



Montgomery County Councilmembers,

We, the congregations and affiliates of Action in Montgomery, write to urge you to fund the supplemental appropriation request, dated August 25, 2020, from the Board of Education to prioritize building a new school for South Lake Elementary School, to be completed by 2023 at the latest. South Lake has one of the top two largest enrollment of any MCPS elementary school, yet its building, which was not built to be a school, is one of the smallest in terms of usable space.

- As we write this, **four new portable classrooms on top of the existing ten** have been constructed on the staff parking lot.
- As we write this, to compensate for the loss of staff parking, part of the **playground**- already inadequate to serve an enrollment of 900 students- **will be paved over** to build a parking lot for staff against the recommendations of the Planning Department.
- As we write this, MCPS has spent taxpayer dollars over several years to address the **air quality problems** of a school that was not built to house 900 students and over 100 faculty members.
- As we write this, **over 30 services requests have been filed to address rodent infestations**, the building continues to fail to meet American Disabilities Act requirements, and the plumbing still leaks into classrooms.
- Finally, as we write this, the impact of the Coronavirus on students returning to their classrooms is unknown. Yet, the 200-square-foot **health room**, where students would be first treated, **fails to meet even minimum Maryland state standards** calling for the separation of ill students from those needing first aid attention.

Our country is in the midst of yet another racial re-awakening, and we cannot help but notice that 90% of the students at South Lake are Black and Brown. The Council issued the following statement on the passage of the Racial Equity and Social Justice Policy (12/2/19):

*Racial equity and social justice are urgent moral and socioeconomic endeavors for our community. Our county's population has changed, both in numbers and in diversity, and this did not happen overnight. Addressing issues of racial equity is not only an ethical obligation; it is essential to ensure the continued economic vitality of our community.*

We are asking you to fill the gap between your actions and your words. The Council should heed the BOE's unanimous demand.



Signed by:

Name of clergy/leader	Name of institution
Pastor Daniel Xisto	Takoma Park Seventh-day Adventist Church
Rabbi Baht Yameem Weiss	Temple Beth Ami
Rabbi Gary Pokras	Temple Beth Ami
Mr. Steven Mandel	Critical Issues Forum (Kol Shalom, Adat Shalom, Temple Beth Ami)
Rev. Hal Garman	Gaithersburg Beloved Community Initiative
Rev. Kenneth MacLean	Gaithersburg Beloved Community Initiative
Rev. Michelle Bartlow	Gaithersburg Beloved Community Initiative
Rev. Donna Schramm	Gaithersburg Beloved Community Initiative
Revs. Gordon and Jan Forbes	Gaithersburg Beloved Community Initiative
Rev. Judy Thomas	Gaithersburg Beloved Community Initiative
Rev. Malcolm Frazier	Gaithersburg Beloved Community Initiative
Rev. John Manwell	Gaithersburg Beloved Community Initiative
Rev. Phyllis Hubbell	Gaithersburg Beloved Community Initiative
Rev. Abhi Janamanchi	Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church
Pastor Hayward Robinson III	The People's Community Baptist Church
Rabbi Mark Raphael	Shaare Torah
Rev. Katie Romano Griffin	Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist
Rev. Nancy McDonald Ladd	River Road Unitarian Universalist
Pastor Don McFarlane	Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church
Pastor Dr. Cheryl Wilson-Bridges	Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church



Rev. Helen Ballew	Grace United Methodist Church
Rev. James Miller	Grace United Methodist Church