

Quince Orchard Cluster of Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations

Brown Station Elementary
Fields Road Elementary
Jones Lane Elementary
Rachel Carson Elementary
Thurgood Marshall Elementary
Diamond Elementary

Lakelands Park Middle
Ridgeview Middle

Quince Orchard High

January 11, 2012

Testimony before the Montgomery County Public Schools Board of Education Regarding the Superintendent's Recommended FY2013 Operating Budget

Dear President Brandman, Dr. Starr, and Members of the Board of Education,

It's a privilege to meet with you tonight on behalf of the parents of more than 6,300 students attending public schools in the Quince Orchard Cluster. We appreciate your efforts on their behalf, and we support the Superintendent's recommended FY2013 Operating Budget. We also support the MCCPTA testimony provided earlier this evening, and the priorities identified therein.

Each year we lend our support to the proposed operating budget, but this year we'd also like to compliment the Superintendent on the process employed to reach his recommendation. He projected to our communities that he is willing to listen and to look for cost-cutting measures that have the least negative-impact on our school children's education, and it is reflected in the recommended budget proposed. We know that this effort to establish a strong credibility base within his new position will continue, and we hope that it is appreciated as much by the Board, and by the Montgomery County Council.

The Quince Orchard (QO) Cluster supports the principle of the Maintenance of Effort (MOE) law, and looks forward to the Board and County Council working together to influence any legislative amendments intended to improve the law. We also believe that any penalty resolution resulting from last year's MOE, should not impact this proposed operating budget.

We thank you for your efforts to "protect the classroom" from additional cuts to school-based staffing. This will permit us to continue our best efforts to teach all of our children in spite of previously reduced staffing and the continuing increase in enrollment numbers and intervention requirements. This effort is still reeling from the more than \$430 million in reductions made since FY2009, during which student enrollment has increased dramatically and the number of students requiring special needs and interventions. I know I'm not telling you something you don't know, but these levels aren't sustainable.

We also appreciate your recognition of the importance of professional development for our teaching staff in rolling out new curricula, implementing intervention measures, and educating our parents about the process. As we continue to rollout Curriculum 2.0, the Elementary Integrated Curriculum, we should do everything possible to provide our teachers with the right resources, and enough resources, to learn the new curricula in a timely manner so that

Cluster Coordinators:

Jim Keenan
15217 Winesap Dr.
North Potomac, MD 20878
301-801-8853
jim.keenan@dot.gov

Rebecca Smondrowski
101 Short Street
Gaithersburg, MD 20878
301-325-6246
rsmon@comcast.net

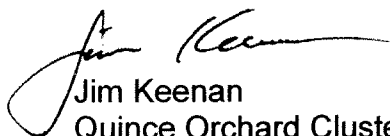
Jeanne Ellinport
319 Argosy Drive
Gaithersburg, MD 20878
240-643-0770
jeanne@ellinportconsulting.com

our children see the benefits. This development focus will also help in the recruitment and retention of a highly qualified teaching staff during this tough economy.

Finally our cluster strongly believes in the necessity of providing a safe, secure, and healthy learning environment for all of our children. Your previous efforts to help us at Ridgeview Middle School are greatly appreciated by parents, students, and the school staff. We also appreciate the improved communications regarding incidents occurring in our cluster and quad-cluster, thanks to the support you have provided. With the support and management of our principals, QO does not have severe bullying or gang concerns, but we support the requests for help of those clusters that do. If an expansion of the SRO program is not possible this year, please continue to support it in the future. We do not want avoidable incidents occurring in our schools.

As always, thank you for the hard work you do for all Montgomery County students. We know it is another tough budget year, and we'll continue to do what we can to secure both County and State financial support. Thank you all for caring for our children!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Keenan", with a stylized flourish extending from the end of the name.

Jim Keenan
Quince Orchard Cluster Coordinator