

## Montgomery County Council Meeting

February 8, 2022

### Testimony of Nicholas Bassey, Paint Branch Cluster Coordinator

Good evening. I am Nicholas Bassey, Paint Branch Cluster Coordinator for the Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations (MCCPTA). We represent over 50,000 members in 192 local PT(S)As across our county. The Paint Branch Cluster is in East County (Council District 5) and serves approximately 7,700 students across nine vibrant schools: Paint Branch High School and the eight elementary and middle schools that feed into it. We are proud of our fast-growing, increasingly diverse, and politically active part of the county, and we are grateful that the current MCPS Superintendent's budget recommendation includes capital investments for our schools - especially Burtonsville and Greencastle Elementary Schools.

Burtonsville Elementary was approved for a school addition almost ten years ago. This project - despite having a completed feasibility study, naming an architect, and consulting extensively with the entire staff - failed to break ground. Their space crisis has only worsened over the past decade without relief from the Council. In the meantime, their cafeteria can only fit one grade level at a time, for example, resulting in six lunch periods. They have only space for one lunch line, which extends into the hallway and disrupts nearby classrooms. The cafeteria is also their only space for school gatherings, but because it is used for lunch from 10:40 a.m. until 2:10 p.m., it is generally unavailable for enrichment activities and assemblies. This lunch schedule also creates staffing issues: paraeducators must trade instruction time for lunch duty. We hope that these issues can be addressed by following through with the school's scheduled addition this time.

Greencastle Elementary has also been approved for capital improvements to address their space crisis. They now have ten portable classrooms, two of which just opened last month. This clearly demonstrates that their current building is inadequate. They also have only four sets of bathrooms for 730 students. We respectfully request that construction of both classrooms and bathrooms proceed as quickly as possible, bringing approximately 200 fourth and fifth graders out of portables and back under the main roof.

We thank you for listening, but we thank you more for the action you must certainly take on behalf of the children and families of Burtonsville and Greencastle Elementary Schools.