

Northwest Cluster

Northwest High School

Clopper Mill Elementary School

Darnestown Elementary School

Diamond Elementary School

Germantown Elementary School

Kingsview Middle School

Great Seneca Creek Elementary School

Lakelands Park Middle School (shared)

Ronald McNair Elementary School

Roberto Clemente Middle School (shared)

Spark M. Matsunaga Elementary School

2009 Operating Budget Testimony

to the County Council

April 7, 2008

Hello, my name is Susan Burkinshaw and I am one of the Northwest Cluster Co- Coordinators, along with my partner Bob Murphy.

Understanding that as a community we are facing a very tight fiscal year, our number one request is that you prioritize your decisions based on our children's safety in and around their learning environments. As fellow taxpayers, we would also request that you consider environmentally responsible solutions that will yield future cost-savings to our county and will also minimize our shared environmental footprint.

We are here tonight to highlight the concerns about pedestrian safety, particularly in the Northwest Cluster. With another fatal pedestrian accident in Montgomery County just last week, this is clearly not a matter to be taken lightly. In our Cluster recently, a Northwest High School Student was hit by an MCPS bus carrying Kingsview Middle School children to school in Germantown. In addition, a Lakelands Park Middle School student was hit by a car near a bus stop on the way to school in a residential neighborhood in Gaithersburg. I don't think the following specific concern should be considered crying wolf.

The intersection in front of Lakelands Park Middle School at Bright Meadow Road and Main Street is brewing the perfect storm for a pedestrian accident, yet apparently no one is seriously considering the concerns being raised by the school community to either the Gaithersburg City, Montgomery County Public School or Montgomery County Officials—all having cited budgetary constraints.

Northwest Cluster Testimony
April 7, 2008 (cont'd)

The community surrounding Lakelands Park Middle School is a shining example of a walkable community, helping to sustain our environment. Lakelands Park MS has the unique upcounty situation of a high percentage of walkers (over 50%); however, the safety of these children is of major concern daily because of the lack of traffic controls around the school.

Until recently the school staff has been facilitating safe crossing at the uncontrolled crosswalks in front of the school, seemingly a major liability for our county's teachers, and acknowledged by MCPS safety staff who have asked that they no longer perform those duties deemed to be too unsafe for them—but our children are still allowed to cross those streets daily to and from school, fighting heavy auto and bus traffic with no stop signs on Main Street or other traffic controls except painted crosswalks at the intersection.

There have been formal requests to the County and to the City of Gaithersburg to install a three-way stop sign at this particular intersection, but to no avail. And neither is anyone stepping up to suggest a solution in lieu of adding stop signs, which has been deemed an unsafe solution to the concerns raised. Requests for crossing guards have also been denied.

We are here to ask that a comprehensive pedestrian safety study be done in and around of Lakelands Park Middle School now, before it takes another fatality to deem it necessary.

We encourage you to continue to evaluate this budget closely to ensure that each child in this county is safe in and around their schools, and that as a county school system we continue to promote and execute solutions with long-term cost-efficiencies and minimal environmental impact.

Respectfully submitted by:

Susan Burkinshaw and Bob Murphy, 2007-8 Northwest Cluster Co-Coordinators