

Good evening, my name is Rebecca Aicher, and I'm here tonight as the Northwood Cluster Coordinator for the Montgomery County Council PTA, representing thousands of Silver Spring students and families, and as a concerned parent of two MCPS students.

We are grateful for the County's investment in Northwood High School and the commitment to Eastern Middle School and Highland View Elementary School.

However, MCPS has historically underfunded schools in Silver Spring, and tonight I'm here to remind you that two of our beloved, diverse, and resilient schools - Sligo Creek Elementary School and Silver Spring International Middle School—desperately need your attention and commitment in the 2027 CIP.

Twenty-five years ago, MCPS promised the "Old Blair High School" building would be transformed into a facility appropriate for a middle school. For decades, SSIMS students and our community have waited for MCPS to honor that commitment.

Sadly, in fall 2025, MCPS made clear that it does not intend to keep its word. The district proposed closing SSIMS, relocating Sligo Creek, and using these buildings as holding schools for the next two to three decades.

MCPS now argues that the only option is to shutter these schools because, in Superintendent Taylor's words, the facility has reached "the end of its useful life." Yet nearly 2,000 students are legally required to spend seven hours a day in these buildings—and will continue to do so for years to come.

We are grateful that the County Executive paused MCPS's plans. Now we need the County Council to step up and do right by the children and staff at SSIMS and Sligo Creek by investing \$60 million in this CIP to address urgent life-safety and health needs.

These are not cosmetic concerns. Students and staff face real and ongoing safety risks. Regardless of what an inaccurate Facilities Condition Index may suggest, we are asking you to invest in solutions that:

- Fix the infamous Stairwell 7 so no child risks being trampled trying to get to class on time.
- Address the failing HVAC system, leaky roof, and gutters that cause extreme temperature swings, water intrusion, and moisture in the building.
- Remediate mold and indoor air-quality issues in the science wing, band room, and other learning spaces.

Delaying these repairs will only increase costs. More importantly, it increases the risk to the health and safety of students and staff.

SSIMS and Sligo Creek sit in an ideal location to demonstrate what Montgomery County values: safe, diverse, walkable neighborhood schools near public transit and a revitalized downtown where schools and businesses thrive together.

These school communities are true gems. We ask you to invest in them because it is crucial for our students, our educators, our community, and our county. No child should have to worry about their safety simply getting to class.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to Montgomery County's students and families.