

WHEATON HIGH SCHOOL

12601 Dalewood Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20906

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BOE HEARING ON THE SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDED CAPITAL BUDGET AND CIP
November 10, 2011

Good evening. I am George Gadbois, one of the cluster coordinators for Wheaton Cluster, but also an MCCPTA Delegate for Wheaton High School. We want you to know that the Wheaton High School PTSA **does not** support the Superintendent's 2013 recommended capital improvements program as it pertains to Wheaton High School. His recommendations fail to keep the planned modernization of our school on track and prevent this facility in this largely socio-economically-challenged area to be on par with the 21st century.

As you well know, Wheaton High School wants to continue to move forward with its modernization, especially at a time of lower construction costs. Wheaton also has the lowest FACT score of any school listed that is not currently under construction.

We share with two other schools in our cluster the health, safety, and environmental issues that aging brings—such as leaks, damage, insufficient circuits, cracks, mold, and loosening asbestos. We thought we were finally embarking on our modernization with facility completion in August 2015 and site completion three years later. After an earlier two-year delay in our original completion date imposed in 2009, we now learn we will be delayed again.

As part of the DCC, we believe our academies are top notch. We have had recent opportunities to share our school's and staff's successes nationally. We eagerly anticipate embellishing two of these programs with our new magnet initiative next year, but we need a facility to properly support this investment going forward. We are still troubled by the trend in under-enrollment as it has resulted in lowering the number of the course offerings available to some students, while demand for choice remains high. We trust the new magnet program will begin to reverse this trend and we thank you for that.

We believe our modernization will not only relieve the facility problems, but will further boost utilization. The modernization is essential for Wheaton to remain competitive within the consortium, particularly as we are the last high school of the five to be updated. It will attract students more proportionately and help us keep many of our cluster high performing

students. We want to remain on track with a facility solution that would provide the Wheaton community with a flagship high school for years to come. But this CIP has just put the brakes on the momentum that has just been built. We urge you to reverse the delay in construction appropriations and reinstate the schedule to start construction in 2013 as planned.

You respectfully need to know that the entire Wheaton community was outraged in learning we would again be delayed. The superintendent is in fact delaying two schools, as the Edison center is equally at stake. He has chosen to delay a high school in one of the poorest and highly diverse areas of the county. What did Wheaton do to deserve that? And for at least a second time! He has chosen to also delay the only county career and technology center too.

In closing, the parents of our cluster strongly support the improved learning environment for our children that a modernization ultimately brings. Our children should not be asked to shoulder the rigor we ask of them without a supportive, safe, and positive environment. Let's not drop the ball now; please NO DELAY for WHEATON HIGH!

Thank you for your support for our community and we ask that you continue to provide us the tools and facilities to allow all our children to succeed in environments conducive to learning. You must remove the "variability" that exists with the condition of Wheaton High School.

Thank you.