



N-897 Anderson House Office Building
124 N Capitol Ave
Lansing, MI 48933
(517) 373-7557

Jennifer A. Conlin
Michigan House of Representatives
District 48

Committees
Military, Veterans and Homeland
Security – Chair
Education
Health Policy
Transportation

Dear Ann Arbor Board of Education Members,

I am writing to express my opposition and concerns for the proposed Thurston Elementary School expansion into the Thurston Nature Center. Please consider my full support for the preservation of the Thurston Nature Center.

The nature center is a historic community and global treasure as it is the birthplace of environmental education. Developed by Bill Stapp the global founder of environmental education, it has served as a vital landmark and nature area for the community for decades. The community has cared for and grown the nature center into what exists today, and their concerns should not be taken lightly.

The current proposal for the building of a new Thurston Elementary raises concerns, including student safety and loss of vital green spaces that contribute to our entire community's well-being. The values of this nature center cannot be replaced by mitigation or a new wetland. Access to preserved nature spaces is more important now than ever, given our changing climate and pressures on our mental health, especially children's mental health. I support the preservation of this green land, as well as the pursuit of historic landmark status for this space. I implore you to listen to the community to prioritize the long-term value of this land over the short-term logistics of reevaluating the current plan.

Please listen to the residents of the neighborhood and school. Their love and concern are based on an understanding and appreciation of what we stand to lose. Many have reached out to me to ask for assistance in ensuring the nature center is protected. Please listen to their concerns as we ask you to preserve the Thurston Nature Center.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and urge you to work together with the community to make the best choice for everyone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer A. Conlin".

Jennifer Conlin
State Representative
48th House District
(517) 373-7557 / JenniferConlin@house.mi.gov