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August 2, 2022

Dr. Monifa B. McKnight, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
Montgomery County Public Schools
850 Hungerford Drive, Room 122
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Dr. McKnight,

The Rockville Mayor and Council thank you for the follow-up letter, dated June 21, 2022, and for your time in meeting with us on May 9, 2022. We are grateful for the generous amount of time that you, BOE President Wolff, and your school system colleagues spent with us discussing the status of MCPS major capital projects and issues of interest in schools that serve students in Rockville and across Montgomery County.

Thank you for the work done to build the new Maryvale Elementary School (ES) in the Rockville High School cluster and the co-location of the Carl Sandburg Learning Center. We also appreciate that you will continue to advance efforts to develop a new Crown Farm site to address overcrowding in schools such as Richard Montgomery High School and move forward on the major capital project planned for Wootton High School to address various building systems and programmatic needs for this school.

As a follow-up to your letter, we are requesting additional information regarding the relocation of the Materials Management facility from its current location and capacity issues at Bayard Rustin Elementary School and other Richard Montgomery Cluster Elementary schools.

Relocation of the Materials Management Facility:

We reiterate that the City is eager to work with MCPS and the County on a solution that addresses the glaring inequity of this blighted property located in the historic African American Lincoln Park Community and next to East Rockville.

The BOE funding request for the Materials Management facility relocation was removed by the [County Council in the approved FY23-FY28 MCPS CIP](#). Mayor and Council regard the relocation of the Materials Management facility as a high-priority goal, as noted in the [City of Rockville Stonestreet plan](#). We are concerned about the deteriorated state of the buildings in our community, in addition to the safety of on-site MCPS employees. We ask that MCPS and BOE members review this facility together and include this item in its next CIP request to the County. Mayor and Council of Rockville are willing to work with MCPS to move this item forward, and we stand ready to assist MCPS in handling this site expeditiously, given the long-standing blight that this site has had on 2 neighboring communities.

We ask that you please work with the City of Rockville as this initiative is advanced, and include the City of Rockville in the site selection process. Please let us know how we can support your work on this important initiative and if you would like to schedule a meeting to discuss further.

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Bayard Rustin Elementary School Enrollment and Available Capacity at Other Cluster Elementary Schools:

According to your June 21 letter, as of April 30, 2022, there were 802 students enrolled at BRES, which is twelve students over the 790-student program capacity. This overutilization has occurred only a few years after the new school opened when the original capacity was stated as 640 while other schools in the cluster have lower capacity.

It is our understanding that both Beall and College Gardens Elementary Schools each have approximately 100 seats available. Further, we've learned that Beall ES and College Gardens ES have lost teaching and other positions due to a lack of enrollment. The imbalance in the Richard Montgomery Cluster enrollment allocations is very concerning and needs urgent attention. We believe there is a more elegant solution to the problem without having to incur the expense of reconfiguring Bayard Rustin and having to go through the dislocations at Beall and College Gardens Elementary Schools. During the meeting, there was discussion about how MCPS has applied this approach in other areas of the County, and we request that this be considered in the Richard Montgomery Cluster.

We believe this issue can be resolved by MCPS relaxing the requirements for elementary school catchment areas or allowing COSAs to help balance capacity. The three schools are in close geographic proximity to one another, which makes it easier for families to switch from one school to another nearby school. Bayard Rustin Elementary School should not be put in the position of repurposing rooms and adding portables when there are vacant seats at Beall and College Gardens Elementary Schools. This would represent a return, in part, to previous catchment areas that were in effect before Bayard Rustin ES came on line.

The Mayor and Council have received concerns about this situation from numerous RM Cluster parents. On their behalf, we request that MCPS please resolve this issue as soon as possible.

In summary, the Mayor and Council of Rockville encourage the following:

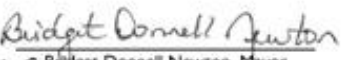

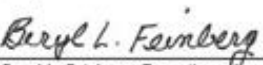
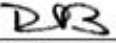
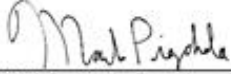
- Relax the catchment area requirements/COSA process so that some Bayard Rustin families can move to the Beall ES catchment area, and so that some Beall ES families can move to the College Gardens ES area. We see this as a voluntary option for families. We recommend that this change be effectuated for the 2022/2023 school year. During the May 9, 2022 discussion you shared that this process was allowed in other County clusters.
- We believe this would require immediate outreach to both the neighborhoods involved and to the principals of all 3 schools.
- Please let us know if these changes can be made for the upcoming school year.

Again, we are very appreciative of the wonderful presentation and engaging conversation on May 9, 2022. We thank you for the work being done to support students throughout Montgomery County.

Dr. Monifa B. McKnight, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
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The Mayor and Council are committed to working together with you and the BOE in support of capital improvements projects and programming that continue to provide Rockville students and their families with a superior educational experience.

Sincerely,

 Bridget Donnell Newton, Mayor	
 Monique Ashton, Councilmember	 Beryl L. Feinberg, Councilmember
 David Myles, Councilmember	 Mark Pierzchala, Councilmember

Rockville Mayor and Council

cc: Montgomery County Board of Education
Seth Adams, Director, MCPS Department of Facilities Management