

Northwest Cluster

Northwest High School

Kingsview Middle School
Lakelands Park Middle School (shared)
Roberto Clemente Middle School (shared)

Clopper Mill Elementary School
Darnestown Elementary School
Diamond Elementary School
Germantown Elementary School
Great Seneca Creek Elementary School
Ronald McNair Elementary School
Spark M. Matsunaga Elementary School

Operating Budget Testimony to the County Council April 6, 2010

Good Evening President Floreen and Members of the Council. I'm Susan Burkinshaw, one of the Northwest Cluster Coordinators.

We understand that as a community we are trying to survive in very tight fiscal times. As always, our number one request is that you prioritize your decisions based on our children's safety, health and educational well-being in their learning environments. Please only consider budget cuts with the least direct impact to our children in their classrooms across the county.

The major concern in our cluster is staff retention. Staff reductions will have a direct, negative impact on our kids in the classroom if not managed properly, regardless of the size of the school building or the number of kids in it. As such, it is imperative that staffing levels not be cut in our schools, including the areas of public safety and security. This holds true not only for the Northwest Cluster, but also across the county.

Furthermore, we have serious concerns about reductions in public safety staffing across the county, particularly with EFOs in our schools and other police, fire and rescue staff in our county. These civil servants play a vital role in our community and in our schools and we must do whatever it takes to protect our citizens and our students by maintaining police, fire, and rescue staffing levels, even if it means that valuable public programs may be at risk in the short-term. These defenders of safety protect all our lives across the county and uniformed officers in our schools and community can act as visual reminders to our kids that their security matters at school.

We urge you to consider ways to navigate through this budget with minimal trimming of personnel positions. Although huge savings can be

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accomplished by cutting staff, there is a trickle down effect that cannot be ignored. The cuts are felt in the immediate school community where the positions are cut and also in our greater community. Families impacted by job loss lose the ability to adequately support themselves, are less able to support the local economy due to decreased local spending which, in turn, contributes to lower sales and income tax revenues for our greater community. As our elected officials, we beg of you to keep our schools staffed and our economy moving.

Again, we want to urge you to be responsible with budgeting for public school staff, particularly when it comes to the education and safety of our children. These are times when we cannot afford to skimp on either the education or safety of our children. We must help them build a strong foundation on which to support their lives and help sustain both our county's and our country's economies.

Our children are our future and now, more than ever, we can't afford to fall behind.

Respectfully submitted by:
Susan Burkinshaw, Beth Kennington and Bob Murphy
2009-10 Northwest Cluster Coordinators