

**STATEMENT BEFORE BOARD OF EDUCATION
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
Hearings for FY 2007 Operating Budget
January 12, 2006**

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My name is Sandy Vogelgesang, representing the West Bradley Citizens' Association, which belongs to the 6000-family Seven Locks Coalition.

Our community and the Seven Locks PTA continue to oppose the Superintendent's plan to shift from expanding Seven Locks Elementary and, instead, to close that school and build a so-called "replacement" school on Kendale Road. Key officials have now joined us in challenging that plan.

- The County Inspector General is investigating the Seven Locks project.
- A majority of the County Planning Board has advised the Superintendent, County Executive, and County Council President this week of their "serious reservations regarding the selected location for the replacement school."
- The County Council wants to know the most cost-effective option for Seven Locks School, including a one-step modernization/expansion of Seven Locks.
- The County Executive has said this month that he will review the Superintendent's plan for Seven Locks.

In light of developments, why rush into building the Kendale facility? The School Board should fully address outstanding issues before requesting more money for this project in the interrelated FY 2007 operating and capital budgets.

- The FY 2007 Operating Budget cites the Kendale school as one of the factors increasing operating costs.
- Closing Seven Locks denies needed classroom space when over 17,000 County students are parked in portables that incur higher operating cost.

One Planning Board Commissioner has called the MCPS decision on Seven Locks "a mistake that has taken on a life of its own." Why not reverse this mistake before wasting more taxpayer money? Drop the Kendale fiasco, with its \$1.5 million storm water management system and destruction of over nine acres of virgin forest. Instead, proceed with a less expensive, one-step modernization/expansion of Seven Locks Elementary!