

**Churchill Cluster Testimony  
before the Montgomery County Council**

**Regarding the Montgomery County  
FY 2010 Operating Budget  
with respect to MCPS**

**Winston Churchill Cluster**

*Winston Churchill High School  
Herbert Hoover Middle School  
Beverly Farms Elementary School  
Seven Locks Elementary School*

*Cabin John Middle School  
Bells Mill Elementary School  
Potomac Elementary School  
Wayside Elementary School*

**Montgomery County Council Public Hearing  
Council Office Building  
April 15, 2009**

Churchill Cluster Coordinators:  
Janette Gilman  
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Laura Siegel

Good Evening, President Andrews and members of the County Council. My name is Laurie Halverson. I am one of the three MCCPTA Cluster Coordinators representing the Churchill Cluster. I stand before you this evening to present our testimony, which will address our community's perspective and concerns regarding the FY 2010 Operating Budget and impact on MCPS.

We are well aware of the dire fiscal situation affecting the county and state budgets. Our PTAs have aggressively pursued advocacy in Annapolis over the past couple of months in response to requests by you, the County Council, and the Board of Education. The Council stated you would fully fund the MCPS budget if the State fully funded their obligations. Now that our delegation has come through with full funding at the State level we believe it is incumbent upon the Montgomery County Council to fully fund the MCPS budget. One purpose of the funds provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) is to "invest" in education. If the maintenance of effort waiver is approved, MCPS will lose \$70-80 million in funds, which could serve to increase our investment in education. The Churchill Cluster Schools will NOT benefit from the stimulus funds because we will receive little or no monies from the IDEA portion and no benefit from Title I monies. The current proposed budget for the Churchill Cluster Schools will make it difficult to maintain the current level of student achievement. We need the benefit of extra funding as well and request that Montgomery County provide resources to our cluster schools.

The future of our students, which in turn will affect the future of our county, is in your hands. Maryland Public Schools was recognized as being the top school system in the nation, a distinction that MCPS contributes to, but will NOT continue to do so, if top-notch programs are cut from our schools. Churchill High School, along with Whitman and Wootton High Schools are consistently distinguished by top publications and recently recognized in *U.S. News and World Report* as Gold Medal schools appearing in the list of the top 100 High Schools in the nation. This gold medal performance is not easy to attain and virtually impossible to continue if our schools receive fewer resources. The Churchill Cluster schools have already lost staff positions and funding for special programs - adversely affecting our students - this school year, and we cannot allow this to continue into next year. The high quality of the instructional program delivered in the Churchill Cluster schools cannot be maintained if you, the Montgomery County Council, does not provide adequate funds. Student achievement in our cluster schools will suffer if there is:

- less staff in our schools;
- less money for resources such as textbooks, supplies and instructional materials;
- less opportunities for enrichment;
- less support for special education students; and
- less than adequate maintenance of buildings and portables.

## **STAFFING**

The staffing level in our cluster's schools is currently at a much lower level than other schools throughout the county that have differing demographics. Our students do not

reap the benefit of the reduced class size initiative; our schools do not have math coaches, focus teachers or other specialty teachers; Churchill High School does not have an academic intervention teacher; there are no Academy Program directors at Churchill; and the number of regular education paraeducators in our schools is significantly lower than in other schools.

**The staffing levels in the Churchill Cluster schools are currently at a bare-bones minimum.** While the Superintendent has stated that the proposed cuts will not affect students because there are no “across the board” increases in class size, the proposed cuts WILL affect students. Many of the cuts are reductions in school-based positions. The media specialists, reading teachers, staff development teachers, alternative teacher (Churchill), paraeducators, English composition assistants, literacy coaches all work DIRECTLY with students. These are some of the positions that are recommended to be cut from our schools. These cuts will have a DIRECT impact on the quality of education our students receive. We cannot allow MCPS to lower the quality of the instructional program, which will in turn lower academic achievement. Our schools have already had positions cut for this school year: our schools have lost paraeducators; the Signature Program Coordinator at Churchill is now only a .6 position, forcing the cancellation of our International Studies Academy for the ninth and tenth graders who were previously accepted into this valuable and timely academy. Seven Locks ES is slated to lose one-half position staff development teacher. Seven Locks ES, and other smaller schools, currently do not benefit from having assistant principals. Cutting these additional staff positions will exponentially increase the burden on administrators and staff—and hinder student performance—at these schools for limited budget savings.

**All of the positions being cut provide essential support to our classroom teachers and students.** Loss of these supports WILL AFFECT our students. These cuts will especially hurt the students who need the most assistance to succeed.

### **TEXTBOOKS, SUPPLIES and INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

The reduction in the budget for textbooks and materials coupled with a cut in allowable curricular fees charged by schools will adversely affect the quality of instruction delivered in our schools. It is critical for our students to have access to all of the materials necessary to maintain performance levels in our elementary and secondary schools. Science labs, foreign language workbooks, music and art courses all play a role in the quality education of our students. MCPS should be exceedingly careful in allocating these resources to our students. The \$1.5 million being re-allocated from central office to local schools to cover the loss of curricular fees will not suffice. First, MCPS is only robbing Peter to pay Paul by transferring funds from a central office account to local school accounts; secondly the \$22/student allocation for high schools does not adequately cover the costs of materials. We risk losing Advanced Placement (AP) certification, if we do not have the adequate science materials to perform the labs that College Board requires for AP status. In 2008, Churchill students took 1,961 AP exams with a passing rate 87.3%, significantly higher than the County passing rate of 70.6%.

Please refer to the Table on the next page comparing Churchill Students' AP performance to that of MCPS as a whole.

## Number of AP Exams Taken in 2008 by MCPS and Churchill Students and Number and Percentage of AP Exam Scores of 3 or Higher

All Students			African American			Asian American			Hispanic			White		
# of AP Tests Taken	# of Exams Scores 3 or higher	% of Exams Scores 3 or higher	# of AP Tests Taken	# of Exams Scores 3 or higher	% of Exams Scores 3 or higher	# of AP Tests Taken	# of Exams Scores 3 or higher	% of Exams Scores 3 or higher	# of AP Tests Taken	# of Exams Scores 3 or higher	% of Exams Scores 3 or higher	# of AP Tests Taken	# of Exams Scores 3 or higher	% of Exams Scores 3 or higher
<b><u>MCPS</u></b>														
25921	18306	70.6	2510	1152	45.9	6813	5017	73.6	2379	1336	56.2	14149	10763	76.1
<b><u>Churchill</u></b>														
1937	1691	87.3	51	35	68.6	583	508	87.1	98	81	82.7	1202	1066	88.7

Attached in Appendix A is a memo illustrating the need for increased funding for our science program. Attached in Appendix B is documentation illustrating the many expenses involved with various science, foreign language, art and music courses available at Churchill High School. Performing hands-on experiments in science labs and writing in workbooks reinforces the curriculum. While our students are entitled to a “free public education” we want to ensure that new policies regarding fees do not compromise the current quality of instruction or level of student achievement that makes MCPS and the state of Maryland premier school systems. MCPS needs more money to supplement the loss of funds currently earned from fees charged to students.

### **ENRICHMENT**

It is equally important for MCPS to close the achievement gap while at the same time continuing to RAISE the bar through improved and increased enriched instruction. Reducing funding and staffing for enriched and innovative curriculum and programs during tight budget times is penny-wise and pound foolish for numerous reasons.

Lessening the opportunities for enrichment will lessen the quality of instruction and reduce student performance, this in turn, will jeopardize the excellent reputation of our County schools and the county's tax revenue base. There are not enough spaces in the magnet programs throughout the county for all qualified students; therefore, Gifted and Talented opportunities must be made available everywhere. Montgomery County must focus an equitable amount of resources on our talented students if the county expects to live up to their responsibility of producing future leaders.

Our community is adamant that GT courses that provide rigorous academic and challenging opportunities must continue to be offered at all levels in our cluster: elementary, middle, and high school. Churchill High School lost a very valuable, as well as timely, program this school year due to budget cuts. The Signature Program Coordinator position was cut to a .6 position and overall funding for the signature programs was reduced as well. These cuts resulted in the elimination of the International Studies (IS) Academy, which focused on History and World Issues and Foreign Language. These disciplines are extremely important to the global economy. The Academy was eliminated after the 2008-09 school year began. Current 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders who had already been accepted into the program were told the program was being abolished. It is limping along with the assistance of parents who volunteered in order to provide these students with the opportunity they were promised.

Churchill High School has two other very successful academies: The Academy of Math, Technology and Science (MTS) and The Academy of the Performing Arts. The cost of running Churchill's signature program is minimal compared to the cost at other schools:

there are NO transportation costs associated with our programs because they are only available to students residing in the Churchill service area; we do not have Academy Head Teachers as in other schools, only a Signature Program coordinator whose position was cut by 40% this year and will be cut 60% next year. Therefore, she will not be able to administer the program and maintain the same level of excellence as in the past. **We respectfully request the necessary funding to reinstate the Signature Program Coordinator to a FULL-TIME position without teaching responsibilities.**

Not only does this program provide enrichment for the students in these three academies, it provides enrichment to ALL Churchill students. Lectures and presentations given by area professionals are open to all students; student presentations about their internships and research projects are open to the community; art projects are displayed throughout school; music concerts are given throughout the year; a week-long Performing Arts Festival occurs every May with different activities every evening open to the entire community. **The students graduating from the Churchill Signature programs take an average of 5.4 AP courses during their high school career – another very impressive statistic.**

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

The elimination of learning centers within MCPS has moved the responsibility for educating students with special needs back to the home schools. Unfortunately, the resources necessary to ensure the success of these students have not been moved to the home schools. The number of special education staff and the hours provided are not adequate to ensure success for every student. Six of the eight schools in our cluster have at least one program that serves special needs students. Most of these



programs are either quad-cluster or county-based programs. Some of the county-based programs receive students throughout the year. Unfortunately, this addition of students is not usually accompanied by an equivalent addition of staff. We cannot expect our students or teachers to succeed if the resources are over-extended and spread too thin. Parents, - of students who are mainstreamed but who still need the assistance of a paraeducator, - should not have to fight to protect the staff hours that are critical for their children's success.

## **MAINTENANCE**

As the economic woes continue, the Capital Improvements Plan for MCPS may be jeopardized, adding to the maintenance concerns throughout the county. Montgomery County along with MCPS, need to ensure that the staff and students have safe, healthy environments in which to teach and learn. Cuts in the number of building service worker positions and central maintenance positions were recommended in the MCPS budget. As the MCPS school buildings continue to age, funding for maintenance must increase, NOT decrease.

“Rigor,” a word we hear so often applied to academics at MCPS, must likewise be applied to maintenance. This means that MCPS must be extremely thorough and exhaustive in maintenance practices. Rigor means HVAC systems should have quarterly filter changes and twice a year inspections and cleaning of the coils, especially in portables, which are more vulnerable to air quality issues. Rigor means adhering to roof repair scheduling without delays. Rigor means being proactive, not reactive in maintenance practices. Rigor in academics results in improved achievement. Rigor in

maintenance practices will result in energy savings; and safe and healthy students who are comfortable in their learning environment, which will contribute to increased achievement!

RIGOR + MAINTENANCE = INCREASED STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT  
(SAFE AND HEALTHY STUDENTS + COMFORTABLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT)

RIGOR + MAINTENANCE= MONEY TO APPLY IN FUTURE CIP BUDGETS  
(ENERGY SAVINGS + LONGER LIFE OF BUILDINGS AND OTHER FACILITIES)

It is equally as important for Montgomery County and MCPS to protect the investment in new school buildings with proactive and proper maintenance. Building maintenance plans (BMPs) must be provided to all of our schools: new and old, to ensure that maintenance is being completed in a timely and proper fashion. Portables must be included in these maintenance plans to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff.

## **SUMMARY**

In summary, how we will continue to drive the success of our Churchill Cluster students when our cluster is not benefiting from the federal or state stimulus funds while also facing reductions in funding due to the \$20 million in cutbacks in the proposed budget for MCPS? Since Churchill is one of the top performing clusters in the county your financial support is crucial to our cluster and to the County's future success.

Thank you for providing the Churchill Cluster with an opportunity to testify before you this evening.

## **Appendix A: Need for Increased Funding for Churchill High School's Science Program**

This memo addresses the need to increase funding for the science program at Churchill High School due to the elimination of revenue provided by student fees.

The science program at Churchill High School services over 2300 students divided into 74 teaching sections (which include 7 double period classes) taught in 15 classrooms by 17 teachers. We spend approximately \$30,000+ per year to provide an on-going rigorous lab program to students. This equates to approximately \$13.00 per student per year for science lab supplies. MCPS provides approximately \$10,000 and student's fees provide the remaining \$20,000+. This year students were asked to donate \$10.00 per student per year or \$25.00 per student per double period class per year. No student was charged more than \$25.00 per year no matter how many science classes are taken.

Everyone understands:

- 1) The cost of science materials has risen dramatically every year for the same item.
- 2) That there are new costs associated with old tasks due to new EPA regulations concerning hazardous materials disposal and usage. Therefore, it has become increasingly expensive to operate a "lab" oriented science class.
- 3) That the new curricular materials developed by MCPS to master the Maryland State HSA and the County standardized semester exams demand the use of lab materials.
- 4) That the College Board Advanced Placement Program mandates 12 to 15 sophisticated labs to attain AP standing per AP Biology, AP Chemistry, AP Physics, and AP Environmental Science courses. Without the AP labs, a school will not qualify for AP accreditation.
- 5) That the MCPS magnet schools will retain more of their funding to continue attracting gifted students and completing their specialized exams.
- 6) That MCPS's focus on rigor and AP/Honors enrollment requires increased funding for science lab settings.

What is hard for people to grasp is that:

- 1) We cannot and will not be able to maintain the present level of education without purchasing the costly lab materials for science classes.
- 2) Churchill High School's gifted science population requires more lab funding due to increased number of students in AP level classes which require AP College Board prescribed lab materials.
- 3) Churchill High School's gifted science population encourages the establishment of the Math, Technology, and Science Academy which stimulates student science interest and provides community research internships for each student. This Academy increases the use of lab materials within the school.

- 4) Churchill High School's gifted science population encouraged the formation of the Molecular Genetics course coordinated with Mount Saint Mary's University to award college credit upon completion of costly college level lab investigations completed at Churchill.

Without revenue from student fees which has supplemented MCPS funding for Science at Churchill High School, the Churchill parents and Churchill community can expect:

- 1) AP science classes to lose certification.
- 2) The Molecular Genetics course to lose accreditation with Mount Saint Mary's University and students to lose college credit.
- 3) All science classes to complete fewer inquiry hands on labs being replaced with lecture and/or discussions.
- 4) Existing science equipment to not be repaired, cleaned, adjusted, replaced as quickly. This will cause 3 or 4 students/microscope/lab instead of 2.
- 5) Decrease in enrollment in Churchill science classes and Churchill science achievement.

## Appendix B-1: Partial List of Science expenses at Churchill High School:

### Earth Science

1 earth science world globe \$100.00+  
1 sun tracking replacement kit/2  
students \$50.00  
1 astronomy telescope **\$200.00 to  
\$1,500.00**  
1 stream table per 4 students \$400.00

### Environmental science

1 set replacement chemicals air  
pollution/class **\$917.00**  
1 set replacement chemicals soil  
analysis/class \$400.00

### Biotechnology (used by Biology, AP Biology and Molecular Genetics = 670 students)

1 PCR kit replacement/30 students  
\$140.00  
1 Transformation kit/30 students \$99.00  
1 DNA electrophoresis lab station/2  
students **\$300.00**  
1 water bath heater/class \$635.00  
1 centrifuge/class **\$350.00 to \$1,200**  
1 spectrophotometer/ 6 student  
**\$1,400.00**  
1 micropipette/ 2 students \$250.00  
1 electrophoresis gel box/ 4 students  
\$200.00  
1 power supply/4 student \$600.00

### Biology (used by Biology, Anatomy = **625 students**)

1 human torso model **\$300.00-\$1300.00**  
1 skeleton model \$500.00 - \$999.00  
1 dissection pig \$16.00-\$21.00  
1 dissection cat \$52.00-\$71.00  
1 dissection sheep heart \$9.75  
1 microscope \$300.00-\$500.00  
1 microscope cleaning/adjustment  
\$15.00  
1 Owl pellet investigation/class \$50.00

1 organic chemical investigation  
lab/class \$75.00

AP Biology = 101 students  
AP Biology has 12 required labs which  
cost approximately \$100.00/lab/class =  
**\$3600.00**

### Chemistry = **460 students**

1 student balance **\$250.00- \$600.00**  
1 titration burette \$55.00  
Chemical replacement approximately  
\$50.00/class/lab

### AP chemistry – 64 students

AP chemistry has 12 required labs  
which cost approximately  
\$100.00/lab/class = **\$2400.00**

### Molecular Genetics completing Mt. St. Mary's University college labs = 60 students

Approximate cost \$150.00/lab/class  
times 12 labs = **\$3600.00**

**The above list is only a partial  
list of science materials which  
must be maintained, repaired,  
replaced each year.**

## **Appendix B-2: Expenses for Churchill's Foreign Language Workbooks**

With the absence of fees, the following consumable workbooks would have to be purchased as textbooks for the next school year. Their lifespan would be less than a textbook. All with soft covers and daily usage, they will not last much longer than one school year.

With the inability to charge a fee for these workbooks, funding for these consumables will now have to come from the schools' textbook funds.

**By reducing curricular fees and textbook funds from the budget, the foreign language program may be severely compromised.**

### **Spanish**

#### **Spanish Three**

Workbook	Realidades, Practice Wkbk.	Consumable workbook: \$9.97
	Nassi/Levi Sp. Two Years	Consumable workbook: \$14.

#### **Spanish Three Honors.**

Workbook	Review Text in Sp Two Yrs.	Consumable workbook: \$9.95
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#### **Spanish Four**

Workbook	Review Text in Sp Two Yrs.	Consumable workbook: \$9.95
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#### **Spanish Four Honors**

Primary Text	Una Vez Más	Consumable workbook: \$44.07
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#### **AP Spanish Language**

Textbook	AP Spanish: Preparing for the Language Exam	Consumable workbook: \$27.97
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### **French**

#### **French 4/4h**

Workbook	French Three Years	Consumable workbook: \$11.25
	Review Text	

#### **French 5**

Workbook	Triangle	Consumable workbook: \$15.95.
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#### **AP French**

Textbook	Une fois pur Toutes	Consumable workbook: \$35.97.
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Textbook	AP French: Preparing for the Language Exam	Consumable workbook: \$27.97.
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\*All prices for workbook purchases are actual costs of book. They do not include additional shipping and handling fees.

## Appendix B-3: Expenses for Churchill's Art courses

### Courses:

#### I. Ceramics/Sculpture

expenditures for 10 sections of classes for a school year:

Clay	\$3500.00
Glazes	3500.00
Ceramic tools	200.00
Plaster	600.00
Paper and Board	200.00
Paint and Finishes	300.00
Wire and hardware	150.00
Sponges, soap & cleaning supplies	200.00
<b>Miscellaneous supplies</b>	<b>200.00</b>

**Total**            **\$8850.00**

#### II. Photography I, II, and Advance Studio Photography

- Cost of repair and replacement of equipment; cameras (conventional, digital, enlargers (Average repair cost this past year (\$1000.00), timers (\$300.00), studio lights (\$500.00), development canisters \$300.00), reels, bulk loaders, dryers, tacking irons (\$300.00), tongs (\$50.00), mat knives (\$50.00), contact printers (\$300.00), easels and magnifiers (\$300.00), Printing Inks (\$2000.00).
- Cost of digital printing papers (\$500.00), conventional photo papers (\$500.00), dry mounting tissue (\$300.00), negative holders (\$60.00), enlarging bulbs (\$200.00), negative cleaners (\$50.00) and lens cleaners (\$50.00).
- Cost occurred for shipping and entering art competitions throughout the school year of entering student art competitions (\$50.00)

**Total Cost: \$6810**

#### III. Digital Art

- Cost of printing papers and ink (\$600.00)
- Cost of repairing and replacing; digital cameras (estimated cost: \$500.00)
- Cost occurred for shipping and entering art competitions throughout the school year (\$40.00)

**Total Cost: \$1140.00**

#### IV. Commercial Art

- Cost of repairing and replacing: etching press and rollers, drymounting presses, (estimated cost: \$500.00)

**Total Cost: \$500.00**

**Total costs associated with selected art courses: \$17,300**

## **Appendix B-4: Expenses for Churchill's Instrumental Music**

Here is a general break-down of instrumental music expenditures for 10 sections of classes for a school year:

Dry Cleaning of concert attire: \$1,000

Replacement of lost or damaged Concert Attire: \$800

Sheet Music for 6 ensembles, 2 guitar classes and 1 music theory class:  
\$2000

Instrument Part Replacement (i.e. strings, bows, mouthpieces, general instrument parts): \$1500

Instrument Repairs (stringed instruments, guitars, winds and brass):  
\$2000

Aging Instrument Replacement: \$5000

**Total: \$12,300**