

Seneca Valley Cluster

Seneca Valley High School
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School
Roberto Clemente Middle School

Lake Seneca Elementary School
S. Christa McAuliffe Elementary School
Dr. Sally K. Ride Elementary School
Waters Landing Elementary School

Comments to
The Montgomery County Council
On the
Proposed FY 2009 Operating Budget
Prepared by: Juan Johnson, Cluster Coordinator
April 7, 2008

We realize that the County Council does not make decisions on where or what the budget is spent on, that the Board of Education and the Superintendent will make those decisions. It is important to understand the effect the amount of funding you authorize has on critical programming that we feel improves school performance. Some of those areas are:

- The transition of Seneca Valley HS from Cambridge to IB
- Middle School Reform for Roberto Clemente MS and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. MS
- Well maintained buildings

I have attached my testimony to the Board of Education that speaks to other issues that are of concern to the Seneca Valley Cluster.

Seneca Valley HS currently has the Cambridge program. This program, which is internationally recognized, is being phased out. Current 9th graders are the last class who will be offered Cambridge courses. In order to continue to provide world class programming, MCPS has recommended that the International Baccalaureate program be instituted at Seneca Valley High School. Kennedy High School is in the same position. This is critical to continue the standard of excellence in education that is the theme of Seneca Valley High School. This program gives students the opportunity to have the most rigorous courses offered by MCPS. This is in line with the “No Child Left Behind” Act theme to meet every child at their needs, which includes those who need more rigorous and challenging curriculum. Funding for the IB program this budget cycle will allow Seneca Valley and Kennedy High Schools to gain entrance into the program and get the necessary training to implement and staff the program.

The Middle School Reform Initiative is a critical piece in MCPS’s goal to reduce the achievement gap and to ensure all middle schools meet AYP. Currently, Clemente MS is participating in Phase I of Middle School Reform. This has given them additional resources (staffing and technology) to provide better services to meet students at their needs. In the coming Phase II, Clemente and the other Phase I schools, will be receiving strategies and curriculum developed by the middle school magnet schools.

MLK MS is on the list to participate in Phase II of Middle School Reform and to receive the additional staffing and technology that the Phase I schools received this school year. The increased staffing will greatly improve the delivery of needed remediation and the technology will enhance the classroom experience.

One area that is very critical to the success of students and staff is the maintenance of the school facilities. The Seneca Valley cluster has no CIP projects in the current CIP cycle, except for possible planning for Seneca Valley HS modernization. With a projected date of 2016 for the SVHS modernization, there are 8 years until the cluster will see any CIP programs. This makes maintenance

extremely critical. With the remaining schools between 12 and 23 years old and the expected life-cycle for these building being 50 years or more, it is imperative that they are properly maintained. With new schools going up in neighboring clusters for the past ten years and for the foreseeable future, a commitment to maintain current facilities is needed to provide safe, secure, and healthy facilities for all students.

When considering the total amount of funds to budget for the school system, please remember that students today will have to live under the decisions you and MCPS make. Students only have one chance to go through the school system, so let's make it the best possible experience for every student whether they need accelerated instruction, remediation or special services. All our students deserve a world-class education.