

# Public Comments for School Board Meetings

#837

I would like to provide: \*

Written Public Comments

My public comments are related to: \*

Budget

Topic \*

Hammond Renovations – Testing Center to prevent closing the school library

Full Name \*

Khris Hutson

What is your relationship to ACPS? \*

Staff Member

Enter your comments here OR upload below:

Hello esteemed members of the school board.

My name is Khris Hutson, and I am one of the librarians at Francis C. Hammond Middle School. Our library has been quite fortunate this year. Ms. Broughton (my co-librarian) and I have increased circulation, increased author visits, increased the number of lessons we co-taught, and increased the library's overall usage. Kaycie Blaylock-Hoffman, the instructional coordinator for libraries and curricular resources, has played an instrumental role in advocating for libraries and encouraging us to do more for our schools. We are grateful for her and the support libraries receive from ACPS in general.

Today, however, I am writing because the library's effectiveness has been stymied by the school's urgent need for renovation.

From September to January, we averaged 1044 books checked out per month. In February and March, our average dropped to 285 books per month. Though we loaded books on carts to create mobile libraries and encouraged students to check out ebooks, we could not overcome testing in the library. From September to January, we were open around 20 days per month (we did close for occasional testing, professional development, administrative meetings with central office, and parent coffee). In February, we were open for a total of half a day. In March, we were open for three days. Of those three days, two of them were actually four half days we added together.

WIDA testing took over our library for a month and a half.

Our school currently has 1560 students. About 765 students took the WIDA test – just short of half the school. For six weeks, the library was nothing more than a testing center.

As such, I am asking the school board to consider including money in the budget for an actual testing center at Hammond whenever we are up for renovation. This would allow the library to be full service all year. That means more opportunity for students to improve literacy skills, conduct research, and develop a love of reading. Moreover, a testing center would lift significant stress from the ELL department. ELL teachers spent nights and weekends helping with organizing paperwork and coordinating which students would test in which locations for WIDA. A testing center reduces much of this work. Finally, as you know, enrollment continues to increase at Hammond. We began our school year with 1506 students. When the enrollment packets on our registrar's desk are processed in the next day or two, we will be at 1565 students by next week. The testing numbers will only be greater next year. A testing space, while not a solution to our increasing enrollment, will at least alleviate some of the issues we have regarding assessing our students. Between MAP testing, SOL growth assessments, the SOL, WIDA, and testing for high school credit, we need a dedicated space to accommodate our students during testing.

Thank you.

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