From "Jeff Lesser <jefflesser@gmail.com>" <jefflesser@gmail.com>
Subject **{BVS Board} In Support of Whittier International Elementary School**
To "bvs.board@bvsd.org" <bvs.board@bvsd.org>
Date March 31, 2026 9:31:54 PM MDT

Dear Members of the BVSD Board of Education,

I am writing as a Boulder native, a Whittier neighborhood homeowner, and a parent of two children who will hopefully attend Whittier International Elementary School. I am deeply concerned by the possibility that Whittier could be closed as part of the district's consolidation process, and I want to make the case for why keeping Whittier open is the right decision for our students, our community, and our district.

When I bought my home in the Whittier neighborhood in 2014, one of the things that drew me to the neighborhood was that the school was at the heart of it. I dreamed of walking my kids to school and watching them walk through the doors with that classic schoolhouse aesthetic. Whittier is not just a school; it is a cornerstone of why I chose to plant roots where I did.

My wife and I want to give our kids a deep cultural education where they can learn to be empathetic and critical thinkers. If Whittier closes, we lose the only IB Primary Years Program school in all of BVSD. The global community that is drawn to Whittier because of the IB programming is another educational asset that will be hard to replicate should we lose the IB programming with a Whittier closing.

Whittier is also where BVSD serves some of Boulder's most vulnerable families. Its designation as a Family Resource School means it carries support services that exist nowhere else in the district for those families. These are parents and kids who have fewer alternatives and less ability to absorb disruption. Closing Whittier eliminates the school built to serve them.

And then there is the building itself. Built in 1882, Whittier is a designated Historic Landmark and Colorado's oldest continuously operating school. That is a point of civic pride, and also a practical constraint. Landmark designation makes repurposing the building genuinely difficult and expensive. The board should weigh not only what it costs to keep Whittier open, but what it will cost, financially and reputationally, to close a 140-year-old landmark that the community has treasured for generations.

I understand the district is facing real fiscal pressure, and I respect the difficulty of these decisions. But I urge the board to weigh the full cost: the loss of a one-of-a-kind program, the displacement of Boulder's most vulnerable student families, and the burden of stewarding a historic building with no easy next chapter.

Please keep Whittier International Elementary School open.

Sincerely,
Jeff Lesser
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