



Oakland Mills Community Association
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Good evening and thank you for this opportunity to speak. My name is Jonathan Edelson and I am the chairperson of the Oakland Mills Community Association as well as the parent of an Oakland Mills High School alumnus and current student. I am speaking on behalf of the Association.

When I last spoke before you, I took you through a timeline of building and systems failures, poor conditions assessments, and decades of deferrals. Unfortunately, I ran out of time before I could finish, which should be telling in and of itself. I have included that timeline in the written portion of this testimony for the record, but there is no need and not enough time to rehash it tonight.

You've often heard that past neglect and deferral of OMHS was the legacy of past boards of education. Is OMHS being punished because it was neglected so long that the only option was two summers of emergency repairs? Are you going to join the legacy of past boards of education, or will you recall your vote and listen to the staff and your past selves? Your decision in November certainly didn't give such a large change in investment the time and attention it deserves. You are using an incomplete and flawed formula, that doesn't even account for how long key systemic components have been operating beyond useful life, to drive decisions about how to spend hundreds of millions of dollars. You are looking at "bang for the buck" without considering that high school facilities, with large auditoriums, gymnasiums, fields, and other space serve not just the students assigned, but feeder schools holding large events, other county departments, and the greater community. We want every student and teacher to spend their days in healthy environments conducive to learning. Oakland Mills High School is not such an environment; simply look at past assessments or read the timeline in the written testimony. Please give that some thought. As we always offer, we stand by ready to support and assist you in securing more funds to address more capital needs across the system.

Thank you.

2008 – Gilbert Architects assesses Oakland Mills High School, opened in 1973, and identifies major problems with the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system that was already ten years past its life expectancy and designed for an open classroom layout in what was now a closed classroom building thanks to walls being put up over the years. Gilbert also noted the hallways were very narrow and caused students to be late to classes. The enrollment at OMHS was under 1,200 students at the time: it's now at about 1,500.

2009 – HVAC renovation, electrical repairs, interior and exterior repairs and upgrades deferred by previous school system leadership.

2017 – Gilbert Architects assesses OMHS and declares that the deferred HVAC and other deferrals now amount to a need for major renovation as the building can **no longer provide a conducive learning environment**.

2021 – Previous superintendent omits OMHS from the ten-year capital improvement program; the Board of Education puts it back.

July 2021 – **Mold** in room 808 and 809.

August 2021 – 13 water outlets over 5 parts per billion **lead**

October 2021 – **Mold** in room 809

May 2022 – Four more water outlets over 5 parts per billion **lead**

August 2022 – **Mold** in the Media center and rooms 808 and 809

2022 – Previous Superintendent proposes deferring renovations to OMHS another 11 years.

2023 – The Board of Education hears hours of testimony about conditions in OMHS and reprioritizes it.

September 2023 – The Media Center closes due to **mold** growth. There is also **mold** in rooms 802, 808, and 809.

February 2024 – The school is closed for the day due to a pipe burst and HVAC issue; students receive no instruction.

March 2024 – **Mold** growth in the kitchen.

Summer 2024 – Emergency HVAC repairs close the building for the summer. The state IAC mysteriously reassess OMHS out of cycle.

September 2024 – **Raw sewage** leaks into the auditorium from a broken pipe. Repairs reveal **asbestos** in the walls.

March 2025 – Pipe bursts; students relocated to other parts of the building.

June 2025 – This Board of Education unanimously approves the capital plan including renovations for OMHS beginning in FY 2027.

August 2025 – Drywall falls in the girls' locker room. There is **mold** on the back of the drywall from an unknown source.

September 2025 – After two summers closed for emergency repair, and HVAC equipment failure causes the band room to drop to 60 degrees and the piano lab to rise to 88 degrees.

October 2025 – HCPSS staff recommend to the Board of Education to proceed with OMHS renovation, pointing out that the new ranking system is not fully developed.

November 2025 – This Board of Education abruptly cancels and redirects over \$160 million in capital funds away from OMHS to other projects.

November 2025 – The girls' locker room is 60 degrees.

November 2025 – There is one functioning boys' bathroom at OMHS.