

February 10, 2009

THE NORTHEAST CONSORTIUM

A Consortium of the Blake, Paint Branch and Springbrook Clusters

Comments on the FY 2010 Capital Budget and Amendments to the FY 2009-2014
Capital Improvements Program

Middle School Needs
For
Benjamin Banneker
Briggs Chaney
Farquhar
Francis Scott Key
White Oak

Written testimony of Naghma Husain, one of the Springbrook Cluster Coordinators, presented on behalf of the capital needs of the Consortium's five middle schools -- Benjamin Banneker, Briggs Chaney, William Farquhar, Francis Scott Key and White Oak.

First I would like to thank you for your dedication and effort to keep all CIP projects on track despite budgetary constraints. These projects are critical to our student's educational needs.

We thank you for several projects in the NEC that have either been completed or are currently underway. We are pleased that the Key modernization is on schedule for August 2009 completion. Staff and students anxiously await the move to their new facility.

Briggs Chaney students would like to thank you for their Promethean Boards. My own children come home and excitedly tell me that, "they got to use the eggs today!" New technology such as this not only aids in teaching, but makes learning fun and engaging which, in turn, boosts performance.

Banneker thanks you for their much needed restroom renovations this past summer.

Now we move on to the problems which I was encouraged to continue to advocate for by our legislators when we met in the fall.

BANNEKER

Banneker's request is the same as it has been for the last two years. We ask the county revise its policy on calculating space requirements per student for older buildings. Banneker needs to be re-configured with additional and more functional teaching space. It was originally designed as a rural, open space school with narrow stairwells and smaller classrooms that are currently ineffective for classroom learning.

The walls have been "filled in," but there are still offices used as classrooms and even classrooms created at the ends of hallways. There are also other weird configurations such as having to walk through one classroom to reach another. This is obviously distracting and takes away from student learning and achievement.

For these reasons, Banneker desperately requests to be put on the modernization schedule. The building is not designed to hold the over 750 students it currently houses. The longer Banneker remains without renovation, the greater its deterioration and the more money spent on an aging building.

BRIGGS CHANEY

The major area of concern for Briggs Chaney is its HVAC system which has been difficult to maintain and regulate for several years. The school requests repairs or replacement for this system for increased comfort and a better learning environment for its staff and students.

Briggs Chaney also requests an additional 100 lockers. While there currently are enough lockers per student, if enrollment increases, some students will be left without lockers.

FARQUHAR

We are pleased to have Farquhar programmed for a modernization in 2015 and request it remain on schedule. In the meantime, it faces the ongoing challenge of operating in a facility that is disastrously outdated, riddled with health and safety concerns, and unable to accommodate anticipated growth. Again, the longer it takes for modernization, the greater the cost of interim repairs to an aging facility.

There are numerous interim repairs that must be immediately addressed for the safety of students and staff. There is remaining asbestos in the building as well as mold growth in the ceiling tiles. The PTSA has addressed several of the schools needs by purchasing equipment at its own expense.

It is imperative that the issue of the increasing impact of development and traffic on Batchellors Forest Road be addressed. The bus circle and parking lot also need to be reconfigured to address serious safety concerns.

Farquhar is doing everything they can to create 21st century classrooms in a building that was built before man landed on the moon. However, without timely modernization, they will not be able to keep pace.

WHITE OAK

Locker rooms at White Oat need to be re-designed for the safety and security of students. Currently, there are many blind spots that make it difficult for students to be monitored. This is a huge problem.

White Oak needs an art room that is more centrally located. The current one is in a remote part of the building that is difficult to access, particularly for students with mobility issues. It also isolates students and the art teacher. The requested solution is to convert the FACS room into an art room.

They also need a new TV studio equipment because current equipment is old and incompatible with anything new. Last year, part of it was replaced by the PTA using PTA funds, but the school is still unable to hold morning announcements through its studio as it did in past years. Again, this takes away yet another piece from our students' educational experience.

Please fully fund all CIP projects and do not allow our students to fall behind.

Respectfully submitted,

The Northeast Consortium Cluster Coordinators

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