

**Testimony of Elizabeth Gamero
Before the Montgomery County Board of Education
Public Hearing on the Strategic Plan October 12, 2006**

Hello—My name is Elizabeth Gamero.

I am here representing Hispanic Students, and Parents of Montgomery County Public Schools.
Class Size & Bigger or New Schools

This is a huge concern for us parents. As in big classes, the children don't get the attention or education they deserve. Last year, my son was failing Honor Geometry and I actually had to keep pushing to get the teacher to respond to my messages. She was busy with over 29 students. Classes are too large; and it is very hard for students to focus and for the teacher to get their attention. We would like to see smaller classes so our children can get the attention and education that will prepare them for life and this nation will have better educated citizens.

In my neighborhood we have an elementary school that has grown so much that they keep adding "portables". This has contributed to a rat infestation in our neighborhood. The rats live under the portables, there have been times when I'm walking to my car and a rat runs by. One of my neighbors has a dog and rats go into her house through the little door that the dog uses to go out. Please look into over populated schools and keep Highland in mind for a New Bigger School.

Parents

I have been part of the PTSA for years translating during monthly, and Board meetings and helping coordinate parents at all school levels. However, when my child got to middle school I offer my volunteering services to the Principal but nothing was done to help me get the parents more involved in PTSA Meetings. We need interpreters and audio systems to minimize the interruptions during PTSA Meetings, assemblies, etc.

Last year, I was fortunate to receive an invitation to attend class/meetings for "Conquistando Tus Sueños" at the beginning I wasn't clear on what it was getting myself into but as soon as we started those meetings a door of opportunities opened. Without knowing, I was being trained to be a leader. I took on the opportunity and now I am teaching computer classes to Hispanic Parents at Silver Spring International Middle School, This has opened my eyes to the need to train and prepare Parents to be Community Leaders. We have wonderful websites for almost everything, my favorite is Montgomery County's website because it's been so useful to me ...but, we have tons of parents that do not know how to use a computer. Furthermore, they do not know of e-mail and all the wonderful technology that we spend a good amount of our taxpayer's money on. We would like to see English and Computer classes offered to parents of children in the Montgomery County Schools.

We need to take advantage of the wonderful diversity in our Montgomery County Schools by investing on these issues of our society.

Small Class Size & Bigger or New Schools

Interpreters & good audio system

Train Parents to be Community Leaders

Offer English and Computer Classes to Parents

Thanks so much for the opportunity