

January 24, 2008

The Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear President Knapp and members of the County Council,

Thank you for allowing the Northeast Consortium to testify in support of a greatly-needed 8 classroom addition to Sherwood Elementary School located in Sandy Spring, MD. Sherwood ES is currently 30% overcrowded, a benchmark reached 4 years earlier than MCPS predicted. In the last two reports on the matter, MCPS has predicted enrollments will continue to increase in the foreseeable future. The school currently maintains 7 long-term portable classrooms installed on the school property behind the main school building.

The County has already funded the first two stages of the Sherwood ES addition process. The Sherwood ES feasibility study, funded by MCPS in 2005 and completed in June, 2006, has long-recommended construction of the addition. During deliberations on the FY08 Capital Budget, MCPS testified in support of the Sherwood ES construction project, but argued that approval of such an addition should not be considered in an amendment year of the FY07 CIP, but instead of the full FY09-14 CIP. MCPS further testified that such a schedule would not compromise the anticipated opening date of the addition by the beginning of the 2010-211 school year. Therefore, the Board of Education, after consideration of the Sherwood ES Addition over the past two fiscal years, voted in support of the project in the current FY09-14 Capital Improvements Program and FY09 Capital Budget.

The Northeast Consortium Cluster and the Sherwood ES PTA express concern that the County Executive's budget funds only 6% of the Sherwood ES project in the FY09 budget, leaving the bulk of the construction funding in the next two fiscal budgets. As we understand the fiscal state of the County is in question over the next few years, we strongly urge the Council to provide even a modest sum in the FY09 Capital Budget to begin construction of the Sherwood ES addition. We understand you will be considering many worthy projects over the next few months, but we ask your consideration in providing relief to Sherwood. Of the nine proposed elementary addition projects in the FY09 budget, Sherwood ES is the only school with class sizes of 29 students in some grade levels, far above the recommended class size of 15 students per educator in the other 8 addition schools. Sherwood ES PTA has sought the school addition for the past five years and we seek completion of the addition by the promised construction date.

Sincerely,

Karen Nelson
President
Sherwood Elementary School Parent Teacher Association