January 18, 2012

Dear Lansing School District Trustee,

I have been watching the Lansing School District and the issue of closing of either Sexton High School or Eastern High School. I support Sexton staying open. I have no issue with being in favor of one high school over the other, as long as the best interests of all kids are served. My real problem is this: The Lansing School District is failing because leadership is failing to take action before a problem is completely out of control.

The Lansing School District cannot fund keeping three high schools open. The only reasonable choice is to keep Everett High School open and one more. I favor Sexton High School staying open because:

1. Sexton has room to absorb students better than Eastern.
2. Sexton has a nighttime football stadium and track, same as Everett.
3. Sexton is a more structurally sound building and not as old as Eastern.
4. The new charter school laws are going to draw more students away from the district if it keeps fighting over right-sizing or redistricting.
5. Sexton has met AYP.
6. Sexton has produced Gates Scholarship recipients with its magnet program.
7. Of the two properties, Sexton has the least resale value or interest.
8. The District has ignored earlier reports to build a new high school and instead built Patengill Middle School.
9. Sexton is a true neighborhood school. It’s closing would devastate the Westside Neighborhood.
10. Delaying the decision for one year will allow the Board to hire a superintendent that will lead the process.

You, a trustee of this school district have the task of hiring a new superintendent and balancing the budget for the next school year. Do those items first.

In the last 15 years, the Board has ignored the call to close a high school despite the recommendations of the first community task force led by former Mayor Hollister. I expect much better results from this board.

Vote to right-size the Lansing School District. Close Eastern High School.

Sincerely,