

**Montgomery County County Council FY25-30 CIP Public Hearing**  
**February 6, 2024**  
**Testimony of Ben Lewis, Burtonsville ES PTA President**

Good Evening, I am Ben Lewis, Burtonsville Elementary School PTA President and proud father of 2 Burtonsville Elementary School students.

On behalf of our school community, we thank the County for all of the efforts to date on the design and planning for the new Burtonsville ES at the Northeast Consortium Elementary School #17 site. Specifically, I'd like to publicly thank Eleesha, DJ, Shiho and Seth with MCPS Department of Facilities Management for their work and collaboration with our school and community.

Our ask this evening is a simple one: ***We request that the County Council fund the project's construction costs, the BOE-requested appropriation for construction cost increases and one-year acceleration of the competition date for August 2026.***

The school was approved for a building addition over ten years ago. This project - despite having a completed feasibility study, named architect, and consultations with the administration and staff - failed to break ground. The school addition and renovation continued to be included, then removed from the CIP budget for several years after. Please, don't do this to our community again...

While the school anxiously awaits a new building, the present-day challenges remain:

- The cafeteria can only fit one grade level at a time, resulting in six lunch periods from 10:40 a.m. until 2:10 p.m..
- Lunch lines extend into the hallway and disrupt nearby classrooms. Paraeducators must trade instruction time for lunch duty.
- Safety concerns around the arrival and dismissal traffic, requiring cars and buses to drive on the opposite side of the roads to navigate queued cars.

We understand that the Superintendent will provide non-recommended reductions to the CIP amendment, however, we ask that The Council fund this critical community project. The building of a new school, along with repurposing of the existing school to a new, innovative, flexible education & recreation campus, the Burtonsville Access Road Project and the MD 198 Burtonsville Improvement Project are critical projects for the community.

The construction of a new Burtonsville school will energize the community, spur economic development and help mend eroded trust in the County's commitment to investment in Burtonsville and East County.

The community has been engaged in the design process and is excited for the new school. The school renderings give vision and hope to a better experience for our kids and community. It would be cruel to divest in this vital Burtonsville community project at this juncture. Please, allow this project to continue with a completion date of August 2026. This community has patiently waited for over a decade, now is the time to finish the job.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to seeing you all at the new Burtonsville Elementary School groundbreaking in the near future!