't impact the classroom.

You have tough decisions to make about funding for all county services in the next fiscal year. There simply isn't enough funding to provide every service we think we deserve. Yet, as you make your decisions about funding county programs, please remember the long term impact of education funding on the economic viability of our county. Do not make the cuts in education that will cause us to lose the achievement gains so painfully won over the last 10 years. Take bold steps to ensure that the Class of 2020 receives the same high quality education that the Class of 2010 has enjoyed.