

May 30, 2007

To: The Board of Education and Montgomery County Council

From: Darnestown Elementary School PTA

We are a school located in the Northwest Cluster of Montgomery County. Our facility is over 50 years old. Our last modernization was held in the early 1980's. Currently we have 9 portables.

Our building is situated in a community where there are no sidewalks. All children use the county bus system. Our portables were placed on top of the septic system and had to be relocated which removed the majority of our parking spaces. **Currently we do not have enough parking for our full time staff.** Not to mention the many volunteers and parents coming to and from the school. This requires staff and parents to park along Turkey Foot road and a small side street (with no sidewalks) that requires crossing Turkey Foot which is a very busy road. It is **very dangerous at best** and requires immediate action to prevent an accident occurring. It is a risk hazard that can easily be remedied by using part of our vast playfield. We are not slated to have anything done about this situation until 2008.

In the catalogue published in June of 2006 we were slated in the CIP plan for a feasibility study. In the most current catalogue published October 2006 were not on the docket for any studies or improvements up to and including 2012. We continue to have septic problems which result in unhealthy smells coming from our bathrooms. As the temperature changes it becomes worse. Clearly a new updated septic system needs to be installed. This would not only end the bathroom issues but allow for a building addition which would address the space problems outlined below

Space is a major issue in parking and for the building itself. We are close to being over capacity by 200 students and that WILL NOT change for several years. Our portables are at maximum capacity. They are a dark and depressing environment and not at all conducive to learning. During dangerous weather and the students needing to be inside for safety reasons there is simply no room for these classes in the building. Teachers and staff members have offices and meeting spaces in closets. At one point during the school year one staff member had her office in the hallway while asbestos was being removed from her flooring. We have had several water leaks in our computer lab and gym. Currently in the computer lab a portion of the ceiling is missing due to the leaks, exposing wires and pipes.

Our building is the oldest in the cluster and the 3rd smallest in the county. In looking at the devotion of funds to the new schools being built compared to an old facility continually needing renovations, we believe that the time has come for Darnestown Elementary School to be renovated and built properly to hold the staff and students that attend this school.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kathy O'Rourke and Diane Harris
DES PTA Presidents