

Northwood Cluster CIP Testimony 2007

Good evening, my name is Pamela Megna and I am pleased to testify on behalf of the Northwood Cluster. As a parent of a Northwood High School member of the pioneer class of 2008, and the parent of two 8th grade students that will most likely be members of Northwood's class of 2012, I want to thank MCPS and the BOE for all of the work that has been done at Northwood over the past 4 years. We support MCPS's recommendation to fund the completion of the remaining Phase II work and the improvements to rectify Northwood's long-standing pedestrian, vehicular access, and vehicular flow problems. We will be relieved to see these necessary improvements completed.

We support MCPS's recommendation for additional facility improvements to support Northwood's new Broadway Music Academy; but the CIP does not contain specifics about exactly what will be done and whether these improvements will be completed during FY 2009 or FY 2010. We hope that these improvements will attract Loiederman's Performing Arts graduates. We expect that at least some of the facility improvements will be completed before the Academy's inaugural year.

We appreciate MCPS' efforts to improve the CIP documentation to differentiate between modernized schools and schools that have undergone facility improvements. Northwood High School and Silver Spring International Middle School have been correctly identified as schools that have undergone facility improvements. The CIP clearly states that when these schools are finally assessed a FACT score in a future CIP, the score will be based on the year these schools were built rather than the year they underwent facility improvements. We look forward to working with MCPS when this date finally arrives.

This issue of using the date a school was built is crucial for our community because someday these two schools will be assessed a FACT score that will reflect the condition of the facility. Even as recently as a week ago I heard some DCC parents negatively compare Northwood's facility with the other DCC high schools and this affects the choice process. MCPS has done a lot of work on Northwood in the past few years and we appreciate that. Northwood is much improved from 2004 when the students first walked through the door, and this has affected my family's choice decision this year. But, portions of the core facility, such as the 1950's gyms and locker rooms continue to need funding and the community will continue to hold MCPS to the goal of making Northwood comparable to the other DCC high schools.

We appreciate the improvements that were done at E. Brook Lee Middle School this summer, and we support MCPS's recommendation to fund renovations to Lee's restrooms. While MCPS continues to invest in this school, we want to remind you that this school is 41 years old and it is one of the oldest remaining schools without a modernization date. According to MCPS the earliest date for modernization is 2021. This will be just in time for the facility's 55th birthday and for the incoming 6th grade class that will be born three years from now.

Finally, we support MCPS's request for additional funding for school security systems. Northwood, SSIMs, and Highland View Elementary Schools have requested funding for security improvements. This is a particular need for Highland View Elementary whose portables continue to be a target for vandalism. The funding for the planning of an addition at Highland View has been approved, but not until FY 2010. Thank you.

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