

## **Please write to the Board and Superintendent to Save Our Schools!**

**CDickson <cdickson@umich.edu>**

**Wed, Aug 31, 2011 at 8:00 AM**

*I am writing to encourage each of you to please write to the Board and Superintendent and express your feelings to them about Harambee and Crosswinds. You don't have to have been an EMID family for long to have a story and make an impact. Please see my letter below. I hope it inspires you to write your own, however brief or long you wish it to be.*

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Dear EMID Board Members:

I am writing to you as the parent of three young boys, the oldest of whom is five and will start Kindergarten next Tuesday. Despite the fact that he has not yet had a single class at Harambee Elementary School, I am writing to ask you to please do all that you can to keep that school and the EMID District open.

My husband and I value education and believe that it is one of the greatest legacies we can leave for our children (second only to love and a strong family). We believe that we are the primary educators of our children and have a responsibility, if we choose our partner with our community in their education, to do so wisely. We consider academics important, but that a foundation for strong citizenship and leadership are equally important for the future of a healthy world. Finally, we believe that solid public schools are essential to a vibrant and strong democracy.

Over the past year we have been considering options for our childrens' education. We fully investigated our community school, homeschooling, charter schools, private schools, and of course Harambee. Only Harambee provided the right combination of opportunities to satisfy our family's educational values.

We chose Harambee for the following reasons:

1. Strong academics
2. An integrated and multicultural environment that fosters tolerance
3. A small and tight community allowing for active family involvement
4. Looping of teachers in K-5 which allows for the building of strong relationships between teacher and child as well as teacher and family
5. A large area of land and four-season opportunities to actively learn about the environment
6. Responsive Classroom method of discipline which establishes an environment conducive to learning and respects children's developmental and social learning needs

We went in with our eyes open, fully aware of the tumultuous state of integration funding and public school funding in general. This summer I attended a meeting with the Superintendent, principals of both schools, and several other EMID administrators. That meeting began with assurances that the schools would not be closing, and that other options were being investigated. We knew things might change over the next 2-5 years, yet still believed this was the best path for our family.

I am now left to wonder if the intent of that meeting was nothing more than to keep families registered in and planning for attending EMID schools in the coming year. Now, with no time to make adjustments for the school year, the truth comes out.

I am aghast the district's own school board would rush to make such an important decision. Why not wait to see how the process plays out in the legislature? Why not exhaust every avenue, of which I believe there are many, to keep the schools open?

I wish to remind you all of your responsibilities to the EMID community as spelled out in the Code of Ethics for the Board of Directors of East Metro Integration District, part D:

**IN MEETING MY RESPONSIBILITIES TO MY COMMUNITY I WILL:**

1. Attempt to appraise both the present and future educational needs of EMID.
2. Attempt to obtain adequate financial support for the magnet schools and integration programs.
3. Interpret the needs and attitudes of the community and do my best to translate them into the educational program of.
4. Consider it an important responsibility to interpret the educational program of EMID to the needs of the community.
5. Insist that business transactions of EMID be on an ethical, open, and above board basis.

I expect each of you to uphold this Code of Ethics to the fullest of its intent.

I look forward to partnering with you to save our schools. Please do not hesitate to contact me at XXX-XXX-XXXX or [cdickson@umich.edu](mailto:cdickson@umich.edu)

Carrie Dickson  
Mother of soon-to-be Harambee Kindergartener