

County Council Public Hearing on Supplemental Appropriation to the County Government's **FY22 Capital Budget and Amendment to the FY21-26 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) - \$602,651 for Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Planned Life Cycle Asset Replacement** (Source of Funds: Aging Schools Program)

Richard Montgomery Cluster  
(Beall ES, College Gardens ES, Ritchie Park ES, Bayard Rustin ES, Twinbrook ES, Julius West MS, and Richard Montgomery HS)

March 15, 2022

Dear President Albornoz, Vice-President Glass, and the Montgomery County Council:

Thank you for the opportunity to express support for utilizing these funds from the State of Maryland. Planned Life Cycle Asset Replacement (PLAR) is an essential component of the CIP for MCPS as it contributes to the goal of ensuring that every student is educated in well-maintained facilities. With over 160,000 students in 209 schools, wear and tear is inevitable, and large numbers of building components will have reached the end of their useful lives at any one time. In other words, the financial needs will always be large; reductions in appropriations such as occurred in FY21 put stress on the entire system.

The council packet indicates that MCPS intends to direct the \$602,651 of this supplemental appropriation chiefly towards repairs and replacements at Brooke Grove and Sherwood Elementary Schools in the Sherwood Cluster in Olney. Since neither school has ever received a revitalization despite being constructed in 1990 and 1978, respectively, and additionally Sherwood ES is currently at 96% utilization, it seems likely that the plans of work for both schools are much needed. The council's Racial Equity Impact Assessment makes valid points that further specifics should be provided about how the PLAR projects will address ADA compliance and that these schools proportionally have fewer students experiencing the greatest disparities in school performance and opportunity than are present in the county as a whole. However, since the funds come from the Aging Schools Program and not the county, using these monies can free up county funds to be directed to schools with larger populations of students experiencing barriers to education.

While there is always much more to do with respect to increasing equity, our cluster is grateful for all of the improvements that have been made through PLAR and other CIP project funds over the past few years at Twinbrook ES, a Title I school, including a full HVAC system replacement in summer 2020 and the roof replacement we anticipate in summer 2022. Ongoing PLAR needs in the cluster include pavement repairs at Twinbrook, installation of a sidewalk behind College Gardens ES, replacement of the upper blacktop at Beall ES, and installation of curb ramps and tactile domes at Richard Montgomery HS. Ceiling tiles and lights need replacement at Beall. The stadium scoreboard and marquee both need to be replaced at Richard Montgomery, and the partition walls between double rooms there should be upgraded. Its outside canopy leaks and its outside elevator is unreliable, even though both have been repaired repeatedly. The staff have also requested barrier gates in the parking lots and by the loading dock to prevent access by unwanted cars.

That quick list underscores the PLAR needs that exist throughout the county, both in schools with recent revitalizations and those receiving replacements of individual systems instead of whole-building renovations. Similarly, the student populations in both aging and newer school buildings reflect the full range of demographic characteristics—for instance, FARMS rates have risen significantly this school year at Beall and Bayard Rustin ES. Thank you for continuing to support the MCPS CIP and serving as partners in the stewardship of MCPS facilities.

Sincerely,  
Amy Ackerberg-Hastings, PhD  
Richard Montgomery MCCPTA Cluster Coordinator