

# **Sherwood Cluster Testimony to the Board of Education on the Superintendent's Recommended FY 2010 Capital Improvements Programs**

**November 13, 2008**

Good evening Dr. Weast, President Navarro and members of the Board of Education my name is Fran Simons Cluster Coordinator for the Sherwood Cluster. I am here on behalf of our schools in support of the Superintendent's Recommended FY2010 CIP. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about the capital needs of our schools, specifically, Farquhar Middle School, Sherwood Elementary and Carl Sandburg Learning Center.

Our community extends its deepest appreciation for the computer technology modernization to Farquhar Middle School this year. The students and staff at Farquhar are enjoying their new computers, promethean whiteboards and handheld student response systems; **however, it is an interesting juxtaposition to see 21st century technology in a 1960's setting.**

Forty years ago this year, William H. Farquhar Middle School was built. **To help put this in perspective** – the average cost of a house was \$14,950, average income was \$7,850, gas was \$.34 a gallon, a new car cost \$2,800 and a movie ticket was \$.49. The “Big Mac” made its debut, 911 telephone services began and **I just bet that in 1968 Dr. Weast was in elementary school!**

Now, let us really WOW you; **Farquhar was built before Apollo 11 landed on the moon.** This eclectic school building has stayed exactly as it was brick for brick since the day it was built. As Principal Murphy says, “We are doing everything we can to create 21<sup>st</sup> century classrooms, in every department in every grade for every child. However, these systems require up to date electric, fiber optics and cable again putting a strain on the aging infrastructure.”

Farquhar is one the **oldest middle schools in the county that has never been modernized**. Members of the Board, we are here this evening to respectfully urge that Farquhar stay on the modernization schedule for completion in 2015.

There are two other schools in our cluster, Sherwood Elementary and Carl Sandburg Learning Center that have also asked for your attention and support concerning their challenging learning environments.

Sherwood Elementary continues to operate in a very overcrowded facility which necessitates the use of seven portables to meet the educational needs of its fast growing community. We would like to point out again that these portables are lined in a row at the back of the school with all the windows facing each other rather than the school. Teachers do not have sight of the school building to keep an eye on what is happening outside to ensure the safety of the children when they leave the portables to use the facilities inside the school. Principal Perlet is looking forward to educating all of his students safely inside one building. Our community asks that you keep the safety of the children a priority and keep the addition on track for completion in August 2010. Tonight you will also hear from Tony Zagami, PTA President for Sherwood Elementary, who will further underscore the need for funding the addition and keeping Sherwood's restroom renovations on schedule for FY2010.

It is said that Carl Sandburg Learning Center was named for the Poet, Carl Sandburg in short because he succeeded despite his many hardships. This small elementary school tucked in the middle of Rockville does a beautiful job providing special education instruction to students with multiple disabilities.

Carl Sandburg Learning Center was built in 1962. **If you are doing the math, than you will easily guess that I am much older than Dr. Weast!** A young man he is, but let this not overshadow the fact that this learning center has had its modernization schedule **delayed three times** and in this CIP budget Carl Sandburg resides in the **"to be determined"** category. We know that this is not the message we should be sending these students and families. **To that end, Principal Marlene Kenny and her families deserve more and we respectfully request that, at a minimum, the Learning Center be placed on the restroom renovation schedule.** Their bathroom

facilities are in disgraceful, deplorable, condition which causes deep embarrassment during prospective parent meetings.

With each passing year that our schools fall further behind in maintenance and modernization schedules it becomes more difficult to attract and keep good families in our schools.

As you work on the Superintendent's Capital Improvements Budget, please keep Farquhar Middle School, Sherwood Elementary and Carl Sandburg Learning Center on pace for their improvements as these schools are stellar in their own right and are making a huge difference in their communities.

Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

Fran Simons  
Sherwood Cluster Coordinator