

February 16, 2024

Co-chairs Gerrard and Holvey and members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Jean Bendele, Principal at Madras Elementary and I am Carly Solera a 4th grader at Madras Elementary. Thank you for hearing our testimony.

The new playground is important because it will be a special place for our school and community. Our playground now is old and falling apart. There are not a lot of things to do or play on and when it is super-hot we can't even slide because it is metal and would burn us. I am excited about the new playground because I will have a place to play after school with my friends. It will be a great place for all the kids at Madras Elementary.

The playground project is such a blessing to our school and community. It will provide a safe outdoor space for our students during the school day, an outdoor teaching space where meaningful learning can take place, and a hub for community activities. Many of our students come from traumatic backgrounds or live in poverty. What I have heard over and over again, is how they can't believe people would do something so nice for kids like them. Our students have helped plan and fundraise for this project from the beginning. It is so much more than a new playground. For some of them, this is the first time they have felt valued and worthy. I appreciate everything you can do to make this a reality for the students, staff, and community.

Thank you for your time,

Jean Bendele

Principal at Madras Elementary School

Carly Solera

4th Grader at Madras Elementary School