

Quince Orchard Cluster of Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations

November 12, 2009

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

Testimony before the Montgomery County Public Schools Board of Education Regarding the FY2011 Capital Budget and the FY 2011 -2016 Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

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

It's a pleasure to meet with you tonight on behalf of the parents of more than 6,000 students attending public schools in the Quince Orchard Cluster. We appreciate your efforts on their behalf, and we support the Superintendent's recommended FY2011 Capital Budget, and the FY2011 – 2016 CIP. We also support the MCCPTA testimony provided last evening.

In the proposed CIP, we thank you for including:

- The funding necessary to complete the interior modifications for Ridgeview Middle School. This long-sought health and safety improvement only reassures us that the Board is truly focused on achieving the "maximum advantage" when it comes to improving the learning environment for all of our students. We very much appreciate the Board's continuous support, and MCPS' determination to work with the Quince Orchard community and the Ridgeview staff in achieving results that will invite both students and staff to the school every day. You'll make many people happier and healthier through this construction and HVAC project, and we really look forward to it.
- Thank you for keeping Brown Station Elementary School on schedule for its completed modernization in 2016. We very much appreciate your recognition of its enrollment growth and your consideration of expanding its capacity as a part of the modernization. This should help them in dealing with the situation, since they will be 50% over capacity by that year. We also appreciate your ongoing efforts to improve the safe access of pedestrians entering this building. Please keep the modernizations on track!
- We appreciate your county-wide attention to restroom improvements, and encourage your continued goal of improving them, no matter how you do it.

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In the Quince Orchard Cluster, we still have a few more issues that need to be addressed. One of them is a pedestrian safety issue, and the other is a severe

case of overcrowding. Tonight we will discuss them, not to ask for money, but to ask for your help in identifying what is needed.

Rachel Carson Elementary School has a program capacity of 639 students and their current enrollment is 880 students. This places a huge strain on the facility and on the resources available, which we'll expound on during Operating Budget testimony in January. MCPS recognizes the problem, but abandoned its planned solution a few years ago due to budget constraints. Next year's planned relief will minimally help the situation, but will also place another cluster school in an over-capacity status. In an effort to improve communications on this issue, we would like MCPS to convene a round table discussion on the Carson issue, in an effort to identify the extent of the problem and to achieve community buy-in on what might be considered in the future.

Thurgood Marshall Elementary School has had a student pedestrian problem that has been reported for at least the last five years. The problem is due to a traffic design on school property that has been largely ignored by the MCPS Department of Transportation. Some of this may be due to the turnover in that agency, but we are at the point where we need the problem reviewed, discussed with the community, and the safety concern resolved. Unfortunately, we also believe that we need your help in order to have this addressed.

On a more personal note, we very much enjoyed your visit to our cluster last Spring, and would like to follow that up with an invitation to the Quince Orchard Cougar football play off game this Friday night. In addition to the game, our marching band, and Red Army should keep you entertained and well nourished! I also understand that Dr. Weast missed hearing the QO Jazz band during a recent visit, so please accept my personal invitation to each of you to attend the QO Jazz Cabaret scheduled for April 30th. We believe our music and fine arts programs to be a testament to the Montgomery County School System, and we're proud to share it.

As always, thank you for your support and the hard work you do for all Montgomery County students. We know it is a tough year, like too many recently, and we'll continue to do what we can to secure both County and State financial support. We thank you for looking out for our children!

Sincerely yours,

Jim Keenan
Quince Orchard Cluster Coordinator
