

Letter to the Editor

Wood End School traffic

Dear Reading Residents,

Upon examination of the Wood End Elementary School traffic related regulations proposed for the August 9 Selectmen hearing, I see that children and their parents remain in grave danger if they are expected to navigate this existing plan to Wood End. The current proposals that prohibit stopping, standing, or parking on various streets during school hours will not alleviate the congestion and the danger from people attempting to drive their children to school along with the ever increasing commuter traffic on Franklin Street. The proposed plan placing a crossing guard at the end of Sunset Rock just below the rise in the road will place in jeopardy both the lives of the guard and those crossing the street.

Based upon faulty, inflated enrollment projections and approved without the requisite traffic study beyond Sunset and Roma Lane, the unnecessary Wood End School project has been flawed from day #1 and continues to reflect what happens when public projects progress behind closed doors. Last spring, "Walk to Wood End" on RCTV documented the frightening conditions encountered by pedestrians walking without sidewalks to and from the Wood End School. Yet, the Reading School Committee knowingly, willingly and voluntarily redistricted elementary children without consideration of safety. In my neighborhood, the School Committee mandates that children who previously safely walked to Birch Meadow must now attend Wood End, an edict that requires that these children to follow a precarious and dangerous route to school. Once again, the School Committee has made decisions in isolation that affect the entire community and expects the residents to compensate for the Committee's flawed thinking.

Reading school officials have known for seven years that traffic would be a problem; they unreasonably chose to work out the details in crisis. I suggest that the Selectmen take the responsibility to protect the public. The Selectmen can reduce the obvious chaos and danger inherent in the location of the school and surrounding streets by supporting public bus transportation of all Wood End elementary children residing on the streets along and including Franklin Street. No parent or child should die because of the foolish decisions that continue to be made in connection with this Wood End School project.

Kendra Cooper