Bethesda-Chevy Chase Cluster
Bethesda-Chevy Chase HS
Westland MS
Bethesda ES*Chevy Chase ES*North Chevy Chase ES
Rock Creek Forest ES*Rosemary Hills PS
Somerset ES*Westbrook ES

Testimony on the MCPS FY 2010 Operating Budget
Montgomery County Council
April 15, 2009

Good evening, President Andrews and members of the Montgomery County Council. I am Joy White representing the Bethesda Chevy Chase Cluster, and I am pleased to be here tonight testifying in support of full funding for the 2010 Operating Budget for Montgomery County Public Schools.

Montgomery County Schools have created an environment that fosters success for all students and we've received national recognition for it. As parents and residents, we should all take pride in these accomplishments. This is why Montgomery County is such an attractive place to live—the quality of our schools is an important magnet for a growing families and employers.

We recognize that we face budget shortfalls this year and significant cuts have already been made to Central Services and School funding. Therefore, let me highlight for you funding priorities for the Bethesda Chevy Chase Cluster. These priorities are related to overcapacity in most of our cluster schools.

Elementary schools in the BCC Cluster are projected to be at 137% overcapacity. We have two concerns related to overcapacity in our schools: facilities maintenance and class size.

Two of our oldest schools, Rock Creek Forest Elementary School and Westbrook Elementary School, require ongoing facilities maintenance. All but 2 of our elementary schools use relocatable classrooms. With these schools supporting more students than they were built for, the main school buildings and portable classrooms must be maintained at a high standard to provide a safe and productive learning environment for our children.

If MCPS' position at the top of AP ranking lists is any guide, MCPS has demonstrated long-term improvement in the educational achievement for all students. We believe the class size reduction initiative begun 8 years ago has played a part in enabling our students to prepare themselves for rigorous instruction at the high school level. With respect to class size in the FY 2010 school year, we are aware that significant cuts already have been made to educational positions. We urge you to avoid additional cuts which may force MCPS to increase class sizes.

You have tough decisions to make about funding for all county services in the next fiscal year. We know that our county and MCPS employees have already agreed to forego COLAs in the coming year and we are grateful for that. As you make your decisions about funding county programs, please remember priorities of the BCC Cluster schools to provide for the maintenance and upkeep of our overcrowded schools, and to provide teacher staffing levels to maintain current class size levels.