

THE NORTHEAST CONSORTIUM
A Consortium of the Blake, Paint Branch and Springbrook Clusters

Comments to the Board of Education on the FY 2012 Capital Budget and amendments to the FY
2011-2016 Capital Improvements Program

On behalf of the NEC Elementary Schools

February 8, 2011

Broad Acres, Burnt Mills, Burtonsville, Cannon Road, Cloverly,
Cresthaven, Dr. Charles Drew, Fairland, Galway, Greencastle, Jackson Road,
Roscoe Nix, William T. Page, Sherwood, Stonegate, Westover

Good evening President Ervin and members of the County Council. My name is Patty Parachini, the Cluster Representative for the Stonegate ES PTA. I am here tonight to speak on behalf of the CIP needs of the sixteen elementary schools of the Northeast Consortium. It is a pleasure to speak on behalf of the tremendous progress that we have made together and we look forward to our continued success.

We are very pleased with the construction projects in the Northeast Consortium. Cresthaven opened their new building this year, and students and staff are in their long-awaited new school. Sherwood is enjoying its new addition, Jackson Road and Fairland have both started their initial groundbreaking rituals toward their new additions, and Cannon Road has begun its modernization this fall. However, as with all our county schools the one commonality we have is a long way to go.

We are all aware of the budget pitfalls and the strain of this economy, but we are seeing real gains made by taking advantage of lower construction industry costs. Advancing our renovation and modernization projects is sensible and the NEC sees much benefit in this approach.

As with all clusters, we are seeing an increase of enrollment in the pre-K through 5th grade, which has increased in the last 3 years and will continue to grow at a fast pace over the next decade. This increase has shown that out of the 2400 new students enrolled in our county 2300 of them were elementary students. In 5 years this trend will continue into middle school and then on into high school.

The NEC has five elementary schools on the “Recommended for Assessment” list in the FY11-16 CIP to receive a FACT Score in the next round of assessments. Two of these, Stonegate and Burnt Mills, at 38- and 46-years-old, are to be placed on the list for modernization. The remaining three, Broad Acres (@57), Cloverly (@48) and Sherwood (@33) have not requested an assessment, but we are concerned about their age and are grateful for their inclusion — especially given the history of our timelines for CIP schedules. Therefore, while we are very grateful for the modernization projects completed and underway in the NEC, our need is still

great and we ask that modernization and renovation projects remain on track for completion to allow these projects to progress once placed on the new list.

The NEC is composed of a richly diverse community and this is reflected throughout our schools. Socio-economically our schools provide for some of the most and least fortunate students. Our schools have the 2nd largest student population after the DCC (16 vs. 28 ESs), we are 4th highest in our FARMS rates (@ 43.4%), 6th highest in ESOL (20.4%) and 2nd highest in our mobility rates (19.3%). Additionally, a large number of our schools are in the Priority Funding Area. Eleven (11) of our schools are part of the Class Size Reduction Initiative and have a total of 152 CSR classes. Our schools have 7 pre-K, 2 Head Start, and 2 METS classes. Four (4) of our schools provide Linkages to Learning/School Based Health Centers. We have 37 classes of Special Education Programs, as well as a Gifted & Talented Center at Drew and a Spanish Immersion Program at Burnt Mills.

Providing a safe and healthy school environment for our children is paramount, regardless of a school's position on the CIP schedule. Pressing maintenance issues too often make this difficult. We support the expansion of Countywide Projects such as the HVAC program. *Sherwood Elementary has long petitioned to replace their system that creates extreme cost and environmental inefficiencies.* We'd like to see this effort continue in PLAR, BMPI and other overlapping maintenance areas.

Regarding the MCCPTA Delegates position to prioritize maintenance above restroom renovations, Jackson Road provides an apt example of this reasoning. Currently on schedule for an addition which will be completed as of August 2011, and a new gymnasium in 2012, their restroom renovations are scheduled for 2016. It is perplexing that the scope of the addition project could not be widened to include restroom updates — crews and materials cost would surely see a long-term savings, utilizing these sources while on site in comparison to returning later.

Fairland, also scheduled for an addition, continues to request *Improved Lighting* in their *parking lot*. Ironically, the handicapped parking area is now lit via the outdoor lamps of the portables. However, it is likely that when the portables leave, so go the lights — and the larger parking lot remains dim.

While *Stonegate* prepares for an indefinite placement (and wait) on the modernization schedule, their list of facility issues is growing. They are grateful for the roof replacement made over the main hallway and all-purpose room. They are also thankful to be part of the Visitor Management System and Controlled Access System for enhanced security. *However, sinks and plumbing* throughout classrooms are *leaking and backing up*. The *walls in the hallways and classrooms* are seeing significant *cracking* and *paint is chipping* throughout! Stonegate also desperately needs additional parking space, as there are 47 spaces for 60 staff members and there is no visitor parking.

Additionally, security has become a sensitive issue for Stonegate with several vandalisms. They are in need of *Security Cameras* in addition to the secured access system that has been put in place, for the safety of the students and protection of school property.

Thank you for the opportunity to represent our schools. Your dedication to our school system is much appreciated and we value your efforts during these tumultuous times on our behalf. We believe that fully funding the current capital budget is fiscally prudent and will provide long-term benefits for our students and County.

Respectfully,

The Northeast Consortium Cluster Coordinators

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