**Oral Testimony in Support of the Resolution to Establish Utilization Premium Payment Rate for Public School Improvements – December 8, 2020**

Good Afternoon President Hucker and Councilmembers,

My name is Laura Stewart, MCCPTA Vice President of Advocacy, and I am here speaking for our Subdivision Staging Policy Subcommittee. We strongly support the Resolution to Establish Utilization Premium Payment Rate for Public School Improvements.

I want to thank you for the hard work it took to produce this final product, which is part of the new Growth and Infrastructure Policy. I think we can all agree that moratoria did not fix the realities that kids are experiencing in their overcrowded schools. This payment helps us replace moratoria with more school construction funding. We haven’t been keeping up with our facility needs, and this payment will help cover our large capacity needs, while freeing up other funds for our huge maintenance backlog. This is more important than ever, considering the extra strain that our facilities will be under when we re-open in the COVID -19 environment.

However, I am worried that we haven’t reached CIP funding goals due to the new Progressive Recordation tax piece being delayed until spring. The Utilization Premium Payment will only fulfill capacity needs if we also cover turnover impacts with the Recordation Tax proposal. I strongly urge you to look for a way to increase school construction funding in a way that will take advantage of the anticipated new state funding through the Built to Learn Act.

I also want to take a minute to thank you for funding the South Lake project and the HVAC request this year. Passing this resolution and the Progressive Recordation tax later this spring, along with the appropriate state funding will help our county actually provide us with the necessary resources to complete long overdue projects like the Poolesville High School, Eastern Middle School, and Twinbrook Elementary school renovations.

Thank you again for all your work on the new Growth and Infrastructure Policy, taking time to hear from parents and education advocates, and for supporting Montgomery County Schools, one of the most important assets to our county.

Laura Stewart

MCCPTA Vice President of Advocacy