

Good evening.

My name is Elizabeth Jannasch. My husband Hans and I are founding members of the Neighborhood and Schools Collaborative. The NSC is a working partnership with neighbors, their schools and school board leadership who share a commitment to "facilitate direct communication and collaboration for the well-being of our collective community." We thus welcome you to our first NSC public information outreach meeting.

The importance of effective communication between us, has never been more critical for our students. With post-pandemic stresses and increasing numbers of homeless youth seeking support in our schools, our young people are experiencing increasingly greater challenges accessing a robust and progressive education.

Therefore, this evening we invite you to join us in working together to help our students. Thank you.

I'm Hans Jannasch and Elizabeth and I along with Tom and the board members with us tonight, are trying to re-establish communications between the school district and neighborhood residents.

As a bit of background, we both came from school districts where the schools have incredible relationships with the communities they serve. I came from Falmouth, MA, where several years ago the whole town came together to design and build their middle school an amazing new playground that everyone is proud of. Last year we went to Elizabeth's 50th high school reunion up in Eureka and were impressed by the community support that equipped a full auto maintenance and welding shop that is now so successful that most school vehicles are maintained by students. We believe we can and should be able to bring our community and schools together so students can have the best learning opportunities that we all can contribute to.

As most of you know, we voted in favor of measures P and I to rebuild our aging schools. One result is this amazing science wing we are now enjoying. Soon after Measure I was passed, a flyer was mailed to residents with information that a field project would soon begin for the high school, including a new weight room, building out the lower field and adding permanent lights, bleachers and press box to the upper field. This caught many residents off guard! So, Tom Newton and I quickly arranged an outreach meeting for residents on a Thursday afternoon for the following morning. With only a single notice on Nextdoor.com, over 50 folks came. There were many questions about the priority and cost of this project. The meeting became contentious and ended with many unanswered questions. That was August 2019, four years ago! After that meeting, many residents reached out to ask questions at board meetings, through letters, and even talking directly to school officials, but ... no further public outreach meetings were granted for discussing and addressing the residents' concerns.

The rest is history: the shutdown of communications left residents feeling frustrated, which led to lawsuits. As we continue down this road, it appears that two fractured sides have formed that don't seem to be able to discuss the issues outside of court. As a result, our Measure I tax dollars meant for the High School are not going to students.

This is why in 2021 we started working together with Tom Newton and Beth Wodecki, to create the Neighborhood and Schools Collaborative with the goal of rekindling collaborative relationships with the district and try to break the 'logjam' of questions and get back to

respectfully discussing the issues at hand. You can read our Mission Statement and what we've done online on the MVNA website. Our first success, thanks to everyone involved, was to modernize the MHS night lighting to downward facing and motion activated lights to comply with City Code and reduce nighttime light pollution for the nearby neighbors.

This year several board members joined the NSC and now, after trying to re-establish communications between the school district and residents, we have our first Public Outreach Meeting tonight on the MHS Field Project - over four years after the last one.

*Our goal this evening is NOT to debate which side is right, but to listen and learn, think outside the box, and get your questions answered, so we can all come **together again** and start working towards supporting all our students, and by setting the best example for them that we can. And so, in a spirit of collaboration, we ask everyone tonight to please be civil, courteous, and respectful.*

After this introduction, we welcome:

- First, each school board member working as part of the NSC to introduce themselves and say a few words about why they're on the board,*
- Followed by Superintendent PK Diffenbaugh and his presentation of the project,*
- Followed by questions sent in from residents, Zoom, and from those of you here today, and*
- **Lastly, we want to open the floor to share and discuss ideas to improve communications with the neighborhood and change the status quo for everyone's benefit.***

Thank you.