

Cold Spring Elementary School – DuFief Elementary School
Fallsmead Elementary School – Lakewood Elementary School
Stone Mill Elementary School – Travilah Elementary School
Cabin John Middle School – Robert Frost Middle School
Thomas S. Wootton High School

**Capital Improvement Plan Testimony to
Montgomery County Council
By Brian Rabin, PTSA President, Thomas S. Wootton High School
FY2027-FY2032 Capital Improvements Program
February 10, 2026**

Good evening Council President and Members of the Montgomery County Council. My name is **Brian Rabin**, and I serve as Wootton PTSA President. Due to the terrible tragedy yesterday, our Wootton students won't be here testify tonight. We appreciate the well wishes.

Tonight, I want to speak plainly about the condition of our schools and the urgent need for this Council to address the growing crisis revealed in the Facility Condition Assessments (FCA) and the Facility Condition Index (FCI) scores. These are not abstract numbers. They are a warning system — and the alarms are going off across the county.

Wootton High School is one of the clearest examples. The FCA identifies widespread deficiencies: aging mechanical systems, persistent roof leaks, inadequate ventilation, and environmental health concerns that no school community should have to tolerate. The building's FCI score places it among the most deteriorated high schools in Montgomery County. And yet, for nearly two decades, Wootton has been passed over for modernization.

We all know what this means in real terms. When a roof leaks, it leaks on every student. When ventilation fails, it fails for every classroom. And when mold grows — and it has — **mold doesn't discriminate**. It doesn't care about ZIP codes, test scores, or school boundaries. It affects every child and every educator who walks through those doors. And Wootton is not alone. Magruder High School is also in serious need of attention. Its FCA and FCI scores show significant system failures, aging infrastructure, and environmental risks that mirror many of the challenges at Wootton. Magruder families have been waiting far too long for a clear path forward. Their concerns are real, their building conditions are documented, and their students deserve the same urgency and investment as any other community.

Across the county, multiple high schools are operating with systems well past their useful life — original boilers from the 1970s, electrical systems that cannot support modern instruction, and HVAC units that simply cannot maintain safe indoor air quality. These conditions are not aligned with the values of a county that prides itself on excellence, equity, and opportunity.

But this crisis is not limited to high schools. Cold Spring Elementary School must remain in the CIP. Cold Spring was simply not built for today's students or today's security realities. The building has fundamental, serious security vulnerabilities that cannot be ignored or delayed especially after yesterday. Its layout, sightlines, and entry configuration fall far short of modern safety standards. Families and staff have been clear: these issues are urgent, not optional. Removing or delaying Cold Spring's project would leave students in a building that cannot meet basic expectations for safety, supervision, and secure access. That is unacceptable.

The CIP is where we decide whether we are serious about our values — safety, equity, and the right of every child to learn in a healthy, functional building.

For Wootton and Magruder, the need is immediate. Their deterioration is not cosmetic — it is structural, environmental, and educational. Students and staff are learning and working in conditions that would be unacceptable in any other public facility. Both communities have waited long enough.

If Wootton and Magruder cannot be added to the CIP this cycle, then at minimum, I request that the Council fund feasibility studies for both Wootton and Magruder.

These studies are the first step toward modernization. Without them, neither school can move forward in the queue, and the county cannot make data-driven decisions about scope, cost, or timeline. A feasibility study is not a luxury — it is the bare minimum required to begin addressing decades of deferred maintenance. At the very least, the 2015 feasibility study will need to be updated after a decade has passed.

The FCA and FCI data give you a clear roadmap. They show where the needs are greatest, where the risks are highest, and where the county must act now. Wootton and Magruder must be prioritized for modernization planning, and Cold Spring's urgently needed project must remain in the CIP without delay.

This is not just a facilities issue. It is a health issue, a safety issue, and an equity issue. Every student deserves a school building that supports learning rather than undermining it. Every educator deserves a

workplace that is safe and functional. And every community deserves to know that the county is investing in the future of its children.

I urge you to use the CIP to correct years of deferred maintenance and to take seriously the findings of MCPS' facility assessments. The data is clear. The need is urgent.

During this black history month, I want to recognize James A. Cole, who made history by being one of the first black principals of an integrated secondary school in Montgomery County. He served Wootton High School for 22 years and is the namesake of the James A. Cole Stadium at Wootton. And when Wootton is moved out of its own building, we don't just lose classrooms — we lose the legacy of leaders like James A. Cole. His history is tied to that school, that community, and that campus. You cannot relocate a legacy.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to our schools.

My name is Brian Rabin, Thomas S. Wootton PTSA President.

First, I would like to thank the Montgomery County Council for appropriating funding to correct some of the significant ADA deficiencies in our building. The facility, built in 1970, has considerable deficits throughout the building as detailed in the MCPS facility assessment conducted in 2018. Wootton's Key Facility Indicator reflected the need for a major capital project. In prior CIPs, the Superintendent and Board of Education recommended planning and construction funds, but the Montgomery County Council has continually delayed the expenditures and completion date. An FY 2025 appropriation was requested by the Superintendent and Board of Education for planning and design funds for the building portion of the Major Capital Project and even these planning funds were delayed. Last year, the County Council shifted all expenditures to the out-years in the adopted FY 2025-2030 CIP, with a "to be determined" completion date. In 2030, Wootton High School will be 60 years old. These delays have been endless and now there is a "to be determined" completion date. The building continues to deteriorate and there doesn't seem to be any urgency by the Council to address these serious issues. Instead, the

Council has appropriated \$180M to build a brand-new high school at Crown instead of renovating an existing high performing high school. As you know, Wootton's facility has been neglected for far too long.

Consider the "Broken Window Theory," that can be applied here where the indifference, lack of care, and neglect breeds discontent among our students, faculty, parents and community members, and this discontent has led to other issues within our school community. There is a belief that our political leaders do not care. It is time for the Board of Education and the Montgomery County Council to get Wootton on the Capital Improvement Program schedule and actually follow-through on delivering the resources needed for a full rebuild of the facility. It is time to take Dr. Taylor's words, to reimagine how we work and how we serve schools, students, and families. Our Wootton community is ready and willing to work with you to make it happen. And as a reminder, Wootton is not the only school in our cluster that has been neglected, Cold Spring is in desperate need of being renovated. Please keep Cold Spring's major capital project on track. Thank you.