

April 12, 2026

To Whom It May Concern,

We are a group of Willard Elementary parents writing in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of the Assistant Principal position for the 2026–2027 school year.

We understand that this decision stems from population and enrollment. We've been told the change is based on the "standardized district staffing structures". We are curious: what exactly is the structure, and if it is based on population, what is the enrollment qualification for an AP position? If there is a threshold, how far away is Willard's current and projected enrollment from that threshold? Given that Kindergarten registration is still underway, that 780+ students are being redistributed across the district, that school closings and further relocations remain possible, and that the late-in-the-year decision to *remove* our TWI program has yet to fully play out — the timing of this cut is deeply problematic. With enrollment likely to grow this year and next, possibly even hitting our target population as early as this summer, eliminating this position now only to rebuild it next year would be a costly and disruptive mistake.

More importantly, we have seen firsthand what our school looks like without an AP. The 2024–2025 school year showed us clearly; the difference this year has been *palpable*. The Assistant Principal role is not a luxury — it is essential to our students' wellbeing and the health of the Willard community.

AP Stacey Ernvall has created a remarkable cultural shift at Willard since joining us just this past fall. In that short time, she has championed screen-free indoor recess, secured snow gear so all students can play outside in inclement weather (an effort stalled for years), and revived school-wide clubs and community events that went dark during Covid — just a few of the many improvements she has helped drive forward for our kids. She is the living embodiment of "a rising tide lifts all boats."

When you speak of "student-facing positions," AP Ernvall defines the term. She knows every child by name. She is on the playground at the start and end of every school day. She welcomes students — especially the most vulnerable — into her office with open arms. She is inclusive, collaborative, passionate, and deeply invested in our community's long-term vision.

This is in no way a criticism of our amazing and exceptional Principal Battle, the backbone of Willard. It is, rather, a recognition that the principal team functions as exactly that — *a team*. Asking one person to carry the weight of two is not a sustainable solution, and our students will be the ones who suffer for it.

Our community is in a period of significant transition: absorbing new Kingsley students, navigating losses of the TWI program and the 5th Ward community, and those redistricted to Lincolnwood & Orrington. AP Ernvall has been central to this transitional work, ensuring affected families feel both welcomed and honored as change unfolds. To remove her presence at precisely this moment would be a serious blow to our community's stability. If anything, this transition demands more administrative support, not less.

We urge you to retain AP Ernvall's position at Willard for the 2026–2027 school year. Our students, our staff, and our community are counting on it. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned Willard Community

1-2. Anna Vogelzang & Andrew Young (incoming K & rising 3rd)

3-4. Hope and Mike Lassen (2nd & 5th grader)
5-6. Laura and Jarod Oliver (1st & 2nd grader)
7. Maggie Levi (Kinder)
8-9. Colleen & Jeff Barkley (incoming Kindergarten)
10-11. Karen & Will Grossett (K & 2nd grader)
12-13. Savanna Essig-Fox & Daron Pearce (1st grader)
14-15. Aana & Jeremy Leech (1st grader)
16-17. Saige & Joel Smith (1st grader & incoming Kindergartener)
18-19. Greer Beckman & Erildo Zyka (K & 2nd)
20. Abby Kritzler (incoming kindergartener, 1st grade, 4th grade)
21-22. Celia & Craig Carlino (4 grade TWI and PTA Co President at Willard)
23-24. Marissa and Jake Koppers, (4th and 1st graders)
25-26. Taylor Varco & Kevin Ruda (1st grader & future student)
27-28. Tara & Mitch Dudek (3rd & 1st grades)
29-30. Christina Cornier Mertz & David Mertz (1st grade and future student)
31. Andrea Camino (5th grade)
32-33. Heather Murphy and Jimmy Kim (5th graders)
34-35. Cristina and Neal Apostu (3rd and 5th graders)
36. Corinna Lugo (5th grade)
37. Joshua Tomlinson (1st and 2nd graders)
38-39. Courtney and Tom Burke (3rd and 5th graders)
40-41. Denise Goode and Noel Cunningham (3rd and 5th graders)
42-43. Meg and Chris Knapik (Kindergartener and 3rd grade)
44-45. Ana Lebron and Tristan Bertsche (2nd grade and 4th grade)
46-47. Maria Gallardo and Angel Quinones (3rd grade)
48-49. Joshua and Kate Moss (2nd grade and incoming kindergarten)
50-51. Whitney and Matt Fogelberg (current Kingsley/future Willard 5th and 2nd graders and kindergartener)
52-53. Abby and Scott Savidan (current Kingsley/future Willard 5th and 2nd grade and current Pre-K)
54-55. Emily & Mike Megall (3rd, kindergarten, & future student)
56. Erika Crowther (kindergarten)
57. Monica meza (2nd 3rd grade)
58. Stephanie Kukankos (2nd and two 4th graders)
59-60. Doug & Betsy Balkin (Kindergarten and 3rd Grade)
61. Melissa Velez-Luce (3rd grade)
62-63. Julie & Phil Yob (Kinder)
64-65. Catrina & Christopher Lawton (current Kingsley/future Willard 2nd grade)
66-67. Suzanne Stern & Frank Olson (1st Grader and future student)
68. Steven Luce (3rd grade)
69-70. Mike and Sarah Murray (1st grade, forced out TWI)
71. Bevin Seifert (3rd grade, current TWI)
72-73. Elyse Schauer & Minnie Sulis (current 1st grade)
74-75. Margaret Cramer & Marc Uible (current Kingsley/future Willard 2nd/3rd grader and future kindergartner)
76-77. Salena Becker (kindergarten and future kindergarten)
78. Alma Hernando (Kindergarten)
79-80. Stephanie lafrate and Mike Boll (1st grade, 3rd grade, and fifth grade)
81-82. Erin and Joe Hartmann (K and 4th)

83-84. Leanna & Zach Schneider (current Kingsley → Willard 1st grader, 2 incoming Willard students in 2029)

85-86. Cait & Jason Rechel (4 current Kingsley future to Willard students)

87-88. Kelsey and Andrew Critchell (current Willard 1st and 2nd grade)

89-90. Kelly and Sam Mack (current Willard 1st grade)

91-92. Sara Sirota and Aaron Lawee (current Willard kindergartener)

93-94. Katie Kline and Dave Wasserman (rising kindergartener)

95-96. Angelica & Bruce Williams (3rd grade TWI)

97-98. Emily and Sumanth Chittajallu (Current Kindergartener)

99-100. Jamie and Patrick Swartzner (current Kingsley and future Willard 4th and 1st graders)

101-102. Jennifer Marin and Ricardo Ayala (Kindergarten)

103. Lynette Stuhlmacher (Current Kindergartener, abandoned by TWI)

104. Dave Goldin (Current Kindergartener, abandoned by TWI)

105-106. Jamie Deutch Noll and Jacob Noll (1st Grade, 4th Grade, and Willard Alum 7th at Haven)

107-108. Matt Kolsky and Joey Harmon (current 1st grade, incoming kindergartner, both at Willard)

109-110. Ellie Maley and Cat Vielma (kindergarten)

111-112. Leah and Ben Haskin (2nd grade, 5th grade)

113. Andrew Pierson (2nd grade, 5th grade)

114-115. Nicole and Kevin Konsler (3rd grade, 2nd grade, incoming kindergartner)

116-117. Kenny and Holly Smith (current 3rd grader)

118-119. Miriam and Patrick Kendall (2nd & 3rd graders)

120-121. Tony Colaneri and Pam Souza (2nd & 4th graders)

122-123. Kinshasa and Charles Douyon (incoming kindergartner & 2nd grade)

124-125. Sara and Sasha Friedman (2nd grader (remaining at Willard) and transferring TWI 1st grader)

126-127. Liza and Jonathan Rivnay (current 4th grader and 2nd grader)

128-129. Allyson and Mike Leber (current 4th and 1st graders, incoming Kinder)

130-131. Bevitt and Darren Gibney (Mollie Gibney 2nd grader) (she eats lunch with Mollie several days and has made a strong connection)

132-133. Kara Foresman & Patrick Motherway (current 3rd grader and 1st grader)

134-135. Katy and Tim Haggerty (current 4th graders and Kindergartner)

136-137. Annie & Andris Lizenbergs (current 4th grader and two prior Willard students)

138-139. Anne and Russ Schoen (current 1st and 2nd graders)

140-141. Ashley Bryan and David Plotkin (second grader, Fall 2027 kindergartener)

142-143. Michele and Puamuh Ghogomu (5th grade)

144-145. Shira and Paul Cavalieri (5th grader at Kingsley, Fall 2027 Kindergartener)

146-147. Tracy and Justin Froelich (current 1st grader)

148-149. Andy & Amy Miner (current kindergarten and 4th grade, and one prior student)

150. Danielle Cohen (current K and 2nd graders in TWI, Willard TWI alum in 7th grade at Haven)

151. Yu Jin Gaydosh (current 2nd grader)

152-153. Karlee Johnson and Ben Stark (Anna Stark current 2nd grader)

154-155. Amy Hauenstein & Jason Gocek (current 2nd grader and one prior student)

156-157. Emily and Abe Ruben (current 1st grader and one prior student)