

March 4, 2025

Dear Midtown HS Go Team,

As elected parent and community member representatives of the Midtown High School GO Team, we are writing to record the troubling reports we have heard regarding overcrowding conditions at Midtown HS.

Our role as Go Team members is to ensure that the school's strategic plan leads to student success. The current state of overcrowding at Midtown HS has negatively impacted both student success and student safety.

Due to consistent, documented overcrowding at Midtown HS, non-classroom spaces, including teacher offices and instructional resource rooms, have been repurposed to classrooms to increase the purported "capacity" of Midtown HS. While the school's "capacity" number may have increased on paper, we are concerned that APS has not gone through the necessary evaluations and adjustments to ensure that Midtown HS can operate safely in this maxed-out state.

The following impacts of facility overcrowding and its impacts on safety have been raised to Go Team members:

- The "Closet Testing" Reality: With the non-classroom spaces at Midtown acting as makeshift classrooms, we have received reports of students who require ADA and 504 accommodations being placed in small storage closets for small-group testing because that is the only space available. We ask for an assessment of adequacy of accommodations for our students with disabilities.
- Movement "Crush" Conditions: We are extremely concerned about the threat to safety of Midtown HS students, staff and faculty due to consistent overcrowding in the common spaces at Midtown HS.
 - In the stairwells: Staff and students report "bottlenecking" at stairwells where the flow of movement is so packed that students cannot stop or change direction.
 - In the hallways: Students have reported extreme overcrowding in the hallways such that students are often bumped into each other, which leads to verbal altercations between students with threat of physical altercations.
 - In the cafeteria: During rainy day "lock-ins," the cafeteria density far exceeds safe standing-room ratios.

- Our concern: All of this creates a high-risk environment for a crowd-crush event, where students, faculty, and staff could be trampled and terribly injured.
- Our request: Required life safety egress widths for hallways, stairwells, and doorways should be re-evaluated, as occupant load spaces of the building have significantly changed in recent years in an attempt to accommodate continued overcrowding at the school. We are asking for an immediate Fire and Life Safety Inspection to be conducted through the Office of the Fire Marshal to ensure that Midtown students, faculty, and staff can remain safe.

<https://www.atlantafirerescue.com/divisions/technical-services/office-of-the-fire-marshal/fire-inspections>

We are concerned that there is no plan at the district level to evaluate safety and educational suitability conditions at Midtown High School at the current time and during the years it will take to build and open the proposed addition. This coming school year we are projected to have an enrollment that was only contemplated by the Facilities Master Plan to happen in 2029. We are asking for a thorough assessment and plan to ensure student and staff safety beyond whatever “action thresholds” are codified in the forthcoming administrative regulation.

Respectfully,

Jenifer Keenan and Eric Goldberg, Go Team Parent Members

Tamara Jones and Brook Bowman, Go Team Community Representatives