

Neighborhood School Committee Meeting

Wednesday, February 20, 2008

Voting Members Present: Eric Christianson, Rob Proce, Rebecca Voigt, Jose Guzman, Kathy Ludowise, Julie Ahern, Janelle Roth, Tanika Strawder, Ray Vukovich, Jonathan White, Norma Jensen, Carol Plizga, Zenaida Figueroa, Anita Hanna, Bill Anderson;
Absent: Nicole Fishman.

Others Present:, June Maguire, Brian Luosa, Dr. Donaldo Batiste, Bertha Campos, Janine Gruhn, Ruth Mendez, Lisa Draper, Judy Kapsala, Dave Fletcher, Katie Dudley, Lynn Kretlow, Jon Ashworth, Karen Bales, Bonnie Holisky, Alan Braun, John Buxton, Edna Vega, Dr. Mary Lamping, Jules Gaudin, Sarah Bankhead, Tom Vick, Marilyn Krajenta.

Eric Christianson introduced the members of the voting committee, ensuring that everyone has a say in what is going on. The voting committee is for the final vote and the process it will prepare for the board next year.

When going over the review process and the elementary capacities the following issues were brought up:

- Desegregation was a factor in creating cross-town boundaries
- Home schools are decided by an address book.
- The bilingual program was in very few schools but now has at least one class at each building. Addresses weren't added to each school uniformly
- There is a lack of capacity in the south side buildings trying to go back to neighborhood schools

Elementary Zones – First Student helped to layout neighborhoods. There is a dense population at the south side of our district, therefore small zones are numbered and the schools are marked with an X.

The hand outs explained what the difference is between the zones. It also explains the full size classrooms hold at least 25 students and spec ed class rooms hold at least 15 students but not 25. This counts every available classroom; music is on a cart, art is on a cart.

There are 2 major categories presented today: Grade configuration and magnet schools

The charts show what neighborhoods could be assigned to which schools. The amount of students that would have to be overcrowded is also listed – boundaries would need to be adjusted to have room in the schools or there would be overcrowding.

Today's plan is to hit some of the highlights, break up into groups, and discuss positive and negatives of each plan, then come back as a group for the voting committee to decide on 2 or 3 plans to investigate further.

Magnet Configuration:

- Oakdale area is quite large – but only has 249 children. McCall also has a large area and only has 266 children. Those two populations would fit into either school building.
- Page two takes magnet schools and puts them back into their home schools – still have overcrowding. Since we are trying to do one cause and effect at a time this scenario only has a grades 1-5 plan.
- Lyon Magnet is on the south side and the vast majority of their current population is from the south side. If we eliminate the Lyon magnet program, we would find that most of Lyon students would return as home school students.
- If we eliminate the magnet schools, the Carman population fills way beyond capacity, primarily from the Lyon draw.
- Relocate Lyon to Oakdale – arbitrary decision for which school, least number of kids in neighborhood – other children could go to neighborhood schools - McCall and Oakdale would fit in same building. It may be possible to do a science magnet at McCall if desired.
- Consistent problem is Hyde Park – Hyde Park West area has too many students for Hyde Park building. Park City does not have a nearby school, Washington and Glenwood are too full with immediate neighborhoods.
- If you take all the Hyde Park overflow and put it in North, it is overcrowded

Grade Configurations

- Grades K-5
 - (Kinder McCall 4 North 6 Cooke 4 sections which means ½ the class rooms)
 - Whittier has 25 classrooms
 - Space on the north side only
 - Adding Whittier gains 600 seats, but also adds 550 students for an overall gain of 50 seats.
- If you add 6th graders to 1-5 and have only two middle school buildings, you gain 1600 seats and 1300 students so you only gain 300 seats
- K-6 and add Abbott, Webster and Whittier you gain 2200 seats and 1850 students so you gain 350 seats.

- Another scenario would be to see how many children would actually be able to walk – how does that help your bussing?
- Middle schools are not dispersed well. Consider middle schools to change them would cost a lot. West elementary became Abbott. Then they added East.

Public Comment and Questions

- Neighborhood schools – busing – it will save a lot of rides. Right now there are apartment buildings that have kids are going to five or six schools.
- Bussing and babysitters – will be dealt with when discussing implementation.
- Projections of number – “for sale” or “foreclosed” – now families are gone - this should be taken into consideration. One problem is housing – they could fill up at any time. Use historical data to make plans.
- There will be more vacancies 500 homes and 250 apartments – but there will be a turnaround. It needs to be in the mix. Vacancies are all over town not in just one area.
- Desegregate - if we change areas – all black areas – all Hispanic- etc. Demographics need to be considered.
- Walking can be a concern- it is not the same as 20 years ago.
- Hazardous roads – 75 intersections – What about no sidewalks?
- Isn't it less complicated if we just move boundaries

Whittier Kindergarten Center petition papers were passed out for everyone – Whittier would like to keep the Whittier Kindergarten Center.

- Set the tone – safety and good educational foundation. Varied backgrounds of education – at home since birth, day care since birth, our preschool, etc. We feel strongly that our job is to turn our young children into successful students. Concentrating on that is helping our children
- Acclimating them to blossom and grow, in all areas of community, make friend across the board across the community bridging the gap of poverty – reading, faculty are specialized in support for young children.
- A 4 yr old of a welfare family knows 974 words when entering kinder
Working class child knows 750-1500
A preschool child knows 1100 2200 words
- Diffused with learning – vocabulary language – assemblies are geared toward age group – families invited every month.

- Lock down – must check into office before they go into the building.
- Always escorted. None of our students walk the halls.
- Safety on the streets 5-6yrs olds walking?
- Quality at Whittier – something to be proud of. Concentrate resources and expertise it helps the children. Within our building – we can accommodate needs without changing busing or shipping across town. Growth of students is great. Kindergarten is very different today – academic structure successful. Whittier has innovating cutting edge resources.

Number crunching is being done right now. In this case we need to look at the Whittier building - but keep the demographics as our focus. There is concern that the information is not clear.

The Voting Committee decided that they needed time to analyze the data before discussing positive and negative points of each plan. We will do this at our next meeting and decide which plans to focus on for further analysis (demographics, tweaking boundaries, etc.)

Before the next meeting the middle school information will be sent to you.

We are working on an e-mail list. Please sign the form if you would like it emailed to you.

Next meeting is Wednesday, March 19, 2008, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the Board Room at Lincoln Center.