

THE NORTHEAST CONSORTIUM

A Consortium of the Blake, Paint Branch and Springbrook Clusters

Comments on the FY 2012 Capital Budget and Amendments to the FY 2011-2016
Capital Improvements Program

On behalf of The NEC High Schools

February 8, 2011

Blake High School
Paint Branch High School
Springbrook High School

Good evening President Ervin and members of the County Council. My name is Patti Twigg and I am the Area Vice President for the Northeast Consortium and Sherwood Quad-Clusters. I am here tonight to speak on behalf of the CIP needs of the three high schools in our Northeast Consortium — Blake, Paint Branch and Springbrook.

The Northeast Consortium fully supports the MCCPTA Resolution on the FY 2012 CIP Budget and Amendments to the FY 2011-16 CIP and MCCPTA Resolution on the Restroom Renovation Project in the FY 2011-2016 Capital Improvement Program. Funding for the CIP Budget is critical for projects underway and waiting approval.

Within the Northeast Consortium, we share a commonality of purpose and passion for the education of our children. I know that you can imagine the excitement in the Paint Branch community as we watch the construction of our new school. I hope that you have been able to drive by to see the progress. If not, I have included 2 pictures taken yesterday in my testimony.



We are extremely grateful for the vision that made this project move forward. I am personally grateful to not have to be harping on it any longer. However, we still have very pressing needs in the Northeast Consortium which will benefit by your fully funding the requested CIP Budget.

Springbrook HS has serious problems with their restrooms. This is their top priority. I have been testifying about this every year, and looked back to find it in testimony from before my time as Cluster Coordinator, starting in 2006. They are experiencing recurring plumbing issues that require frequent maintenance requests and work orders, with numerous visits by depot personnel. Many of the fixtures are so old that replacement parts are no longer available. Springbrook has all metal stall dividers, which have been etched in and are repainted almost daily. Painting these over and over has become a real problem. Springbrook needs nonabsorbent stall dividers, which allow for quicker/easier clean up. Their first floor bathrooms, which need to accommodate not only students but most visitors, are so unappealing as to reflect poorly on the school.

Unfortunately, they are not on the current list for the restroom renovation program, which goes out through 2016. If we adhere to the restroom renovation program as it stands, Springbrook HS will be waiting a minimum of six years for repairs that are needed now! We realize this situation is beyond your specific purview, however, funding the budget is of great importance to the continuation of the restroom renovation program.

We all understand the importance of technology in modern education. Springbrook High School needs their TV Studio to be modernized. They are offering a state-of-the-art technology education to their students. However, the TV Studio is outdated. I again looked back at past testimony, and was disheartened to see this request also predates my time as Cluster Coordinator. Given that Springbrook houses the Technology Signature Program, it seems only logical that its equipment remain state-of-the-art and functional to optimize the opportunities for the students there.

Blake HS is once again requesting more storage space for equipment. The need is especially critical in the auditorium area for the storage of props, costumes and supplies and they request an addition be considered to expand the scene shop area. The building was designed before the signature program was determined and they have been trying to retro-fit ever since.

Frankly, Blake HS is a good example of the costs and problems associated with not fully funding the CIP projects. The lesson to be learned is that when the school was built, they scaled back its size, including the core capacity, and no matter how many classroom additions are built the core facilities will always be too small. That is very expensive, and thus practically impossible, to fix. That is the danger of not fully funding the CIP projects. Please don't let this happen to any other schools.

High schools behind Paint Branch on the modernization schedule, Gaithersburg, Wheaton, Seneca Valley, are also eagerly waiting their turns to see their schools transformed into the gems of their communities, and we strongly support them in seeing their projects, and indeed all modernizations and additions, completed on time and as planned.

We fully support the requested budget increase for desperately needed heating and air conditioning improvements to \$15 million and the \$1 million increase for routine life-cycle asset replacements in order to restore funding that was cut from last year's budget. At Blake HS, floor tile throughout the building is in horrendous condition; far beyond what would be a result of natural wear and tear. It is separating, buckling, and gathering mold due to separations. The majority of hallway tile, specifically on the lower floor, needs to be replaced. Not only is it aesthetically a nightmare and a safety issue with people tripping on separated and lumpy tile, but mold is a concern as a significant number of the tiles are edged in black mold. This is a possible health hazard. This has been an ongoing problem at the school, with one area being repaired, only to have the problem recur somewhere else.

Programs that benefit from continued expansion are the Roof Replacement and School Security programs. While it is not currently an issue, over the last few years, Paint Branch has had some significant roof leaks, resulting in damaged equipment. And, because our high schools are large, outdoor cameras are particularly important for the protection of our buildings. For instance, Blake has a 93 acre campus, making the issue of outdoor security that much more complex.

As we work for continuous improvement in our schools, for reaching benchmarks, for raising test scores and student achievement, we need to be mindful that to accomplish these goals, our children need the proper resources. Our number one priority should be to provide each student with a safe, secure and modern facility that is conducive to learning. This is all about the children! We must fully fund the projects in the CIP.

We very much appreciate your giving us the opportunity to speak on behalf of our high schools tonight. Thank you for your time and your consideration of these requests.

Respectfully,

The Northeast Consortium Cluster Coordinators

Area Vice President

Patti Twigg

Springbrook

Reva Gambrell

Paint Branch

Patti Twigg

Larry Edmonds

Blake

Jocelyn Walker