

February 6, 2008

The Northeast Consortium

A Consortium of the Blake, Paint Branch and Springbrook Clusters

Comments on the FY 2009 Capital Budget

On behalf of the NEC Middle Schools

Benjamin Banneker

Briggs Chaney

William Farquhar

Francis Scott Key

White Oak

Good evening President Knapp and members of the County Council. My name is Naghma Husain and I am one of the Springbrook Cluster Coordinators. I am here to speak to the CIP needs of the consortium's five middle schools—Banneker, Briggs Chaney, Farquhar, Key and White Oak.

First, I must say that we appreciate your time to hear our concerns. We also appreciate your generous support and dedication over the years to our school system and the educational requirements of our subsequent generation. We all recognize that a quality education is paramount for future success. In these times of financial difficulty, we ask for your continued support and commitment. We urge you to allow for necessary funding for renovations and modernizations, without which, our students will suffer the consequences of learning in often unsafe, and certainly unpleasant environments.

The greatest impact to the NEC, particularly all of our middle school students preparing to participate in what we call the "Choice Process," is the delay in the Paint Branch modernization. Without this modernization, Paint Branch, built in 1969, is not really much of a "choice" in comparison to Blake which was built in 1998, and Springbrook which was renovated in 1994. Keeping Paint Branch on track for modernization will allow it to be an equal choice which is, after all, the purpose of the choice process.

Also, as you are well aware with the increasing costs of construction, sooner is more cost effective than later. Delaying the Paint Branch modernization will cost the County more in the long run as well as increase the number of students trying to learn in an aging, inadequate facility. It is painfully obvious that funding for construction is imperative for the educational future of our NEC students. It is an investment in our future.

Individual Middle School Needs

Benjamin Banneker

- *Requests to be put on the modernization schedule.
- *Immediate need for two additional portable classrooms to address overcrowding.
- *Expedite restroom renovations to address wear and tear of age and overcapacity.
- *Replacement of AC unit in main office which is over 30 years old and breaks down frequently.
- *Conversion of sewing and FACS classrooms into a computer lab as these classes are no longer part of the curriculum.

Briggs Chaney

- *Repair or replace HVAC system which has been difficult to maintain and regulate for several years.

William Farquhar

Farquhar remains the oldest, continually operating middle school in the county never to be modernized. The PTSA has addressed several needs by purchasing equipment at their own expense. Staff and students are working in an unsafe environment until this modernization is complete. Please read the attached letter provided by the Farquhar PTSA.

- *Remain on track for scheduled modernization with August 2015 completion.
- *Address growth, traffic and safety concerns at Batchellors Forest Road.
- *Immediately address essential interim repairs for the safety of our students and staff such as:
 - repair or replacement of lighting and stairwell treads
 - remove remaining asbestos and mold growth in ceiling tiles

Francis Scott Key

*Remain on schedule for August 2009 completion.

White Oak

*Requires new TV studio equipment. Current equipment broke last year and the school was unable to offer video classes as a result.

*New furniture, paint and carpet in heavy traffic areas.

Thank you for your time, support and consideration of our requests.

The Northeast Consortium Cluster Coordinators:

Area Vice President

Ellen Salins

Springbrook

Pamela Johnson

Naghma Husain

Paint Branch

Patti Twigg

Blake

Dawn Dolan

Lee Ann Doerflinger

Wm. H. Farquhar Middle School PTA
16915 Batchellors Forest Road Olney, Maryland 20832

Dear County Council Members:

While the school community has benefited from previous improvements, **Farquhar's need for an accelerated modernization date is paramount.** The growing burden of an old, outdated building with many unsafe, unhealthy and antiquated areas is compounded by the immediate and increased development on Batchellors Forest Road and the greater community. This includes the construction of two new high schools, Good Counsel and Washington Christian Academy. Our school is in dire need of major renovations, including the removal of asbestos tiling throughout the school, the replacement of the aged and defunct lighting system throughout the building, and the improvement of the bus, vehicular, and pedestrian access to the school. Only modernization can alleviate these conditions.

We urge you to address the age of Farquhar's facility and the immediate impact of growth and traffic in this area. Farquhar cannot keep up with all the technological advances in the classroom in a building that existed before they were invented. Acceleration of the modernization date must be underscored as a priority for our almost 40- year-old school that has never been modernized. Thank you for all your efforts on behalf of our school and students.

Respectfully yours,
Jennifer Mazur
Farquhar PTA President-Elect

Fran Simons
Farquhar PTA President