

Thank you Dr. Weast, President Brandman, and Members of the Board for giving us this opportunity to speak on the Superintendent's recommended Operating Budget on behalf of the Clarksburg Cluster.

With much celebration, Maryland schools are ranked first in the US and we do not want to lose that National recognition if class sizes become too large, loss of quality teachers, or maintenance issues. We respectfully ask you to **Hold the Line.**

Thus far, Dr. Weast's recommendations for all-day kindergarten, reduced class size and the completion of Algebra by eighth grade have proven beneficial to our students. We ask that you do everything within your power to keep these initiatives in place. MCPS's focus on reducing class size throughout all schools is a powerful testament toward Fox Chapel Elementary seeing a difference in academic success. In addition, Daly elementary school sees reduced class sizes as aiding them in differentiated instruction to meet student needs as well as assisting with the needed support for MSA. We will support you and will use our strong partnership with our elected officials, which we have developed over the last four years. We look forward to our annual trip in February to Annapolis to visit our Legislators and continue to strengthen our advocacy for safe, secure, well-maintained, and healthy school facilities for all children of Montgomery County Schools.

MCPS initiatives require we keep qualified, knowledgeable teachers that connect with students inside the classroom. We are concerned for funding and staffing for Clarksburg High School's signature programs; Capstone and APPS Programs. Projects such as these foster problem solving and critical thinking in a real world environment. They reward collaboration, initiative, and entrepreneurship and have helped many of our students define the field of study they want to pursue in college. Being mindful of what administrators, teachers, and staff require to meet the rigorous requirements for 21st Century education, our Rocky Hill Middle School Principal Steve Whiting put it best, "If we maintain what we have, we'll be able to continue to give our kids an excellent program. If we're cut, then we lose pieces that help us give every student what they need. I'm aware of the economic climate and so I wouldn't ask for anything more."

A summation report of cluster CIP requests received this past summer from the Department of Long Range Planning showed an overwhelming improvement needed within Maintenance, Preventive and Routine Repair. During CIP testimony, we testified that the Clarksburg Cluster would like the Board to act proactively towards implementing a Building Maintenance Program (BMP) - especially in new schools throughout the county.

We hope sooner rather than later that Rocky Hill MS, Clarksburg HS, Little Bennett ES, and Clarksburg ES #8 will soon have an established BMP to ensure all new equipment is maintained and thus fewer dollars will be required for replacement and repairs down the road. The creation of this "punch-list" will allow principals, building services, county maintenance, operations, etc. to remain proactive vs. reactive to the current and future longevity of our facilities. Additionally, all county schools can benefit from this program.

This project shouldn't cover only the brick and mortar, but it should incorporate maintenance of portable classrooms too. There is no established preventive maintenance on leased or county owned portables. The only exception may be within the 60 schools that have a BMP already established. A few schools within the Clarksburg Cluster have a Building Maintenance Plan, but none are established at the newest facilities established within our recent past.

Through the tireless efforts of a single parent and the help of MCCPTA, our portables have had mite-infested carpeting removed, saturated wall panels replaced, air filtration systems cleaned and correct sized filters replaced. Rusty doors replaced, boarded up windows replaced, and we're still in the process of getting necessary ventilation repairs to improve air quality. With a BMP in place, portables would be systematically evaluated and necessary repairs would be made on an established schedule.

As noted in the Operating Budget FY10, we support the Dept. of Facility Management goal of maintaining ventilation rates to meet acceptable indoor air quality standards which will require that the department collaborate with other units, school staff, and communities to ensure building equipment is properly maintained and operated. This initiative is necessary to create classroom environments that promote successful learning, both inside school facilities and portables.

Thank you for giving us this opportunity. We've kept this short and sweet due to the tough economic times and budget challenges. Congratulations to Shirley Brandman as the newly elected board President. Not long ago you were one of us; and we look forward to continuing our work and partnership with the Board.

Respectfully submitted-
Jaimie Jacobson, Donna Pfeiffer and Sonya Leaman
MCCPTA Clarksburg Cluster Coordinators