MANSFIELD REPUBLICAN TOWN COMMITTEE
P.O. BOX 32
MANSFIELD, CT 06250
MARCH 1, 2011

Over the years the people of this town have been strong supporters of our educational system, valuing a good education as a necessary basis for all of our children. We, the members of the Mansfield Republican Town Committee, pride ourselves as having been active, positive supporters of Mansfield education. Currently both the board of education and the town council are grappling with the issue of a possible school building project – what to propose and what to support. The issues appear to be should we demolish 2 elementary schools and rebuild 2 larger ones to accommodate our K-4 population; or should we leave empty 2 elementary schools, demolish the third and rebuild 1 large school for our K-4 population; or should we leave all 3 elementary schools standing and occupied and plan and carry out a renovation/maintenance plan for our entire K-8 population?

After much discussion and research, the Mansfield Republican Town Committee has concluded that it would be in the best interests of our children and the taxpayers of the town to, at this time, support a planned program of renovation and maintenance of our K-8 schools – 3 elementary and 1 middle. Further we support this as a Capital Improvement project, not reliant on state bonding and reimbursements.

Our reasons for this position are as follows:

1. It appears that at this time, no one is able to predict or project, realistically, the possible total costs to the town and taxpayers of the "demolish/rebuild" projects.
2. Under our new governor there appears to be a change in proposed school building/renovation reimbursement percentages – but nothing here is definite.
3. There is a possibility there may be no bonding projects approved by the state in the coming years (due to the current deficit climate).
4. In the past, the town has been proactive in addressing and maintaining buildings. We believe these policies should be reinstated. All Town of Mansfield buildings need to have planned programs of maintenance.
5. Renovations of school buildings can be planned for times when they are the least disruptive to the children, i.e., vacations, summers or when there is a chance to move children out of the affected areas for the least amount of time. On the other hand, demolition and reconstruction will be 2 to 3 year projects that will require moving children to different buildings/ neighborhoods for years at a time.
6. The need for renovating buildings in order to address security issues can be accomplished without physically moving offices, etc.
7. The schools, 3 elementary and 1 middle, are all structurally sound and technologically up-to-date.
8. Smaller, neighborhood-type schools appear to be more conducive for learning, especially in the early grades.
9. If a school's population decreases and another's increases, redistricting is an option that is something that many of our children over the years have experienced and have survived.
10. The Town of Mansfield is embarking on some building, construction projects that are already having an impact on our budgets. The addition of a school building project, with indefinable costs, could severely hamper these other projects.

In conclusion, the Mansfield Republican Town Committee support a plan to program the necessary renovation and maintenance of all 3 of our elementary schools and middle school and would want the Town Council to provide for the monies through our annual budget.

Gordon B. Allan
25 Sawmill Brook Lane
Mansfield Center, CT 06250

March 1, 2011

Town Managers office
Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
4 South Eagleville Road
Storrs, CT 06268

Dear Matthew Hart, Elizabeth Paterson and Town Councilors,
As a longtime Mansfield resident and former school administrator, I have become aware of the school building project proposals and endorse the concept of preservation and maintenance of our existing school buildings which include Goodwin, Southeast, Vinton and Mansfield Middle. I encourage you to do the same. These schools have successfully met our children's educational needs for many years in the past and look forward to many more years in the future.

Respectfully,

Gordon B. Allan

Gordon B. Allan

Print Close

school options

From: **Robin Blomstrann** (robinjohnb@sbcglobal.net)
Sent: Mon 2/28/11 4:31 PM
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org

To whom it may concern:

I have written to express my discontent with the one school option in an earlier letter. However, I did not mention in my previous letter that my major preference would be to repair the existing three schools. My second preference would be the two school option as long as they are located on both ends of town.

If the ballot comes down to the two school option, please consider disclosing the location of the two schools on the ballot as this will make a major difference for voters in the Goodwin area. If we go with the two schools, it is only fair to have each school on opposite ends of town for equal travel distances. The fear in the minds of many is that UConn will take over the Goodwin area if there is no school present and this could impact our home values.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,
Robin Blomstrann

One school option

From: **Robin Blomstrann** (robinjohnb@sbcglobal.net)
Sent: Thu 2/24/11 8:28 AM
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org (TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org)

Hello,

I am writing to express vehement opposition to the one school project. I feel that kids will lose connections which are vital to their development. Life has become impersonal enough. Inevitably, with a large sized school, more children will fall through the cracks. In addition, school should provide a cozy, nurturing environment for children. If this decision comes down to money, I will be very disappointed in a town I moved to because of its schools and commitment to education.

Please do the right thing for our children. My kids will not be impacted by this decision, but, as a mom, concerned citizen, and former educator, I feel strongly enough about this issue to voice my opinion.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Robin Blomstrann

School Building Vote

From: **Stacy Boothroyd** (sbooth21@sbcglobal.net)
Sent: Wed 2/23/11 10:53 AM
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org

Dear Council,

I am strongly opposed to the one-school option. As a life-long resident, parent, and tax payer, the best option for the future of our children and town is to have smaller schools. So if given the option, I would support the two school option as opposed to the one school option.

Thank you,
Stacy Boothroyd

school building project

From: **Boskovic, Michele (World Languages & Cultures)** (Boskovicm@easternct.edu)
Sent: Fri 2/25/11 12:12 PM
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org

Hello,
As the Town Council is getting ready to decide on an option for the school building project, I would like to express my strong opposition to the one-school option.
Thank you.
Michele Boskovic
11 Michele Lane (Southeast School)

Michele Bacholle-Boskovic, Ph.D.
Dept of World Languages and Cultures
Eastern Connecticut State University
Willimantic, CT 06226
860-465-4572

School building project

From: **Julie Brown** (julie.medill@yahoo.com)
Sent: Tue 2/22/11 9:21 PM
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org

I am strongly against the one school option, and I support the two school option.
Thank you,
Julie Brown

school building project

From: **Bill Caneira** (wcaneira8614@charter.net)
Sent: Wed 2/23/11 8:28 PM
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org

2 attachments
062810-comments-againstoptionD.doc (33.0 KB) , 071210-comments-againstoptionD.doc (42.0 KB)

Councilors and neighbors:

I understand that we are nearing a Council vote on the referendum question for the School Building Project. I'm one of the parents opposed to the single-school Option D and I wanted to take an opportunity to resubmit to you some of my thoughts on the matter. Please take a few minutes to review the attached. I considered writing something entirely new, but ultimately I felt that these comments still served their purpose.

In summary, I feel that Option D will be to the detriment of our students, teachers, administration, as well as our neighborhoods. I can't quantify this cost, but I hear it in the voices of fellow parents, and I read it in the words of the BOE reccommendation, and of those who participated in the teacher survey. I imagine that cost when I recall the LOWV panel discussing school size, and shudder at the thought of sending a 3 or 4 year old pre-K child to a 700 student school (with 1.5 nurses).

I can appreciate that we are faced with deteriorating, costly facilities and declining revenues and reimbursements - and I don't have a solution for that, especially in our current economic climate. All I ask is that while weighing the various options, please consider those less obvious costs that might not show up in the dollar figures.

Thank you for listening, and for your attention to the project.
Bill Caneira
38 Candide Lane

school building project

From: **Maryclaire Capetta** (maryclaire.capetta@gmail.com)
Sent: Wed 2/23/11 12:29 PM
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org

Councilpersons,
I am emailing to voice my strong opposition to the one-school option for Mansfield.
Thank you for serving our town.
Sincerely,
Maryclaire Capetta
48 Monticello Lane

one school option

From: **melissa champagne** (melissachamp@snet.net)
Sent: Wed 2/23/11 11:05 AM
To: towncouncil@mansfieldct.org

To Whom It May Concern:

My family and I are strongly opposed to the one-school option.

Sincerely,
Melissa Champagne

Print Close

School Building Project

From: **Kimberly Christenson** (kmchristenson@charter.net)
Sent: Tue 3/01/11 12:58 PM
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org

Hi~

I am writing in reference to the School Building Project. Unfortunately, we cannot attend the meeting tonight, due to a sick child and my husband's work schedule.

However, we would like you to know that we strongly oppose the one school building option.

We are open to growth and change, and fully support the two school proposal.

Sincerely,

Kimberly and Richard Christenson
19 Adeline Place
Mansfield Center

Opposition to the one-school option

From: **Cristina Colon-Semenza** (ccolonsemenza@hotmail.com)
Sent: Tue 2/22/11 11:50 PM
To: towncouncil@mansfieldct.org

Dear Council Members,
I have voiced my concerns several times in the past and I will continue to voice my strong opposition to the one school option. This option is not in the best interest of our children or our community, as have parents, educators and research all said previously.

Sincerely,

Cristina Colon-Semenza
64 Woods Rd, Mansfield

One School

From: **Sonya Conrad** (sonyaconrad@charter.net)
Sent: Mon 7/12/10 3:42 PM
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org; PatersonE@mansfieldct.org; HaddadG@mansfieldct.org; DeniseKeane2009@gmail.com; PeterKochenburger@yahoo.com; LindseyM@mansfieldct.org; Morantt@earthlink.net; PaulhusCR@mansfieldct.org; bonbill@charter.net; Carl.Schaefer@uconn.edu

Hello Council Members,

I am a mom of two beautiful boys (I admit I'm a little biased ☺) : 16mnths and 5yrs.

My husband and I moved to Mansfield in 2001 for the purpose of the quality education in smaller schools and the rural feel/small community (as many other people have).

Our family supports the three schools 'as is'. We are in favor of paying more in taxes to maintain the current three elementary schools in town and doing what is necessary to maintain the middle school.

Building a new 'one school' or even 'two schools' does not mean updates/repairs wont need to be done on those buildings in the future. We will have to pay for demolition of the current schools if they aren't leased etc.. Buildings in town such as the library and town hall were schools at one time however we don't need another library or another town hall. I see the vacant schools having potentially many hidden costs.

If my husband and I wanted to pay less in taxes we would move to a neighboring town where taxes are a priority not education (and send them to private school). As a result of some neighboring towns having lower taxes they are paying for it in other ways (the pay me now or pay me later principle – the pay me later has ramifications that no dollar amount could ever truly fix). I would like to not see that in Mansfield.

Thank you for your time.

Cheers,
Sonya Conrad

No on the one-school plan

From: **Coppola, Marie** (marie.coppola@uconn.edu)
Sent: Sun 7/11/10 9:59 PM
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org (TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org); PatersonE@mansfieldct.org (PatersonE@mansfieldct.org); HaddadG@mansfieldct.org (HaddadG@mansfieldct.org); DeniseKeane2009@gmail.com (DeniseKeane2009@gmail.com); PeterKochenburger@yahoo.com (PeterKochenburger@yahoo.com); LindseyM@mansfieldct.org (LindseyM@mansfieldct.org); Morantt@earthlink.net (Morantt@earthlink.net); PaulhusCR@mansfieldct.org (PaulhusCR@mansfieldct.org); bonbill@charter.net (bonbill@charter.net); Schaefer, Carl (carl.schaefer@uconn.edu)

Dear Council Members,

I am a new resident of Mansfield with a young daughter. I believe that the one-school option will have a negative impact on the academic and social quality of our schools, and strongly urge you to support the neighborhood schools by voting NO on the one-school plan.

Sincerely,
Marie Coppola

Please note new email: marie.coppola@uconn.edu<mailto:marie.coppola@uconn.edu>

Marie Coppola, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Departments of Psychology and Linguistics
University of Connecticut

Mailing address:
Department of Psychology
University of Connecticut
406 Babbidge Road
Unit 1020
Storrs CT 06269-1020
USA
Phone: +1 860 486-4907 | Fax: +1 860 486-2760

Strong opposition to the one-school option

From: **Coppola, Marie** (marie.coppola@uconn.edu)
Sent: Tue 2/22/11 11:16 PM
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org (TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org)

Dear Council Members,

I understand that the Council is nearing its decision on the School Building Project. I am strongly opposed to the one-school option because I do not think it would adequately serve our students.

Sincerely,
Marie Coppola
233 Hanks Hill Rd
Storrs Mansfield

Please note new email: marie.coppola@uconn.edu

Marie Coppola, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Departments of Psychology and Linguistics
University of Connecticut

Mailing address:
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University of Connecticut
406 Babbidge Road
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Storrs CT 06269-1020
USA
Office: +1 860 486-4907 | Lab: +1 860 486-2185 | Fax: +1 860 486-2760

Please do not build a mega-school

From: **Anna Cranmer** (annacranmer@hotmail.com)
Sent: Sun 7/11/10 11:05 PM
To: towncouncil@mansfieldct.org; patersone@mansfieldct.org; haddadg@mansfieldct.org; denisekeane2009@gmail.com; peterkochenburger@yahoo.com; lindseym@mansfieldct.org; morantt@earthlink.net; paulhuscr@mansfieldct.org; bonbill@charter.net; carl.schaefer@uconn.edu

Mansfield currently has a wonderful school system, and all of my neighbors with school-aged children have moved to this town because of it. Please do not eliminate the neighborhood school system for elementary school in Mansfield. The single school that has been proposed is far too big for an elementary school, even by large school standards, and will not provide the optimal learning environment for our children. Mansfield will no longer be as desirable a place to live and our property values will decline.

I realize that there are many budget constraints and have heard the arguements for the single school. I am unconvinced, however, that building the new mega-school, and relying heavily on state funding which may or may not come through, is the right decision at this time. While our current schools may be older, they are thriving because of the dedicated staff and motivated students, who are not lost in a sea of 750 students.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Anna Cranmer
33 Adeline Place
Mansfield Center, CT 06250

The New Busy is not the old busy. Search, chat and e-mail from your inbox. Get started.

School Building Project

From: **Lisa Drzewiecki** (shepwiecki@sbcglobal.net)
Sent: Wed 2/23/11 10:22 PM
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org

To the Town Council,

I understand that you will be voting soon about the school building project and I wanted to let you know that I am strongly opposed to the one-school option. I know that it's cheaper to build one school, but it would be a huge mistake for our students and teachers. One school is too large for kids this age and I'm concerned about the affects on educational quality and safety. For these reasons, I would support the 2-school option for our town.

-Lisa Drzewiecki

school building plan

From: **ieigsti@gmail.com** on behalf of **Inge-Marie Eigsti** (inge-marie.eigsti@uconn.edu)
Sent: Thu 2/24/11 8:22 PM
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org

Dear Town Council members,

As you move forward with discussions about how to modify the current school buildings, I wanted to voice my strong support for a multiple-school plan, where we maintain at least 2 separate elementary school buildings in Mansfield. The single-school approach may be appealing for some financial reasons (though it also seems to ignore long-term costs of emptying multiple buildings); however, I think the research that the panel reviewed strongly suggests that a single large school is less effective in supporting student needs (and indeed, may most hurt our most vulnerable children - those who have less family support for education).

Thank you for hearing this input!
--Inge-Marie Eigsti
Professor of Clinical Psychology, University of Connecticut

Inge-Marie Eigsti, Ph.D.
http://eigsti.psy.uconn.edu/
Bousfield 146
Dept. of Psychology, Univ. of Connecticut
406 Babbidge Road, Unit 1020
Storrs, CT 06269

inge-marie.eigsti@uconn.edu
(860) 486-6021
fax: 486-2760

Please vote for the two school option

From: **Brian Evans** (evansbw1@yahoo.com)
Sent: Wed 2/23/11 9:10 PM
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org

Hello,

I am a Mansfield resident and parent of an Annie Vinton student. I strongly oppose the one school option and urge you to vote against it.

Thank you.

-Brian Evans

elementary school vote

From: **Evans, Heather** (heather.evans@uconn.edu)
Sent: Wed 2/23/11 10:37 AM
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org (TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org)

I am a resident of Mansfield Center and I STRONGLY oppose the one-school option.

I realize that budgets are tight right now, but this is our opportunity to support and continue our high quality elementary education system. Schools are not built every 5 or 10 years. If we make the wrong decision now, we will be living with that for many years to come. Please use the wisdom and foresight necessary to realize that the 2-school option will be what is in the best interest of our children's education for MANY years to come. Please don't be fooled into thinking that school budgets and funding are appropriate places to be stingy, even in our troubled economy.

THE DECISION YOU MAKE NOW WILL AFFECT OUR CHILDREN FOR MANY YEARS TO COME. BE WISE.

Heather Evans, PhD, RNC, CLC
Assistant Clinical Professor
University of Connecticut
School of Nursing
231 Glenbrook Road
Storrs, CT 06269-2026

Office Information:
Storrs Hall, #321
Phone: 860-486-1699
Email: Heather.Evans@UCONN.edu

School options

From: **Jim Greene** (jimgreenejr@hotmail.com)
Sent: Mon 7/12/10 6:51 AM
To: towncouncil@mansfieldct.org; patersone@mansfieldct.org; haddadg@mansfieldct.org; denisekeane2009@gmail.com; peterkochenburger@yahoo.com; lindseym@mansfieldct.org; morantt@earthlink.net; paulhuscr@mansfieldct.org; bonbill@charter.net; carl.schaefer@uconn.edu

Good Morning,

I am writing to voice my opinion that Mansfield either adopt the one school policy. As the parent of two elementary school students I believe in the long run that this is the most viable option for the town. Having most of the children attending the same schools throughout their younger years will provide stability and friendships that will last a lifetime. I realize this is a simplistic way of viewing this and there are many other reasons I believe the way I do but I do not feel I will say anything that you have not heard before.

I also realize this is a very tough decision that you are facing and there is a lot of pressure being felt on all sides of the issue. I do believe Mansfield had a building committee recommend this to the board of education and also strongly believe the committee had the best interests of both the students and the town when they made that recommendation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kindest Regards,

Jim Greene
52 Beacon Hill Dr.
Storrs, CT 06268

The New Busy think 9 to 5 is a cute idea. Combine multiple calendars with Hotmail. Get busy.

Elizabeth Paterson

From: Heidi Hand [heidihand@sbcglobal.net] **Sent:** Tue 3/1/2011 9:52 AM
To: Town Council
Cc:
Subject: One-School Option
Attachments:

Dear Council Members,

I am writing to express my opposition to the one-school option. I strongly believe that smaller schools are more appropriate for young children. I do not believe that a large, single school is in the best interests of Mansfield's children.

Thank you for your consideration and and time as you address this complex issue.

Sincerely,

Heidi Hand
39 Bundy Lane
Storrs

School Building Project

From: **Jessica Higham** (jjohigham@gmail.com)
Sent: Fri 2/25/11 11:56 AM
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org
Cc: Jessica Higham (jjohigham@gmail.com)

Dear Town Council Members,
I am writing to express my strong opposition to the one school option for Mansfield. I understand that in difficult financial times this option seems appealing but all of the experts that served on the LWV/MAC panel agreed that one school would not be the best educational option for our students. Likewise, they stated that studies showed a much higher turnover rate with educators the larger the schools became. Mansfield has wonderful teachers and a great educational system, please take the one school option off of the table.
Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Higham
14 Adeline Place
Mansfield Center, CT

Elizabeth Paterson

From: john hodgson [jlhodgson@hotmail.com] **Sent:** Mon 2/28/2011 6:56 AM
To: Town Council
Cc:
Subject: School Building Project
Attachments:

Dear Mansfield Town Council Members,

I appreciate your hard work as you consider the future of our town's educational system. During the course of the past year, I have followed the school building issue through the various boards, and have spoken before the School Building Committee, the Board of Education, and the Town Council on different occasions. I appreciate the opportunity to address the Council once more as it prepares to develop a referendum question on the school building issue.

Last week, my child had a conference with the school psychologist and another student at Southeast School. Some things had been disappearing from her backpack, and staff members had figured out where they were ending up. In the meeting, my daughter got to tell the other child what it felt like to have possessions taken. The other child got to explain himself, and give a heartfelt apology. Then, the three of them played a game together.

Later in the week, as I got off the bus after a late night road game with the varsity ice hockey team that I coach at E.O. Smith, the bus driver stopped me and made a comment about how pleased she always is when she sees that her driving assignment involves E.O. Smith students. She knows they will behave and then thank her for the ride.

There is no doubt in my mind that there is a cause/effect relationship between these two occurrences. I've been seeing it for years. As a counselor at E.O. Smith, I am reminded daily of the special culture we have--which begins with the extraordinary behavior of our students, and the remarkable way they have for caring about the plight of others. As a Southeast parent, I am likewise reminded that I have little to do with the formation of this culture-- I simply help maintain it. For five years I have watched the Southeast staff work their magic in all sorts of settings and situations, be it individual issues with my own child, school-wide functions, or countless unique occurrences like the one last week. I have watched them nurture and shape students from many backgrounds, and mold this culture that I eventually see in the high school-- and on the bus.

The one common denominator, the one thing that has allowed them to truly know their students, to coordinate with one another in their work with these students, and to establish a sense of *community* and *one's role in it* that carries forward, is the size of the learning community itself. I could give countless examples. The incident with the backpack is the current one: It is so clear that because the psychologist knows both of these students, because she had a trusting relationship with teachers she sees daily, because both of the students know each other from their years together, and because the psychologist *had time* to work this situation properly, both children benefited. As a parent, I am pleased that my daughter was subtly shown that there was a human on the other side, that there could be resolution, that she doesn't have to go on feeling victimized. Perhaps even more, I am pleased that this boy, whom I know a little about, is being served by great professionals *over five years*-- not one year at a time-- because the structure allows them to know him and share in his development. Again, it is work like this in the formative years that makes some of our most challenging kids in the high school--and ultimately in society-- truly *reachable*, and *educable*.

Because there are too many interfering variables, it is simply hard to envision this kind of intervention-- which occurs frequently in our three elementary schools-- occurring as readily in a large school. When students don't know one another, it's harder to bring them together. When staff members are acquaintances rather than colleagues, it is harder for them to collaborate well. And, when professionals don't really know their students, they can't be as effective. Teachers who work in large schools confirm this regularly-- and have done so before our committees.

Having lived in Mansfield for most of 35 years, and in my roles as a student in the schools, and later as a high school counselor, parent, and husband of a teacher here, I have long known that we have something special in our schools. And now, as we consider the future structure of education in our town, we must consider the fragility of our outstanding system-- and the impact that

wholesale changes in structure can have upon it.

We live in difficult economic times that happen to coincide with a feeling that something needs to be done about the condition of our school buildings. Many have worked hard on this issue, and there is no easy solution. But, in the process of determining efficient economic solutions and desirable classroom and library sizes, we must not lose sight of the most important factor in the education of our children: The nurturing, personalized *environment* in which they learn.

Though I've held many roles that make me feel close to this issue, it is as the father of a ten-month-old boy that I implore you to continue to consider this truth most seriously, and to give credence to the multitude of voices that have spoken from all directions against building one large school for our elementary children: The voice of our talented staff members and residents who teach in large elementary schools, the voice of current and future parents of young people in our schools, the recommendation of our hard-working school board, the *research* that clearly supports medium, not large elementary schools, and finally the voice of our older school children, who in my experience universally oppose the idea of one large school because the start that they got from the smaller schools is tangible to them.

Sincerely,

John L. Hodgson

491 Wormwood Hill Rd

Mansfield

Print Close

School Building Project

From: **Lisa Holle** (holledixon@charter.net)
Sent: Tue 3/01/11 12:00 PM
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org

Dear Town Council members,
I understand that a decision is being made to move forward with one of the options for the Elementary School Building project. I would like to voice my opinion to you. I am **strongly opposed** to the one elementary school option even though that may be more cost effective. Currently the 3 schools seem to be doing a fantastic job where the students, families, and staff seem to be happy and doing well academically and socially. I feel that it is important to not make a change that could alter any of these things. It has been a wonderful experience to have all of the teachers, and I do mean ALL of the teachers and staff, know my children personally while they have been enrolled at Southeast Elementary School. It is not a phenomena of where this happens in the 4th grade after 5 years at the school, but it happens during their first year, whether it be Kindergarten or later on if they have moved into the school district. This personal, social aspect, is important in helping children do well in school, especially children who are in most need of academic, social, and nurturing environments. I urge you to consider the information we learned that large schools do not work as well as smaller schools, and that most of the community is in support of what is best for the children even if it is more costly.

Sincerely,

Lisa Holle
Storrs Heights Road
Storrs, CT

To help protect your privacy, links to images, sounds, or other external content in this message have been blocked. Click here to unblock content.

Elizabeth Paterson

From: PATTI ANN JAJLIARDO [jajliardo@sbcglobal.net] **Sent:** Mon 2/28/2011 1:14 PM
To: Town Council
Cc:
Subject: one school option
Attachments:

I am strongly opposed to the one school option. Don't ruin the quality school system that Mansfield has.

Patti Jajliardo
Independent Avon Representative
www.youravon.com/pjajliardo
(860)429-2166

School options

From: **blair.t.johnson@gmail.com** on behalf of **Blair T. Johnson** (blair.t.johnson@uconn.edu)
Sent: Tue 2/22/11 11:15 PM
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to express **my opposition** to the one-school option currently proposed to replace the current 3-school system in place for elementary students in our town. **Smaller is better, especially as concerns younger students.**

Sincerely yours,
Blair T. Johnson
20 Lynwood Rd
Storrs Mansfield CT 06268-2016

School Building Project: I Support Neighborhood Schools for Mansfield

From: **jordan42@charter.net**
Sent: Sun 7/11/10 10:22 PM
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org; PatersonE@mansfieldct.org; HaddadG@mansfieldct.org; DeniseKeane2009@gmail.com; PeterKochenburger@yahoo.com; LindseyM@mansfieldct.org; Morantt@earthlink.net; PaulhusCR@mansfieldct.org; bonbill@charter.net; Carl.Schaefer@uconn.edu

Dear Town Council Members,

As a Mansfield taxpayer, parent, and Goodwin Elementary School employee, I wish to express to you my strong support for at least two, centrally located neighborhood elementary schools for our town. I am strongly opposed to the one school option because I do not believe it makes sense financially or educationally. This is in agreement with the Board of Education's recommendation.

More specifically, I believe that any supposed state and federal funding for new school construction is not a sufficient reason to build one, or even two new schools at this point and time. The cost to maintain or demolish the current schools has not been factored in. There is also the Storrs Center project that has the potential to change our school enrollment or require redistricting. As a parent and employee who is in the schools on a regular basis, I feel our schools are in fine shape and, with some maintenance, should easily last several more years until the economic and demographic conditions are more appropriate for this decision to be made. There is no real reason to force this new building project through at this time.

Ideally, I support maintaining our three existing elementary schools for the next five to ten years.

Respectfully,

Carey Jordan
42 Moulton Road

Print Close

1 School vs 2 Schools

From: **JULIE KESSLER** (jkesslerconsulting@yahoo.com)
Sent: Mon 2/28/11 10:37 PM
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org

Dear Town Council,

My name is Julie Kessler and my husbands name is Eugene Kessler and we reside at 20 Buckingham Rd in Mansfield, Ct. I have been a resident of Mansfield since 1978 and have had 3 children go through the mansfield public schools and always have been happy with the education in Mansfield. Even if the 1 school is less money you must consider the children first. I employ you not to consider the one school option. Having 2 schools would be the better choice. This town has always put education and what was best for the children first.. Clearly 2 schools are better than one. We are talking about young elementary children who undoubtedly will get lost in the shuffle in one school. Lets not change the quality of education and whats' in in their best interest.Lets not sacrifice them. PLEASE take this into consideration.

Respectfully,

Eugene and Julie Kessler

Elizabeth Paterson

From: jsmagnuson@gmail.com on behalf of Jim Magnuson **Sent:** Mon 2/28/2011 9:31 AM
To: Town Council
Cc:
Subject: Opposed to 1-school plan
Attachments:

To the council:

I am deeply opposed to the one-school building plan for the following reasons.

1. It will damage education. The school board presented research showing that the optimum size for an elementary school is not more than about 500 students. What we have now is excellent and unusual. The two school plan will be moderately worse, but the 1-school plan will have many deleterious effects. There are many Mansfield parents who are researchers at local universities with research in just this area. It would be quite sensible for the council to commission a quick report from, e.g., the school of education at UConn. The research that has been presented at school board meetings showing some advantages for larger schools was actually done with high school students, not elementary students.

2. Damaging education means damaging the Mansfield housing market. Modest savings now will have deleterious effects for generations. If you ask people why they move to Mansfield, the number one reason is the school system. Decreasing the quality of elementary education will weaken the housing market.

3. The schools we have now are jewels. My daughters attend Southeast. The small size means every single adult working there knows virtually every kid's name. The kind of attention kids get, and the speed with which academic and emotional problems are detected, is incredible. This will not be true in a school 3 times the size, no matter how well-intentioned the staff are.

I know that you, the school board, and the school board's building committee have worked hard on these issues for a long time. But Mansfield residents are going to be unpleasantly surprised if the 1-school plan is selected. Hundreds of parents and other interested citizens showed up at school board meetings over the last year, and many of us thought that the 2-school solution had been settled on as a compromise at the school board level -- most parents and others strongly support the 3-school plan -- and assumed the council would follow that advice. I think many people are not aware that the council is considering the 1-school option. If the 1-school plan is adopted, you can expect very strong opposition to the referendum.

Sincerely,

Jim Magnuson, Wormwood Hill Road

School Building Project

From: **Mayer, Anysia** (anysia.mayer@uconn.edu)
Sent: Wed 2/23/11 9:31 PM
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org (TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org)

Dear Council Members:

While I deeply respect your position and commitment to leading this town, I must state that I am strongly opposed to the "one-school" option. The students of this community will not be well served if this is option is adopted.

I advise superintendents across the state of Connecticut and would be happy to present the educational research in support of small schools to town council members.

There is in fact little research to suggest small class size positively impacts learning. However, there is substantial research to suggest large schools negatively impact students' learning and are not conducive to a positive working environment for teachers.

I believe there are multiple policy options and additional funding streams that have not yet been explored because we have focused our discussion thus far only on "buildings" rather than the school system in its entirety.

I also believe that the district and town underestimate the powerful positive impact Mansfield parents could bring to the discussions and solutions if they were included as legitimate partners in the decision making process. This could be accomplished through the creation of a parent committee to advise both the town council and the school board.

Respectfully,

Anysia P. Mayer
Assistant Professor
Educational Leadership
Neag School of Education
University of Connecticut

@ 46 Beacon Hill Drive
Vinton School Parent

Elizabeth Paterson

From: miaangela@aol.com [miaangela@aol.com] **Sent:** Mon 2/28/2011 10:26 AM
To: Town Council
Cc:
Subject: School Building Project
Attachments:

Hello Council Members,

As you are nearing a vote on the school building initiative, I wanted to let you know that I am opposed to the single-school option. In moving to Connecticut two years ago, we chose Mansfield as the best place to raise our family primarily due to the small schools and excellent reputation of its schools. Our two boys are doing well and enjoy school immensely, although the younger one (grade 2) had a difficult time at first. I believe that a larger school would have been an even more difficult experience for him, and other young children intimidated by a large school population.

Being an educator at large urban high schools, first at Wilson Classical High School in Long Beach, California, and now at Manchester High School, I see that large schools can be an advantage in terms of the diversity of courses and extracurricular activities. However, I do not believe these same advantages exist for our younger children. We have been so pleased with the education and experience that our boys are receiving at Southeast, and are eager to see our older son (grade 4) make the transition to Mansfield Middle School next year. He is both excited and nervous about moving to a "bigger school", but I believe this is the appropriate time in his development for this transition. Please consider this as you are casting your votes tomorrow.

Thank you for all you do,
Mia Mitoma
18 Pinewoods Lane

Opposed to the one school plan

From: **Emily Myers** (emilybmyers@gmail.com)
Sent: Wed 2/23/11 8:39 AM
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org

Respected City Council Members,

When our daughter began Kindergarten at Annie Vinton last Fall, we walked through the halls behind the principal, Dr. Palmer, listening to him greet each and every child by his or her name. From talking to other parents at the school, we came to find out that school administrators are keenly aware of the challenges each child faces–which child's mother was just laid off, which child has a new sibling at home, which child comes from a tough family situation--and offer help to those in need. This kind of model would simply be impossible under the one mega-school plan.

Mansfield has a history of choosing what's best for our children over the most 'economical' route. That's why I write **in opposition to the one-school plan**.

Sincerely,
Emily Myers
19 Shady Lane
Storrs Mansfield, CT 06268

school

From: **Ronald Nadeau** (ron.nadeau@sbcglobal.net)
Sent: Thu 2/24/11 1:21 PM
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org

I am in favor of the one school option. I am very concerned that the reduction in the amount of reimbursement from the state will significantly increase my property taxes. I also support this option because I am not convinced that students will be adversely impacted. My grandson currently attends Birch Heights in Tolland where all grades K-2 are grouped together in one school and he is thriving. The current fiscal climate is a huge factor in this decision. We certainly don't want more families leaving Mansfield because of higher taxes .I'm a retired secondary school teacher and I favor the one school option because it will offer more curriculum flexibility. Buildings don't teach children teachers do .

Sandra Nadeau

1 or 3 Schools

From: **Robin OBrien** (obrienrobin@hotmail.com)
Sent: Wed 2/23/11 7:22 PM
To: towncouncil@mansfieldct.org

I am opposed to the idea of one elementary school in our growing town. I am a "graduate" of Southeast Elementary and have very fond memories of my experiences there. I have returned to Mansfield to raise my own children so they may have the same stellar academic experiences I had. Both my children are at Vinton and we love it. By combining schools into one giant school (or even 2) the quality of education will be diluted. I strongly believe that the overall experience will not be as wonderful for our kids as it is now. I hope you will recognize the kind of comfort and confidence we parents have with all three elementary schools. These things are essential for elementary school families. These things cannot be accomplished with one (or even 2) large school(s).

Thank you for your consideration;

Robin O'Brien

Elizabeth Paterson

From: Jeannette Picard [jeannettepicard@sbcglobal.net] **Sent:** Mon 2/28/2011 7:17 AM
To: Town Council
Cc:
Subject:
Attachments:

Dear Town Council Members:

After years of planning and discussion, the fate and direction of public education in Mansfield will be determined when you vote on the proposed school building project. From renovation of three existing elementary schools, to the building of one large elementary school, to the creation of two elementary schools, the project has taken many forms. However, the last proposal, the one recommended by the Board of Education, deserves your most serious consideration.

- The two school project maintains the smaller learning communities which have been so successful in our town and which research are shown are the most beneficial to younger students
- The two school proposal allows for cost savings in both construction costs and service delivery. The Board of Education has worked hard to trim costs from the two school proposal to meet the needs of taxpayers. Furthermore, recent research has shown that funds spent on education are regained in increased property values.
- The move to one large school would tie our hands if student populations were to increase in the future and our town would find itself with no recourse but to further increase the warehousing our youngest students.

As you make your final decision, I hope that you, as members of the Town Council, will remember their commitment to *all* citizens of our town, even those community members who are too young to speak for themselves. Although a prior commitment (ironically to work with students at the other end of the educational spectrum) does not allow me to attend tonight's meeting, I will be with you in spirit and appreciate your service to our town. Please remember that your decision does not just affect us today, but will have a great affect on the future of our town for years to come.

Sincerely,

Jeannette Picard

Elizabeth Paterson

From: mrubega@sbcglobal.net [mrubega@sbcglobal.net] **Sent:** Tue 3/1/2011 8:42 AM
To: Town Council
Cc:
Subject: OPPOSED to one school option
Attachments:

Dear Council members,

I write to voice my strong opposition to the one-school option for update/renovation of our elementary schools. While I recognize that costs, and the effect of the state's fiscal crisis must be taken seriously by the town, I urge you to remember that any apparent savings of the one school option will be offset by the drop in educational quality, and the attendant reduction in property values, over the long term. A great many people on and off the school board's building committee have invested a great deal of time and energy thinking about what the best investment in school building would be: now is not the time to second guess them. Voting to put the one school referendum up to a vote is voting to bring out the core group of parents and residents who have tracked this issue carefully as committed opposition to such a referendum passing. I respectfully urge you to vote for the two school option.

sincerely,

Margaret Rubega
470 South Eagleville Rd
Stores

Sent from my iPad

Print Close

Re: School Building Public Hearing

From: **Jay Rueckl** (jay.rueckl@gmail.com)
Sent: Mon 2/28/11 3:33 PM
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org

To the Town Council:

The following comments pertain to the school building project.

First, I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for your willingness to take on the burden of responsibility for this decision. This is surely the most difficult issue that has confronted the Council in years, and I expect that it will be a gut-wrenching decision for many of you.

Second, I understand that part of your challenge is to balance the needs of the school system with other town needs—a balancing act that is made more difficult by uncertainty about the economic future of our town and state, our heavy reliance on funding from the state, and the impending costs of other major town projects, including the Four Corners project, the need to address future water demands, the desire for an improved Senior Center, the need for an assisted-living facility, and so on.

To me, these projects fall into two categories. On the one hand are

projects generally geared towards improving the quality of life of Mansfield residents—projects such as improving the Senior Center, open space purchases, the building of bike paths and so on. Here it is a question of priorities, and while I am generally supportive of these efforts, I believe addressing the needs of the school system should be our top priority. It is an American tradition, if not a human one, to make sacrifices for the sake of our children, and I believe this tradition reflects the values of the majority of town residents. It certainly reflects mine.

The second category includes projects like the Four Corners project, securing a new water supply, and building the downtown. These are primarily investments for the town, aimed at growing the Grand List and reducing our reliance on state funding. Because these projects have the potential of generating new tax revenues, they are not necessarily in direct conflict with the school building project. However, it is worth noting that one consequence of these projects would be to grow the town, and hence to increase the demands on the school system. Thus, because it provides the least capacity and flexibility to deal with future enrollment increases, the one-school option is, of the school building options under consideration, the least compatible with investments intended to increase the tax base.

Third, I'd like to comment on the decision-making process. I think it was sensible to divide the process in three stages. The School Building Committee, the Board of Education, and the Town Council each have different responsibilities and concerns, and the three-stage process was an efficient way to ensure that all possibilities were identified, and that the educational, fiscal, and other impacts of each option were fully considered. That being said, one drawback of this organization is that the discussion of educational impact was mostly compartmentalized to the initial stages. The discussion recently has focused primarily (not

exclusively, but largely) on the question of affordability. Many of the lessons from the evidence concerning the educational impact of each option seem to have been lost.

Thus, while I don't question the legitimacy of bringing the one-school option to referendum, as discussed at the Feb. 22 Council meeting, I do question its wisdom. I believe the BOE's recommendation of the two-school plan was an implicit rejection of the one-school option. The BOE's deliberations, including the many statements by education professionals and town residents at various public meetings, revealed the unpopularity of the one-school plan among a large segment of the town's population. More importantly, the evidence brought to light during these meetings strongly supports the conclusion that, although there are some educational benefits associated with building one large elementary school, the net impact would be to lower the quality of the education our school system provides. In this light, the endorsement of the one-school option by the Council (as would be implied by bringing it to referendum) would not be balancing fiscal and educational concerns; it would be substituting the one for the other. This would be a mistake. In making your decision, I urge you to follow Hippocrates: First, do no harm. Especially to our schools.

Finally, I'd like to suggest a course of action, which is predicated on the following: First, I assume that a majority of you would find some version of the two-school plan viable given the current reimbursement rates. (Having followed your deliberations for the last five or six months, I think this is a fair assumption.) Second, I assume the two-school option is the best choice from a purely educational perspective, as attested by the BOE's recommendation. Third, because some time would be needed to prepare the town's application to meet the state's June deadline, and because the town's bond attorneys and other offices require a comparable

amount of time to prepare a referendum, a decision on which path to take must be made soon and any referendum must be held in late April or early May. Fourth, notice of the referendum need not occur this rapidly—late March or early April would be soon enough to satisfy statutory obligations given these target dates. Fifth, even if a referendum is approved, the town would not be obligated to bond at all—this would require further action on the part of the Council. Sixth, we don't know if the reimbursement rate will change, nor do we know when we'll know.

Given all this, I urge you to vote now to authorize the preparation of a referendum for bonding the two-school plan contingent on the current reimbursement rate, and that you delay formally voting to hold this referendum until required by statute given the target date. Making the referendum contingent on the current rate would give the voters some certainly about the potential impact of their votes. Delaying the formal notice would give you more time to fully inform the voters about the complex issues involved. If the reimbursement rate were lowered before notice is given, the referendum would be moot and need not be scheduled. If the reimbursement rate were lowered after notice is given, the town would not be obligated to bond—indeed, it wouldn't have the voters' consent to do so. If the referendum fails, or if the reimbursement rate drops, you could begin work on another course of action, which might include a plan for limited- or large-scale renovations of our current buildings, the development of more concrete ideas about the repurposing of these buildings in the event that new schools are built, and the development of a long-term plan that sets a timetable for the school building project in the context of other major capital investments.

I might add that while the preparation of the referendum could impose a cost on the town, there would be an opportunity cost to not being prepared to go forward with the best plan if the reimbursement rate does not

change. Finally, it is no accident that the odious one-school option has no place in my suggested course of action. It is the wrong choice for our town, and I urge you to take it off the table.

Sincerely,

Jay Rueckl

128 South Eagleville Road

Elizabeth Paterson

From: rerumbo@aol.com [rerumbo@aol.com] **Sent:** Wed 2/23/2011 11:09 PM
To: Town Council
Cc:
Subject: One-school option
Attachments:

Dear Council Members,

As the parent of a child who has been in the Mansfield schools throughout his education (now in E. O. Smith), I am STRONGLY opposed to the one-school option.

The only argument in favor of such an option is economic, but it is a short-sighted, end-justifies-the-means kind of economics that does not improve education or our community.

The truth is that "one-school" is bogus pedagogically; it is only the adoration of the almighty dollar that is sexy here. I prefer a well-educated populace to a cheap excuse for education. For once, let our tax dollars go to something worthwhile. We don't need fewer teachers and more crowded students; we need as many good teachers as we can afford, and smaller communities in which students can learn and thrive.

Rebecca E. Rumbo, Ph.D.
209 Davis Road
Storrs

One School Option

From: **kenneth smith** (kennethsmith0926sa@sbcglobal.net)
Sent: Thu 2/24/11 5:36 AM
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org
Cc: kennethsmith0926sa@sbcglobal.net

Dear Council Members,

As a parent, taxpayer, teacher, and volunteer for the Mansfield Schools, I must strongly oppose the one-school option for our elementary schools. Research continues to show the benefits of community schools such as we have now. My experience supports this.

Please do not jeopardize the success of our students!

Sincerely,

Theresa Smith
319 Woodland Road
Storrs, CT 06268

elementary schools in Mansfield

From: **Spottiswoode, Heather** (heather.spottiswoode@uconn.edu)
Sent: Mon 7/12/10 11:29 AM
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org (TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org); PatersonE@mansfieldct.org (PatersonE@mansfieldct.org); HaddadG@mansfieldct.org (HaddadG@mansfieldct.org); DeniseKeane2009@gmail.com (DeniseKeane2009@gmail.com); PeterKochenburger@yahoo.com (PeterKochenburger@yahoo.com); LindseyM@mansfieldct.org (LindseyM@mansfieldct.org); Morantt@earthlink.net (Morantt@earthlink.net); PaulhusCR@mansfieldct.org (PaulhusCR@mansfieldct.org); bonbill@charter.net (bonbill@charter.net); Schaefer, Carl (carl.schaefer@uconn.edu)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My husband, Michael and I are the parents of a daughter who just completed 5 incredible years at Southeast School and a son who is entering 1st grade but has been at Southeast since he was 3. We do not favor one or even two schools and feel that one of the things that sets Mansfield apart from so many other towns is its strong educational opportunities. Friends and family from other districts and states have always marveled over the small class sizes and the closeness of the school communities and it's something that we have always considered our children fortunate to be a part of. We moved to Mansfield largely for this reason when our daughter was 3.

We would very much like to see the 3 schools remain – it's a wonderful, unique system and it certainly isn't broke and doesn't need fixing.

Respectfully,

Heather Spottiswoode

Heather L. Spottiswoode
Program Manager, UCONN Mentor Connection
2131 Hillside Road, Unit 3007
Storrs, CT 06269-3007
860-486-0283
860-486-2900 fax
www.gifted.uconn.edu/mentor