

# Opposition to Moving Our Beloved Robert Goddard Montessori School to Meadowbrook Elem. in Bowie

## Thanks for joining our fight!

Here are some ways you can help (click each item for more info):

- ✓ [Major Concerns](#)
- ✓ [Upcoming Events](#)
- ✓ [Social Media Campaign](#)
- ✓ [Email Campaign Contacts](#)
- ✓ [Sample Emails](#)

# Major Concerns

**Concerns to add to your emails:** Make sure to stay firm that moving to Meadowbrook is not an option for our school. Keep this point first and foremost. AND that we EXPECT to see Dr. Goldson at our Town Hall meeting on Wednesday:

- We are being moved permanently to a school that is sub-par for our needs permanently, away from a school that currently meets our needs.
- The proposed location is not sufficient to accommodate all of our students
- We finally have our new HVAC systems, which we fought hard to get for many years, only to be moved away as soon as it is installed.
- Not enough parking space - we have 3 year olds that can't ride the bus (are not allowed) and parents must be able to walk them safely into the school building and pick them up at mid-day.
- No band and orchestra rooms, no gym, no lockers, no locker rooms, no space for all of our students - temporary trailers for our entire middle school is not acceptable for a permanent change.
- No space for special education; No space for coordinators guidance counselor, and tech IT
- No Middle School(MS) Science Labs
- No Middle School Sports Facilities - or any MS facilitiesNo storage space and insufficient workspace - needed for our Montessori materials
- Loss of the outdoor green classroom that we have spent years building to be a certified Green School
- Improvements we fought HARD for on the RGMS campus (playground, basketball courts, new windows, small bathrooms for our primary students) that we will leave behind in a pandemic
- Transportation- increased bus times for small children
- Disrespect and lack of communication before 'decision'
- Building is old and in disrepair
- MS students opted out of other Speciality Programs to remain with RGMS community - missed deadlines now as we have been blindsided with only the option to have them remain in Middle School in permanent Temporaries, without a gym, without science labs, without adequate space for the rest of their time, and all MS students that come after them - it is a permanent move
- **Be clear on what we are asking. We want to stay where we are!**

[Back to the top](#)

# Upcoming Events:

## Community Organizing and Demonstration Events:

- **Nightly Zoom Calls at 8pm (Sunday, Monday and Tuesday):**  
<https://zoom.us/j/98254643941?pwd=STFsQ1J3VzI1bXozMVl1N3ZkYTgrUT09>
- **A Demonstration Rally on Wednesday 3/17 3:30pm**
  - @ Sasscer Building 14201 School Lane, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

## **PGCPS Town Hall: We need EVERYONE to show up Wednesday, March 17th from 7:30 - 8:30**

- <https://pgcps-org.zoom.us/j/85619223446>

## **Next PGCPS Board of Education (BOE) Meeting:**

- The next BOE meeting is **March 25**. The BOE only accepts 15 public comments per meeting and opens up the public comment period somewhat randomly. Here is how you register: <https://offices.pgcps.org/participate-in-a-board-meeting> , but when you click on the registration link it does not yet allow registration. Help us keep trying and let us know if anyone gets in.

[Back to the top](#)

# Social Media Campaign

## Social Media:

- Please feel free to tag PGCPS (@pgcps), Goldson (@drmonicaceo) and Faucett, and local politicians on FB and twitter.
- Please use the following tags and add in others from any news outlets: #SaveRGMS2021, @CEOAlsobrooks, @drmonicaceo, @pgcps
- Circulate our flyers!
  - [https://drive.google.com/file/d/18lx\\_XIFM6nyuwoWbX2Ty1pHbF6uD7fX8/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/18lx_XIFM6nyuwoWbX2Ty1pHbF6uD7fX8/view?usp=sharing)
  - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ddiKXv5zcahuhaRcR0MunsZl8cCYBLdw/view?usp=sharing>

[Back to the top](#)

# Email Campaign Contacts

**Massive Email Campaign:** Let's flood everyone with emails this weekend, so Monday morning is a shock. Send an email and have your friends, relatives, and especially your children send one:

**Individual emails are below. Complete string of emails is here:**

kfossett@pgcps.org, ceo@pgcps.org, david.curry@pgcps.org, kassand.lassiter@pgcps.org, countyexecutive@co.pg.md.us, juanita.miller@pgcps.org, sonya3.williams@pgcps.org, david.murray@pgcps.org, joshua.thomas@pgcps.org, pamela.boozerstrother@pgcps.org, shayla.adamsstafford@pgcps.org, raaheela.ahmed@pgcps.org, belinda.queen@pgcps.org, kenneth.harris@pgcps.org, edward3.burroughs@pgcps.org, paul.monteiro@pgcps.org, sandra.shephard@pgcps.org, curtis.valentine@pgcps.org, ninah.jackson@pgcps.org, alonzo.washington@house.state.md.us, nicole.williams@house.state.md.us, dmglaros@co.pg.md.us, District4@co.pg.md.us, [councildistrict5@co.pg.md.us](#), [paul.pinsky@senate.state.md.us](#), [gladysw@pgcps.org](#), [Jim.Rosapepe@senate.state.md.us](#), [DLTaveras@co.pg.md.us](#), [aisha.berkeley@pgcps.org](#), [juan.mercedes@pgcps.org](#).

**Individual Emails and person to address the letters to:**

[kfossett@pgcps.org](#) - Dr. Fossett - instructional coordinator, 301-952-6584

[ceo@pgcps.org](#) - CEO Goldson; 301-952-6008, @drmonicaceo on twitter

[david.curry@pgcps.org](#) - Dr. David Curry Jr, associate superintendent for middle school

[kassand.lassiter@pgcps.org](#) - Dr. Cassandra Lassiter, associate superintendent for elementary school

[gladysw@pgcps.org](#) - Gladys Whitehead: Director of Instruction, including Montessori

[countyexecutive@co.pg.md.us](mailto:countyexecutive@co.pg.md.us) - Angela Alsobrooks (County Executive), @ceoalsobrooks on twitter,

**Emails at Board of Education** are below, central line phone is 301-952-6115,

David Murray's (district 1) direct line - 301-213-8406

Joshua M. Thomas (district 2) direct line - 301-526-1918

[juanita.miller@pgcps.org](mailto:juanita.miller@pgcps.org), **Board Chair** Dr. Juanita Miller

[sonya3.williams@pgcps.org](mailto:sonya3.williams@pgcps.org), [david.murray@pgcps.org](mailto:david.murray@pgcps.org), [joshua.thomas@pgcps.org](mailto:joshua.thomas@pgcps.org),

[pamela.boozerstrother@pgcps.org](mailto:pamela.boozerstrother@pgcps.org), [shayla.adamsstafford@pgcps.org](mailto:shayla.adamsstafford@pgcps.org), [raaheela.ahmed@pgcps.org](mailto:raaheela.ahmed@pgcps.org),

[belinda.queen@pgcps.org](mailto:belinda.queen@pgcps.org), [kenneth.harris@pgcps.org](mailto:kenneth.harris@pgcps.org), [edward3.burroughs@pgcps.org](mailto:edward3.burroughs@pgcps.org),

[paul.monteiro@pgcps.org](mailto:paul.monteiro@pgcps.org), [sandra.shephard@pgcps.org](mailto:sandra.shephard@pgcps.org), [curtis.valentine@pgcps.org](mailto:curtis.valentine@pgcps.org),

[ninah.jackson@pgcps.org](mailto:ninah.jackson@pgcps.org),

### **Local Politicians**

[alonzo.washington@house.state.md.us](mailto:alonzo.washington@house.state.md.us), Alonzo Washington - state delegate from PGCPs

[nicole.williams@house.state.md.us](mailto:nicole.williams@house.state.md.us), - Nicole Williams - state delegate from PG

[dmglaros@co.pg.md.us](mailto:dmglaros@co.pg.md.us), - Dannielle Glaros - County Council Member, District 3: includes College Park, Landover Hills, Lanham, New Carrollton, Riverdale Park, Seabrook, University Park, and others.

[District4@co.pg.md.us](mailto:District4@co.pg.md.us), - Todd Turner - County Council Member, District 4: includes Bowie, Glenn Dale, Greenbelt, Westchester Park, parts of Lanham-Seabrook and Upper Marlboro.

[councildistrict5@co.pg.md.us](mailto:councildistrict5@co.pg.md.us), - Jolene Ivey - County Council Member, District 5, includes Bladensburg, Cheverly, Glenarden, Mitchellville, and portions of unincorporated Bowie

[DLTaveras@co.pg.md.us](mailto:DLTaveras@co.pg.md.us) - Deni Taveras, County Council Member, District 2 - includes Hyattsville, Brentwood, Chillum, Mt. Rainier

[paul.pinsky@senate.state.md.us](mailto:paul.pinsky@senate.state.md.us) - Paul Pinsky, MD State Senator, District 22, PG County

[Back to the top](#)

## Sample Emails

[Back to the top](#)

**Excellent letters that others have sent**

Dear Dr. Goldson, Dr. Fossett, Dr. Curry, and Ms. Lassiter,

I hope to see you virtually at the Robert Goddard Montessori Town Hall on Wednesday at 7:30pm, so I can express my concerns directly to you and your team. I already know that many Board of Education members, local mayors, county council representatives, and state delegates will be there. I am the person leading the RGMS opposition efforts for moving to Meadowbrook. Please feel free to reach out directly to me (see contact information below).

We are vehemently opposed to moving Robert Goddard Montessori (a pre-K-8<sup>th</sup> grade school) to Meadowbrook Elementary. This is the wrong decision. It was made after the Principal, three teacher representatives, and two PTSA members did a walk-through and said that under no circumstances was the school adequate for our needs (or ever could be). The decision was also made with ZERO community input. In fact, parents were blind-sided and informed via social media from another school's PTSA page, even before our Principal was informed. While parents were asked to give concerns about sharing the space into a Google form in January, this was not a survey about the choice between staying versus moving. A move to Meadowbrook was not even on the table. If the community was given the courtesy of asking if we wanted to continue to share our space or go to Meadowbrook, you would have heard loud and clear that Meadowbrook is not a viable option for our program.

There are so many reasons the school does not work, but first and foremost, our school community has fought hard over many years to make the RGMS campus our own. We knew we were swing space, but we upgraded, raised money, and advocated for the necessary updates to keep this space the best campus for our children. Yes, we had concerns about a middle school moving in, but to be ripped from our campus and placed permanently in a completely inadequate facility for our school needs is absolutely the wrong decision. Our community is thriving and strong. Our students stay in the program for 12 years (3 year old through 8<sup>th</sup> grade), with caring and amazing teachers, administrators, and parents. Yet, all that we have fought for over the last 15 years is being taken away from us without any input from us.

Over the years, we built a beautiful green space, we became a certified Green School, with a butterfly garden, and an outdoor classroom that was dedicated (with placards) in memory of our beloved Principal Susie Johnson, who died of breast cancer mid-way through the school year in 2009, with 100% of all the funds for this green space and outdoor classroom raised by the PTSA and our Green Team school fundraisers. We fought hard to get our new HVAC system, new windows, new playground, and new basketball court, which was just completed (we were so proud and excited). Now, we are being told to move into a school with an old HVAC system that is short at least eight classrooms, where we will put our middle school students in temporary classrooms (or modules) permanently, tiny elementary classrooms that do not have room for the large floor activities that Montessori requires, no gym, no science labs, no lockers, no sports facilities, no MS band/orchestra rooms, no space for our Tech classes, no Special education pull-out space, no counselor office, no storage space for our mountain of Montessori materials, no parking for 3-year parents (who must drive their children to/from school), horrible traffic in the area already (again many parents have to drive – no choice), and not enough office space for the multitude of teachers and staff needed to operate a K-12 school. Additionally, it is too far from the northern and western PG county constituents that it serves. We have 3-year old students that are only in school for a few hours, and their parents must drive them. If that drive is over 30 minutes, which it will be for our northern and western communities, there is no reason to continue to send their students there (they won't have time to go back home/work). People in these communities would no longer be served by any Montessori school.

To have a permanent change announced with ZERO input for our larger community and only negative feedback from the select few that were informed of this possible change and went on the tour goes against every Best Practice for Community Engagement. RGMS has worked hard to build a strong community. We love our school,

our teachers, and our Principal. **WE CONSISTENTLY HAVE THE HIGHEST TEST SCORES IN THE COUNTY.** This type of community should be praised and rewarded by the County. Instead, we were beyond disrespected with this decision. **WHY ARE YOU ACTIVELY TRYING TO DESTROY ONE OF THE BEST SCHOOLS IN THE COUNTY?** For our community to continue to thrive, we cannot have our middle schools permanently in modules/temp space. We cannot have staff and teachers without offices, no gym, tiny classrooms, no band spaces, no fields, no lockers, no storage space, and NO PARKING. Sorry, this is just NOT ACCEPTABLE, and we will not back down until the decision to move to Meadowbrook is reversed. This move will destroy our school's progress and our community.

Sincerely,  
Stephanie Lansing, Ph.D.  
Parent to a RGMS graduate (class of 2020) and current 6<sup>th</sup> grade student

###

Dear BOE members,

I urge you to overturn Dr. Goldson's unexpected unilateral decision to permanently relocate Robert Goddard Montessori School to the Meadowbrook site.

As you know, the Meadowbrook location is wholly inadequate to house this program. The issues include:

- Inadequate HVAC system
- Presence of asbestos
- Lack of safe drinking water
- Insufficient space to accommodate all students
- Lack of gym
- Lack of space for art, music, library, computer, and other current curricular classes
- No space for special education
- No space for coordinators, guidance counselor, and IT staff
- Insufficient storage space
- Long busing times for young children (3 years old!)
- No middle school science labs
- No sports facilities
- and many others

Dr. Goldson gave no courtesy for community input and did not even respond to our PTSA letter.

We understand the shortage of space in PGCPs but an adequate solution is needed for all students. Please consider allowing us to share space with Hyattsville Middle School or delaying the planned moves until adequate space is identified.

Thank you in advance for protecting our students!

##

Members of the RGMS community have worked tirelessly to upgrade our school building and advocate for our school. We finally received our HVAC system that we had advocated for over the past few years, our playground arrived, we developed our community garden, and our school has all of our amenities needed (gym, band/orchestra rooms, science labs for middle school.

The Robert Goddard Montessori School (RGMS) community has learned via a Facebook post dated March 11, 2021 that Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) has decided RGMS will be moved out of their school home come September 2021. It has been proposed to move the RGMS to the Meadowbrook Elementary school in Bowie, without consulting the community, nor providing the proper notice. This has taken the school by shock. Given the lack of communication and concern for the RGMS community, it has already been demonstrated that PGCPS is not respecting the tireless efforts the parents, teachers, and administration have put into the school community to keep them in a building they occupy and work for their K-8 population.

As a result, the community is not hopeful that PGCPS will keep any promises to retrofit Meadowbrook. The school, as it stands, has several environmental safety concerns, and the space simply does not work for the RGMS community. It is our understanding that Meadowbrook has had its HVAC system upgraded to modern standards and has not yet been tested for mold. The school is also not large enough to accommodate the program, in particular art, music, media, and technology classes. The new location also does not have an adequate space for middle school science lab. The Meadowbrook building is inadequate with no rooms for ....

Meadowbrook is also not located in an equitable location. Being in the far eastern portion of Prince George's County is an incredible burden, especially for the younger elementary students. Some of our students already have to spend more than two hours on the bus every day to get to the current, central location, and will need to travel even further to get to Meadowbrook. This is a huge burden to place on students as young as four years old. This is especially hard to fathom given that diesel buses are still relied on for transportation.

In the end though, the RGMS family would be happy to share our current location with others in the short term, so that the RGMS students, many who are as young as four, are not uprooted and lose their ties as Rockets. In the medium term, the ideal solution would be for a right sized modern replacement to the current RGMS to be constructed using the innovative financing model that current PGCPS leadership is a national leader in public Montessori programs. Doing this will show leadership in PGCPS and allow for a better solution to this problem as PGCPS continues to advance through the construction backlog.

The RGMS family looks forward to working with PGCPS in a productive dialog to make sure that we welcome the portion of students at Hyattsville Middle School that will be sharing our school in the Fall of 2021 and to find a way to create a long term solution for RGMS.

###

**Below is the letter we sent to Dr. Goldson (cc to Angela Alsobrooks)**

Dr. Goldson,

Our daughter attends Robert Goddard and we were startled to suddenly learn that she will be sent to an old, small building in Bowie.

As Hyattsville residents, we were well aware of the need to house Hyattsville Middle School students and the possibility that they would share our building. That didn't upset us - we were happy to share the space.

But to find out that we will be moving to Bowie came as a shock. Bowie is quite far and we're concerned about our daughter spending such a long time on the bus.

Even more alarming is the building we'll be moving to. Clearly the building is not nearly large enough for our school, may not be up to modern safety standards and lacks a gym. Our daughter will be entering fourth grade and we would NOT want her to attend middle school in a temporary building.

We've been incredibly grateful for your steady leadership during the pandemic and supportive of your decisions. We realize that space is limited, but we urge you to reconsider this decision that will have such a negative



impact on RGMS students, teachers and community

# # #

Below is the Email of 6th grade student to the entire board of education

Hello Board of education,

My name is Lidia da Cruz, a student at Robert Goddard Montessori School. I am writing to you about my school moving to Bowie. It enrages me that you didn't tell the parents or our principal about it until today while the Hyattsville Middle School parents found out about it yesterday. Also I don't appreciate that you are moving us all the way over to Bowie maybe permanently.

I live in Hyattsville and I love my school but the Hyattsville/College Park bus route was already 30-45 minutes to our school before we were going to Bowie. As an older kid on the bus, I see the little kids sometimes have accidents or have a hard time waiting to get home to use the bathroom. Wouldn't that be worse with a longer ride? Can you imagine how long our bus ride would be when we move to Bowie?

Another thing that concerns me is we are moving to an elementary school in Bowie and since it doesn't have a gym or any fields for sports, and not even enough offices for everyone how are we going to do Physical Education, play sports or work to our best extent? Will we just not have the same opportunity as other middle schoolers to do that? I don't think that is acceptable.

As a part of the RGMS Junior Green team, we just spent a lot of money on the new playground and an outdoor classroom, we will not even be able to use it. The RGMS junior green team planned that out thoroughly. We all had to write a grant for our school to get the outdoor classroom and new playground. I do not think it is fair that we just get it taken away from us after all our hard work. Will PGCPS put the same amount of money towards an outdoor classroom and new playground as we just raised?

Elementary schools are small, will our school be split in one school and another? I don't think that is good because many of the kids who go to this school have little siblings that are in elementary school. Also shouldn't Hyattsville Middle School move back to their school once it has been renovated? I don't understand why we wouldn't be able to move back to our school.

I like our school. We have shared it before. When we split the school with Glenarden woods, and correct me if I am wrong, their whole school was in our school with us and the same thing happened with Dora Kennedy. So why can't it be the same thing with Hyattsville Middle School? You may respond to me and say "life isn't fair, kid get over it". Even if you tell me that I will not back down about my opinions. I speak on behalf of all the students and parents at Robert Goddard Montessori School.

Sincerely, Lidia da Cruz

# # #

-----

Today I'm saddened to learn that the school that my kids attend, Robert Goddard Montessori School (RGMS), will be permanently relocated to Meadowbrook Elementary in Bowie. RGMS has been operating in the current space for a long time. As an active PTSA member, I have witnessed first hand how much time and energy parents have invested in improving our school. **Over the years, the community has made the school better, little by little.** We've installed an outdoor green classroom, a new playground for our younger scholars (starting at 3-years-old), a new HVAC system. The PTSA has been discussing updating the stage curtains, adding reading space in the library, freshen up the entry way right before the pandemic. It shocks, saddens, and disappoints me to learn a decision of such gravity from generic flyer posted on social media (see image below), with no prior communication from the county school system at all.



**It might be a decision that made sense to some in a board room, but I can tell you, it's a decision that made ZERO sense, at a HUMAN level for most of the RGMS community.**

After making do with almost a full year of virtual learning and keeping families safe from the pandemic, most of us feel hopeful with the news of increased vaccine availability, the reopening of schools. Many in the RGMS community are looking forward to return in full capacity in the fall of 2021, catch up with friends that we haven't seen for months and walk the familiar hallways and classrooms. **This news seriously dealt a punch to our collective psyches.**

I chose to send my kids to RGMS because it's an outstanding school for both its elementary and middle schools, the close proximity to our home (Greenbelt) and my husband's workplace (NASA Goddard flight center), and its Montessori teaching philosophies. We've passed on private schools and other TAG programs because we believe in the Montessori approach is the best for our kids and we believe in public education system. My husband and I are both graduates of Baltimore County public school system and have led successful careers.

The proposed location, Meadowbrook Elementary, is not an adequate replacement for our current building. Even though our current building isn't new, through the efforts from the community over the years, we've able to get incremental upgrades done. It's a space that's sufficient for our student body including many pre-K students, Montessori teaching supplies, and our specialty arts programs. The proposed space was build 60 years ago with unclear answer on HVAC, asbestos, drinking water safety, issues. We have heard that the school as is will not be large enough to accommodate all of our current students. Furthermore, there'll be no space for our middle school students, no gym for middle school, no storage for Montessori teaching materials, no office space for counselors, program coordinators, specialty arts classes, band/orchestra places, no parking for picking up and dropping off, on and on and on. **This new space is not adequate as a replacement for RGMS, it is a major downgrade that can severely affect the quality of our program.**

**RGMS is a high-performance school within PGC.** It's a hidden gem of this county. We should build RGMS into the poster child of what specialty education programs like Montessori can do in a large and diverse county like ours. We should work on expanding this program and improve equality of access to more county residents.

**I strongly implore the school system executive team to reverse this decision, find ways to allow RGMS to stay in its current space, or find an alternative building that will be adequate for this great program.**

Respectfully,

Lei Zong

Mom to Sam Winternitz (3<sup>rd</sup> grader) and Mary Winternitz (1<sup>st</sup> grader)

#####

My family was startled to suddenly learn that the school, which has welcomed the Montessori program for almost twenty years and has recently enjoyed renovations, will no longer be our school (our daughters are 2nd grade and pre-K4) and it will be moved to Meadowbrook Elementary.

As for my understanding, the decision was made after the Principal, the teacher representatives, and the PTSA did a walk-through and said that under no circumstances was the school adequate for our needs (or ever could be). The decision was also made with ZERO community input (in fact, parents were blind-sided and informed via social media from another school's PTA page before our Principal was informed).

Meadowbrook Elementary is an old school, out of school boundaries, completely inadequate for our needs. It has an old HVAC system, asbestos, old water pipes. Our middle school students will be put in temporary classrooms (or modules) permanently with no gym, no science labs, no lockers, no sports facilities, no MS band/orchestra rooms, so space for our Tech classes, Special education or Arts programs, no storage space for our Montessori materials, no parking for 3-year parents (who must drive their children to/from school), no space for our guidance counselor, and not enough office space for the multitude of teachers and staff needed to operate a K-12 school. Additionally, it is too far from the northern and western PG county constituents that it serves. I doubt that it will be made a safe, healthy and appropriate place for the Montessori programme in a few months before the start of the school year in September.

While I understand the reasons for moving Hyattsville Middle School (which after the relocation will have a completely new facility), I do not want to send our children to Meadowbrook. Our school community has fought hard over many years to make the RGMS campus our own. We knew we were swing space, but we upgraded, raised money, and advocated for the necessary updates to keep this space the best campus for our children. We would like to continue to stay there and, if impossible, to have a new, safe, healthy, adequate space.

Most importantly, I ask that the decision be made in agreement with all parties involved via fair negotiations. The Robert Goddard Montessori Program deserves attention and care. Its students and teachers consistently have the highest test scores in the county. It should be one of the County's flagship programs. It almost seems that you want to sink the Montessori program forcing many families to have to review whether to keep their children in the school and new families not to register to the program. Everything comes at a time, when there is no choice since the lotteries for the specialty programmes are over. People in our communities would no longer be served by any Montessori school.

To have a permanent change announced with ZERO input for our larger community and only negative feedback from the select few that were informed of this possible change goes against every Best Practice for Community Engagement. This is literally from the handbook of what not to do to build community. We feel treated like rubbish.

Please, listen to our community, our teachers, our principal and let's find the best solution for everybody.

Sincerely,

-----

Letter from alum (9th grader at ERHS):

My name is Snowdenn Jackson, and I am a Robert Goddard Montessori alumnus. I've been told that the students of Goddard are going to be displaced and moved into a school not built for K-8. I don't think this is right.

I was at Goddard from the time I was three years old all the way until last year; I practically grew up there. Goddard had a gym, where we learned sports and ran laps for warm ups, among other activities and sat in the bleachers watching basketball games and pep rallies. We had a soccer team, a softball team, a basketball team, a baseball team, a gymnastics team that consistently won awards—and space for them to practice.

There was a band room and orchestra room where we could practice our instruments, and a stage in the cafeteria where we performed. And a choir room, too. Our music program was one of my favorite parts of Goddard.

There was a science lab where we performed labs like extracting DNA from strawberries and examining organic matter under microscopes. We had a biology program in eighth grade that set me up for chemistry this year.

There was a library with shelves full of books, which became my favorite spot in the whole school, right next to a computer lab where we had tech class. Tech, which was made a requirement for middle school students, and which I found I enjoyed a lot more than I thought I would. I'm in AP Computer Science Principles now, preparing to take the AP exam—and I couldn't have done it without that class.

All of these things were essential parts of my experience at the school, and I have always felt extremely grateful that I got to be a part of them. I have two younger brothers who also go to the school, who deserve to get to be a part of those programs. My youngest brother just started band this year and loves science; I know he's looking forward to when he gets to do those labs and be a part of that program. My other younger brother is also in band; he loves to run and play sports, and both enjoy P.E. immensely.

If Goddard gets moved, it will be the students who suffer. The other school building was not built for K-8, it was built for K-5. Besides the issue of space, it was not meant for the programs that Goddard has. It would be cutting off all of the current and future generations of students from those opportunities, especially for the middle school students. And not just temporarily, but permanently.

Goddard is a successful school. It helped me grow into the person I am today. I scored 1300 on the PSAT 8/9 and my best friend scored 1270. Both of us are in the Eleanor Roosevelt High School Science and Tech program. I am also in chemistry, geometry, and Spanish 3 classes, because Goddard offered high school credit classes.

Being at the same school for eleven years also gave me close relationships with the other people in my classes, and with the teachers. Goddard was a home and a family to me. I can't imagine having gone anywhere else, and I wouldn't want to. Moving it would not be moving a school, it would be uprooting a community—a community which, even though I'm not there anymore, I still feel like I'm a part of and always will. So please, don't do this to their home. Our family. Give my brothers and all of the other students the opportunities that I had.

Sincerely,

Snowdenn Jackson

9th Grader at Eleanor Roosevelt High School

Letter by Stella Hrusa, Grade 7

Dear Dr. Goldson,

I am a seventh grader at RGMS and I am against the decision to move our school to Meadowbrook Elementary. Something that makes our school special is that it is a k-8 school. That means we need space for our middle schoolers. We need basic necessities, such as a gym, lockers, locker rooms, science labs, sports facilities, etc., which Meadowbrook Elementary does not have. Another big part of our school is our band and orchestra programs for upper elementary and middle school students. I am in Orchestra myself and I know that a majority of the students in our band and orchestra really love it because we enjoy the arts and because we have an amazing teacher! However, Meadowbrook does not have enough space for band and orchestra. Another thing that not only applies to middle school, but the entire school is that Meadowbrook doesn't have room for special education classes, art classes, and insufficient storage space for the Montessori materials we need. It also has a limited amount of office space and parking for parents and teachers. The fact that Meadowbrook doesn't have enough space for basic necessities and activities that are important in our school, proves that Meadowbrook Elementary just isn't suitable for our school.

Another point I wanted to bring up is how the students will feel about all of this. I have so many memories at the RGMS building because I have been there since I was four. For example, I met my best friend, my first day at RGMS. I had no idea that a year ago, today, it would be my last time, maybe, ever stepping foot into a place that has seriously helped shape who I have become. And how will this affect the younger children? They have already had to adjust to the virtual environment, imagine if they had to adjust to a whole new environment, again? That wouldn't have a positive impact on their mental and social health. The last point I want to state in this paragraph is about the bus. I live in Hyattsville and it's usually a 30-45 minute drive, to and from school. That's already plenty of time for young children to be on the bus. If we took the bus to Meadowbrook, it would be an even longer drive. And students who live even farther from Bowie would have an even longer commute to school! Four year olds being on a loud school bus for an hour is just a bad idea. Overall, moving our school to Meadowbrook Elementary would not have a satisfactory effect on the students, especially the younger ones.

I live a few streets away from Hyattsville Middle School, I have friends who go there, and I have been there a few times, myself. I know Hyattsville Middle School desperately needs to be rebuilt. I would not mind sharing our school with HMS since I know that their students need somewhere to go. However, moving RGMS's students to an entirely different school because HMS needs to be rebuilt is just unacceptable. We shouldn't have to suffer because of their emergency.

I hope you will reconsider your decision.

-Stella Hrusa