

## **Testimony for the Mayor's Hearing on the DCPS FY04 Budget (2/13/03)**

My name is Nancy Huvendick, I work with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Fund and I have a son who is a junior at Wilson and son who is a seventh grader at Hardy.

### Hold the Line on Maintenance and Repair

Facilities Management was allocated \$17,098,600 for maintenance and repair in FY '03; this year the proposed budget provides for \$42,433,780 - - an increase of \$25,335,180. This is a much needed catch-up increase, and I can't emphasize enough how critical it is. Chronically, one of the first things cut over the years to reduce deficits has been maintenance.

Even with more and more spent on new construction we cannot allow ourselves to neglect the buildings where the great majority of our children and teachers spend every school day. Except for the new buildings at Oyster, Minor and Barnard, and the 8 schools currently in construction, the rest of the district's approximately 147 buildings are continuing to deteriorate at a rapid rate.

We have to expand the momentum for new construction into a real enthusiasm for substantially upgrading the buildings that are not scheduled for renovation just so that they will be decently habitable until it is their turn for a complete rebuilding. In the meantime they need roofs, windows, boilers, new wiring, lighting, paint. Most of all, they need careful attention to the day-to-day effort of keeping them clean.

### New Maintenance Plan

We look forward to participating in the development of the Maintenance Plan that is being drafted. With the help of our custodians, engineers, and principals, and with the assistance of private experts in maintaining environmentally healthy, safe schools, this document should greatly assist the Office of Facilities in its mission.

### Healthy, Green Schools for the Future

We also have to consider our responsibility for the long term future for our grandchildren as much as our children. This means building and maintaining buildings that are "healthy": free of indoor pollutants, comfortable both in summer and winter, and full of natural light. We have to start retrofitting our school yards and parking lots to better manage rainwater run-off, and get permeable surfaces on our playgrounds we might even consider a few green roofs. We have to hold fast to the precious system of neighborhood schools which make it possible for most DC elementary students to walk to school, and most jr.high and high school students to take public transportation. DC children avoid long hours on a fleet of expensive and polluting school buses.

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