

Seneca Valley Cluster

Seneca Valley HS
Roberto Clemente MS
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. MS

Lake Seneca ES
S. Christa McAuliffe ES
Dr. Sally K. Ride ES
Waters Landing ES

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Good evening, I'm Juan Johnson, Cluster Coordinator for the Seneca Valley Cluster. This year I actually have something to talk about since last year we had no money in the CIP. Advocating for the modernization of Seneca Valley High School has been passed down from Cluster Coordinator to Cluster Coordinator for about ten years since our completion date was set to TBD. This year Seneca Valley High School received its modernization completion date of 2016. For some this may be exciting. For me it has been a long time coming. In my testimony two years ago I stated that at the current renovation pace, the earliest completion date would be 2016.

For years we have testified about lead in the water, inability to properly regulate temperature in classrooms, the challenges of having a school designed with an open, "no walls" concept now with walls that create classrooms inside of classrooms. We have watched as our neighbors to the west and our neighbors to the north receive new schools and multiple additions while we wait for our turn.

To keep Seneca Valley HS on pace for completion in 2016, it is imperative that the schools that are in the modernization queue ahead of us be completed on time. We are very concerned with the delay of Paint Branch HS and strongly encourage that Gaithersburg HS stays on schedule. The timely completion of Walter Johnson, Paint Branch, Gaithersburg, and Wheaton are necessary to keep Seneca Valley on target.

For years it was told to us that our problems were being resolved by building in neighboring clusters. But all that has done is give others modern schools while our modernization kept being pushed back further in the future. Now, with the redistricting of Seneca Valley Cluster to populate Clarksburg HS and Neelsville MS, we face the same thing that happened when Northwest opened. A new school is built for a growing community, Seneca Valley is redistricted to "alleviate overcrowding" and then the new school continues to get more CIP money and additions to alleviate their "overcrowding" and Seneca Valley is made to wait for modernization. Although the date has been set, I see the fight continues to make sure Seneca Valley is modernized on schedule.

From the presentation given by the staff of the Division of Long Range Planning, we recognize that the life cycle of schools has increased dramatically. With buildings and major systems needing to last fifty or more years, we need to look at a comprehensive inventory, assessment and maintenance plan. HVAC, fire control, roofs, restrooms, kitchens and other parts of the building will need to be closely monitored and proactively maintained to extend the overall life of the building to accommodate the current pace of modernization. Also, equipment for classroom instruction needs to be kept up to date whether or not the building is renovated. All students deserve to learn in a clean, safe, modern school, no matter how old the structure.