

CLARKSBURG CLUSTER

Clarksburg High School
Rocky Hill Middle School (split articulated)
Neelsville Middle School (split articulated)

Clarksburg Elementary School
Fox Chapel Elementary School
Little Bennett Elementary School
Capt. James E. Daly Elementary School
William B. Gibbs, Jr. Elementary School
Cedar Grove Elementary School (split articulated)

The Clarksburg Cluster thanks the MCPS Board of Education for the opportunity to provide input on the FY 2013-2018 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and FY 2013 Capital Budget.

Two years ago, during the Board of Education's visit to the Clarksburg Cluster, some of you may remember the bus tour during which you were taken on a long loop of the Clarksburg schools and communities. If you recall, Clarksburg was no longer the sleepy little town with one or two traffic lights, located somewhere along I-270 between Germantown and the Frederick County border. Even then, its population was exploding, and planned new schools and infrastructure couldn't be built fast enough – and this was in a tough economy! Today, construction continues at a fast pace, with new families and children of all ages moving in. Clarksburg is certainly defying the local and national trends when it comes to real estate. In 2000, Clarksburg had a population of 2,371 residents. Today, Clarksburg has over 14,000 residents – a 490% increase!

In continued recognition of our community's growth, we would like to thank Superintendent Starr for his recommendation that keeps the much-needed new Clarksburg Village Elementary School #1 and Clarksburg High School addition on schedule. By the time the new elementary school is completed (August 2014), the other impacted existing elementary schools (Clarksburg ES, Cedar Grove ES, and Little Bennett ES) are projected to be at a combined 136.6% of capacity – with LBES more than 157%!

Similarly, by the time Clarksburg High School's addition is completed (August 2015), it is projected to have 1,843 students (117.7% of capacity) – with its next year slated to be at 120.4% of capacity.

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As happy as we are about the projects that have been kept on schedule, we are extremely displeased with the recommendation that the new Clarksburg/Damascus Middle School be delayed yet another year, to open in August 2016. Currently, with Rocky Hill Middle School (RHMS) at “only” 105% of capacity, we can see why the Superintendent believes there is room for delay. However, RHMS is projected to be at 127.4% of capacity by 2015 – one year before relief from the new middle school, and 135% the next year! And we urge the Board to remember... Clarksburg has defied local, state, and national housing trends before – WHAT IF IT DOES SO AGAIN??

What will MCPS do to ensure the extra 350+ students at RHMS get the quality education they deserve?

The too-often offered solution to the overcrowding, MORE PORTABLES, is no longer acceptable. Our school sites have too little space to begin with, and sacrificing one educational space (a PE field, basketball court, or recess blacktop) for another makes no sense. Little Bennett Elementary School is on one of the smallest lots in the county, and is trying to come to grips with adding 2 more portables to the 6 it already has. The same is true at Rocky Hill Middle School and Clarksburg High School, where the expanding enrollment in the coming years will require far more portables than those already there, 8 and 7, respectively.

The Clarksburg Cluster does recognize the difficult financial situation, where lower than requested Spending Affordability Guidelines and likely smaller State aid creates a perfect storm. However, as Arne Duncan, the US Secretary of Education, stated during a recent town hall meeting, "Today, other countries around the world are investing more. They understand that education is the surest path to social mobility and economic security. They are united, intent and rapidly moving ahead, [and] America must do the

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same." Now is the time to take advantage of lower construction costs and make the investments that will help ensure our children are socially and economically secure.

There is not one school or addition in Clarksburg that can be postponed if we are going to provide the best education possible for our children every day. We want to work with the Board of Education to help fund these projects. If there are other alternatives, we are listening – but we need the Board to learn from past inaccuracies in the projected numbers and make the correct decision now. The children of Clarksburg depend on it.

Below is a detailed list of the CIP needs for Clarksburg cluster schools:

A. Request for individual projects:

1. Additions:

Clarksburg HS– Request the construction funds for the two-story addition. (Please see #8, Relocatable Classrooms)

Capt. James Daly Elementary – Request for classroom additions

3. New Schools:

Clarksburg/Damascus Middle School - Allocate construction funding for the MUCH need new middle school

Clarksburg Village #1- Allocate construction funding for new elementary school.

B. Request for County-wide Project

3. Building Modifications and Program Improvements (BMPI)

Cedar Grove Elementary,

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Clarksburg Elementary and

Capt. James Daly Elementary- Redirect and control visitors gaining entry to the school facility by redirecting visitors to be forced into the Front Office when entering the building.

5. HVAC Replacement

Cedar Grove ES – Half of the school have had its HVAC replaced, please keep the remainder of the school’s HVAC to be replaced on schedule.

Rocky Hill Middle School – Request a permanent solution to the inconsistent heating and cooling at RHMS. The temperature in the 3rd floor and the interior classrooms reaches 80 + degrees during the late Spring and early Fall. There are also issues with the building’s chiller, with rooms that are 65 degrees and below when the AC is running.

6. Improved (Safe) Access to Schools

Clarksburg HS and

Rocky Hill MS – With increased student pedestrian traffic to the schools with the completion of Foreman Blvd into Clarksburg Village, we have two major safety concerns: crossing Rt. 355 at Foreman, and walkers along Rt. 355 without sidewalks. We request a study to be conducted to identify solutions to ensure our students’ safety.

9. Relocatable Classrooms

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Little Bennett ES- Request green modular portables are utilized at this green school.

10. Restroom Renovations

Cedar Grove ES – request bathroom renovations stay on schedule.

13. School Security Systems

Cedar Grove ES - Request camera security system

Capt. James Daly ES- Request camera security system and exterior lighting to deter vandalism around the portables.

15. Technology Modernization

Cedar Grove ES – Request re-wiring of the computer lab. When it was made a computer lab, they added the Ethernet drops, but not additional electrical wiring. The result is many, many computers and accessories are plugged into the same electrical outlets, creating a potentially unsafe situation. According to our user support specialist, another result is that computer mice and other peripherals are failing and needing to be replaced.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Clarksburg Cluster Coordinators

Todd Powell, Janet Sanchez & Seenu Suvarna