

Quince Orchard Cluster of Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations

Brown Station Elementary
Fields Road Elementary
Jones Lane Elementary
Rachel Carson Elementary
Thurgood Marshall Elementary

Lakelands Park Middle
Ridgeview Middle

Quince Orchard High

Testimony before the Board of Education January 9, 2008

President Navarro,
Dr. Weast,
Members of the Board of Education

On behalf of the students attending Montgomery County public schools in the Quince Orchard cluster, and their parents, I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of the Superintendent's Recommended FY2009 Operating Budget.

We do appreciate your efforts in making Montgomery County one of the best school systems in the nation.

We recognize that this budget struggles to maintain advances made in recent years. We are please to see that we share the priorities for funding that is reflected in this budget. We agree that initiatives for elementary school Assistant principals, for reduced class sizes, and the consistency in staffing policies that promote professional, well trained teachers should be among this budget's highest priorities.

We would like to especially emphasize our support for budget to sustain plant maintenance at our school facilities. In this current budget climate, we acknowledge that the lack of cuts in this area is probably a positive sign. We would still like to assert that the Board recognize the need to require MCPS to establish objective standards for portable classroom conditions and building maintenance, and in some better time, allocate the funds needed to adhere to those standards.

We would also like to suggest that this budget be stretched to provide for improvements in the Division of Long Range Planning. As a cluster that has experienced most of its growth in the last 15 years, we have been repeatedly surprised as the projected population in our boundaries exceeds the best projections issued by Long Range Planning. We acknowledge the difficulty of their art, and recognize that their accuracies, on the county level, are within 1 to 2 percent. But, in a system that accommodates 139,000 students, 1 or 2 percent is more than a half a high school. Population projections in clusters with recent growth have been distressingly consistent in underestimating the students arriving each year. We encourage the Board to recognize this and press MCPS to utilize some extra funds to reorient their processes of statistical gathering to a cluster by cluster basis, and to seek new methods of data acquisition to increase their accuracy at the cluster level.

We would like to acknowledge our support of MCCPTA President Jane DeWinter's testimony on the FY2009 Operating Budget, the MCCPTA FY2009 Operating Budget compact, and the MCCPTA resolution on Operating Budget priorities.

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We know you agonize along with us faced with this budget that struggles to maintain the advances made in recent years, and regrettably delays anticipated improvements in other areas.

We look forward to working with you and the County Council to allocate the funds necessary to maintain the tradition of excellence in Montgomery County education.

Thank you for all that you do for our children's education.
