

Montgomery County Board of Education
2008 Capital Improvements Program Testimony
John F. Kennedy Cluster
November 15, 2007

Good evening. My name is Ricky Ford and along with Karen Sullivan, I serve as a cluster coordinator for the John F. Kennedy Cluster of schools. On behalf of the Kennedy Cluster, thank you for allowing me to speak about the Capital Improvements Program.

For the most part, the Kennedy Cluster supports the Superintendent's FY 2009 Capital Budget and the FY 2009-2014 Capital Improvements Program.

At the elementary school level we are pleased with the FY 2008 appropriation for the construction of a school gymnasium at Strathmore Elementary. We are also pleased that an FY 2009 appropriation is recommended to determine the feasibility of a classroom addition at Georgian Forest and the modernization of Glenallan.

Georgian Forest ES is in desperate need of additional parking. They currently have 56 parking spaces (with four designated as handicapped), a staff of over 70 people, and are prohibited from parking across the street from the school. As a result, there are not enough spaces to accommodate the staff or any parents who may want to come to the school. This has been and continues to be a major issue at the school. We have raised this issue for the past three years and it has not been followed up on.

Glenallan Elementary School needs a parent drop off zone at the end of the staff parking lot. There is not a turn around area for parents. This situation is creating a terrible traffic problem and more importantly, safety issues in the parking lot in the AM and PM with cars double parking, backing up and turning around in the parking lot.

The redevelopment of the Indian Spring Country Club has been approved by the Maryland Park and Planning Commission and construction is scheduled to start in 2008. MCPS has prepared estimates of the number of students that will have to be accommodated from this development. The high schools in the DCC and Lee Middle School have the capacity to accommodate the additional students; however, the elementary schools cannot accommodate the estimated 189 additional elementary school students.

We are pleased that MCPS has started the process of investigating the possibility of adding an addition to Glenallan ES, as part of the scheduled 2013 modernization, to accommodate the additional elementary students. This is an additional option that must be considered and evaluated along with the options of reopening of the Saddlebrook facility, and building a new school on the Indian Spring's property.

Col. E. Brooke Lee Middle School was built in 1966; it has never been renovated and remains the oldest non-modernized middle school in the county. It still has no date for modernization. Lee needs to be put on the modernization list in this CIP cycle. But beyond this, given the long waiting list for modernization, Lee needs some urgent renovation now. Lee is an aging facility that is currently scheduled solely for bathroom upgrades in 2009. Lee needs to have the rugs/carpets replaced and a thorough cleaning of the entire school to address mold and other environmental health issues. Recently, there have been a number of staff and student complaints about the unexplained flare-up of allergies within the school that must be addressed.

We are pleased with the planned FY 2009 HVAC project at Argyle middle school. This is something that is long overdue. The school and community are appreciative of this project.

We are concerned about the overall state of the facilities within the entire Down County Consortium (DCC). Northwood, Einstein, Wheaton, Blair and Kennedy are part of the DCC. In order for the DCC to meet its objective, each of the DCC schools needs to have adequate facilities to be successful.

The Kennedy Cluster stands ready to respond creatively to the challenges presented by our diverse community. But MCPS cannot respond to those needs if there isn't collaborative communication between it and the parent community.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.