



*For Immediate Release*

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### **Briarlake Elem. PTA Votes to Oppose Cell Tower Siting at School**

#### ***Loss of 3600 square feet of educational space on small campus a major concern***

Decatur, GA – Briarlake Elementary School’s PTA adopted a formal resolution this week opposing the siting of a T-Mobile cell tower on its school grounds. The group sited major concerns with the negative impact of the 150 foot tower and its required 3600 square foot perimeter on the school’s outdoor educational spaces and safe access to the school.

“We simply do not have the space for a monumental expanse of our tiny school yard to be off limits to our children,” said Vanessa Erens, PTA co-President and parent of two Briarlake students. “Our parents, teachers, and students have invested significant time and resources to build a wonderful learning environment inside and outside of the school. We have a new playground, gardens, outdoor classroom and walking trails at Briarlake that our kids use every day, and this cell tower would take away that critical educational space from our children.”

The group is responding to the vote taken by the Dekalb County School Board of Education in July of this year to enter into a contract with T-Mobile allowing land to be leased for cell towers on several county schools, including Briarlake. The contract is to provide a one-time \$25K to the impacted school and an additional \$450K to the BOE over the term of the lease.

“The funds simply do not make up for the loss of critical space at our school,” says Sarah Cook, Erens co-president and a mother of 3 Briarlake students. “We understand that the Board of Education is trying to support cell coverage and financial needs in DeKalb County, but Briarlake would like to opt out as the costs outweigh any benefits to our children or our school,” continued Cook.

The group is asking for the Board of Education to revise the contract and for T-Mobile to remove Briarlake from the list of cell tower sites because of its limited space and the negative impact to the school yard. The group sites a provision in the contract that allows for alternative sites if the current site is not suitable.

The resolution states that "Based on the current information available, the Briarlake PTA adopts a motion to oppose the siting of the T- Mobile cell tower on Briarlake Elementary School grounds due to the lack of any suitable location that would not detrimentally impact the playgrounds, play fields, walking trails, wooded amphitheater, gardens, outdoor seating, outdoor classroom, limited parking, school building, natural spaces and safe access routes to the school and its surrounding educational spaces."