

Concord High School P&C: Three worrying issues

Updated December 2023

The text below, updated in September 2021, is now out of date and incorrect. It does not reflect recent changes to the school including new toilets and other improvements. Since that time, the NSW government has begun an upgrade of the school which will give it a capacity of 1,340 students, including (we are told) the facilities they need.

However, this document reflects the historical neglect of Concord High School over a long period of time. The school remains underfunded.

The Executive of Concord High School P&C would like to highlight three worrying issues at Concord High School.

1. Alarming overcrowding at Concord High School
2. The troubling absence of a school Masterplan
3. Destructive underfunding at Concord High School

Alarming overcrowding at Concord High School is putting pressure on amenities

1. Concord High School is one of the top 20 overcrowded schools in NSW, 45% above capacity
2. The school has capacity for 900 students yet it accommodates 1,300 students
3. We only have enough outdoor seating for 50% of students
4. More than 600 Concord High School students have had to sit on the concrete ground or stand up while eating for years now, every day
5. One parent told us their daughter avoids eating at Concord High School because the outdoor furniture is covered in hardened bird poo, impossible to wipe off it's been there so long
6. Even more devastating is our female students were short 16 toilets
7. For years student surveys highlighted enormous student dissatisfaction with the toilets, and we have received concerned parent feedback

"My daughter said there are only 5 useable cubicles across the whole school for junior girls most of the day... She also confirmed that there aren't sanitary bins in all the toilets. The reason she's not going to the toilet is that it takes too long – the line-up takes most of lunch!"

"At least we have sanitary bins in each cubicle now – that has only happened this year. And they are actually emptying them now too."
8. School Infrastructure's solution has been to install additional demountable toilets at the school
9. The graffiti we've seen in the female demountable toilets that were already at the school was distressing
10. We are truly frightened about the mental health implications and generational damage of the soon to be 5 demountable toilet blocks at the school
11. And we're in a state of disbelief there's no plan to replace them
12. And there's more parent feedback from a male student perspective

"I asked my son and his friend about the toilets and both said both of them and their friends will avoid going. The floor is gross and sticky and smells. They said most doors don't close properly and that many are missing toilet seats. Explains why he is busting by the time he gets home."
13. The toilet and outdoor seating condition and shortage is distressing and highlights years of student neglect at Concord High School
 - We also worry about the experiences of the ten community groups that use the deteriorating amenities at our school and note the School Excellence Framework states for sustaining and growing a school: *Use of school facilities by the local community delivers benefits to students*

- This is not the case at Concord High School despite the school doing the right thing and opening its space up so community groups can be together and have a sense of belonging

The troubling absence of a school Masterplan is resulting in a misguided use of time, money and effort

- Our community is asking for a school Masterplan
- Due to our immense frustration of no Masterplan in the pipeline and devastating overcrowding, we engaged the same architect that delivered St Ives High School's Masterplan
- A Masterplan will cost approximately \$30,000 and give us a plan to create a school that will accommodate our projected youth population growth for years to come
- As part of the NSW government's \$120m Metro Renewal Program, Concord High School will receive up to \$350,000
- The intention of the Metro Renewal Program is to make a positive difference to young people and their local communities
- The current plan is to spend \$84,000 from the NSW state government and \$56,000 from the school for a canteen upgrade
- We questioned why a canteen upgrade was prioritised over amenity upgrades
- School Infrastructure's Asset Management confirmed there was limited scope of projects under the Metro Renewal Program and that the school either ask for canteen and oval upgrades or nothing
- This is inconsistent with School Infrastructure's website that states canteen upgrades, Covered Outdoor Learning Areas, wet areas and amenity upgrades, outdoor and play equipment upgrades and access and car parking improvements are types of eligible projects
- Imagine our frustration with a canteen upgrade when our female students have been deprived the basic physiological need of being able to go to the toilet for years
- By the start of 2022 Concord High School will have an estimated 22 demountables – 17 classrooms and 5 toilet blocks – and there is no plan to replace them with more permanent structures
- Alarming, the \$198 million Parramatta Road Urban Amenity Improvement Program estimates an additional 7,000 new dwellings in our school catchment area
- Sadly, no one can tell us the impact this has on Concord High School and the plan to accommodate this population growth
- A Masterplan will tell us how to accommodate this population growth
- Our school hall cannot accommodate the entire student population
- A speaker event funded by the P&C had to be delivered twice as a result of the hall not being able to accommodate the entire school, costing twice as much and requiring twice as much effort to organise – far from efficient or productive
- Our school theatrette is in original 1981 condition and School Infrastructure's Asset Management says it's "fit for purpose"
- The theatrette cannot accommodate performances delivered by the five music ensembles and the audience they attract
- When there is a small performance in our theatrette, audiences have to sit on the hard floor as there are no chairs, a potential WHS issue with audiences complaining of back, neck and buttocks pain
- We'd welcome Asset Management to help teachers and students with ways to reduce the 30 minute set-up the antiquated digital equipment in the theatrette
- The theatrette is not equipped, safe or large enough for our students to do an annual musical, restricting learning opportunities in the suffering performing arts sector

Destructive underfunding at Concord High School

- Toilet and seating shortfalls are not the only shortfalls at Concord High School
- In 2019 the *my school* website indicated there was an SRS per student shortfall of \$1,369
- That's a total shortfall of almost \$1.7 million across the 1,229 students at the school that year
- This shortfall means our young people at Concord High School have only one counsellor resulting in a lack of critical mental health care in crisis situations
- We are aware of several mental health hospitalizations of Concord High School students in the past 12 months. We fear there are many more student suffering without the support they need
- This funding shortfall also means our young people are short the equivalent of 17 teachers and support staff – SEVENTEEN!!!
- Staff shortages are resulting in teachers having to teach outside their subject area, teaching combined classes, or leaving students under minimal supervision
- Staff shortages also mean extra curricula activities cannot be accommodated at our school resulting in a lack of student engagement and connectedness
- With increasing student enrollments at feeder primary schools and no plan for the future, the impact of underfunding is devastating and snowballing
- We're seeking community support and the support of the NSW government for the only public high school in the Drummoyne electorate and Canada Bay LGA. We are deeply concerned about the neglect of youth at Concord High School resulting from inadequate funding and an absence of amenities.

Our ask of the NSW government.

- 1. Please fund the \$30,000 Masterplan the School and our community so desperately needs**
- 2. Please commit to funding a swift delivery of the Masterplan**
- 3. Please provide full SRS funding per student, plus loadings starting the beginning of the 2021 calendar year**