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Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak tonight. I would like to focus on some of the problems found in the School Without Walls Building and the effects of these problems, environmentally, academically, and physically, and in the last case, for both the Walls community as well as those not connected with the school at all.

First, there is inadequate space in the school building. Although Walls continues to support the high quality program André Lindsey and others have discussed, the student population is growing, so more and better designed spaces are needed to accommodate this growth. For decades we have been using classrooms half the size of standard ones and dealing with awkward and wasted space created by dividing larger rooms in order to have enough classrooms for a high school teaching system. We cannot continue attempting to learn in certain cramped classrooms where it can be very difficult to move around. I once had a class where the desks were placed so close together that some people, whose chairs with attached desks were placed against the wall, had to wriggle out of their seats and under their desks just to get up if the rest of the class was seated.

Second, the poor condition of the building allows the elements to come in and damage materials and equipment vital to the learning experience. Multiple leaks in the library ceiling mean that rain can damage books and computers we need. Such problems can also prevent us from concentrating on our work and making the most of the opportunities a Walls education provides. For example, I remember a math test one winter when it began to snow on one of my classmates—not through an open window, but through a hole near the ceiling.

Additionally, a great deal of energy is wasted at our school as a result of structural problems. The most apparent example of this is the distribution of heat in the building. In winter when the heat is on, the third floor is generally too hot, and the second and first floors are often too cold. It also depends on if a classroom opens onto the main foyer of a floor (in which case it may be hot), or a small hallway made when one classroom has been divided into two (where it is probably cold). The heat gets turned up when cold people complain, but then those on the third floor have to open windows to stay cool, and waste energy doing so.

The hazards at Walls range from the merely disruptive to the potentially dangerous. The perpetually crumbling ceiling and wall of room 308 caused me to need to brush debris off my

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seat every morning in ninth grade, and temporarily displaced classes last year. More disturbing are the colonies of mold growing in the hallway off of room 305 and on a classroom wall in room 205. Bricks and pieces of slate have fallen off of the building onto the sidewalk outside, endangering Walls students, faculty, and staff as well as anyone in the neighborhood passing by. Our agreement with George Washington University is crucial to the solution of these problems. If not for the agreement, Walls would not have the means to properly renovate and ensure the efficiency of the building and safety of the community interacting with it. The success of Walls and its students depends on many factors, not least of which is the environment where we do our best to learn.

Thank you.