

*The proposed school consolidation and reconfiguration plan for Amherst would require pupils to transfer to a different building across town at the start of their 2<sup>nd</sup> grade year. Below, a Wildwood 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher, **Mangala Jagadeesh**, shares her concerns.*

### **Ten Reasons Why This Plan Doesn't Meet the Needs of Second Graders:**

1. Second graders belong with other early childhood grades. Developmentally they are still young learners. They need the supports that early childhood-focused instruction provides.
2. Second graders have strong connections with their kindergarten and 1st grade teachers. They would lose those connections if made to move to a separate school. Their sense of safety and belonging will be diminished. For our most needy students, this will have far reaching effects.
3. Second grade teachers work closely with their kindergarten and 1st grade colleagues. They will not be able to easily discuss children's history, needs, and successful practices for particular pupils.
4. Second grade teachers need the supports provided by early childhood specialists. Those staff members would be housed far away at the Early Childhood Center at Crocker Farm. Second grade teachers should be a part of Early Childhood professional development. Would it be made available to such teachers if they were clustered with the upper grades?
5. Second graders, at a stage in their development when they should be starting to see themselves as independent learners and coming into their own as students, would suddenly become the "babies" of the bigger school. Regression would likely.
6. Second graders with close younger siblings would be separated from their brothers and sisters. Families with young children would need to divide their time among two schools, at a time in their lives when kids very much want their parents to attend classroom events.
7. Second graders are still learning to read. They need many books at sequential levels for independent reading, and for book-group work. Currently these books are shared with first grade. Where would the books go? Would there be below level books available for struggling readers? What about word work materials? What about all the blocks and puppets and cars and hats and sand tables that we borrow from kindergarten when we use them for Reader's Theater?
8. Second graders need easy access to the library. Early readers finish their books quickly. Under the proposed plan, kids would need to go upstairs, into the den of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders to get to the library. Would the library for the 2-6 school even have lots of picture books and early readers?
9. Second graders need bathrooms close by. Under this plan, they would need to go all the way down the hall to the bathroom, and 140 children would share a single boys' bathroom and a single girls' bathroom!
10. There isn't enough play space. Second graders need swings, structures to climb on, structures for hiding games and role-playing games, "free" fields to run on for imaginative play, fields for organized play like soccer. Where would six to eight classrooms of second graders get to play?