Board of Education members and Superintendent Smith, thank you for allowing me to provide testimony regarding the Boundary Study for the Clarksburg, Northwest, and Seneca Valley Clusters.

My name is Peter Kim and I have 3 children in the MCPS system - 7th grade, 3rd grade and 1st grade. I believe that children's success is a partnership between parents and MCPS. For my part, I have been fortunate to attend many field trips and school functions for my children. When I am interacting with my kids and their classmates at school, I get a good sense of the classroom, the school and the teachers. I see how the teachers are supported in the classroom, how the kids learn, and what techniques are being implemented during the school year.

I recently saw the Neelsville MS SGA president, Sonia Thanicatt’s November 5th testimony about improving the conditions at the school. If the students’ nickname for their school is “prison on a hill” there are certainly improvements that must be made. No one should have to worry about having a desk in MCPS, nor worry about their personal safety. Teachers and students should not be in spaces without natural light. It is impossible to believe that in one of the top 10 school districts in the nation we can have a class without enough desks and chairs for students. If they don’t even have those, what other support and resources are they lacking? Do the teachers have all the necessary support and resources they need to do their job well? Are students given a fair chance at learning in this school setting? The BOE must move to approve and fund the Neelsville MS capital project. It is not enough that this project is Recommended in the Capital Improvement Plan, it must be Approved as soon as possible.

I live in the Milestone community and we have been a part of multiple boundary studies over the past 20 years. I understand that changes have to be made, but even in the last 5 years, we have been a part of two boundary studies. The uncertainty that a boundary study creates among the residents is very stressful in many ways. The BOE should create new guidelines that can relieve “boundary study fatigue” where a neighborhood experiences this only once every 7-10 years, for example.

Finally, I do support the Superintendent’s Boundary Study recommendation for Option 11a. After reading his report, I can support the reasoning behind his decision. As the transition occurs, I ask the BOE and Superintendent that you will keep improving the programming that is available at Neelsville MS and Seneca Valley HS.

Thank you for your time.