

# **MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

850 Hungerford Drive \* Rockville, Maryland

20850 October 16, 2007

Dr. Jane de Winter, President  
Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations  
2096 Gaither Road, Suite 204  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Dr. de Winter:

Thank you for your letter dated August 27, 2007, to Dr. Jerry D. Weast, superintendent of schools, and me requesting information regarding the resources needed to accelerate the modernization of schools, as well as reducing the backlog of Planned Life-cycle Asset Replacement (PLAR) and maintenance projects. First, we would like to thank you and your organization for the support you provide throughout the operating and capital budget processes. The support the Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations (MCCPTA) provides to the school system is invaluable. It is my understanding that Dr. Weast has included MCCPTA as part of the group that is reviewing and developing recommendations for the FY 2009-2014 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) for the Board's consideration in November.

We appreciate your interest in accelerating the modernization schedule and reducing the backlog of PLAR and maintenance projects. As you are aware, the superintendent, as he develops his recommended six-year CIP, must balance all school system facility needs. Modernization of our existing facilities, as well as projects included in PLAR, are two of the many countywide projects that are funded in the CIP to maintain our existing inventory of schools. The superintendent also must take into consideration the Spending Affordability Guidelines (SAG) set by the County Council, as well as the fiscal climate in the county and the state.

The acceleration of both the modernization program and PLAR projects would require significant funding increases in the capital and operating budgets. With respect to modernizations, on average, the cost to modernize a high school is approximately \$95 million, a middle school is approximately \$50 million, and an elementary school is approximately \$24 million.

Currently, at the high school level, we are modernizing schools at a rate of three high schools every six years, resulting in a 50-year cycle. By adding half of the funding for an additional high school in the six-year CIP (approximately \$47.5 million), the cycle for high school modernizations would be approximately 40 years.

With an inventory of 38 middle schools, we are modernizing at a rate of three middle schools every six years, resulting in a 76-year cycle. In order to accelerate the middle school modernization program to a 38-year cycle, three additional middle schools would need to be added to the six-year CIP. Since there is only one middle school holding facility, acceleration of the middle school cycle would not only require additional funding for the three modernizations (approximately \$150 million), but also funding to acquire a second middle school holding facility.

At the elementary school level, with four holding facilities utilized throughout the six-year period, a total of 16 elementary school modernizations can be completed within a

cycle of 49 years. To accelerate this cycle, three additional elementary schools would need to be modernized in the six-year period (\$72 million), resulting in a 41 -year cycle. This acceleration would not be possible without a new elementary school holding facility.

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The acceleration of both PLAR and capital maintenance projects (fire and life safety, restroom renovations, and roof replacements) also would require significant funding, as indicated below:

<b>Funding to Reduce PLAR and Capital Maintenance Backlogs</b>	Funding Needed per Year	Additional Staffing Needed	Total per Year		
				(in millions)	
<b>PLAR Backlog</b>			\$ 24.40	\$	
Current (6-yr. completion)			4.10	\$	\$ 4.10
50% reduction (3-yr. completion)			8.13	\$ 0.33	8.46
Eliminate Backlog (1-yr. completion)			24.40	\$ 0.99	25.39
<b>Capital Maintenance Backlog</b>			\$ 39.60		
Current (6-yr. completion)			\$ 6.60		\$ 6.60
50% reduction (3-yr. completion)			\$ 13.20	\$ 0.40	13.60
Eliminate Backlog (1-yr. completion)			\$ 39.60	\$ 1.21	40.81

Given the current and projected economic conditions in the county and the state, as well as increases in construction costs, the possibility of adding \$270 million to the CIP and funds for two more holding schools to accelerate the modernization schedule would be very unlikely. It is just as unlikely that we will be able to add funds in FY 2009 in the capital and operating budgets to accelerate the PLAR and capital maintenance projects. Unfortunately, it will be difficult to keep all projects in the current CIP on schedule. As previously stated, we must balance the needs of all schools in order to provide quality educational facilities for every student in the county. At the same time, we must consider the economic climate and submit a CIP to the County Council that is fiscally responsible.

As always, we continue to encourage communication between the Montgomery County Public Schools and MCCPTA and welcome any further feedback on this or any other matter.

Sincerely,

Nancy Navarro President

NN:vnb

Copy to:

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Dr. Lacey  
Mr. Bowers  
Mr. Lavorgna  
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