

**Einstein Cluster
CIP testimony
presented to the Board of Education
November 15, 2007**

Good evening, I am Diane Dickson. Faye Nabavian and I are the Einstein Cluster Coordinators.

We'd like to start by acknowledging our relief that the Einstein High School Visual and Performing Arts addition has finally been completed seven years after the initial feasibility study. Students started the new school year with a facility that supports our largest academy, the Visual and Performing Arts. The first group to attend this academy as freshmen will be able to complete their final year as seniors in the new space.

A complete lack of student parking continues to be a problem at Einstein High School. To date, nothing has been done to address this problem. Einstein remains the only high school with no parking for students. This has a negative impact on students who are involved in extra-curricular activities and to those who have internships. Parking in the surrounding neighborhood is very limited and creates tension between students and the community. For the past two years, our cluster has testified about this and has requested that MCPS develop a plan to accommodate parking for students and visitors.

While the opening of Arcola Elementary School has reduced overcrowding at Highland Elementary School, for which we are grateful, other elementary

schools in the cluster remain drastically overcrowded. Oakland Terrace, with about 700 students is more than 230 students over capacity with 7 trailer classrooms while Rock View Elementary is 132 students overenrolled with 8 trailer classrooms. Thousands of our elementary school students have been attending schools with trailers for the entire duration of their elementary years. The temporary solution has become a permanent condition.

We are pleased that projects to relieve overcrowding appear in the 2009 CIP. The re-opening of McKenney Hills Elementary to reduce overcrowding at Oakland Terrace and Woodlin is planned for 2012, while the addition of eight classrooms for Rock View Elementary is slated for 2010. Neither of these projects is likely to occur if the proposed budget is not fully funded. Concerns about the health of our students, the safety of our students and the sense of connectedness of our students prompt us to state what we feel is obvious; the slow pace of improvements is not keeping up with growth in our communities. The good news is that there is a plan. The bad news is that most of those impacted will have already left the school by the time it is corrected, and in many cases we already know that the improvement will be insufficient before it has even been started. We find this most unacceptable.

In the 2009 Capital Improvement Program we noticed a plan for the Stephen Knolls facility. It appears that a decision has already been made to collocate the Stephen Knolls students with an undetermined elementary school, presumably within the Einstein Cluster. We've also noticed program changes to special education programs, such as the movement of two LFI classes and one SCB class from Einstein to Wheaton High School. It also appears that enrollment in Elementary Learning and Academic Disabilities

programs is projected to decrease from 589 students currently to just 74 students over the next six years while projected enrollment in Home School Model Schools increases from 431 in 2007 to 989 students in 2013. We question why changes that impact students are virtually hidden in this document. What is the process by which these decisions are reached, as it appears that parents and the community have not been included in discussions about these changes?

We encourage the Board to exercise more oversight to ensure that MCPS adheres to established protocols regarding program decisions that impact students. We also request that you continue to act to reduce overcrowding in our schools and to protect the health and safety of our children by getting them out of trailers and back into school buildings.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify and to let the Board know what is going on in our cluster.

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