

Good evening BOE, Dr. Weast, community members. My name is Vladimir Rodriguez and I am a proud senior and SGA president at Gaithersburg High School. One of my many responsibilities as SGA president is to advocate for and represent the concerns of over 2,000 students who are part of my Gaithersburg High School family. I am here today to advocate for Gaithersburg High School and all the other schools waiting for a new building. GHS is a very diverse school that has many excellent programs, like the different signature academies, clubs, activities, and sports. But there is one key question on the minds of every member of the GHS Trojan Family. When do we get a new building? When do we get a building where we can hear our teachers teach without being distracted by the noise that the air conditioning unit makes in the classroom? When do we get a building where we can concentrate and not worry if there is asbestos in our classrooms? The solution to our question is to put a new GHS in the budget for 2009-2010 school year.

An immense number of experiences come to mind when I think of why we need a new GHS. My Advanced Placement World History Class last year was a very demanding class that required a lot of work both inside and out of class. For over a week in the dead of winter the heater did not work in the classroom and it was below 50 degrees inside. I could not concentrate or write because my fingers were so cold and my nose was dripping. When I took my reading quizzes and unit tests I could not concentrate at all. Therefore, I did not do well on those

tests and it affected my grade very heavily. The condition of the GHS building has blocked me from getting an "A" in an AP class.

In addition to broken heating and A/C parts, of our school were closed down because there was asbestos present. Four classrooms of the science department that I have been in had asbestos. Four of them! I was on those classes for four hours everyday for 10 months. I was very worried when I found out. People who were cleaning the asbestos in these rooms were wearing full body suits because they do not want to inhale any of the asbestos that can cause cancer. On the other hand there are hundreds of students and teachers that learn and teach in these classrooms that do not wear body suits everyday and breathe the air of the classroom without protection. I didn't focus on my academic success as much as I should have because I was so worried about my health.

Another reason we need a new building is because the narrow hallways cannot hold the number of students that attend. There are two main intersections at our school that are worse than 270 during rush hour. These overcrowded hallways have caused many students to be late which lead to a loss of credit. What happens when we have another real like fire caused in February by a faulty heater? How will 2000 terrified students exit the building safely when there is not enough space for us to walk in? We need a new GHS!

I have other concerns. When it rains there needs to be a bucket to catch the leaking water. Also the green mold coming out of the ceiling in the child development office is a great concern. I see the horrible conditions that the

locker rooms are in, not because we don't take care of them but because the school is very old. O could talk about how the temperatures in the classroom affect our concentration. We need a new GHS!

In conclusion, the question posed to me is "During difficult economic times, what priorities in the Montgomery County Public Schools strategic plan should we focus on for the 2009-2010 school year to improve achievement for all students?" The key is to rebuild Gaithersburg High School. By rebuilding GHS, students' achievement will improve and there will be positive impact on the whole Trojan Family. I thank you Dr. Weast, BOE, and community members for listening to us. Please remember the safety and the education of the students. Please keep GHS on our budget. Thank You!