



Edward McGuire <edward.mcguire@boston.gov>

Support for Epiphany School Project, Dorchester

1 message

Jeffrey Gonyeau <jeffrey.gonyeau@gmail.com>

Wed, Nov 11, 2015 at 12:42 PM

To: edward.mcguire@boston.gov

Cc: John Finley <jfinley@epiphany-school.com>

Dear Mr. McGuire,

I attended the BRA-sponsored public meeting regarding the Epiphany School project in Dorchester on November 9, have been present at several other project-related presentations over the last several months, and have reviewed the latest project material (dated October 19, 2015) on the BRA website.

I write to express my strong support for the project. I would also like to commend the Epiphany School on the their commitment to listening to and incorporating public input as they have shaped this important facility expansion that enables Epiphany to increase and enhance the critical educational and family support services that they provide to some of the city's most under-served families.

As a resident of Dorchester since 1997 who has been involved in many community-building projects in my neighborhood over the years--and who currently serves on the board of directors of St. Mark's Area Main Streets and the Dorchester Historical Society--I am always pleased when strong organizations propose good projects in my neighborhood.

Although it added to the complexity and expense of the project, as a person working in the field of historic preservation, I was pleased that the School was able to save and re-purpose the historic Industrial School for Girls at the heart of the site. Further, the project's commitment to maintaining many of the mature trees on the site is laudable--not to mention its creative plan for preserving the wooded area at the back of the site as a safe, green play area in the heart of a densely-developed neighborhood, which is a brilliant idea.

I believe that the design of the new structures effectively preserves the rhythm of the residential structures on the street while skillfully incorporating more institutional-scaled volumes such as that of the Community Room. The exterior cladding choices will also fit well into a residential context. Setting back the main entrance to the school will concentrate activity in the heart of the site which, along with the carefully placed and adequate parking, will help mitigate congestion on Centre Street.

Since building their first school building near Shawmut Station, The Epiphany School has fit seamlessly into the neighborhood, has been a force for good, and has become a reliable community partner. I believe that they will continue to be an excellent neighbor in their new and sensitively-designed facility on Centre Street.

With all best wishes,

Jeffrey Gonyeau

* * * * *

Jeffrey Gonyeau Preservation Services
86 Ocean Street
Dorchester, MA 02124
jeffrey.gonyeau@gmail.com
Mobile 617-512-0851



Edward McGuire <edward.mcguire@boston.gov>

Epiphany School expansion project

1 message

Jansky, Karen <Karen.Jansky@arbella.com>

Thu, Nov 12, 2015 at 12:20 PM

To: "Edward.McGuire@boston.gov" <Edward.McGuire@boston.gov>

Cc: "mikemaz09@gmail.com" <mikemaz09@gmail.com>

Dear Mr. McGuire,

I am writing to you to express my sincere support to John Finley and his team at the Epiphany School for their expansion project on Centre Street in Dorchester.

I am a direct abutter (I live behind them on 22 Mather Street) and am confident that they have done and will continue to do the following for this project:

- Clearly communicate plans to all members of the community
- Negotiate with impacted parties and adjust plans as necessary and feasible (they have gone above and beyond in this are – to the point where it has significantly impacted their schedule)
- Be respectful of the surroundings when scheduling contractors to begin work (both audibly and physically)
- Balance the need for off street parking with the desire to minimize impact on green space/trees
- Thoughtfully plan for hours of operation and rollout of programs

I speak for both me and my husband, Michael Mazerall, in support of this project.

Please feel free to contact me if you want more information.

Sincerely,
Karen Jansky

Karen Jansky | Application Portfolio Manager, Information Technology | Arbella Insurance Group

1100 Crown Colony Drive | Quincy, MA 02169 | : 617.328.2968 | 7: 617.328.2237 | ✉: karen.jansky@arbella.com

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Edward McGuire <edward.mcguire@boston.gov>

Urmila Buchan

1 message

Urmila Buchan <ubuchan97@gmail.com>

Thu, Nov 19, 2015 at 5:09 PM

To: Edward.McGuire@boston.gov

Good Afternoon Edward M. McGuire,

My name is Urmila Buchan and I am 18 years old. I graduated from the Epiphany School in 2011, and now attend college at Wentworth Institute of Technology. Myself and my parents, Parbatie Buchan (Mother) and Gopaul Buchan (Father), attended the last meeting. There were many interesting things said in the meeting followed by some concerns. I have lived in the community for 18 years, and my parents lived in this community for over 30 years. I believe it is very important that we have this early learning center for the kids of the community because it will allow the kids to start learning early. There are a lot of kids, mainly in this community, that are on the streets and no where to go. Epiphany School has made me into the person I am today. The motto, Never Giving Up On A Child, motivates kids to become a better person knowing that there will be someone there to lean on. It is also important to have a learning center in this community because Epiphany School is reaching out to the community and always tries their best to help people in the best way. I am in an organization, The Shri Lakshmi Mandir Of Boston (Church) and the Epiphany School has contributed immensely throughout the years of this organization. I firmly believe that granting Epiphany the opportunity to expand there teaching and love through this center, will impact the lives of children from this community for many, many years to come. Please consider their plans to the BRA.

Thank you kindly for taking the time to read my letter.

Sincerely,

Urmila Buchan, Parbatie Buchan, and Gopaul Buchan



Codman Square Neighborhood Council

September 9, 2015

Christine Araujo
Chair
Board of Appeal
1010 Massachusetts Avenue, 4th Floor
Boston, MA 02128

Re: 232 Centre Street, Dorchester, MA 02124

Dear Christine Araujo,

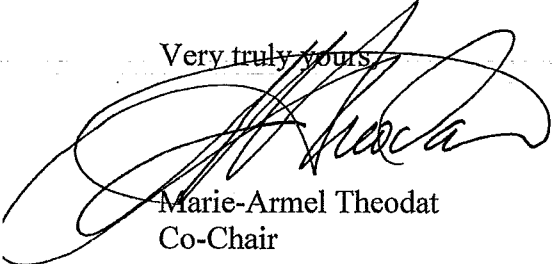
We support the proposal for an Early Education Center at 218 and 232 Centre Street.


On March 4, 2015, Michelle Gomes Sanchez, principal of the Epiphany School, attended our monthly community meeting and presented a plan to expand the Epiphany School by developing an early education center on Centre Street. Mrs. Sanchez also met with our Board on August 12, 2015 to further explain the impact the center would have on the community.

The Epiphany presently serves 90 middle school aged students at 154 Centre Street as a private, tuition-free school and its operations, infrastructure, parking, and services are in harmony with the surrounding community. The proposed early education center we will serve up to 60 infants, toddlers and pre-school children, offer graduate support community space and outdoor gathering space. The proposed building will meet LEED Silver Standards and exceed the Massachusetts Energy Code. In addition, the teacher housing in both the historic existing building protected by the Boston Landmarks Commission and the proposed building will be smoke-free.

Based on the foregoing reason, we support this proposal. If you have questions regarding this matter, please contact us at 617-265-4189.

Very truly yours,


Marie-Armel Theodat
Co-Chair


Candice Gartley
Co-Chair

Cc: Mayor Martin Walsh, Boston City Council Charles Yancey, State Representative Russell Holmes, State Representative Dan Hunt, Councilor Frank Baker



Edward McGuire <edward.mcguire@boston.gov>

Epiphany School - Zoning Appeal

1 message

Lee Robinson <lee.robinson@gibsonsir.com>

Thu, Nov 12, 2015 at 12:29 PM

To: Edward.McGuire@boston.gov

Good morning, Ed:

I am writing on behalf of my husband and myself in unequivocal support of Epiphany's planned - first in the nation - lower school.

Years ago members of the Melville Park Neighborhood Association met with numerous potential buyers for the property Epiphany now occupies. The proposed uses were definitely not compatible with a residential neighborhood, and in one case would have been a dangerous use. Exhausted by the process we were happy to interview, and advocate for a school.

And what a wonderful school it has turned out to be. It's attractive school building fits the scale of the streetscape, and enhances the tranquil setting of the Shawmut T.

Epiphany has made a significant contribution to our neighborhood from the beginning, always generous, fair, and reasonable to interact with...and sharing their space for neighborhood meetings and events. Most of all Epiphany has always been considerate of their neighbors and abutters concerns.

One could say Epiphany has been the best improvement in our neighborhood in decades.

Now their lower school will enhance and invigorate another fairly neglected space, adapting the existing historic school building and adding well-scaled new school and housing units for teachers.

How lucky we are to have Epiphany!

Lee and Paul Robinson
37 Wellesley Park

LEE ROBINSON, Broker

Senior Vice President/Historic Properties Specialist

*Specializing in "City Pockets," Victorian neighborhoods
offering gracious living in elegant homes in Boston.*

The finest compliment I can receive is an introduction to friends from an appreciative client. If you are searching for an experienced agent outside the Boston area, please contact me for one of my many contacts around the globe.

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119 Savin Hill Avenue - Boston, MA 02125
c. 617.875.0763 / f. 617-288-6367



Edward McGuire <edward.mcguire@boston.gov>

Comment for Epiphany Meeting.

1 message

Nick Young <nyoung@epiphanyschool.com>
To: edward.mcguire@boston.gov

Tue, Nov 10, 2015 at 1:22 PM

Dear Mr. McGuire,

I have a few comments about the project itself and a few thoughts on what was said tonight.

On the project:

I am 100% behind this project. The meaningfulness of early intervention in childhood education; the power of serving entire families; and the impact of training more urban educators has been elucidated with more clarity and persuasive rhetoric than I could hope to muster. The significance of Epiphany's mission cannot be overstated. It's what drives the teaching fellows (the teaching interns that live in 232) to work 60+ hours a week for a monthly stipend we could get serving fast food. **It is my belief that this project furthers that mission.**

I know from personal experience with the families of my students that young children can be a great complicating factor. Several of my students struggle to complete homework at night because they are tasked with caring for younger siblings. From my perspective, if those children are cared for during the school day, it will help their parents, and any help for the parents will alleviate some responsibility for my students who need to take care of themselves. I have **many, many** more reasons for supporting this project. If you are interested I would be happy to speak at length about anything.

On the meeting:

It seemed to me that three largest concerns were:

- 1.) Parking
- 2.) Stylistic Architectural "fit" with the neighborhood
- 3.) Zoning

As I stated above, I believe that the mission of Epiphany school is of utmost importance. I understand that many people may not value that mission as I do. I would implore those people to bring those concerns to the forefront of the discussion. Our community (students, faculty, parents, alumni) can attest to the profound impact of the work we do. If we can speak openly about the merits of our work, I believe that the vast majority of fears could be assuaged.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Young



Edward McGuire <edward.mcguire@boston.gov>

In Support of Epiphany School

1 message

Dwight Simon <dwigthesimon@gmail.com>

Tue, Nov 10, 2015 at 8:54 AM

To: Edward.McGuire@boston.gov

Mr. McGuire,

As an eleven year resident of the Codman Square community here in Dorchester and as someone who has been affiliated with Epiphany School in various capacities for several years, I want to urge the BRA's full support of Epiphany's plans for an early learning center. Epiphany School, since I have been connected with it, has been an institution that seeks to do right by its neighbors and support the community in any way possible. For two years, I managed Epiphany's building and grounds and was in charge of building use by outside groups. Epiphany's leadership was always receptive to community groups seeking to use Epiphany's space - their cafeteria, gym, assembly hall, and classrooms were always in use in the evenings, on the weekends, and through the summer. The only cost they charged was for minimum security and safety demands required to host outside groups. This community-mindedness is already baked into the Epiphany mission as they seek to partner with local families whose children have fewer options than many of their peers with greater economic means. Epiphany provides a long-term support network that can put young people from Dorchester on an equal footing with young people who are growing up anywhere in America with the best options and paths to power and success. This is a place that doesn't shirk its duties to families and to Boston's youth, and it surely won't shirk its continued duties to be a good neighbor at its new site on 232 Centre St.

There are never enough early learning and literacy programs in our city - this is a critical intervention stage and the children and families of Dorchester deserve to have increased and affordable options in this regard. Epiphany is seeking to use a site that has been quite desolate and somewhat uncared-for for years and turn it into a site where children and families can connect, learn, grow, and succeed. They are also preserving and restoring much of the historic integrity of the Industrial School building while enhancing the aesthetics and accessible greenspace in the area. I'm very encouraged by Epiphany's new attempt to live into their mission and by their responsiveness to community concerns. Most importantly, I'm hopeful for the children and families who will find this early learning center to be an important center for empowerment and education.

Thank you for your consideration,

Dwight Simon
41 Melville Avenue
Dorchester, MA 02124

7 Centervale Park
Dorchester, MA 02124

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to support the Epiphany School in their school expansion project. The school has proposed a new building wrapped around the Industrial School for Girls on Centre street. This expansion would allow the school to have more offices, classrooms and housing for teacher fellows.

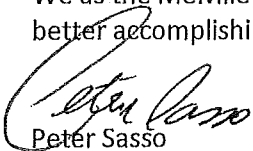
I have been around since the Epiphany first came to the neighborhood to speak about their original plans for a school. They have always worked with the neighborhood to become a good neighbor and always reached out to the neighborhood which allowed us to share our opinions on any new activities and developments at the school. From the beginning of their time in our neighborhood the school has always reached out the Melville Park Neighborhood Association about developments and changes at the school.

The Epiphany School is also generous with sharing their facility with the Community. Neighborhood Groups like the Melville Park Neighborhood Association and other groups have been offered the opportunity to meet at the school. The School has also volunteered to help out offering student assistance with any activities the community has been engaged in.

The Melville Park Association held a meeting that the Epiphany School presented their expansion plans in detail. After the presentation the group took a vote and authorized me to send a letter of support for the project.

The Epiphany School does great work educating students and creating a environment which helps them strive in academics, become model citizens and good neighbors. The example is set by the Epiphany School leadership team to always strive to be a good citizen and neighbor. That is the reason why we support this school expansion project. It will help to continue their mission of never giving up on any child and helping to develop students to discover and develop the fullness of their unique gifts.

We as the Melville Park Neighborhood Association are proud to encourage their effort and mission in better accomplishing this goal by supporting their expansion project.



Peter Sasso

President, Melville Park Neighborhood Association

Evan Brinkman
4 Remington Street
Boston, MA 02124

November 20, 2015

Edward M. McGuire III
Project Assistant
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02201

Re: Epiphany School Expansion at 218-232 Centre Street

Dear Edward,

I am sending these comments to you in response to the proposed project at 218-232 Centre Street in Dorchester, as proposed by the Epiphany School in their October 19, 2015 application for Article 80 Small Project Review.

As a homeowner, architect, and dedicated employee of the City of Boston, I consider myself and my family not just neighbor, abutter, and constituent, but also stakeholder. As I oppose this project generally but am also aware of the likelihood of its approval, I will phrase my comments in terms of impacts, but then also make some suggestions.

This project will have an indelible effect on the neighborhood. Reducing the amount of green open space and tree canopy will reduce the available habitat for birds, bats, skunks, snakes and other wildlife we see here. Increasing the amount of impervious roof and paving surfaces will add to the heat island effect and distribute more stormwater runoff to the abutters and the public way. Bringing the building all the way to the street edge will increase vehicular speeds in front of the site as the feel of Dorchester Avenue will be brought around the corner. Adding numerous parking spaces for employees, on-site residents and day-care drop-off will encourage more cars to circulate through the neighborhood, increasing pollution, congestion, a dangerous street, and noise. Providing food service in the facility will bring rodents, pests and the frequent noise of commercial-scale deliveries and garbage removal. Constructing on the site but not incorporating nor deferring to the existing historic building, which is currently

indicated as an important building in the St. Marks Neighborhood District, will forever change the character of this site that has largely existed as it is for the last 150+ years.

To mitigate the loss of green space, I suggest requiring the designers to break the massive building into smaller units, locating various portions in areas where there are currently no trees: the housing could be located immediately behind 218 Centre Street, in what is currently a lawn, preserving some of the largest healthy trees on the site; the Gymnasium could be located behind the existing historic building, in place of the green house, or deleted all-together as the current Epiphany School facility has a full-gymnasium.

I further suggest requiring the amount of parking be reduced to only what is required, not exceeding the requirement by 56% as currently proposed. The site is ~350' to a major bus line (1 minute walk) and ~800' to the Shawmut T station (3 minute walk). A short distance from the T station is the existing Epiphany School which has its own dedicated parking lot, including Zipcar spaces. The new project could also utilize Zipcar, and I note as well that the proposed project does not provide any bike parking. The current west parking lot is disrespectful to the nearest abutters and will bring noise, light pollution, and potentially unsavory behavior if not surveilled sufficiently.

To mitigate the increased vehicular speeds, I suggest requiring the designers to propose various traffic calming measures per the Boston Complete Streets guide. At minimum the project should carry the cost to extend the School Zone on Dorchester Avenue all the way beyond the St. Marks School as well as restriping the nearest crosswalks. The parking narrative in the application is insufficient and a comprehensive and complete traffic study must be required.

To avoid the impact on the existing historical building, the impact of food service and the impact of increased general traffic congestion, I request that the BRA uphold the tenets of its own zoning code and not support nor permit this project due to the required variances. Any project on the site should be lower than and deferential to the existing historic building, not blocking it nor taller than it as proposed. Housing on the site is welcome as zoned, but business uses and day-care uses are variances that should not be granted. The project designers claim that because the Epiphany School received a conditional use exemption on another site (as an elementary/secondary school) that it does not have to meet the requirements for this site, but that cannot be true – the whole notion of zoning is that it is site specific, not entity nor owner specific. In addition, day-cares are not permitted even as accessory uses and it is the day-care which will bring the most traffic (drop-off for 60 children) and related food service issues.

With all due respect, the mission of the Epiphany School is admirable but the project as presented here should not be approved as designed. I respectfully request that each concern be addressed with written responses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Evan Brinkman". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Evan Brinkman



Edward McGuire <edward.mcguire@boston.gov>

YAY for the Epiphany Early Learning Center Project!

1 message

Erika Forrest <ezanders@epiphanyschool.com>

Fri, Nov 20, 2015 at 9:13 PM

To: Edward.McGuire@boston.gov

Dear Mr. McGuire,

I am writing to express that The Forrest Family- resident of 218 Centre Street in Dorchester, wholeheartedly support the Epiphany Early Learning Center Project!

As educators, we recognize the value of the full service work being done at the Epiphany School. Expanding this model and starting with children at an earlier age would be very beneficial to families in our neighborhood and ultimately our community as a whole, as these children grow to inherit the neighborhood.

As community members, we appreciate that Epiphany School welcomes various groups to host events in their current space and plans to do so in the new space.

Lastly, as the parents of a 1 year old, we were quickly made aware of the lack of high quality care for infants and toddlers in this area during my childcare search. We personally send our child to Weymouth, because we did not find a provider in this area that offers a comprehensive curriculum, warm welcoming space, and history of great care.

This could be an amazing opportunity to support the Dorchester community for many years to come!

Cordially,
Erika and Arturo Forrest

Sent from my iPhone



Edward McGuire <edward.mcguire@boston.gov>

Epiphany's Early Learning Center

1 message

Caroline Abernethy <cabernethy@epiphany.school.com>

Fri, Nov 20, 2015 at 5:09 PM

To: Edward.McGuire@boston.gov

Dear Mr. McGuire,

I attended the meeting the other evening in support of Epiphany's Early Learning Center. In fact this was the second meeting I have attended where the plans were presented to the community. As a long-time Epiphany faculty member and advisor, I am writing to add my support for this powerful project. Our Epiphany School neighborhood is such an important and valuable resource for Dorchester and the city of Boston: the friendly neighbors, the convenient T Stop, the surrounding shops and services, and the other important educational centers. The missing piece in our neighborhood is an Early Learning Center.

For many of us who work at Epiphany, this decision to focus on a 0-5 program rather than expanding our middle school was a hugely moral one, taking months and months of thinking and planning; we were constantly asking ourselves what would best serve the needs of the children and the surrounding community. With the completing of an Early Learning Center we have an enormous opportunity to enrich the lives of the young families and children living nearby as well as the teachers who are privileged to work with them.

As a teacher for over 35 years, I have never been involved in a project so meaningful and timely as this one. An Early Learning Center would help to lift many children and their families out of poverty and enrich the entire community. An Early Learning Center could not come at a more important moment in our nation's educational history. We are so hoping you will be willing to approve this project.

Very sincerely,

Caroline Abernethy
English Teacher
Epiphany School
Dorchester MA



Edward McGuire <edward.mcguire@boston.gov>

Ephiphany School Early Education Proposal

1 message

Karla Brown <karlabrown2@yahoo.com>

Thu, Nov 19, 2015 at 9:10 PM

To: "Edward.McGuire@boston.gov" <Edward.McGuire@boston.gov>

Hello,

This letter is in support of the Early Education School Proposal by the Ephiphany School. Presently, I'm an neighbor to the Ephiphany Middle School. Since June 2006 I have owned and resided at 52/54 Mather St in Dorchester. My backyard and the schools are adjacent. The children can be heard playing sports and other activities during recess. The sounds of their voices have been great. After listening attentively to the interactions of the students and staff during play. At no time did I encounter any foul language, destruction of property or any other concerning actions. The presence of the school is great for the community of St. Marks, Melville Park and surrounding areas. The Early Education Center can only enhance an already great Educational Organization and deliver a wonderful stellar curriculum to a challenging education system of our Boston Schools.

Presently, my ten year old daughter is a new 5th grade student at the Ephiphany . She is flourishing in many areas at the school. Therefore, I'm speaking from experience . The support, exposure, resources and enhancing challenges are wonderful.

As we are all aware exposure to a great educational environment in the primaries years is beneficial to our communities.

Regards,

Karla Brown
Parent, Neighbor, Property Owner



Edward McGuire <edward.mcguire@boston.gov>

Comments on 232 Centre Street Development

1 message

Maddie Ribble <maddie.ribble@gmail.com>

Thu, Nov 19, 2015 at 8:47 PM

To: Edward.McGuire@boston.gov

Cc: John Finley <jfinley@epiphany.school.com>, Catherine Bell <catherine@keshetonline.org>

Hello Edward:

We are writing to express our support for the proposed development at 232 Centre St. in Dorchester.

We live directly across the street at 233 Centre St.

The proposed project by the Epiphany School has raised a number of questions and concerns among neighbors, given its significant size and the significant change in the uses on the property. In particular, many neighbors have concerned about the loss of open space in a densely developed neighborhood.

We have had the opportunity to talk with the project proponents and provide input and feedback on the project at several points over the last several months, and we believe the current project should receive the necessary zoning variances to proceed. The project proponents have addressed several suggestions and concerns raised by us and other neighbors, including the location of the driveway and parking, the number of parking spaces, the setback of the gym, and external design of the housing component.

The uses proposed for the site respond to a tremendously important need for quality affordable early education and care for Boston families, and we are pleased that the site will be able to increase access to these services.

With the significant loss of open space on the site, as well as the loss of several large trees on the southwest corner of the property, it is even more important that every effort be made to maintain the mature trees on the southeast part of the site. We understand that all of the mature, healthy trees on this part of the site will be maintained, and we urge the project proponents to make every effort to ensure this happens.

The Epiphany School has been a good institutional neighbor for many years in this neighborhood and we welcome their increased presence.

Thank you,

Maddie Ribble and Catherine Bell
233 Centre St.



Edward McGuire <edward.mcguire@boston.gov>

Epiphany Expansion Project

1 message

Lino Sanchez <lsanchez@urbanachievers.org>
To: edward.mcguire@boston.gov

Thu, Nov 19, 2015 at 5:28 PM

Dear Mr. McGuire,

My name is Lino Sanchez and I've resided at 20 Mather Court in Dorchester, Massachusetts 02124 for the past 4 years. I'm writing in support of the Epiphany School expansion being considered at 232 Centre Street, Dorchester, Massachusetts, 02124.

My reason for writing this letter is to support this project. I've worked at the Epiphany School for approximately 11 years. In that duration, I've seen the miraculous things Epiphany has been able to do with the children and families fortunate enough to enroll into the school.

Epiphany's mission is to work with families residing in historically under-resourced and under-served communities. I've watched first hand how the staff commits their entire lives to positively impacting the lives of the children and their families. I constantly experience the love that every faculty member gives. This love and commitment to our children has set children on a course towards success. I often wondered what more could Epiphany do for these families and, then came the ELC.

What an amazing opportunity to get into these lives sooner. In my opinion, being able to love and teach the children at such an early age in their lives will significantly increase their chances of success. As educators, our jobs are to teach our children. However, Epiphany is much more than an educational institution.

Epiphany is also a second home for many children, families, teachers, and community members. It's been a haven for many. As you will see and hear throughout this period is how awesome Epiphany has been within this community.

I wholeheartedly support what Epiphany has set before you. In my experience, there is no other place (and I'm sure I speak for all that have had the opportunity to experience Epiphany) that will teach and love these children more passionately than Epiphany ever will except for the ELC!

Thank you very much for granting us the opportunity to write you in support of Epiphany's Expansion Project.

Sincerely,