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February 13, 2026

The Honorable Grace Rivera-Oven, President
Montgomery County Board of Education
15 West Gude Drive, Suite 100
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dr. Thomas Taylor, Ed.D., MBA
Superintendent of Montgomery County Public Schools
15 West Gude Drive, Suite 400
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear BOE President Rivera-Oven and Superintendent Taylor,

We would like to thank MCPS, Board of Education, and the Superintendent for the strong partnership in the midst of a trying time over the past few weeks as we worked together with local schools to address snow removal supports and most recently the major public safety issue involving a school shooting at Wootton High School. Through collaboration, we were able to respond to the emergency and support public safety. We look forward to ongoing efforts to work together.

As partners and stakeholders, we have very serious concerns about the Superintendent's Recommendation to the Board of Education to (1) close the Wootton High School Rockville campus, (2) convert the campus into a holding school at an undefined date for an undefined time, and (3) relocate all Wootton students to the Crown Farm High School. We strongly urge the Superintendent and Board of Education to quickly change course and recommend the school system advocate through the County Council CIP process to add funding for the Wootton High School Major Capital Project in the FY27-FY32 CIP or collaborate on a renovation of the current campus at Rockville. We have shared with the Superintendent that Rockville would consider supporting either of these two options above as part of our budget process and we would welcome a discussion with the Board. We stand together with the Wootton community and will continue to strongly advocate for keeping Wootton High School open on its current campus.

The Superintendent's Recommendation (which includes the closure of the Wootton High School campus) is a dramatic departure from the purpose for which the new Crown High School was created -- which was to address overcrowding in mid-county high schools. Beginning in 2019, MCPS' communications with the City of Rockville have stated clearly that Crown High School would alleviate overcrowding at Richard Montgomery High School. Now, after years of assurances regarding Crown's purpose, the decision to permanently close the Rockville Wootton campus is an extremely late announcement and introduced within a very short time period during the holiday season with limited engagement. The first iteration of a Wootton closure -- termed Option H was only shared with Rockville in December 2025 after years of different expectations. There was not sufficient time for engagement with the Wootton and Richard Montgomery Clusters on Option H potential impacts. Importantly, between Option H's introduction and the Recommendation announcement on February 5, there was no meeting by the Superintendent with these clusters, as has been historically offered in other parts of the County when there are significant proposed changes of this magnitude.

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Dr. Thomas Taylor, Ed.D., MBA, Superintendent of Montgomery County Public Schools
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We are aware that the Superintendent did visit other clusters before the final recommendation was shared. We request equitable engagement for these communities.

Importantly, there are also several concerning factors about the October 2026 CIP document and December Boundary Options recommendations. First, the October CIP document, which annually includes a section on “Cluster Planning Considerations” fails to include two major planning documents adopted by the City of Rockville in the Richard Montgomery High School Cluster section.

The first planning document that is missing is the Rockville 2040 Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2021 and the Rockville Town Center Master Plan in 2025.

Both documents reflect significant planned growth, including thousands of additional housing units within the City of Rockville. The October released CIP data shows overcapacity for Richard Montgomery. Yet, the December and February Options data shows Richard Montgomery as no longer overcapacity - despite indicating “no change.” Meanwhile, the Richard Montgomery currently relies on nine portable classrooms, and faces continued growth pressure, including 1,055 residential units in nine approved developments and more in the pipeline. Similarly, the Wootton Cluster planning considerations reference include the County’s Great Seneca Science Corridor Minor Master Plan Amendment, but they do not reference the Rockville 2040 Comprehensive Plan or acknowledge new communities being built in this area, including a new community being currently built directly across from Wootton. At the same time the State has asked Rockville to contribute more units to help address the housing shortage, including 2,330 new units by 2030 toward a total of 5,000. Rockville needs school capacity not only to address overcrowding at Richard Montgomery, but also to plan responsibly for future growth. That growth generates impact taxes that help fund MCPS. Closing an existing high school campus in the City undermines that planning. We ask directly: how will MCPS and the County address overcrowding and projected growth amidst a State and national housing shortage if you close an existing high school?

Further, this Recommendation directly conflicts with State and County policies focused on adding housing where children can walk to school. Wootton has fostered a viable walkable community for residents. The Superintendent’s Recommendation would bus the entire community out of the neighborhoods adjacent to Wootton High School, and then bus an entire community to the Wootton Rockville campus. This transportation plan will create significant traffic concerns and remove walkable options for students. It is essential that Wootton High School remain a walkable community hub for the surrounding Fallsmead, Fallsbend, Scott Drive, Rockshire, Lakewood, and Hurley neighborhoods. Permanently closing the campus will negatively impact the City and the surrounding community. The school serves as a significant community hub. The classes, programs, and activities offered at this central community campus have served Rockville students and families for decades. Our City already has multiple MCPS properties that are in a state of transition, such as Stonestreet, Carver, and Rock Terrace, and we know how long it takes to repurpose properties and give them new life. Please do not add another vacancy in Rockville. The Wootton High School campus is the heart and vibrancy of the community.

For the benefit of Wootton High School, Richard Montgomery High School, the City of Rockville, and MCPS overall, we endorse a “Modified Recommendation,” wherein the existing Superintendent’s Recommendation can be adjusted through an Amendment. Through this proposed “Modified Recommendation,” all of the school assignments in the Recommendation are retained except for:

- (1) current Wootton High School students proposed to attend “Wootton High School at Crown Farm,” and,
- (2) current Magruder High School proposed to attend the “Rockville Holding School” during renovation or rebuild (“Magruder Students”).

Under this proposed “Modified Recommendation,”

- Wootton students and Magruder students (each at separate times) would temporarily be placed in the Crown Farm High School (along with local Crown Area Students) during their school’s renovation and/or rebuild periods.
- Wootton Students would not be placed at Crown Farm High School permanently.
- The same Crown Area Students who are proposed under the current Recommendation to attend the Crown Farm High School would still attend the Crown Farm High School. We support their community’s advocacy to be able to attend as a walkable school.
- After the temporary use of Crown Farm High School, MCPS may want to consider a boundary study to determine how best to fill the Crown Farm High School.


This Modified Recommendation preserves the utilization, stability, walkability, and equity factors for a boundary study, and reduces the instability from permanently closing a longstanding school community. It also secures the opportunity for neighboring students to attend Crown as soon as possible. The “Modified Recommendation”

We request further discussions and meetings between staff and urge you to change course and advocate through the County Council CIP process to add funding for a Major Capital Project for Wootton HS in the FY27-FY32 CIP and/or work collectively with us to discuss what is needed to support renovations for Wootton High School in Rockville. Rockville is also open to exploring a partnership with the school system to support improvements at the existing Wootton High School to keep the campus open. MCPS was already planning to invest funds to support the community as a holding school and then shut it down. Why not partner with the City to make the building work for the longer term? The City has a history of partnering with the county to support improvements at MCPS schools, most recently, on a community-sized gym at Bayard Rustin Elementary School.

The Rockville Mayor and Council value our partnership with the BOE and Superintendent, and we fully recognize the weight of the decisions before you. We request that you take more time to review the issues and look into the concerns raised before making a decision that has such a major impact on the stability and future of the school communities, municipalities, and County. Once the school is closed, the consequences will be difficult to reverse.

We have also listened to needs from communities across the County, and we believe that we need innovative solutions and new approaches to address the backlog of CIP needs at schools across the County so that all communities can thrive. We share the school system's deep commitment to providing high-quality services that meet the needs of students and school communities, and we look forward to our continued partnership to help achieve them.

Sincerely,

 _____ Monique Ashton, Mayor	 _____ Izola (Zola) Shaw, Councilmember
 _____ Kate Fulmer, Councilmember	 _____ Barry Jackson, Councilmember
 _____ Barry Jackson, Councilmember	 _____ Marissa Valeri, Councilmember
 _____ David Myles, Councilmember	 _____ Adam Van Grack, Councilmember

City of Rockville Mayor and Council

cc: Rita Montoya, Board of Education Member
Karla Silvestre, Board of Education Member
Laura Stewart, Board of Education Member
Julie Yang, Board of Education Member
Brenda Wolff, Board of Education Member
Natalie Zimmerman, Board of Education Member
Anuva Maloo, Student Board of Education Member
Jeff Mihelich, Rockville City Manager