

Board of Education

CIP Testimony

November 2008

Good evening. My name is Kelly Giblin and I am the cluster coordinator representing the Einstein cluster schools. The Einstein Cluster gives its support to the Superintendent's recommendations for the 2009-14 CIP. We understand the need to keep the schedule of modernization on track despite the stress the current economy puts on MCPS.

Overall the Einstein cluster schools are in good shape and we appreciate that much has been done in the past ten years to modernize schools in our area. We would like to thank the board for their support of opening Arcola Elementary and appreciate the relief its opening has offered to Highland Elementary School. The arts addition at Einstein High School, completed last year, is a critical component of matching facilities to programs and allows students in the Visual and Performing Arts Academy to have appropriate space that matches the curriculum.

With full implementation of choice in the Downcounty Consortium including the reopening of Northwood, the enrollments at Einstein and Blair have been reduced. However, we continue to **encourage the Board to ask questions about the available facilities for a specific academy program before the program is offered to students.** The need to match facilities and equipment to programs will continue to be a challenge, especially in academy and whole-school magnet programs.

We are pleased that the CIP addresses the overcrowding at Oakland Terrace and Rockview Elementary Schools, however it is a little slow in coming. Currently Oakland Terrace is over enrolled by about 300. According to this CIP a new elementary school is slated to open in 2012. In less than four years, Oakland Terrace is projected to be 414 students over capacity. One example of the stress these numbers puts on the building is lunchtime. Today the staff runs five lunches to be able to seat the entire population and stay within fire code for the all purpose room. Imagine adding another 114 bodies. The community and MCPS have focused on the over enrollment at Oakland Terrace for many years. In fact, the cluster presented testimony on this issue as far back as 2001. Although the school had a four-room addition completed, this was short-sighted. In 2005 the cluster coordinators again requested that overcrowding at Oakland Terrace be addressed.

There are actually a few schools in the county with fewer students enrolled, than the number that overcrowds Oakland Terrace at this time. Oakland Terrace is a unique situation in that its site constraint doesn't allow for portables to be brought in to ease overcrowding. And while the county has been caught off guard by an unexpected surge in enrollment throughout the county, this situation has been "brewing" for many years.

We urge the Board to accelerate the assessment of Oakland Terrace and request that MCPS look at alternative options that might alleviate Oakland Terrace's overcrowding sooner than the construction of a new school.

We do support MCCPTA's request to increase funding for countywide programs to maintain and refurbish older schools. It is important to have well-defined county-wide programs to maintain our schools and prevent costly repairs and remediation.

We understand that difficult choices have to be made to stretch funds as far as possible and give the best to the students in the County. Please include us in your discussions about solutions for our schools.

Thank You