

**Testimony on the FY 2012 Capital Budget and
Amendments to the FY 2011 – 2016 Capital Improvements Program
Before the Montgomery County Council
February 8, 2011**

Richard Montgomery Cluster

*Richard Montgomery H.S.
Beall E.S.
Ritchie Park E.S.*

*Julius West M.S.
College Gardens E.S.
Twinbrook E.S.*

ORAL STATEMENT

Cheryl Moss Herman, RM Cluster Co-Coordinator

Good Evening. My name is Cheryl Moss Herman and I am one of three MCCPTA Cluster Coordinators who proudly represent the Richard Montgomery Cluster.

We appreciate that there are real challenges in the County's fiscal situation. But we **MUST** find a way to manage school growth while providing safe, secure and modern learning facilities for our students.

All four elementary schools in the RM Cluster are overcapacity - the Cluster elementary school utilization rate is at 122% now and is expected to rise to over 130% by 2012. Two elementary schools will have utilization rates greater than 150% within the next few years. We employ 19 portables in our cluster now and expect that number to grow. Current projections show our elementary schools will be a total of 728 students over capacity by 2016.

Enrollment at our sole middle school, Julius West, is also projected to skyrocket. We expect JW to be 362 students over capacity at the end of the six-year planning period.

During last year's full CIP, the County Council funded a "solution" project for the RM Cluster to avoid a residential moratorium in FY13. However, the "RM Cluster ES Solution" is merely a "**paper solution.**"

It is time to turn that **paper solution into a bricks and mortar solution....**

Initial steps in the RM Cluster have begun:

MCPS is conducting a feasibility study for a new elementary school on the site of the former Hungerford Park School. One or more elementary additions may also be needed. Beall and Twinbrook are currently in the planning stages. Ritchie Park completed a feasibility study last year.

All of these studies will be used to develop a Cluster-wide plan to address our elementary school capacity needs as part of the FY 2013-2018 CIP.

Julius West is also being studied for an addition. However, our Cluster is concerned that an addition at Julius West may not fully address our capacity needs – or – may result in a middle school that is just too large.

Regarding FY12:

Please don't delay MCPS' modernization program. We must remedy the condition of our older, deteriorating schools. Twinbrook Elementary, a Title I school, will be assessed for modernization soon. Twinbrook's situation (and others like it) raises concerns about equity across the County – we believe that children in ALL schools should have access to modern facilities and safe places to learn.

Hold the line on funding countywide projects such as PLAR, HVAC and roof replacements.

In particular, fully fund MCPS' roof replacement request so that a new roof can be put on Beall Elementary after years of waiting. They want to finally put those buckets away.

We also ask you not to delay restroom renovations scheduled for four of our schools.

Finally, we note that MCPS' implementation rate for General Obligation bonds is significantly higher on average than for other County "agencies." We think that is because their projects meet real, identifiable, near-term needs.

With the SAG set at a lower level than previously planned, we ask that MCPS be given resources to address the real, identifiable, near-term needs of our students.

By doing so, we invest in the educational future of our children – the future of our County.

Thank you.