

*Cold Spring Elementary School-Dufief Elementary School-Fallsmead Elementary School
Lakewood Elementary School-Stonemill Elementary School-Travilah Elementary School
Cabin John Middle School-Robert Frost Middle School
Thomas S. Wootton High School*

**WOOTTON CLUSTER TESTIMONY
REGARDING THE SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDED
FY 2010 CAPITAL BUDGET AND AMENDMENTS TO THE
FY 2009-2014 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM**

County Council

Council Office Building

February 10, 2009

Good evening Council President Andrews and other Council Members. My name is Carol Van Dam Falk. I'm Wootton Cluster Coordinator. First let me express my condolences over the passing of Councilmember Don Praisner. He was a good man and like his wife Marilyn, left this earth much too soon.

The Wootton cluster is brimming with bright, wonderful, compassionate students but we also face hard challenges ahead under the current economic crisis.

I typically focus on Wootton first, but Cabin John's modernization project is foremost on our minds this year. This project is scheduled for completion in August, 2011. Keeping it on track is a cluster priority. We believe in bad times it's more important than ever to update aging facilities to provide optimal learning environments. The cost of upgrading building systems only increases exponentially every year it's delayed. We urge you to keep this project on track.

The Wootton High School community is thankful for its Building Modifications and Program Improvements for last year, including the conversion of four classrooms into two science laboratories. However, with that conversion, Wootton now faces a shortage of at least six classrooms. The school is 460 students over capacity and still has ten classrooms in portables.

Dr. Doran does an incredible job of utilizing every available resource to make it feel less crowded, but the fact is Wootton is more over-crowded than any other

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school in Montgomery County, and therefore continues to rely on your support to alleviate this problem.

Under building modifications, Wootton desperately needs upgrades to its auditorium. The backstage is cramped, and the sound system is outdated. New office space and a new sound system are required to accommodate the larger crowds that regularly attend Wootton's critically acclaimed performances. This auditorium is also used for parent and student meetings/presentations. A recent presentation to incoming 9th grade parents involved counselors walking up and down the aisles, shouting their speeches as they did in the 1970's (before the school had a sound system) so they could be heard. We can do better than this.

We also ask that Wootton's restroom renovations slated for fiscal year 2009-2010 be kept on track.

And Wootton is still in dire need of a remodeled weight training room. Current conditions are deplorable. All athletes use the same, small weight room. If our boys and girls are to compete on a level playing field with the County's star athletes they simply need a new weight room.

In addition, the Wootton cluster still seeks a commitment from the Council to support a Wootton/Robert Frost initiative for improving the playing and practice facilities shared by the two schools. Speaking as a proud Mom of athletes at both schools for several years, I can tell you that these fields are torn up. The principals of Frost and Wootton would like to see a new practice field and the current fields improved.

Robert Frost MS would like to stay on track for replacement of its HVAC system. As far as we know, every improvement to the current HVAC system has been made and it still leaks.

The folks at Travilah Elementary are extremely thankful for their addition and want you to know they are able to house an entire grade in the new classrooms.

Dufief Elementary School is also grateful for their roof repairs last year.

Cold Spring Elementary School, our oldest elementary school (built in 1972) which has yet to be renovated, has no gymnasium. A new project was slated to start and be completed by August 2010 but was delayed by 2 years due to budget

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constraints. We urge the Council continues to support this project with plans to design the gym in August, 2011.

Our entire cluster is very concerned about the Preliminary Draft of the Gaithersburg West Master Plan. It anticipates the addition of 5,000 housing units, an increase of 50,000 cars in the area, and there was little if any participation from the community in formulating this plan. I've attached a sample letter which is being circulated to various communities to send to Planning Board Chairman Royce Hanson, supporting our position, for your further review.

Thank you for your time tonight.