



The Montgomery County Council of Parent-Teacher Associations

House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Education and Economic Development  
Public School Construction  
Annapolis, MD  
February 19, 2009

I am Kay Romero, President of the Montgomery County Council of PTAs. We represent over 50,000 parents and more than 139,000 students in the county.

We appreciate the commitment you have made to public education this year and in years past. If we are to maintain Maryland's top-ranked public school system, we need to continue to invest in our schools, now and in the future. We urge you to approve the Governor's recommended amount for aid to school construction projects statewide.

Montgomery County, like many counties in our state, faces a growing and increasingly diverse student population. Student enrollment rose by more than 1,500 students this year and we are expecting record kindergarten classes for several years to come. Our African American, Hispanic and Asian American populations are growing rapidly: Collectively, they now represent over 60 percent of the students in our county schools. Our students speak over 132 different languages at home.

The County's six year CIP budget includes 22 school additions scheduled to bring 229 additional classrooms to our county. It also includes 31 planned modernizations, 18 of which will be completed in the six year period. In addition, we have a number of countywide programs designed to repair and replace HVAC systems, fix aging roofs, upgrade restrooms, enable planned replacements of key assets and construct facility improvements to accommodate educational programs at our schools. Our local budget calls for \$200 million in spending this year, over 80 percent of which is to be funded solely with county funds.

However, we, like other county school systems, cannot maintain our buildings and accommodate our growing population without state construction aid. Our local leaders are doing all they can to keep pace, but they must have your support as well. \$260 million is critical to ensuring that we can continue to provide our students with safe, secure and modern learning facilities. We fully support the Governor's request.

MCCPTA also supports the testimony given on behalf of Maryland PTA by Laura Carr, VP for Legislation, regarding funding for the Aging Schools Program. It is crucial to maintain safe, healthy learning environments for all children across our state.

Thank you.

Kay Romero  
President, Montgomery County Council of PTAs