

20 September 2011

Dear School Board Members,

Let me start out by saying that I'm a ninth grade student at crosswinds and I'm starting my 10th year with the EMID schools. I was five years old when I first came to Kindergarten at Harambee, back then known as Tri-district elementary. I've made friends that I can't forget, memories that can't be broken and teachers who've introduced me to life and many careers, and I won't forget that. I was a nominee for the Fred Storti award in the 5th grade and left to face Crosswinds. 6th, 7th and 8th grade I've learned more and made new friends. I've had my ups and downs, losses and gains but I will always remember each teacher and every friend. Some kids hate school and I pity them. Some kids have been going here just as long as me and I have connections with them that will last a lifetime. So to enter the ninth grade, the beginning of a new time for me and my peers, and learn that my school, OUR school, could be shut down because of money, politicians and greed, it makes me want to go back to the first day of kindergarten and do it all over again just so that all those memories won't be lost because of lack of integration funding.

I was once told that I should accept everyone as my friend, no matter who they are or what they act like. Teachers at school, people at church or just being overheard on sesame street, I've always heard that no one is different because of what they look like. I accepted that. I've seen kids get bullied because of their skin and I've always questioned why. Now that I'm older, I realize that if it weren't for EMID I could've been that bully. I could've grown up thinking that a certain color is more dominant than another, or just not being around diversity could've made me see others differently. EMID always taught great lessons on integration whether or not they needed to, and the classes have all kinds of people in them. To learn that the funding for integration might end, that makes me appreciate the fact that I grew up in that environment for the past years. There's nothing that can change that for me, but the people who come after me, that might change.

Plus the year round format is a great way for everyone to have a constant education without that after-summer slump that traditional school children get. That's just an added benefit for everyone at our schools. You don't find that in a lot of other places.

In the seventh grade we read *The Outsiders* for an all class project. We were taught that separating ourselves from others to get into social groups just caused extra problems to everyday lives. That's what Crosswinds has taught to every student ever since the schools started.

These schools are too special to close. No other school gives you relationships with everyone in them and no safer environments than Crosswinds and Harambee give you. Please keep this in mind when you're making your decision.

Thank you,  
Nathan Schlenker