

## CIP Testimony Einstein Cluster

Nov. 11, 2009

Good Evening.

My name is Kelly Giblin and I am the Cluster Coordinator representing the Einstein cluster of schools. In examining our cluster's facilities we realize what great shape our buildings are in compared with other clusters. We would like to thank the Board and Dr. Weast for the attention our schools have received over the past few years and feel grateful for the condition of our buildings.

However, you knew there had to be a "however", the cluster leadership continues to be concerned about overcrowding at Oakland Terrace and Woodlin Elementary Schools. While a long-term solution has been enacted to address the overcrowding of these schools with the scheduled opening of a new elementary school in 2012, short term solutions to the severe overcrowding are virtually non-existent to bridge the gap until this new school is opened. The problems at Oakland Terrace are particularly acute which currently has 798 students, 175 of which are kindergarteners and is projected to have 873 students next year and 912 students the following year. And looking at Schools at a Glance these outrageous numbers continue beyond the projected opening of the new elementary school. Is this an oversight, or is MCPS telling us

this project will not happen on schedule? With these numbers Oakland Terrace is approaching a small high school without the structural or logistical support to handle such a population. The simple task of feeding the students and providing recess requires three hours as lunch and recess begins at 11:25 AND DOES NOT FINISH UNTIL 2:30. Providing classroom space entails 1/3 of the students to be housed in portables and the "more portables" solution is no longer available since there is no room for more portables on site. This past October the annual Halloween Parade was not held because the logistics of moving 798 children in costumes was too great. And no school-wide events can be held at the building. These are but a few examples of the obvious and simple problems. As we all know running an elementary school is a complex operation, one can only imagine the burden this overcrowding is causing on the teachers and administrators responsible for actually educating and maintaining the safety of these students.

This huge number cannot just be attributed to the economy, and people coming back to public schools. As far back as 2001, we have been presenting testimony and bringing MCPS's attention to this train wreck waiting to happen. In 2002 we prepared data for a Board of Education cluster visit when the enrollment was listed at 711 and projected to rise. It took until 2005 for the facility planning recommendation to be made. And now in 2009 we are watching the train wreck happen.

We are pleased to see the opening of an elementary school in 2012 to help the situation but urge the Board and MCPS to keep this job on schedule and investigate creative solutions to make the next two years ones where learning is helped not hindered.