

Dear County Council,

Thank you for all that you do for the residents of Montgomery County. **I am writing in support of full funding for Clarksburg Elementary #9 to be located within the Cabin Branch development. This school cannot be delayed again.**

Currently, this school, built for 311 students, is squeezing almost 800 students into its limited classroom space.. Grades 3-5 are housed outside in 15 portable classrooms, and those students use a portable bathroom MCPS placed in the parking lot last month. We are grateful for the portable classrooms and the bathroom, which we sorely needed. Before the last three portables joined our campus this fall, the assistant principal's office was in the hallway, the art room was converted to a classroom, and the instrumental music teacher had to carry instruments from one end of the school to the other end of the field to provide instruction. Even after the portables were installed, we have continued to be forced to use a windowless computer lab as a classroom, and the teacher's lounge is still the music room.

Clarksburg Elementary #9 is scheduled to open in August of 2023 and it is vital for our children.

Please note: This new school will not open for another 1.5 years, and MCPS is projecting that our school enrollment will approach 900 students (280% utilization) for the 2022-23 school year. We are very concerned that there is no more room, and our school is going to be overwhelmed. There will not be space in the cafeteria for an entire grade to eat lunch at the same time, so it is very possible that some students will need to eat lunch in their classrooms. Arrival and dismissal are so crowded on our narrow, sidewalk-less, one-way road, that students barely make it to class on time now - what will happen when we have 100 more students? And the parking lot, built for the staff of a school built for 311 students, will not be able to accommodate the teachers, let alone any parent volunteers or any school events. Please know that there are over 400 seats that will be open at nearby elementary schools during this school year, but MCPS has refused to make public any plans to relieve the overcrowding.

The new school must be built on time for an August 2023 opening.

There are over 1000 houses planned for the Clarksburg Elementary School service area, all of which have been approved to begin construction. These include the Linthicum West, Creekside at Cabin Branch, and Ashford Woods developments. If the school doesn't open in August of 2023, our little school will be completely overwhelmed and will cease to function.

Our new school has been delayed multiple times due to lack of funding, but it cannot be delayed any longer. Nine hundred children, who have already endured a year of virtual school followed by extreme overcrowding, deserve better.

Sincerely,
Susan Owens