

Printed by Matt Utterback



[REDACTED]
05/12/08 02:58 PM

To Matt Utterback <utterback@nclack.k12.or.us> [REDACTED]

cc

bcc

Subject Boundary Committee Meeting

Hi Matt and [REDACTED]

As you begin the discussion tomorrow regarding the Eastside school boundary proposals, it is important to all of the families of the Happy Valley "49" that our concerns are understood. Having attended the last boundary committee meeting, it became obvious from comments made that we were being perceived as being "way out of line with our request and with the information we provided". Please know that providing this information represents the depth of concern of families who do not want their children to suffer emotional distress from the undoing of their neighborhood school. Moving only 49 children seems a small task, until you understand the emotional impact of such isolation. Moving our 49 children with 400 other children would nullify this negative impact. The issue is not the school building, the issue is the removal of this small number of children from their neighborhood school. Previous letters, and e-mails have spoken to our concerns with research findings to support our request. Including our children in either of the Happy Valley Schools will not disrupt the body count, as many of them will be entering Middle School within 1 year of the opening (2010).

I was very pleased with the decision at the last meeting to change the boundary (as requested by committee member, Tricia Sanford) to keep her neighborhood together. I fully support that decision; keeping children with their peers promotes the healthy sense of belonging that all children need as they grow into adolescence and adulthood. The school setting is the primary influence at their young ages. For the past 30+ years, I have worked with children and teens who have severe emotional difficulties. These are children who resort to drinking, alcohol, or drug use. In every case, none of those children did well in their schools. Peer relationships were extremely poor, social development lagged and the result was severe depression, delinquency, or gang involvement. I am not saying that this is all caused by their school relationship, but it did play a major part in their descent into self destruction (again supported by research).

As stated very well in your Community Agreements: "We will assume we all want the best for all children in North Clackamas Schools". What is best for our 49 children is to remain with their peers, some familiar teachers and administrators in either of the Happy Valley Schools. I remain hopeful that the committee will again support the best interests of these children by changing the proposal to include them in either of the Happy Valley schools.

I know that "grandfathering in" has been stated to be a potential option. However, Matt, you have made it clear that all 49 would not be grandfathered in. Can you imagine the isolation that the few who don't remain in Happy Valley will experience?

I would appreciate your sharing this e-mail with the committee.

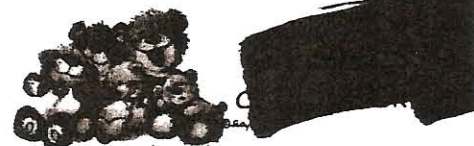
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Thank you,



May 27, 2008

North Clackamas Boundary Committee
Matthew Utterback
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
4444 SE Lake Road
Milwaukie, Oregon 97222



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ASST. SUPERINTENDENT
CURRICULUM/INSTRUCTION

Dear Mr. Utterback,

When our daughter was entering first grade, and our son was seven weeks old, we were blessed to become part of the Sunnyside Elementary family. We moved out to Clackamas at that time to be nearer to our church, and asked many friends at church what school had the personality, the heart, the academics, etc., that we were looking for. We chose Sunnyside Elementary based on these conversations and a visit to the school, and bought our house specifically because of its location within the district.

Now, it's six years later. Our daughter is about to move on to Sunrise Middle School and our son has been taught since birth that Sunnyside Elementary is his school home. We have spent six years growing friendships, building relationships, investing our heart and soul in this school, in reading programs and jog-a-thons, new playground fundraisers and field trips; from the fall Open House to the Spring Carnival. Sunnyside has been our second family – and now that feels threatened.

We have not shared the possibility of moving schools with our son, although he did overhear once that we are in a "boundary dispute" area. We don't understand how our area can be considered for this change since we live just under a mile from the school and are invested in it on so many levels. Kids bike to school from our neighborhood; they obviously can't do that to Oregon Trail. We hope and pray that you will reconsider asking that our neighborhood, Comanche Bluff, move to Oregon Trail. It is far both in physical distance and in emotional distance. The kids we play with go to Sunnyside, and the kids we are in activities with go to Sunnyside. We chose this house, in this neighborhood so that we could be part of the Sunnyside family, which we have been a part of now for six years.

As a mom, I have helped with reading groups at Sunnyside, been on many field trips each year with Sunnyside kids, led and helped lead Girl Scout troops at Sunnyside and have been to more fundraisers than I can count. We are invested in Sunnyside in so many ways, as are many of our neighbors in Comanche Bluff – a neighborhood with several PTA leaders and many very involved parents.

I respectfully ask that you would reconsider asking us to make this move when there are so many new neighborhoods in the area that don't have the history with Sunnyside and could make the move easier. Oregon Trail will always be a school with population issues; each new apartment complex or group of row houses will affect its population despite efforts to build new elementary schools toward the east side of Clackamas to relieve over populating that building. Please let us stay where we are. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this issue that is very personal and very important to us.

Sincerely,

cc:

Cathy Lehmann