



**MILWAUKEE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Forest Home Avenue School
1516 W. Forest Home Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53204
173@milwaukee.k12.wi.us • (414) 902-6200
www5.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/school/foresthme/

Dear Alderman Perez and members of the Zoning, Neighborhoods and Development Committee,

I am the Principal at Forest Home Avenue School, the largest bilingual K-5 elementary school in the City with nearly 700 students. We also have the largest special education population in the area with over 25% of total enrollment identified for specialized services in one or more areas. Of that population and amongst the entire student body, we have a significant percentage of students who are medically fragile and require high levels of care. We have historically experienced higher student absence rates due to illness, lack of access to medical or mental health services based on transportation issues, or the frequency of appointments. This is a concern that we have campaigned to address every school year and work directly with families to address. Regular daily attendance is a priority for our students' overall academic and social growth and development, but will also have long-term impacts on the overall health and well-being of our broader community as well.

We are directly across the street from the site of the proposed pediatric clinic and support this project. The former library has been vacant for several years and is an eyesore in our neighborhood. We have witnessed the decline of the property that is now littered, dirty, and even partially boarded up. When we consider the services, programming, and support that we are offering to our families as a public elementary school, our reach can go only so far. We leverage the strong community partners that we currently have and proactively seek out others to fill the gaps. Healthcare and mental health services are critical areas of need that we do not have the full capacity to provide at the school level. The benefits of having the proposed pediatric clinic across the street from our school would extend exponentially to our staff, students, their families, our immediate neighborhoods, and ultimately the City of Milwaukee as a whole. These benefits and the possibilities of strengthening a future school-to-clinic relationship should be strongly considered. We would argue that the potential for positive long-term community impact outweighs the importance of the existing empty space that has been vacant, littered, and unused for years now.

When our children are healthy they can focus on attending school, there is less of a burden on parents, and our economy and community are both stronger. Having additional access to healthcare in our community would be welcomed.

Thank you,
Bradley Christensen
Principal, Forest Home Avenue School