

Lower Merion School Board of Directors:

We present this response as residents and friends of the community of North Narberth. Thank you for your hard work on the difficult task of redistricting. It is appreciated that in the current plan our children will be able to walk to their high school – a high priority for us as a walking community.

However, we do have concerns with the plan, specifically the issues of community, walkability and social networks. While these criteria were identified during the redistricting meetings, they have not been fairly applied to North Narberth. In the last redistricting Narberth Borough was divided and children are now sent to two schools. North Narberth students are currently bussed to school when they should be able to walk – a major reason for choosing to live in a walking community. We hoped this would be resolved in the new plan, but in the current proposal our children continue to attend a different elementary and middle school from their geographic neighbors. We understand the proposal is to keep students together for K-8, but as middle school is already the major transition time in our district our children can and should at least be tracked together with their neighbors from 6-12, since most other neighborhoods in Lower Merion are tracked K-12.

We propose that North Narberth attend Bala Cynwyd Middle School and Lower Merion High School, uniting them with their geographic neighbors at the more appropriate transition time in middle school. In addition, while we appreciate the grandfathering provision of the proposal, we hope the Board will also reconsider the short term goals of the redistricting plan and allow choice at the middle school level, especially for current eighth grade students in the Penn Wynne, Penn Valley and North Narberth communities, taking into account the friendships and connections those students have established over the last three years.

“Social networks are at the heart of where people live and those networks expand as people grow older.” In a district that espouses caring and understanding along with considerable resources we know the plan can be better. We thank you for your consideration and look forward to working with you and our neighbors on this important task.

Sincerely,

