

Testimony of Dan Silva

MCCPTA Cluster Coordinator for the Magruder Cluster

I'm Dan Silva, one of the three MCCPTA Magruder Cluster Coordinators.

I'm here tonight on behalf of a marginalized & underrepresented community and therefore woefully neglected by MCPS. In my role, I've been submerged in this CIP process for months. I've already met with some of you and your staff and would welcome the additional opportunity to speak with any one of you in the upcoming weeks, especially now that circumstances have once again changed.

If you're somehow unfamiliar with the history of broken promises and abhorrent conditions at Magruder, you will be by the end of tomorrow's hearings. Instead, I want to focus on the current situation according to MCPS's own published data, the bedrock of which is the FCI. Magruder's score of nearly .65 distinguishes it as THE most depleted high school in the entire MCPS system. When those scores are weighted with other objective factors like Utilization and Enhanced student needs, their prioritized ranking of schools in need of a capital solution puts Damascus 6th, Magruder 7th, and Wootton 8th.

As you're aware, there's been a tremendous amount of public outcry about how to prioritize these three schools, leading 3 communities to cannibalize each other, all fighting for the same scraps. I implore the council today to take a more holistic, forward-thinking, and equitable approach by looking at these three projects as a single problem, and here is why that makes sense.

When you look at MCPS's list of the top 52 CIP priorities, there isn't a single other high school project. That means if you can get through this boondoggle of overdue high school projects at the top, you have a ton of runway to work through much smaller middle and elementary school projects, while also working out sustainable holding school solutions before the next batch of high schools are due for replacement. After Magruder and Wootton, Quince Orchard is the next oldest high school, nearly 20 years newer.

Until last week, most of the conversation had revolved around how to best utilize Crown. Doctor Taylor and the BOE vehemently defended their right to use it as a holding school, so we know that's possible. The timelines presented had it being utilized first by Damascus, then Magruder, then Wootton; corresponding with their objective prioritization. With Magruder being completed right on the heels of Damascus, and if MCPS still wants to relocate Wootton to Crown, that means Wootton and Magruder would both move into their long-term homes at the same time, 3 communities equitably served within 3 years of each

other, and the whole region stabilized for decades to come. MCPS would still realize the long-term cost savings of not adding a 27th High School.

Instead, Dr. Taylor opted to recommend immediately relocating Wootton to Crown. So let's compare the experience that would create our students. Wootton students would just pick up their books and head down the street to their new home, somehow bypassing the whole process, skipping from 8th to 1st, and avoiding any construction-related disruptions.

Damascus would have the added burden of disruptions caused by attending on-site during construction.

Magruder would just be left on the vine to continue rotting. We would not only see another school jump ahead of us, but necessarily another capital project to repair Wootton. If & when we are eventually added back to the CIP, we would have to endure a longer commute to a holding school further away, and in a building deemed no longer suitable for a comprehensive high school. The renovation standards for this holding school have already been recognized as lower than for a comprehensive high school, so our students would have to endure an unnecessarily diminished high school experience for multiple years. While we wait indefinitely, Dr. Taylor has explicitly called for a halt to all off-year spending as the rate of our deterioration continues to escalate exponentially. If we do see the benefit of a capital repair, such as our roof in 2029, that will trigger a re-evaluation of our FCI and we could be penalized by moving us further down the list.

Rubber-stamping this recommendation dooms Magruder to another decade of suffering. To the Magruder community, Dr. Taylor's recommendation is seen as a politically expedient one, not an equitable decision that prioritizes the best interests of the county as a whole.

I urge you all to exercise your authority to insist on a more equitable solution that protects and includes the Magruder community. If you are unable to find a way to add us to the Master Plan, at the very least, please mandate the major repairs needed with the stipulation that we will not be penalized.

I look forward to speaking with you in greater detail in the weeks to come.

Thank you,

Dan Silva

MCCPTA Magruder Cluster Coordinator