

Board of Education Testimony

Thursday, November 15, 2007

Good evening. My name is Kathy Boehlert. I am an MCPS parent of three boys, one at Redland and the other two and Judith A. Resnik. I am the current PTA President at Judith A. Resnik Elementary and I am here tonight on behalf of all Resnik students and their parents. Resnik is the largest Redland feeder with about 540 students.

What needs to be done at Redland is the original building modification plan that we heard about 10 years ago and that was approved earlier this year. This plan is **not** a wish list. This is what MCPS said Redland needs to make it a functional school in one of the richest counties in the country. I don't think I have to convince you that this is what **needs** to be done. I am here to help convince you to **make it happen**.

In the current CIP, the Superintendent has slashed the proposed funding for the Redland project and now we are talking about wall-toppers, ceilings and paint. Obviously, this new proposal doesn't address many of the glaring needs at Redland. For instance:

- We have all heard that there are four types of walls. Apparently, Redland has all four. The problem is that only one type provides any adequate noise reduction – even with toppers.
- The front entrance is not visible from the main office or from any office.
- Redland's science classrooms are not fully functional for a lot of reasons – a big one is that they are just not safe.
- Some hallways are so small (5'8" & 5'10" wide) that while they **might** meet code, even James Song admits that they are not optimal – and certainly not when you have students who are wheelchair or walker mobile.

- Students in wheelchairs don't have access to the stage which interferes with their participation in band, chorus and the performing arts.
- Redland has some classrooms that are too small and others that are too large.
- It has piggyback classrooms with two classes in one room.
- The computers in the computer lab are prone to overheating because of the poor air circulation.
- And more.

The Superintendent's current recommendation is like putting a band aid on a building that needs major reconstructive surgery. How is the Redland community supposed to be satisfied with that?

As advocates for education, you understand that we are not talking about walls and ceilings. We are talking about creating a decent learning environment. We are talking about providing educational opportunities. We are talking about leveling the educational playing field for Redland students.

It seems that the superintendent has decided that Redland students don't deserve what other MCPS students have. That message comes through loud and clear. But, you can tell the Redland community that our kids do deserve what other middle schoolers in MCPS have. This is it for Redland for 15-20 years or more.

An easy way to save money is to cut Redland's funding. But we all know that doing the right thing is usually not doing the easy thing. Please do the right thing for Redland students. Don't make us settle for less.

Thank you.