



Amanda Sawyer
COUNCILWOMAN, DISTRICT 5

City and County of Denver
CITY COUNCIL
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November 6, 2022

Denver Public Schools Board of Education
(via email)

Re: Palmer Elementary/Montclair School Proposed Consolidation

Dear DPS Board Members:

Thank you for all that you do! I know what a difficult job you have and truly appreciate your work on behalf of the students and families of Denver. I am writing today to urge you to reconsider DPS's recommendation to consolidate Palmer Elementary School and Montclair School of Academics & Enrichment.

I believe that consolidating these schools is a mistake because of the safety issues that will be created by requiring young children to cross Monaco Pkwy. So that you can better understand my concerns, let me explain the infrastructure that surrounds these two schools: Palmer is to the west of Monaco Pkwy., and Montclair is to the east. Monaco Parkway is a four-lane road that is designated as an emergency route. It is a main thoroughfare for emergency vehicles that use very high speeds and sirens/flashing lights numerous times per day. We see high vehicle speeds resulting in major accidents along the stretch of Monaco from 6th Ave. to East Colfax Ave. – exactly where students would be crossing Monaco to access Montclair.

Unfortunately, there are no options for traffic calming measures other than stop lights on Monaco. Adding or updating stop lights will cost several million dollars and take several years to install. Monaco is also one of Denver's Historic Parkways, which means that there are almost no sidewalk connections along this corridor, or on the adjacent local streets. In order to add sidewalks, several City agencies would have to agree to grant a variance (which they rarely do), and it would take millions of dollars – which the City has not budgeted or planned for. It would also take several years to design and install them.

Given the infrastructure challenges presented by Monaco Pkwy., students would need to be bussed or driven from the west side of Monaco to the east side, which would change the fabric of the Mayfair neighborhood and is not in line with our climate goals. Many students walk or bike to Palmer Elementary, and the playground is a social gathering place for neighborhood families when school lets out. Consolidating the schools would destroy this community-building opportunity. In order to access Montclair without a car, DPS would need to staff two crossing guards (one for the west two lanes and one for the east two lanes) at several different intersections along Monaco. DPS doesn't have the staffing or funding available to do this. Families will have to drive or take the bus, which will raise our local emissions.

My office has received numerous calls and emails protesting this recommendation and I stand with the parents, students, and residents in their opposition. I ask you to vote no to consolidate these schools. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Councilwoman Amanda Sawyer
Denver City Council District 5