

Seneca Valley Cluster

**Seneca Valley High School
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School
Roberto Clemente Middle School**

**Lake Seneca Elementary School
S. Christa McAuliffe Elementary School
Dr. Sally K. Ride Elementary School
Waters Landing Elementary School**

Comments to
The County Council
For

FY 2011 Operating Budget

Prepared by: Kevin David, Seneca Valley Cluster Coordinator
April 6, 2010

Good evening President Floreen and members of the County Council. My name is Kevin David and I am one of the Seneca Valley Cluster Coordinators.

The Seneca Valley Cluster would like to recommend that you vote to fully fund the FY 2011 Operating Budget as passed by the Board of Education. This budget is a "Maintenance of Effort" budget and is the absolute minimum needed to maintain the level of excellence that we have grown accustomed to here in Montgomery County.

Level of Excellence

It is this level of excellence that pushes Seneca Valley High School towards the IB program. As many of you know two years ago the Seneca Valley Cluster and the John F. Kennedy Cluster were asked to do away with their very successful University of Cambridge program and switch over to the equally rigorous International Baccalaureate Diploma Program. Just last week Seneca Valley High School completed the two year application process and was officially accepted into the World IB program. More than 30 students will officially enter the IB program in FY2011.

With no Middle Years Programme in our either of our middle schools, it is this level of excellence that has pushed the principals our cluster schools to work together to create a vertical articulation model that will best ensure that our students are prepared for the IB program from Elementary School through High School.

The IB program has become the focus of our cluster and we want make this program one of the reasons families want to move to Germantown.

Maintenance of Effort funding

MOE funding is needed if we are to continue to offer the supports that our neediest children require. Our elementary schools have some of the highest FARM rates in the Up County area and they are all focus schools. Any increase in classroom size would be detrimental to our at risk population. It has taken us ten years to implement class size reduction around the county and that effort could be wiped out in less than two years if the budget is met by increasing class size.

MOE funding is needed if we are to properly maintain our aging schools. With our cluster schools ranging in age from 14 to 36 years old it is imperative that these buildings are properly maintained. Any cuts to building services staff would greatly impact the well being of these facilities and possibly the health and safety of our students.

MOE funding is needed if we are going to keep our teachers trained and properly prepared for today's ever changing student. We ask our staffs to keep up with technological advancements and rapidly changing teaching techniques, but yet we decrease our staff development positions and classroom aides.

Hold the Line

This year looks a lot like last year and like last year we need to hold the line.

We need to hold the line on classroom size.

We need to hold the line on building services staff and levels of building maintenance.

We need to hold the line on staff development cuts.

In closing if we as a county want to maintain the same level of excellence in our public school system we have grown accustomed to, then we need hold the line on the MOE funding.