Pepper Ridge Elementary School
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August 26, 2026

Dr. Weikle and Unit 5 Board of Education,

Subject: Recognition of Community Partnership and Facility Enhancements at Pepper Ridge Elementary

We are proud to share an achievement that highlights the power of community collaboration in supporting our students. Through a joint volunteer effort, Pepper Ridge Elementary has completed the procurement and installation of a dedicated fence across a portion of the front of the school, creating a safe, enclosed outdoor play area tailored for students with special needs.

The Collaborative Effort This project came to fruition through the leadership, donated resources, and hands-on dedication of several key community members and partners:

- **Laborers Local 362:** Special thanks to **Mr. John Penn**, who coordinated with all stakeholders.
- **Ron Paul** Business Manager Laborers Local 362
- **Gil Brockway** Secretary Treasurer Laborers Local 362
- **Jason Pascal** Field Rep for Laborers Local 362 and President of the Bloomington-Normal Trades and Labor AFL-CIO
- Laborers Local 362 Retiree/Veteran Council worked on the projects
- **Tom Whalen** President of the Retiree Council
- **Doug Meyers, Glen Arbogast, Greg Edwards, Joe Wilson**
- **Donors**: Appreciation goes to **Bob and Mary Williams** who donated the financial resources to make this possible.
- **The Promise Council:** Gratitude to **Mr. Gerry Hendrix** and **Mrs. Sara Edwards** for their original ideas, coordination, advocacy, and guidance throughout the initiative to ensure student needs were met.
- **Unit 5 Facilities Department:** Thank you to **Mr. Tom Rockwell** for providing essential technical consultation, drafting the necessary site drawings, and navigating administrative approvals to keep the project compliant.

Project Impact Beyond the physical fence, the true impact lies in the substantial investment of time and expertise. Moving from initial concept to completion required extensive hours of meticulous planning, research, material procurement, site prep, and physical installation labor.

By eliminating the burden of material and labor costs, these partners delivered a high-quality facility upgrade directly to our school. Most importantly, this enclosed space gives our students with special needs a secure, inclusive space to play, build motor skills, and interact safely outdoors—empowering their independence while giving educators and families complete peace of mind. Pepper Ridge was able to use the school building budget to order some outdoor games and activities to put inside the play space. We look forward to seeing our students learn and grow in this new outdoor play area that was created through the fencing project.

Robert Battey, Principal

Kirsten Freeze, Assistant Principal