

From: Mariela Humphrey [mailto:mch.tnt@gmail.com]

Sent: Friday, October 28, 2016 4:56 PM

To: PCD <pcd@bainbridgewa.gov>

Cc: Missi Goss <mgoss@madronaschool.org>; mehdi labaied <mehdi.labaied@gmail.com>

Subject: Madrona School move to Lowery Farm

Dear Mr. Machen,

This is a letter of support for the development of Madrona School campus on Lowery Farm. I should start by letting you know I have two children at Madrona, in first and second grades, and I have been involved in the school community for the last 6 years.

I live on Bainbridge and first moved here in the summer of 1993 to be a 'working student' at an island horse-back riding barn. What drew me to the island was the various outdoor areas on the island, and I lived at other orchard and horse and sheep farms on the island where I was also a caretaker or worker on those farms. I loved that living on the island allowed me to be close to a big city like Seattle, while still living in the beautiful outdoors of the NW.

Now as a parent, I have no doubt my children would perform well in the excellent public schools on Bainbridge, though I have chosen Madrona School's program for my children because of the emphasis on outdoor learning that encourages respect for nature. In preschool and kindergarten, my children spent the majority of every day outdoors. Each morning, they were bundled up and donned in rain gear - prepared to explore the beaches and woods of Bainbridge, and shelter as needed among the fallen pine needles of the great firs of our island. By practicing playing outdoors every day - they know how to have fun outside, and I believe that is a foundation for loving and respecting nature. I am ever so grateful that I have the opportunity to provide such an education to my children.

I understand one of the concerns for the school in the new location is the impact it will have to the surrounding community, and how it will affect traffic, light and noise. I have attended planning meetings open to all school parents - and these issues were discussed openly and respectfully as things we have to address and have continuous solutions in place. Prior to our last large event at the Lowery campus - there were multiple reminders sent to families and parents to respectfully not park on the street or surrounding area. The leaders of our school make being a good neighbor a priority - it is a core value of the school to not only respect our surroundings, but respect individuals and our community - which includes these new neighbors. As fall and winter are upon us, I am reminded of the larger group activities the school hosts at this time of year. I will describe some of them for you - so you have a sense of the kinds of activities held at the school. One event is a lantern walk - where children first make lanterns in school, decorated with dried fall leaves they have collected, and then with our lanterns, we go for a walk observing the dark early evenings. In November, we have a candle dipping evening with singing and cello music, which prepares us for another event - a spiral of light ceremony. For the spiral event, children walk into a spiral laid on the floor with fir tree branches, to a center candle. They light their own candle and place it on the spiral on their way out. These are some examples of our fall/winter gatherings which don't include any loud, amplified or recorded music. As well as this, we are removing as few trees as possible from the grounds which will help screen out noise and light from our movement to and from the campus.

In closing, I wanted to thank you for your time to consider the value Madrona School brings to our community by providing alternatives in education and diversity in our population. With core values of respect for individuals and natural surroundings – we would be good neighbors to the North Madison area and continue to have a positive impact on our island community.

Sincerely,

Mehdi Labaied and Mariela Humphrey
8855 Ferncliff Ave. NE,
Bainbridge Island
206.842.4405