

# THE NORTHEAST CONSORTIUM

## A Consortium of the Blake, Paint Branch, and Springbrook Clusters

Comments on the FY 2013 Operating Budget

### On behalf of The NEC High Schools

January 11, 2012

Blake High School  
Paint Branch High School  
Springbrook High School

Good evening Superintendent Starr, Ms. Brandman, members of the Board and staff.

My name is Jocelyn Walker and I am the Blake Cluster Coordinator. I am here tonight to speak on behalf of the Operating Budget needs of the three high schools in our Consortium — Blake, Paint Branch and Springbrook.

Let me begin by saying that the Northeast Consortium strongly supports the MCCPTA FY 2013 Operating Budget Compact and Resolution on Operating Budget Priorities.

Our parents appreciate the Superintendent's focus on optimizing resources for increased community engagement, academic intervention for struggling students, and professional development. We also applaud the effort of not proposing any reductions to school-based staff.

However we have concerns in the following areas that are specific to the needs of the NEC High Schools:

#### **Academic Support**

The economic difficulties of our region has resulted in the reductions of teachers and support staff, yet at the same time enrollment and academic program requirements have increased, and because of such, many students are not receiving the type of assistance that they need to succeed.

For example, the State graduation requirement in the form of the HSAs has added to the workload of our school's staff. However there have been cuts in the **Composition Assistant hours and we would like the hours restored.** Composition Assistants work directly with students and specifically to help students pass the English HSA, graduate high school and help schools make AYP.

With the additional responsibility of implementing HSA Bridge Projects, Resource Teachers in those content areas are feeling the strain of finding time to support students who need help.

### **School Security**

Maintaining safe, secure and healthy school environments, with no further reductions in maintenance, building service, MCPS security staff or School Resource Officers (SRO) is also a concern in our Consortium.

School security is important on our large high school campuses. Maintaining appropriate levels of security staff is critical to the safety of our children, our staff, and our buildings.

### **Building Maintenance**

Building maintenance is a priority for our clusters. Our schools, which are not only sites of education, but also serve a myriad of other functions, need constant maintenance to ensure they are safe for our students and staff, as well as the community members that use our schools 7 days a week. We feel that preventative maintenance of our schools is the most cost effective solution. The maintenance staff works very hard, but it is our understanding that work orders have a long history of being backlogged. This is compounded by the staff shortages realized in recent years.

In closing, we believe that our partnership with you, the County Council and the State Government, in working for the best for all our students, families and staff, shows a strong commitment to our common goals. As I said earlier, we all realize that the budget is very tight this year and that difficult choices must be made. We do not envy you this task. We do appreciate your careful and thoughtful consideration of our concerns.

Respectfully,

The Northeast Consortium Cluster Coordinators

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