

CLARKSBURG CLUSTER

Clarksburg High School
Rocky Hill Middle School (split articulated)
Neelsville Middle School (split articulated)

Clarksburg Elementary School
Fox Chapel Elementary School
Little Bennett Elementary School
Capt. James Daly E. Elementary School
Cedar Grove Elementary School (split articulated)

Greetings President Knapp and members of County Council. I am here tonight to offer testimony regarding the proposed Operation Budget and its effects upon the **Clarksburg Cluster**.

First off, the Clarksburg Cluster is looking forward to the graduation of its' first senior class!!

The Clarksburg Cluster has the highest projected growth in MCPS and the second largest elementary and second largest middle school within the county. As the newest cluster, we request you continue to look at our expanding growth and diversity and adjust staffing to meet our growing needs.

To ensure success for every student, MCPS must focus on raising academic performance of all students so that all may reach their full potential, no matter where they reside in the county. There is a need for uniformly high expectations that all students, including Special Education, ESOL, and Gifted/Talented students, will succeed and have their needs met.

Clarksburg Cluster schools can use additional special education resource staffing especially those with LAD programming. Special education Para-educators are also necessary to support the dynamic teachers and the cuts made last year.

To provide the high quality business services that are essential to the educational success of students, which is consistent with the goal of promoting maximum performance by all students, there must be greater accountability by MCPS for improved academic performance of students. The Clarksburg Cluster finds it a priority to retain and increase class size reductions.

Evaluating programs is essential especially when every dollar makes a difference within a tight budget. Additional supports are necessary to insure staffing has the needed textbooks, instructional materials, and physical classroom space. The Cluster believes "dollars well spent" would be to increase funding and the promotion of accelerated and enriched programs in the middle and high schools. More attention needed to address discipline problems and create a positive interactive support within the community, we would ask the county to increase the EFO and school security personnel and increase security cameras.

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With a larger walking community, we also find it essential to add crossing guards to the elementary school neighborhoods. Increased building facility services are critical to the preventative and routine maintenance of our schools.

Each of our schools addressed a concern for the possibility of losing any part of their Staff Development positions. We want to make sure the seven instructional specialist positions being cut at the county level does not drastically impact the staff development teachers within the schools. It is more important to supply staffing with the tools necessary to insure success for every student.

We need to keep teachers and increase diversity in hiring staff. We must request that teachers and staffing are adequately trained and this request includes the training of much needed lunch and recess aides. We support the reduction in the use of substitute teachers in the classrooms, during the academic year, for teacher training.

We understand difficult decisions will have to be made with this budget. Attracting and sustaining quality teachers remains one of the top priorities to ensure success for every student! Without highly qualified teachers, staff and administration the framework for success will collapse. To create a positive work environment in a self-renewing organization, we need to develop, retain, and recruit talented educational, administrative, and support staff which are fundamental in maintaining a high quality of education in Montgomery County.