

**November 25, 2019**  
**Budget Public Hearing**  
**Michael Therway**

We appreciate the difficulty of the many competing concerns across our city schools. Again, please know we are extremely happy at GWMS and think our teachers and administrators do an excellent job in often very difficult conditions that distract from education.

Like many fellow GW parents we are greatly concerned to hear a response that GW's "**fire alarm system has always met basic fire compliance standards**". A student set a fire to a poster, which was not detected by the fire alarm but reported by bystanders, and the alarms did not sound for gas smells. Kids were told to evacuate by teachers and staff roaming the halls... We do not see how this could be in compliance with any standard. How was the school allowed to remain open in this situation?

Broken fire alarm system infrastructure, dangerous mold, excessive heat in classrooms, old carpeting that teachers tell us is the same as when they attended GW as 12 year olds - if these do not rise to the level of making GWMS a #1 priority immediately, we are at a loss. With so much development and investment in our area in the national spotlight - it is shameful to have GWMS be notorious for its building problems, when it is truly an excellent school.

GWMS families are reaching a boiling point in frustration and lack of trust when it comes to addressing the disgraceful conditions at the school. My son comes home regularly passing on comments from teachers that GW's building problems are never a priority, and a feeling of hopelessness is clear. The community should not feel they need to escalate matters to the state level or a widespread press campaign of students and parents to get attention for these very serious issues.

We implore the Board and City to make GWMS a priority **now**. Waiting an other year is not an option. It is an achievable goal to ensure that GWMS has a healthy/safe building so the school can focus on instruction. With investment, GW's impressive building could be a true showpiece for our area, rather than an infamous liability.