

Montgomery County Council Testimony April 8

Nancy McInerney

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Hello My name is Nancy McInerney. My testimony is about the Council approving the entire MCPS 2025-2026 budget. I am the PTA President for New Hampshire Estates Elementary School, which we call NHE. My kids attend NHE. I am humbled to represent the families that trust NHE with their children. We love this school. Principal Bob Geiger is a tireless advocate for the teachers, staff and students at NHE. Our educators are passionate about teaching, and love to work together.

Unfortunately, NHE suffers from design and construction issues that go back decades. The lower level of this school is a basement that is located at the foot of a hill. Mold grows in these rooms because of high humidity and poor ventilation. These rooms are not safe for our kids or their teachers. MCPS already knows about this because our teachers and administrators have been reporting the problems for years. Superintendent Taylor visited NHE on our first day of school back in August. He has seen these problems and has created a 2025-2026 Budget that addresses the lack of infrastructure funding that has plagued MCPS for decades.

Right now, NHE needs portables to get kids out of the basement and a full cleaning of the air system with functioning AC in each classroom before school starts in August. By summer, MCPS will have their contracted engineering firm's building assessment and will know how to fix or rebuild NHE, which will cost considerable money either way. Today I am asking the Council to fully approve the MCPS budget because the mold, ventilation and drainage problems in NHE, that have persisted for decades, must be prioritized and remedied.

Additionally, we can not overlook the inequity in this situation. NHE is a Title 1 school in a neighborhood of Silver Spring which is composed of low income, and historically underserved residents. More than 90 percent of our students qualify for Free and Reduced Meals. We have one of the highest rates of students who qualify for Free and Reduced Meals in MCPS. 72 percent of our students are Latino and 21 percent are Black. 65 percent are Emergent Multilingual Learners. Not only are they getting by with fewer resources, many must now deal with increased safety concerns stemming from changes in Federal immigration policy.

So this is my message: Now it is time to fulfill the Council's mission to create equity for county residents. I believe under Dr. Taylor's leadership MCPS can provide safe schools for the kids of Montgomery County. The council must approve the full MCPS budget this year.