

David Evans

Thursday, May 19th, 2015

Members of the School Board,

My name is David Evans, and I teach music at Patrick Henry. I am also speaking on behalf of my fellow performing arts teachers, Todd Mulder and Stanley Marcellus Reynolds. Unfortunately, all three of us have commitments tonight, and are unable to attend this meeting in person.

Our current building may not be a spectacular facility, but one thing we are blessed with is a real auditorium, with a full stage, sloped floors for optimal sightlines, comfortable theater seating, and good acoustics. While it could use some upgrades, it is a wonderful setting for performances and various community events. I was happy to see that the renovation/addition option (#3) preserved the auditorium (while resolving the previous issues with the field). Unfortunately, the other two plans, including the one which is being recommended, involve demolishing the auditorium, and not building a new one to replace it, but instead using an "all-purpose room" for such events.

As a parent, I have endured performances in schools with "gymnatoriums" and "cafetoriums", sitting on folding chairs and struggling to see around the people in front of me, so I am well aware of what "all-purpose rooms" are like. I also have colleagues that work in schools with such facilities and hate them; some choose to move their performances to the local high school, at great inconvenience to themselves and the school community.

We have been informed that another part of the proposal is a small black box theater, seating around 200+. Although useful for smaller, more intimate events, this would be far too small for the larger school/community events. We frequently pack out our auditorium; if anything, we should be talking about *increasing* its capacity. It would be a big mistake to destroy our auditorium and have to use a cafeteria or gymnasium for assemblies, concerts, plays, dance programs, movie nights, Heritage Night, and other community events.

With Patrick Henry becoming a Pre-K – 8 school, and with our increasing emphasis on the performing arts (last year, we added a spring musical, and this year we added a dance curriculum), we need an adequate space for performances – ***which we currently have!*** Please don't demolish the auditorium. Speaking for myself, I would happily teach in a trailer for a year or two, if it meant that in the long term we would have a decent gathering place for the Patrick Henry community.

Thank you,

David Evans
Vocal Music Teacher,
Patrick Henry Elementary School

Todd Mulder
Band, Orchestra and General Music
Director of Spring Musical
Patrick Henry Elementary School

Stanley Marcellus Reynolds
Dance Instructor
Patrick Henry Elementary School