

# Quince Orchard Cluster of Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations

Brown Station Elementary  
Diamond 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 14, 2009

President Brandeman,  
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 FY2010 Operating Budget.

We do appreciate the efforts the members of the Board of Education make in maintaining Montgomery County Public Schools as one of the best school systems in the nation.

We feel it is appropriate to commend the process pursued to develop this budget; participation of the BOE, County Council, MCPS, MCEA, SEIU, MCAASP, and MCCPTA certainly made sense for this difficult fiscal environment. We think the virtues of using this same process as a model for budget development in future years are self evident.

We think it appropriate to commend the three employee unions for their shared sacrifice. This is not in any way intended to endorse the current state of compensation for these employees. It is just to recognize that all of us, teachers, administrators, students, parents, and Montgomery County in general, would clearly be in worse shape without their concessions.

Discussions in the Quince Orchard Cluster concerning the operating budget have arrived at a list of priorities. Our priorities align with the Strategic Plan, and also are well expressed by the MCCPTA Operating Budget priorities and Operating budget compact.

## **Maintain class sizes**

The Superintendent's budget respects our highest priority. We feel strongly that the MCPS class size guidelines are among the most significant factors in the quality of education our children receive. We recognize that sacrifices were made in other areas to enable maintenance of current classroom sizes.

## **Intervention and support for all students who need it**

The budget describes cuts and realignments to these areas, in the expectation that there will be little impact for students needing these services.

## **Continue to recruit the best staff and develop them professionally**

Benefits and salary structures that attract the best teachers are a significant component of the quality of education in the County. The sacrifices

### Cluster Coordinators:

Kevin Farragher  
13 Galesville Ct.  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878  
301-208-8382  
KevinFarragher@comcast.net

James Keenan  
15217 Winesap Dr.  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878  
301-963-9174  
[Jim.keenan@fmcsa.dot.gov](mailto:Jim.keenan@fmcsa.dot.gov)

Paul Morrison  
11900 Clover Knoll Road  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878  
301-977-9230  
wallyboy53@comcast.net

---

made by the unions have been noted and we hope that no further restructures become necessary.

**Maintain levels of counselor staff and resource teachers**

We believe that counselor staff becomes more essential, not less so, to the maintenance of educational quality in every one of our schools in difficult fiscal environments. We hope cuts and realignments in these areas remain minimized.

**Assistant Principals in all elementary schools**

We recognize that this initiative is still in the budget, though delayed to later years. We ask that the BOE continue to regard this as an important element in the success of all the elementary schools in the county.

**Maintain adequate school administrative staff**

We feel that schools that are well run, with an office that has resources to assist in the day to day interaction with parents and students are no small part of the quality of education in the County.

**Bus fleet maintenance**

This budget describes economies in transportation personnel and equipment, delaying vehicle replacements and realigning money allocations. We hope that confidence of parents and students that the vehicles they ride in will not be affected.

**Plant maintenance level**

We worry upon examination of the budget when it appears that cuts in this area appear disproportionately higher. Plant maintenance, at a level that sustains buildings for their planned life spans of more than sixty years in most cases will not just manage itself. Cuts in this area are clearly a loan we are making to ourselves, borrowing against a future filled with buildings in disrepair. We urge you to minimize any further stress to this budget area.

We note from other interaction with the BOE and the County Council that this budget, as strained as it is, expresses an optimistic viewpoint. We recognize that funding from the state of Maryland at the level expressed is in doubt, and that revenues for the County may not be as described following the revenue updates expected in February 2009. We have been told that we can probably expect further cuts, on the order of 60 million or slightly more.

We hope further cuts and realignments can be avoided, but recognize the grim reality of dealing with them. We urge you to consider the priorities outlined above, those in the MCPS Strategic plan and the MCCPTA Operating Budget Compact as you wrestle with the numbers.

We further recognize the importance for interaction with the Maryland state legislature for residents of Quince Orchard Cluster and the entire county. We are planning a number of methods to reach out and touch our legislators, and to try to influence the governor's office. We further urge that the BOE, the directors of MCPS and the County Council strive to maintain the most amicable and productive relations with all levels of our state government.

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.

---

---

We want to express our appreciation for this years document “Operating Budget in Brief”. This is a big improvement over previous years, and has greatly aided our understanding of this year’s budget.

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

Sincerely,

The PTSA’s of Quince Orchard Cluster

- Brown Station Elementary
  - Diamond Elementary
  - Fields Road Elementary
  - Jones Lane Elementary
  - Rachel Carson Elementary
  - Thurgood Marshall Elementary
  - Lakelands Park Middle
  - Ridgeview Middle
  - Quince Orchard High
-