

Pittsburgh Public Schools Budget Public Hearing Testimonies Submitted Not Read
October 26, 2026

Eric Howze

Community Member

Good evening, members of the School Board.

My name is Eric Howze, and I stand before you tonight not just as a community member, but as someone whose life was shaped by **Miller Elementary School**.

When I hear people talk about our school, I hear words like "utilization rates," "enrollment numbers," and "budget challenges." While those things matter, they don't tell the whole story. They don't tell the story of children walking like myself walking down street from Reed Roberts through those doors every morning to a whole new world. They don't tell the story of teachers like Ms. Burley & Ms. Foster who stayed late because they cared. And they don't tell the story of a community that sees this school as much more than a building or future site for condos.

Miller is part of who I am.

It is where memories were made, friendships were formed, and foundations were built. It is where children learn not only math and reading, but about our ancestors' confidence, responsibility, kindness, and resilience. For many students, school is the place where they feel safest, most supported, and most encouraged to dream about our future.

What concerns me most is that the discussion has focused on whether the school is being fully utilized. I believe we should be asking a different question: **Is the school being fully supported?**

Schools do not thrive because they have perfect enrollment numbers. They thrive because communities invest in them. They thrive because leaders believe in them. They thrive because parents, teachers, students, and community partners work together to strengthen them.

Closing Miller Elementary School may solve a short-term problem on paper, and put a possible kickback in someone's hand, but more importantly it will create a long-term loss for our community and city. Once a school is gone, the sense of connection it provides is not easily replaced.

Instead of closing **Miller Elementary School**, I ask you to consider ways to help it grow and succeed. Work with us. Partner with us. Invest in programs, community engagement, and opportunities that attract families and strengthen enrollment.

Tonight, I'm asking you to see this school not as a line item in a budget, but as a place filled with children, memories, potential, and hope.

Because when we invest in our schools, we invest in our children. And when we invest in our children, we invest in the future of our entire community.

Respectfully, please remove **Miller Elementary School** from the closure list. Together, we can give this school and community the chance to thrive rather than putting it on life support.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



Pittsburgh Public Schools Budget Public Hearing Testimonies Submitted Not Read October 26, 2026