

Testimony on Behalf of Woodrow Wilson High School

By Mr. Evan Holly, Class of 2010 and
Mr. Marc Keegan Murphy, Class of 2010

PUBLIC ROUNDTABLE BY THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON

“MASTER FACILITIES PLAN FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SCHOOLS”

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2008, 10:00 A.M.
JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING, COUNCIL CHAMBERS
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W.**

Hello Mr. Chairman and members of the Council and thank you for this opportunity. My name is Evan Holly. I am an 11th grade student from Woodrow Wilson High School, and I've attended DC public schools my whole life. Before Wilson High School, I attended the SED Center, Oyster Bilingual Elementary and Hardy Middle School. I am here today as a person who has had a life-long interest in architecture and engineering and who strongly believes that my school, Woodrow Wilson High, with an exciting architectural design in hand, is ready for a complete modernization. Students, faculty staff and neighbors have contributed to this architectural plan and are ready to move forward.

Good morning. I would like to thank Chairman Gray and the City Council for allowing my friend and I to come here today and speak on behalf of the students of Woodrow Wilson High. My name is Marc Murphy, I am a junior at Wilson, and I aspire to one day have a career in engineering. I have lived in Washington, DC all of my life and have attended St. Peters Interparish School, Hyde Elementary, and Hardy Middle School. Wilson is the greatest school I have ever been to, and I have seen it become better and better each year. There have been tiny physical improvements to the school, year after year, but they have not helped us to achieve our goal of being DC's and America's model urban high school. The students and faculty want a modern and environmentally friendly school, and we are tired of having to wait each year for it to come. Right now is the time for Wilson to receive the money it needs to do this project.

Wilson High School is a school with a very diverse student body with many special needs. There are students who are blind, deaf, with physical disabilities and mental challenges. To meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) we need ramps and elevators and things of that nature. Wilson's current design does not meet these requirements. As a matter of fact, Wilson's classrooms, cafeteria, gym, auditorium and pool are housed on eleven different levels. Easy access is impossible. The design of the new Wilson campus, with a wide, welcoming Main Street with no stairs, will solve this challenge

There has already been a lot of buzz and excitement about the renovation and full modernization of our school. Mark and I are both part of an engineering class, and we and the rest of the class have reviewed the construction plans of a new Wilson. It has things like a performing arts center, 9th grade wing, public parking, a public cafeteria, and meeting space, a completely new library and media center, state of the art classrooms, and even the thing I am most excited about, a new robotics and mechanical engineering lab located in the old power plant. Bottom line is it would be a real big disappointment to the entire Wilson community for this dream to be terminated.

In our engineering class, we have been studying the renovation plans for the school. Not only do we want a better school and thus a better educational environment, we want to help our environment by reducing our carbon footprint. In this day when the world is in an environmental and climate crisis, we at Wilson want to do our part to help the world by using new green technologies to decrease our impact on the earth. Not only will the money we are asking for benefit future students of Wilson, it will allow us to lead an effort to make our building have less of an impact on the Earth by reducing our carbon footprint.

A number of us students are currently studying the details of achieving LEED certification for a modernized Wilson. LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design and is a set of environmental building standards created by the US Green Building Council. We must take into account the sustainability of the site, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, indoor environmental quality and innovation and design.

Most schools are encouraged to strive for Silver LEED Certification but we want to go for the Gold by earning the necessary rating of 44 points. We will consider lots of options including support for alternative transportation, ports for electric cars, bicycles, green roofs, solar panels, capturing of ground water and innovations in lighting, heat and clean air and the recycling and reuse of materials. You even get points if designing the building is used as a teaching tool. Evan and I agree that we have already scored those points. I would like to thank you all, and I hope that the city will help a great school achieve its goal of becoming the country's model urban high school in a model school system.

Thanks again for your time and attention to our message and I was proud to hear there are other Wilson Tigers in this room and on the City Council.