

May 23, 2019 School Board Meeting

Public Comments

Speech

Good evening, my name is Sasha Dafkova and I am a 7th grade student at George Washington Middle School. I'd like to take a few minutes of your time to inform you on what our **class** has been doing to help the water conservation efforts in Alexandria and to ask you to consider engaging with us in the future. I helped to create a student organization, the Student Water Conservation Society, earlier this year when we noticed that GW is not equipped with water conservation technology because of its age, so we took this opportunity to try and repair it.

We entered in a competition called "Caring for our Watersheds" in which 90 schools competed in order to win money to implement different solutions to environmental issues.

To prepare for this competition we contacted stakeholders, volunteered for Alexandria Earth Day, and gathered information. We came 7th out of 90 and won a grant for \$450. This grant is to implement eco-friendly tech at our school. With this, we plan to install one dual flush toilet and one rain barrel.

Throughout the duration of a regular school day the toilets we currently have flush around 9,000 gallons of water a day. Some of the water is not even necessary to be going down the pipe! With our new dual flush toilets the lever allows choice of the amount of water that is used.

Another positive outcome of dual flush toilets will be the reduction of the water bill. Unfortunately, we could not determine how much the water bill would be reduced due to the difficulty in getting access to this information. After 3 calls to Central Office and 2 to the superintendent's assistant to get this information, our attempt to use this data for academic learning wasn't available.

The rest of the money will be used for our rain barrel. A rain barrel is a cheap and efficient way to save water. The water in that barrel can be used for the gardens that most schools have. With this, we will use the collected water in the barrel instead of using the clean tap water. Each drop flushed away by our toilets, or sprinkled on our plants must be treated by a highly energy intensive process leading to the our skyrocketing problem of climate change.

Our idea developed in March, the communication between students and facilities would have supported in the movement of progress by the end of the year. I'm committed to overcoming this obstacle by continuing this next year. But, with only a month left the realization of achieving this goal by June 20th is flushing away from my grasp. By June 2020 we hope that a consistency in communication with facilities will support us in installing 2 water conserving toilets on each of our 3 floors; one for the girls bathroom and one for the boys bathroom. And then, hopefully expand this plan to other public schools worldwide to make our education community a water conservation friendly place.

Thank you for your time!