

My name is Nick Federico, and I'm a Cold Spring ES parent to a kindergartener and second grader. I am testifying in support of including Cold Spring and Wootton High School on the FY27-32 Capital Improvements Program (CIP). Thank you to County Executive Elrich and Councilmembers Jawando and Friedson who recently visited Cold Spring.

Cold Spring's building was designed for a different era. It was built in 1972 with an open concept floor plan and never renovated since then. This means there are no walls or doors between classrooms. Instead, makeshift stacked furniture often divides classrooms. This makes teaching more difficult, and learning with distractions and noise commonplace. But more seriously this design creates critical safety and security risks. During yesterday's incident at Wootton HS, Cold Spring was in lockdown and my Kindergartener had to hide in a closet for more than half an hour, since there are no locking doors or walls to her classroom. A Cold Spring renovation is urgently needed to fix this critical design flaw and safety issue. Funding the Cold Spring renovation will not just help my kids, but will also help other kids who attend Cold Spring through its Center for Enriched Studies (CES) program, which serves students from across the county.

Aside from the security concerns, we are also outgrowing the building. Over the past few years enrollment has steadily increased so we are now near capacity — about 381 students in a building built for 389. — with 100 CES seats. Funding in the CIP will allow the Board of Education to expand the Center and welcome more students across the county as part of the upcoming elementary boundary study.

Cold Spring has been on the CIP since at least 2014, with promises to renovate by 2019 that remain unfulfilled. Its facilities condition ranks as one of the worst and in dire need of replacement under current assessment criteria<sup>1</sup>. For too long, CIP decisions have favored overcrowding fixes while ignoring aging schools with stable enrollment. Wootton HS is another perfect example of this CIP neglect, with unfulfilled promises of renovation, and then removal from the CIP. Sadly many Wootton cluster schools have faced similar treatment and have been deprioritized under the CIP process. Under the current CIP framework, projects linger for years on the CIP, then get suddenly removed or have funding pulled, with other new projects cutting the line. Schools with delayed or cancelled CIP projects often end up worse off than new projects which jump the line, since schools on the CIP are often not eligible for capital repair projects while they're on the CIP. I urge the Council to reform the CIP process, and investigate additional funding sources so it can fully fund the CIP requests received from MCPS. Montgomery County's future depends on it.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the official MCPS Facility Condition Index (FCI) data, **Cold Spring Elementary School's FCI Depleted Value score is 0.6583**. See Facilities Condition Assessment, Cold Spring Elementary School, available at: [https://ww2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/facilities/FCI/reports/172559.25R000-030.354%20-%20Cold%20Spring%20Elementary%20School%20-%20Potomac,%20MD%20-%20FCA%20Summary%20Report\(Final\).pdf](https://ww2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/facilities/FCI/reports/172559.25R000-030.354%20-%20Cold%20Spring%20Elementary%20School%20-%20Potomac,%20MD%20-%20FCA%20Summary%20Report(Final).pdf)

N. Federico – County Council FY27-32 Capital Improvements Program Testimony

Please support Cold Spring and Wootton in the FY2027 CIP. My children deserve the safe learning environment every other MCPS student has. This is a critical safety issue that cannot wait. To those of you who haven't visited us yet, please do so you can better understand the facilities challenges we are facing. Thank you.