

Quince Orchard Cluster of Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations

February 17, 2010

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 Council Regarding the FY2011 Capital Budget and Amendments to the FY 2011 - 2016 Capital Improvement Program

Dear President Floreen and members of the County Council,

I take great pride in addressing you this evening on behalf of the 12,000-plus interested souls who comprise Quince Orchard Cluster. Collectively, we thank you for not assuming the fetal position as so many other governments have done in this time of economic hardship. Your actions and decisions continue to make Montgomery County a hopeful place to live. Thus encouraged, we approach you tonight in support of the Superintendent's FY2011 Capital Budget

In Quince Orchard Cluster we are well aware of the numerous opportunities and advantages afforded us by Montgomery County Public Schools and the Montgomery County Council. Our children have safe, secure places to learn, inspiring teachers and the finest concentration of principals, administrators and support staff imaginable. This didn't happen by chance and tonight we applaud the Council's role in helping to bring together this unique mix of talent and resources.

We must, however ask more of you, for it is time that all of Quince Orchard Cluster joined the new millennium. Ridgeview Middle School and Brown Station Elementary School have for too long remained much the same structures as when they opened in the seventies. Ridgeview has serious problems with its air quality, HVAC and overall layout, while Brown Station, at 120% of program capacity and growing, has gone over forty years without significant capital improvement. Expecting students to remain intellectually curious in such outmoded physical plants is the academic equivalent of teaching them to keyboard in today's hi-tech world on an IBM Selectric typewriter.

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Fortunately, the Superintendent's budget calls for improvements to Ridgeview by August 2012 and a full scale modernization for Brown Station to be completed in 2016. We petition you to please support these measures in their entirety so that succeeding generations of students in QO Cluster may be spared exposure to these sole remaining vestiges of academic and architectural detritus from the so called "Me Decade."

The rest of the Superintendent's CIP recommendations for QO Cluster speak to restroom renovations. Mindful of the times we're in, we appreciate these

efforts to satisfy what the psychologist Abraham Maslow characterizes as the most fundamental of human needs. We therefore ask humbly, yet with the sense of urgency that sometimes accompanies such needs, please help ensure these fixes stay in plan and on schedule.

There are, of course, other concerns that the budget doesn't address:

Rachel Carson is way overcrowded, maxed out on portables and without an inch to grow and, while MCPS has worked to provide relief, budgets have tightened and plans have been dropped, leaving no prospective solution on the table.

Pedestrian safety issues linger as well at schools such as Thurgood Marshall, Brown Station, and Lakelands Park. These need to be addressed sooner rather than later before somebody gets hurt.

We appreciate, however, that there is only so much you can do. So we implore you, adopt the Superintendent's recommended Capital Budget and CIP and help make certain that the most immediate health and safety problems in QO Cluster are dealt with now, while something positive can still be done.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Kevin Farragher
Quince Orchard Cluster Coordinator
