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November 13, 2023

Board of Education
Mesa County Valley School District #51
2115 Grand Avenue
Grand Junction, CO 81501

Re: Concerns Regarding Proposed School Boundary Changes and Long-Term Planning

Honorable School Board Members,

On behalf of the Fruita City Council, I would like to express our gratitude for the longstanding partnership between our city and School District #51. Our collaboration has played a pivotal role in fostering a thriving educational environment for our residents.

The City of Fruita is proud to be a pro-planning community that diligently employs land use best practices. Our commitment to planning is evident in the recent update of our Comprehensive Plan and subsequent master plans, which involved the engagement of over 4,000 residents in a year-long process. We value community engagement and use sophisticated, statistically valid survey results to inform our decisions that significantly impact residents. Additionally, the City of Fruita collects \$920 in school land dedication fees per housing unit developed within our boundaries, demonstrating our dedication to supporting our schools.

We appreciate the positive collaboration with School District #51, and it is in this spirit of partnership that we wish to express our concerns regarding the proposed boundary changes affecting Wingate Elementary and Appleton Elementary, particularly the shift from FMHS to GJHS. Our concerns stem from the perceived lack of public engagement in the decision-making process.

As recently as the Spring of 2023, Fruita residents were invited by the District to engage in meetings and surveys related to grade reconfiguration of Fruita schools. Participation was not high in numbers with the short notice provided for the meetings; however, these discussions and survey questions tied Fruita grade reconfiguration to the need of voter-approved funding to expand FMHS to accommodate grades 9-12. Approximately six months later, the Wingate and Appleton boundary change is proposed with a possible Board decision November 14th raising our concerns on timing, rationale, and potential negative impacts on FMHS and its community.

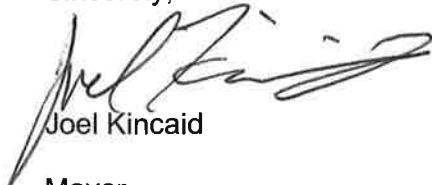
The District's engagement with families in the FMHS boundaries and staff impacted by this boundary change resulted in less than 60 responses. If community engagement was sought as a basis to consider for making the decision, then this low response is not enough.

The Council is concerned with how this boundary change will fully impact Fruita Monument High School in the future related to its culture, educational standing, extracurricular activities, sports, arts, staffing, and funding in addition to the families who will now travel further to GJHS than to FMHS.

The Fruita City Council requests a delay in the Board of Education's proposed Wingate and Appleton Elementary Schools FMHS boundary change until more community engagement and feedback has occurred, until the District Wide Facilities Master Plan is complete, and until more thorough information on other impacts such a boundary change will have on FMHS.

In conclusion, we value the collaboration between the City and the District. We realize the challenges facing the district with declining enrollment and funding. The Fruita City Council is dedicated to working together to ensure the continued success of our educational institutions and the well-being of our residents. Thank you for your attention to these matters. We look forward to a constructive dialogue and collaborative solutions that prioritize the best interests of our community.

Sincerely,



Joel Kincaid

Mayor