

Sunday, October 09, 2011

Dr. Robicheau,

I am writing this letter in reference to the Harambee and Crosswinds closing being seen as a benefit (integration dollars plus serving 120,000 students) to the 10 member districts.

I want to make sure that you are aware there is a "bigger picture opportunity" that is at stake if Harambee and Crosswinds are closed at the end of this school year.

We live in a global community. The global world has established itself as one of diversity which implies that we all need to learn how to operate in a diverse society. It is critical that we are able to interface with other cultures.

Minnesota and the Nation at large are currently behind this paradigm shift.

Closing Harambee and Crosswinds would be a serious setback in this endeavor.

Harambee and Crosswinds have already been meeting the needs of this paradigm shift for the past 15 years. It is essential that they remain open as a template for not only Minnesota on how this shift can be successfully made but the Nation as a whole. Closing the two schools will have much more long term ramifications than any short term financial gains would justify.

The toehold that we have established through EMID will not only be lost in the closure of Harambee and Crosswinds but will also discourage future initiatives around these diversity and integration matters. This work needs to be strengthened otherwise the old patterns of functioning will leave all school systems in Minnesota and the Nation behind.

Closing Harambee and Crosswinds is akin to turning our backs on the diversity work that we have been passionately involved in for 15 years. I implore you to stop looking at Harambee and Crosswinds as low hanging fruit, but rather an essential beacon and anchor for diversity community.

Respectfully,

Denise J. Dzik

Harambee Teacher since 1999