

Before I begin, I want to share that two of my kids were very close to the shooting at Thomas Wootton yesterday. They witnessed faculty heroically rushing toward the trouble. Their teacher, Keith Schwartz, then watched over them for hours. It's hard to talk about it, and quite plainly, I lack the proper words to express my gratitude to all who responded yesterday.

Today, I am an MCPS mom of 3. I thank those who have testified before me regarding the state of our public school system, hearing names like Wootton, Macgruder, and Cold Spring over and over again.... because it gives me the luxury of telling you a story.

I grew up on a farm. We made the most out of nothing. In the early 1980's, we didn't have indoor plumbing or trustworthy transportation, and we actually shared a telephone line with our neighbors, whom we relied on through thick and thin.

I grew up differently, and it gave me the ability to see and solve problems differently. And when I grew up, I became a nurse.

In 2004, I got a call. They said, "Jill, we've got a 5-pound baby down here who needs a life-saving procedure, but the machine we need to use will only work on a 10-pound baby. Can you help us?" I said, "I'll be right down". I ran to the baby's bedside and immediately began bypassing the manufacturer's safety recommendations that prohibited it from operating.

It worked beautifully.

I am telling you this story because right now...

It's time.

You need to bypass the manufacturer's safety recommendations to offer creative solutions in the CIP.

Please.

PRIORITIZE MCPS in the CIP.

Shatter the traditional restrictions that limit funds.

Create avenues to gain equity for school renovation.

Engage your persuasion and leadership to acquire assets and encourage others to do the same.

Old approaches are failing us.

Last month, Mark Elrich said the Council was "surprised" to learn MCPS needed 700 teachers. He went on to state that MCPS NEVER once requested the required CIP funds, despite the need for additional funding year after year.

MCPS consumes almost HALF of the county's budget.

Miscommunications like these put us on a crash course for disaster.

I have emailed each one of you a copy of this statement.

Please. Read it over and over again.

Be brave.

Remember why you wanted to serve, inspire your talents, trust your intuitions, access your practical sense of intelligence, and please RESIST ALL SENTIMENT OF POLITICS to do whatever it takes to save our schools.

You can be the council that finally PRIORITIZES MCPS.

PRIORITIZES our children.

PRIORITIZES the future of this county.

I'm a Wootton mom, and I'm empowering you to increase the CIP.

Our children's victory is in your hands.

