

Dear Superintendent Cheatham,

On behalf of the Education Committee, I'd like to thank you for coming to our December meeting to discuss the important challenges and opportunities facing our community in regards to educating our youth. We appreciated the honest and open conversation that your presentation spurred and look forward to working with you on a variety of topics. **Specifically, we are writing you to show our strong support for the District's community school initiative.**

The idea of community schools is not a new one, in fact several members of the committee and of the larger community have been tossing it around for many years. However, it is under your leadership that the talk has turned into action. For that, we sincerely thank you.

The committee is dedicated to this initiative and is excited to support the effort. We took seriously your desire for us to provide guidance and look forward to getting updates about the initiative as progress is made. Additionally, the committee believes it is uniquely situated to advocate for and help facilitate a truly collaborative and complimentary community schools initiative. While we all know that a leading indicator of a successful community school model is a genuine partnership between the schools and neighborhood residents, we also believe that short and long-term success will be dependent upon how well the three government entities work together. Whether the issues are funding priorities, facility use agreements, community agency contracts or a host of others, strategic collaboration will be vital. **We, therefore, strongly encourage that the planning, implementation and operations of a community school initiative be accomplished through a strong partnership between the City of Madison, Dane County and the Madison Metropolitan School District staff, administrators and elected officials.**

As the only entity that includes elected representatives and executive level appointees of all three local levels of government, we feel that supporting and working with you to create "community" schools is our natural responsibility. It is not too much of a stretch to say that the opportunity in front of all of us, to create community schools that are reflective of and responsive to the needs of their neighbors and neighborhoods, has the potential to transform lives like no project has in a long time. Therefore, we owe it to our constituents and to each other to work in the most efficient, collaborative and comprehensive way possible. With that, thanks again for your visionary leadership and please don't hesitate to call on us as you move forward with this important initiative.

Regards,

Matt Phair

Chair, Education Committee