

Good evening! My name is Erika Kelley. I am a parent of a rising 4<sup>th</sup> grader at CMIT Elementary. I am also the President of the CMIT Elementary Parent Teacher Organization and here speaking on behalf of the parents I am elected to represent.

I am here tonight to request that you vote to revise the CMIT Charter to combine CMIT Elementary with CMIT Middle and High School into one continuous charter. This would allow continuity of education from Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

In 2014, at the inception of CMIT Elementary, parents were informed during registration that this would be a continuous program. At that time, my son was a kindergartener at Vansville Elementary but we wanted him to have the STEM based curriculum offered at CMIT. Changing schools was emotionally difficult and adjusting to the CMIT curriculum was academically challenging. As a parent, CMIT also has challenges, as there is no bus service and parents are responsible for school transportation. Some parents took their children out of other charters or private schools to attend CMIT. Being a CMIT family is both an investment and a commitment.

This past fall, news of the revised charter lottery process was announced and quickly became a topic of contention. Only 35 percent of the CMIT middle school slots could be reserved for the CMIT Elementary students. Parents are upset and scared of the impact this will have on their children's education. However, this problem could be solved by combining the CMIT schools.

I understand the perception that combining the schools may limit access to other children. However, when we look at the facts, there are only 32 or less spots each year in question. When CMIT Elementary is at its maximum enrollment, it will have 100 5<sup>th</sup> graders. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade class for CMIT North, as of yesterday, is 193. At 35% of the 193 student slots, approximately 68 of those spots would be for CMIT Elementary Students. This leaves 32, 5<sup>th</sup> grade students without a 6<sup>th</sup> grade slot and it gives the entire CMIT Elementary parent body anxiety and fear of what to do if their child doesn't get one of those 68 spots. Even if all 5<sup>th</sup> graders accepted placement, you still have a minimum of 93 slots of new students attending the middle school.

Failure to combine the charters would drastically impact the lives of 32 CMIT Elementary students and their families who have committed and invested in CMIT and its mission. It is unconscionable to take away stability and replace it with fear and uncertainty especially when for families it was understood to be a certainty from the moment of registration. It is unconscionable to make those 32 students go through the process of physically, emotionally and academically adjusting to a new school, in a new area, with potentially new curriculum, with all new peers.

My hope for this evening is that I effectively articulated how important the board making the correct decision is to CMIT Elementary families and how devastating not combining the charters would be. Thank you for your time.