

Northwest Cluster

Northwest High School

Kingsview Middle School
Roberto Clemente Middle School (shared)
Lakelands Park Middle School (shared)

Ronald McNair Elementary School
Spark M. Matsunaga Elementary School
Darnestown Elementary School
Clopper Mill Elementary School
Diamond Elementary School
Germantown Elementary School
Great Seneca Creek Elementary School

FY 2008 Operating Budget

Testimony to the Board of Education

January 11, 2007

The Northwest Cluster appreciates this opportunity to comment favorably on the Superintendent's Recommended Fiscal Year 2008 Operating Budget. My remarks this evening will be brief.

First, and as an overarching comment, the Northwest Cluster agrees with the testimony delivered by Ms. DeWinter last evening that the Superintendent's proposal "makes significant progress towards MCCPTA priorities as outlined in [MCCPTA's] Operating Budget Compact and Resolution on FY 2008 Operating Budget Priorities."

Second, the operating budget input we received from schools in our cluster all centers around just one of the themes in Ms. DeWinter's testimony, namely the MCCPTA's goal of "safe, secure, clean, healthy, modern school facilities." While she spoke in general terms about the overflow of maintenance backlogs and the financial consequences of constantly playing catch-up, I will speak in more specific terms using case examples from our cluster.

- As I noted when we were discussing capital budget issues, Darnestown Elementary School's gym floor is worn and slippery. While complete replacement of the gym floor is a capital expense, interim fixes such as resurfacing need not be.
- That same school experiences what is best characterized as "bathroom smells," which are purportedly a function of an outdated septic system. While full repair or replacement of the septic system is a longer-term and likely necessary step, interim steps should be taken to ensure a clean and healthy learning environment.
- Building security is a pervasive concern that has been raised by most schools in our cluster. Appropriate entranceways, parabolic mirrors, card

readers, appropriate lighting and locks, and security cameras are all options for addressing the relative ease with which undesirables can enter our permanent and transitory structures. The cluster urges proactive MCPS assessment and remediation of security concerns.

- Finally, we raised in our testimony in October and provide some additional details now, regarding the condition of the Northwest High School football field. The field is sinking and has many low spots that hold water. When the field was built in 1998, organic matter (tree trunks and branches) was included with the fill dirt. This organic matter has decomposed and the dirt has settled at a lower area. The low areas hold water, which makes the field unplayable and creates problems with the grass (such as fungus and weeds). The field needs a true drainage system below the playing surface. The field needs to be stripped, re-graded with a proper drainage system installed underneath, and then sod put down. The minimal cost for this project is \$65,000.00.

Thank you for the opportunity to elaborate on Ms. DeWinter's testimony from last evening, with particular focus on a few issues confronting the Northwest Cluster. I welcome any questions.