Good evening.

My name is Alan Jung, and I will be testifying on behalf of the Clarksburg cluster for the CIP.

First, I'd like to speak to the superintendent's recommendation for Clarksburg Elementary #9.

Clarksburg Elementary #9 is intended to provide relief for Clarksburg Elementary, a school that is currently over two-hundred percent utilized. TWO HUNDRED PERCENT! Imagine putting a chair between each of you today and adding one more person between. It would be inconvenient, there would be added stress and conflict. You'd probably cope, but you certainly wouldn't want to be in such an environment. That is what two-hundred percent utilization is, and those are the conditions at Clarksburg Elementary today.

At Clarksburg Elementary bathroom lines resemble those at baseball games and amusement parks. The cafeteria is so small that lunch must be served starting at 10:30am and ending at 2:30pm. Yes, students are eating lunch until 2:30pm! Teachers are fighting to be IN the portables because they are less suffocating than the actual school building. Teachers and staff at Clarksburg Elementary spend increasing amounts of time to cope with the severe overcrowding, taking time and focus away from instruction. Clarksburg Elementary is bursting at the seams. The students aren't thriving, they are too busy struggling to just get through the day. This environment is not safe and does not allow our students to reach their full potential... and things are only getting worse.

The Cabin Branch neighborhood, where Clarksburg Elementary #9 will be located, will consist of over 1,300 homes when complete. Developers have released proposals for the adjacent Ten Mile Creek neighborhood for 400 to 600 homes. The 400 acres to the south of Cabin Branch are under contract by a developer and will represent hundreds, possibly over a thousand homes. Over one hundred new homes have begun construction at Dowden's Station. Clarksburg Square is still selling homes across from the MCPS bus depot. The area to the north of Clarksburg Road has recently had water and sewer mains installed to support future development. All these new developments are in the Clarksburg Elementary service area and will only add to the overcrowding. Clarksburg Elementary simply cannot absorb more students, we must start building Clarksburg Elementary #9 now.

The superintendent has recommended Clarksburg Elementary #9 to be built in the latest CIP, and the Clarksburg cluster fully supports this recommendation. Clarksburg Elementary #9 has already been delayed by a year. Please do not allow Clarksburg Elementary #9 to be delayed any further.
Second, I'd like to speak to the superintendent's recommendation for Neelsville Middle School.

The Clarksburg cluster is pleased that MCPS has acknowledged the challenges in retrofitting Neelsville Middle School and that the superintendent recommends replacement of the Neelsville building. This may seem extreme for a school built in the 1980s, but those who have been to Neelsville know there is no other option.

The challenges at Neelsville are numerous. The hallways are so narrow that the school has implemented "one-way" hallways to keep students moving. Lockers cannot be used because they obstruct the hallway when open and only allow students to pass single-file. Students must carry around an entire day's worth of books and supplies due to the locker situation. The kitchen is too small to efficiently serve lunch to a school where two-thirds of the students are eligible for free and reduced meals, and the cafeteria is too small for all students to have a seat. ESOL and special education are being taught in book closets because there aren't enough classrooms. There are no dedicated technology classrooms. There are six science classrooms for nine science teachers. There is no auxiliary gym. Half the rooms have no windows. There is no elevator for students with mobility difficulties. There are just four bathrooms for an entire middle school, and a staff bathroom so small you must stand over the toilet to shut the door. There is no secure entry vestibule or an easy way to retrofit one. The list goes on and on and on.

Yet perhaps the greatest challenge at Neelsville is the conflicting message we are sending our students. We emphasize the importance and value of education to all students and highlight our commitment to their success. Yet we've failed to provide Neelsville students with a building and environment that matches this narrative. Students need and do better in a school environment that meets their needs, that they can be proud of, and that they want to go to. Today's Neelsville is not such an environment. A new Neelsville can be.

Both the Watkins Mill and Seneca Valley clusters have expressed support for a new Neelsville Middle School. As a cluster, and as a broader community, we also overwhelmingly support the superintendent's recommendation to build a new Neelsville. However, we also ask that the board go further than just a new school. We ask the board direct MCPS to build a new building that will especially address the challenges of the elevated socioeconomic need at Neelsville, including additional space for programming and services specifically intended to create equity and success for all students.

Thank you for your time this evening and consideration of our cluster's needs.