LETTERS

District gives Perry MS the short end of the stick

To the Editor:

As I read Pamela Willis' article in the Aug. 29 edition of the *Worthington News*, I felt duped. "Enrollment 'bouncing back;' district surprised, pleased."

Why were they surprised?

Perry Middle School parents told board members last year; the same parents who have children in overcrowded elementary school classrooms. But, they didn't listen and proceeded to disrupt our community, our children's lives, learning environment and opportunities based on dwindling enrollment figures that are not actually dwindling.

The Phoenix School is the board's solution to a perceived impending enrollment crisis. The experimental school moved into half of Perry Middle School and our school sports were combined with McCord Middle School. Presumably, Phoenix will eventually need the whole building, and Perry will be no more.

Due to "declining enrollment," teachers who made Perry Middle School a blue ribbon school and the district's best kept secret, now teach Phoenix students, not my kids.

We are Worthington Wolves now, not Perry Panthers. We share the number of positions available on our sports teams with McCord, thus half as many of our students will have the opportunity to participate, and Worthington Kilbourne High School sports will suffer just one feeder school of developed athletes vying for their varsity teams.

Assistant Superintendent Paul Cynkar said, "It's still clear that the enrollment decline we saw over the past years is bouncing back." Mr. Cynkar, it's been clear all along. Worthington has district imbalance, causing Perry Middle School to come up short.

We need to balance out enrollment and (thoughtfully) draw a different line. There are homeowners with a view of Perry Middle School from their backyards who are assigned to Kilbourne Middle School three miles away.

I had wanted all my children to experience Perry Middle School the way it was. The building isn't pretty on the outside, but the things going on inside more than made up for the aesthetic issues. Last week, I saw them selling leftover Perry Panther apparel. Naturally, it wasn't flying out the door. You'd have to give it away. Even then, why would anyone wear maroon and gold?

The school board's short-sighted decision has needlessly eroded our identity, school spirit and neighborhood pride. Here's an idea. Put your Phoenix School in the rented out Sutter Park building and leave Perry alone.

Kelley Dahn

State's grading process is expensive and confusing

To the Editor:

Given the absurdity of Worthington's official rating as a "Continuous improvement" school district, I have come to doubt the validity of assessment tools being used to compile the state report card data and the relevance of the conclusions drawn from that data. I don't believe parents can use the state report card to make informed decisions about their child's education or that state government should set policy in reliance upon them.

For example, are you confused like me about how all of Worthington's separate school buildings can be identified as "Excellent" or "Effective" and collectively that adds up to a "Continuous improvement" rating for the district? Do you believe that Worthington Schools are comparable to and appropriately grouped with the other Central Ohio school districts labeled as "Continuous improvement?" Do you agree that the performance of a subgroup of a dozen or so eighth graders on a dozen questions on a social studies exam should rule the fate of the Worthington School District? Do you think multiple-choice testing is the best way to assess the quality of learning going on in our schools? I do not.

I know Worthington Schools are excellent not because there is a blue sign in front of my child's school or some outside state agency says so. I know that our schools are excellent because my son is excited to go to school, loves his teacher, tells me about all of the wonderful things he is doing in class and reads to me at night. My wife and I hold Worthington Schools accountable by becoming actively involved in my son's education. We communicate with his teacher and principal about his particular needs and they are responsive to our concerns.

As a school community we are expending a tremendous amount of effort and resources preparing for tests, taking tests and compiling data to put together state report cards that contain conflicting and confusing conclusions. This accountability process is not something I have demanded as a parent and I find the end product remarkably unhelpful. We need to reassess the real costs and benefits of this regime, both in dollars and educational achievement and decide whether current policy is an effective way to improve our schools.

Geoffrey P. Scott
Worthington School Board Candidate

Solar energy not a cost-saving option for schools

To the Editor:

Before we spend too much time and money examining photovoltaics, or PV, for powering our schools, and with all due respect to those who would like to consider it further, the economics of PV systems are already well-defined.

In its 2007 report, for example, U.S. Department of Energy's Solar Advisor Model estimates the 2007-2011 cost for commercial-scale PV power in Phoenix at 15 to 22 cents per kilowatt-hour (levelized over project life). For the cloudier climes of Central Ohio, comparable costs would be 25 to 40 cents per kilowatt-hour. By contrast, Central Ohio power is made for less than 4 cents per kilowatt-hour, and is delivered to my house for about 8 cents.

Very possibly, there are federal or state subsidies available to shift some cost to other tax pockets (still, we pay taxes for those pockets as well). Solar energy for electricity is not a cost-savings option with current technologies.

If the goal is for schools to use renewable power, renewable credits can be purchased – the current price is under 2 cents per kilowatt-hour, quite a bit cheaper than the incremental cost of solar power. Just a little tongue in cheek - how much power would we save if night sports were moved to Saturday mornings? For those who are interested, the Solar Advisor Model is available for free from Department of Energy.

Ted Thomas

beyond aesthetics
AN INNOVATIVE SKIN CARE CENTER

CROWN KIA OF DUBLIN
KIA Total Protection Package