

April 21, 2020

Dear Woodbridge Board of Education Members,

I am writing this letter in support of my colleagues who are at risk of having their positions reduced and/or eliminated. The reduction of any of these positions would have devastating impacts on the quality of education at Beecher Road School; I would specifically like to address the impacts of our special area teachers whose positions would be reduced.

Both our art teacher, Ashley Wagner, and library/media specialist, Larissa Crocco, do an incredible amount of work behind the scenes. Beecher has always been a place where the arts are clearly valued, as student artwork lines the halls and is admired by all members of the school community. This is not something that happens easily. Ashley Wagner and Linda Acheson work tirelessly before, during, and after school hours to fill the walls and display cases with art. They are often called upon to create artwork for the school, such as the painting and inspirational words which line the fascia in the main hallway. It is difficult to imagine a Beecher in which art is not present all around us, however, this is the reality if the art position is reduced. This reduction would also impact the availability of Open Studio hours, a time that Ms. Wagner has dedicated for students to come to the art room and express themselves through art when they may have a difficult time doing so in other areas. This program has been important to so many students, and the possibility of it being eliminated due to this reduction would directly impact student learning.

Additionally, I would like to speak to the reduction of the full-time position of a library/media specialist. The reduction in this position would have a significant impact on students, staff and programs at Beecher Road School. Throughout the year, and even more so since distance learning has begun, our library/media specialists have been invaluable in their knowledge and communication with staff and families regarding various tools associated with distance learning. Larissa Crocco has been an extremely valuable member of our school community since she arrived 4 years ago, and adopted the orphaned elephant, Ambo, from Africa as a gift to our staff. Since then, she has served on countless committees including the Community Diversity Committee, Professional Development Committee, TAG Committee, as well as the roles of Secretary on the WEA Executive Board, TEAM Mentor, and support staff of countless faculty members and students.

Ms. Crocco spends hours outside of school devoted to her work and professional development, and is truly one of the most dedicated teachers at Beecher. Her love of books and enthusiasm for her profession sets her apart from many, and she is always willing to support, listen, and offer a hand to staff, students and families. A reduction in her position would directly impact

the programs that she has spent so much time creating and contributing to, along with the Beecher Community, who truly value her passion and dedication.

These reductions, along with the possible elimination of our school social worker, would result in devastating losses for our school community. I know that this is an extremely challenging time we are facing, but please reconsider the impacts that this would have on the Beecher Road School community.

Thank you,
Emily Jacober
World Language teacher