

Northwood Cluster FY 2009 CIP Testimony

Good evening, my name is Pamela Megna and I am pleased to testify for the Northwood Cluster.

The County faces significant revenue challenges; and these challenges will likely continue in the near term. Consequently, the County must strive to allocate its scarce revenues in the most efficient manner to serve the needs of all students and, in particular, its disadvantaged students. The DCC serves a significant portion of the County's students and a disproportionate number of its disadvantaged students.

We support the recommendation to fund renovations to E. Brooke Lee Middle School's restrooms, but the rest of the facility must not continue to be neglected. We remind the Council that Lee is 41 years old, it has not been modernized, and a date has not been set for its modernization.

We support the request for additional funding for school security systems. Northwood, SSIMs, and Highland View Elementary School requested funding for security improvements. This is a particular need for Highland View Elementary. Its portables continue to be vandalized, and on Monday, it had a Code Red when a staff member noticed an intruder. The intruder was detained by the school personnel and the police arrested the intruder because of two outstanding warrants for her arrest. The school security system needs of our schools should be considered.

We support the recommendation to fund facility improvements to support Northwood's new Music Dance Academy and to complete Northwood's Phase II modifications. The proposed CIP reports the timing for these projects, but it lacks sufficient details about what exactly will be done to support the new academy. Some of the facility improvements to support the new academy, as well as the installation of the new doors and hardware should be completed this summer rather than next year. We remind the Council that the community will likely continue to request a full-evaluation of Northwood's facilities. We hope that if budgetary problems affect the timing of Northwood's projects that MCPS work with Northwood's administration to prioritize projects.

Finally, as a parent of a Northwood High School class of 2008 student and two Montgomery Blair base area 8th graders that will enter Northwood this fall, I want to thank the Council for all of the work that has been done at Northwood since its reopening. However, in particular, I want to extend condolences to Councilmember Praisner's family, and to note the assistance the Northwood Community received from Councilmember Praisner last year. She was instrumental in coordinating the efforts of MCCPTA, Northwood's administration, MCPS central office, and local and state agencies to devise a plan to improve longstanding pedestrian and vehicular circulation problems at Northwood High School. She helped to devise a funding plan for a traffic light that will be installed this summer and for on-site pedestrian and vehicular improvements that will be completed in 2008 and 2009. She was truly instrumental in getting these long needed safety improvements to Northwood in the proposed CIP.

Thank you.

-Northwood Cluster Coordinators - Pamela Megna, Jennifer Chambers and Stacy Menendez