

# ***Spotlight on the Board***

## **Notes from the District 15 School Board Meetings**

### **June 11th 2008**

This was a Regular Board of Education meeting. All members were present at Roll Call. It was noted that this was Superintendent Dr. Robert McKanna's last District 15 Regular Board of Education meeting. His retirement begins July 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **Superintendent's Reports**

### **2008-09 Student Assignment Plan and Demographic Report**

**McKanna** – The Board received a 28 page draft of next year's student assignment plan (also on the district's Web site). At the August Board meeting, the administration will look at additional staffing if we need it. In the past, we have actually added staff if the numbers have gone up on averages, we have actually taken teachers away from schools when the numbers have dropped in the summer. Our process is to implement the Board Policy on class sizes – which is 24 children (per class) in primary grades, 26 average in intermediate and 28 children in junior high. We were a little under that this year to the discrepancy of 22 teachers more than what those numbers called for so we reduced about 21 to 22 teachers (for next year) to bring ourselves in line to the 24, 26, 28 averages.

The role we take as a district administration is to allocate teachers to the schools based on averages. It is up to the building principal to work with the teachers in shared-decision making and come to the best allocation for those students/teachers and how it looks. It looks quite different from school to school. We have one school (Willow Bend) that is almost totally multiage – 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders together, 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> grades together and 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> graders. It looks like we have some large classes in the early primary grades, but again that is a building decision and we expect the teachers/principals to make the very best decision they can make. They also make the decision when allocating program assistants (PA). Wants Garwood to present the draft, says he guarantees that it will change somewhat and he is sure they will add a teacher or two when we get to August. The other challenge is that when we get closer to school starting and a principal comes to us and says "I need another section based on our numbers." We will have the principal/staff literally call everybody in that third grade, for example, to make sure they are still coming. One of the difficulties we have is that we don't always know who is going to show up and who is not because people don't always tell us.

**Board Member Tim Millar** – Some of that reduction (of teachers) is because of the reduction in the number of students. We show a drop in enrollment. It may have peaked a few years ago. When you say that you are reducing that staff, it isn't just a reduction across the board.

**McKanna** – That is a good point because you (Board) also have the Demographic Study (also on the district's Web site) that shows 5 years out – that there will be a 1,000 fewer students in the schools. You could literally close one or two schools, but he is not recommending that. But there are some things you need to take a look at in terms of where we are going. The Facilities Study will bring all of that to your attention.

**Jim Garwood, Asst. Superintendent** – Part of the drop in classroom sections is because we have about 250 kids less from 2006/07 to 2007/08. Right now, we are projecting about 173 children less for 2008/09. We anticipate a gradual drop in the years to come. Part of the rationale of that is outlined in the Demographic Report. Within our attendance boundaries, we are pretty much maxed out on single family homes. There has been a lot of building with condo complexes but we don't seem to get a lot of children from those new developments. Palatine is becoming maxed out on building space so we are starting to see an enrollment drop there.

This is truly a working document especially in the last couple of months, it is something that we have been updating on almost a weekly basis to see where we are in the staffing so we know in a timely manner whether to add or reduce staff in any given building. There is one misconception that gets out there sometimes (regarding class averages). We actually look at the total amount of kids

1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and then we divide that by 24. That is what gives you the total amount of staff for the primary grades, and then we do the same for the intermediate grades. We don't take it grade level by grade level and divide by 24 or 26 (the misconception out there).

The principal/staff looks at the needs of each grade level as to whether certain grade levels may need more or less assistance based upon the types of students that are in those grade levels. They also look at the placement of PAs to offset class size issues. Sometimes buildings will take the option to do a multiage classroom if they have high numbers in one grade level and lower in the next grade level. Sometimes they will not take that option. Sometimes we have had principals make the decision to take one of the intermediate sections out and put it in a primary grade.

Also said that the Gifted enrollment numbers are not quite complete (in the report). They have made a shift to improve upon their gifted classrooms. Previously we have had a 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> gifted classroom in one building, a 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> in a different building. What that results in is that children go to school in one building for K through 2, then if they qualify for the gifted program they might go to a different building for 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> and then another building for 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> and then to junior high. The administration worked closely to modify that system, we created six "gifted clusters" at this point in six different buildings so that each one has a 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> and a 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> classroom. So once you go into that program in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, you would be able to stay in that same building through sixth grade. Numbers are not finalized yet for gifted, still waiting for some parent consent forms to come back.

**Ref: 2008-09 Summary of Average Class Sizes across the District per school/per grade**

Click here to view: [www.fcwpta.org/pdf/2008\\_09\\_summary\\_average\\_class\\_sizes.pdf](http://www.fcwpta.org/pdf/2008_09_summary_average_class_sizes.pdf) (one page)

**Millar** – Do you work with some cases that are anomalies to these situations?

**Garwood** – Has worked with principals in those situations, again it becomes a final building decision as to how they will do that. If we were to give extra teaching staff to a building because one grade level is high, even though they (building) are meeting the average – that is really going to change the parameters that the Board has set for us. We would be adding many teachers across the district to be able to go with those situations grade level by grade level, school by school. That would certainly increase the amount of staff that we would have to hire.

**Board member Wendy Rowden** – Thinks the district should be proud that we set a class size average and also that we have shared-decision making in the buildings. Because when we do have anomalies, it is up to the building because they know and understand each other's strengths, they know how to utilize their time the most efficiently. Sometimes you could be in a large class but you could have a teacher and a PA and the way that they operate and deliver and manage the classroom could be even better than a smaller class size with one teacher. Thinks that it is important to emphasize to have those decisions made in the building.

## **Citizens Address the Board**

**Ross Guisti** – Representing group of Thomas Jefferson parents of incoming 1<sup>st</sup> graders

Has 17 years of educational experience, 7 at the elementary level and currently an administrator in D214 and is familiar with allocation of class sizes, distributing resources across the district. Focus tonight is the current district proposal to allocate 60 to 62 1<sup>st</sup> grade students into two sections for this fall. Believes that everyone can agree that 30 to 31 first grade students in one classroom is too many. We have addressed the principal in regards to these issues and concerns. As stated earlier, the district targets average class sizes of 24 for grades 1 through 3. Current D15 data indicates that 9 out of the other 14 elementary schools are at 20 to 22 for first grade students per class. And the other five schools are at 24 to 25 which is at or above the district target. According to district literature, the Board makes every attempt to maintain class sizes at or below the Board targets while remaining fiscally responsible. Studies indicate that larger class sizes have severe impact in the classroom. It also promotes problems in regards to classroom management. Without proper guidance and individual attention, we feel that future academic success for these children will be in jeopardy of not reaching their full potential. First grade is vital to the educational process – the foundational start to their educational career. Not looking to debate circumstance, we can all believe that the current class size

proposal is too high. Looking for a responsible solution to this sectioning, would like to ask the Board to please be consistent, be willing to work with the school itself as mentioned and go from that route.

**Ani Erickson** – Marion Jordan SIP program parent

Last month when she spoke it was under much adverse conditions. Wanted to come tonight to thank three ladies that have helped us tremendously – the Special Education Coordinator, Director of Student Services and Asst. Superintendent for Curriculum. They met with us (SIP parent group) for a two-hour meeting to address our concerns that we have with the program at Marion Jordan. They made the parents feel welcomed and also made sure that our children's IEPs were updated. As she stated at the last BOE meeting, all we wanted was for our children was to have the same opportunities that they had at Jane Addams School. As the SIP parents, we are looking forward to a better year next year and we are still hoping that two of our concerns are addressed. That is our concern with communication with the building principal and we are still extremely upset about the firing of our kids' teacher and making sure that whoever they hire is as highly qualified as she is.

**Sharon Bradley** – Marion Jordan SIP program parent

Would like to address the Board regarding the hiring of a replacement teacher for her son's SIP class at Marion Jordan. She would like to express her concerns and convey to the Board the importance of hiring a teacher which specific background in Special Education. Her son's current teacher has been working with autistic children for the past 14 years. Seven of those years she was a classroom teacher and three of those years, she has been her son's teacher. She is also trained in Behavior Analysis, she is on the Adapted Reading Committee in D15, she is a Certified Crisis Prevention Instructor and is currently receiving her Reading Specialist Masters. The parents of the SIP class urge you to take these qualifications into consideration when looking for a replacement teacher for our children.

**Ying Wang** – Marion Jordan SIP program parent

Wanted to thank the Board for working so fast. At the last BOE meeting, we aired our issues and immediately a meeting was scheduled with us to discuss the issues we have with MJ. So like to say thank you to the people helping us. Would like to add her concerns about having a new teacher in the SIP program. Since our children have problems with communication, it is really hard for them to build a relationship with the teachers. Therefore, we would like to have someone who is responsible and experienced with special education and be involved in the teacher's hiring process. We want to make sure that the teacher hired will have expertise in special education especially with autistic education. So the new teacher can respond to our children's needs, we want someone with very good communication with parents and is very devoted and passionate about teaching so the new teacher can be helpful to our children and really care about them. The new teacher needs to have good communication skills and know how to handle the kids' special skills and be involved and creative with our children's education.

**Jeanne Goodsite** – Resident of the Dawngate community, Rolling Meadows

Wants to address an issue that she brought up to Sue Quinn, Jim Garwood and Dr. McKanna regarding her neighborhood where the junior high boundaries have been changed on the map. What she is asking is to – it is on the agenda to be discussed (tonight) – she is hoping that it is either not to be voted on today and be considered a bit further. She believes that the information that will be presented (tonight) does not accurately address the concerns of her particular neighborhood. The bottom line is that the map was changed. We FOIAed information to find out when it was changed, who was responsible, when it occurred and if there was Board approval. A FOIA would reveal none of that. Additionally we have historical precedence in the neighborhood with the original homeowners (children) have gone to Plum Grove JH. The map all of a sudden changed where we are now going to Carl Sandburg JH. We are just east of PH JH and we are 100% bused to our elementary school. At that rate, to divide us further to Sandburg JH, we will then have very few students going as a group from elementary to JH to high school. That is a major concern as well as being a homeowner and not being notified that this occurred. Also at many times during this year, at any given time, you can call transportation and ask about a certain address (in their neighborhood) and get a different answer from the map. It is very confusing, distressing and we can't seem to get the story straight. Doesn't want

this to be done in a hurried decision, wants the Board to consider the things she mentioned and really consider the fact that historically we have always gone to Plum Grove JH. We have proof from the people who have lived in the neighborhood. She has lived there since 1997; no one on her block has ever gone to Carl Sandburg JH.

**Ref: Summary of JH Boundary Lines Clarification and Dawngate map**

*Click here to view:* [www.fcwpta.org/pdf/Dawngate\\_JHboundaries.pdf](http://www.fcwpta.org/pdf/Dawngate_JHboundaries.pdf)

**Michelle Massey** – Representing the Dawngate Homeowners Association, Rolling Meadows  
We are a community of 46 homes and about ½ mile from Plum Grove JH. The community is 37 years old and no student in our community has ever gone to any other public junior high other than Plum Grove. She has spoken to original homeowners and homeowners that have been there for more than 20 years. She has a list of names and can give them to the Board. There have been 11 children in the last five years that have gone to Plum Grove JH. If you look at our boundaries, the boundary shows half of our community goes to Sandburg, the other half goes to PG. That is actually inaccurate based on these names (children who have gone to PG). Thirty-seven years of historical precedence that says that our community has always attended PG JH, she thinks is significant. Thinks it is also significant that our children have a very social experience of staying together in a group going from a junior high to a high school is important. If you would like to check these names and graduation dates, she can give them to the Board. This map is inaccurate based on information she knows to be true.

**Melissa Larson** – Resident of Dawngate community, Rolling Meadows  
Has been a teacher in Chicago for twelve years. She moved here five years ago because D15 is exceptional because it considers the needs of the community. That (Plum Grove) is our community school, we are just blocks away. If my son misses the bus, he has a five minute bike ride or a little bit of a walk (to school). Please consider the consistency of the children. My son is at Willow Bend, Plum Grove and then Fremd. It is consistency, it is just healthy, it is good education to have the community go to one school and not so far away. She would like to echo her neighborhood's concerns and please consider that when making your decision.

**McKanna** (commented) – Would like to reiterate some comments that the parents just made. They are five blocks from the school and they are being bused. You might wonder why we are bussing kids five blocks away. It gets into the "hazardous" – no sidewalks declaration. It is not that we are violating our policy. We have to consider safety.

**Jane VanWolvelear** – Palatine resident  
Was here last month and will be here until she gets an answer because she didn't get any response last month to her statement of: I am requesting this Board to allocate a period of time on an interval whether it is monthly, quarterly, whatever – To have the opportunity for this community to have a true dialogue with our Board members. You give us three minutes to state a concern, thank you, goodbye and that's it. My sitting here last month is a perfect example. I heard nothing from anyone. Why do I have Board members who don't respond to the community's needs? You as Board members are elected by the community to represent the members of this community. You are not representing yourself, this is not your personal agenda forum. Your job is to represent the community of Palatine Elementary Illinois. If you don't have a dialogue with that community, how do you know what to vote for? What your community wants? You must respond. I don't know how to get answers out of you guys. If someone who would like to give me feedback now? I know this is not a "dialogue time" but I would love feedback of some kind.

**Rowden** (responded) – Asked are you looking for a phone call?

**VanWolvelear** – She is looking for a genuine opportunity for concerns of this town to be heard and to be verbally responded to – eye-to-eye contact, not email. Let's not hide behind our computers - have a true dialogue. That's how problems get resolved. That's how misunderstandings get resolved. Oftentimes in this town, many problems are simply misunderstandings.

**Terry Hooker** – Thomas Jefferson parent

Would like to comment on the issue of class sizes in the first grade at TJ. Does think that the district as a whole has done a very good job at keeping the averages low. But like the question that was asked earlier, does anomalies sometimes occur? Thinks that we are one of the anomalies because at TJ – 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade numbers are really low but our first grade numbers are high. Does think it is really important for the Board to support shared-decision making process (in the buildings) and our staff (at TJ) at this time has decided that the best thing to do is to keep some smaller upper level classes and let our sections (1<sup>st</sup> grade) stay large with the addition of some full-time aides. Although the aides are going to be helpful, a lot of the research has shown that the aides are typically most helpful with clerical, task and behavior management. She is requesting that if the additional numbers do not come in for an additional teacher to be hired, and the staff still makes the decision that they have now that the needs of our sixth graders are greater than the needs of our first graders. Would the Board at least be willing to reevaluate our situation on our first grade? Feels that if you really believe in the shared-decision making process, you would want to support our staff's decision to meet those greater needs of the sixth graders, you would understand that the needs of the first graders are still great. Knows that nothing can be done until the late enrollment numbers come in (August). Just asks that since they are one of the anomalies, that the Board reevaluate our situation if our staff makes the same decision when those late enrollment numbers come in.

**Millar** – Wanted to make a comment to VanWolvelear's request for communication. Said that we (Board) are seven individual members, we don't have the exact same thoughts on the issues. The only power we have is when we are sitting up here and voting as a group and it has to be a majority. So to do any action, it would have to be in a Board setting and have the majority of the Board vote for that action. Thinks we are all willing to listen and we do listen, we do read the emails and generally respond to emails. That is a good way to start the ball rolling on a specific topic. If you give us the opportunity, you will find that everybody on the Board is more than willing to listen to the community.

## **Board Discussion and Reports**

### **Review of Board Procedures**

#### **A. Review of Board Policy**

##### **2:230 Public Participation at BOE meetings and Petitions to the Board**

**Millar** – Asked to have this put on the agenda to review the Policy and how we handle citizens addressing the Board. Currently we have the three minutes, thinks it is very difficult for most people to come up and speak and sometimes that may go over the 3 minutes. Thinks we should give a little grace (over the 3 minutes) to finish their thoughts.

**Board President Gerald Chapman** – So you are saying, maybe give them a 30 second warning and then allow them to finish? **Millar** – correct **Chapman** - so it is how we are interpreting it rather than changing the Policy? He for one would like to try it. If it works, he doesn't have an objection.

**Board member Sue Quinn** – Would like to add, in our Policy it says that citizens can speak "at each Regular and Special open meeting". She believes that our Board Committee meetings are open meetings. She thinks that they should be subject to the same conditions as we run any other meeting in particular having a section where citizens are allowed to address the Board.

**Board Vice President Kelly Keenan** – We started doing that (in the Facilities Committee) but it didn't work out very well so they (Committee) went to Mike Loizzi (district attorney) and asked for his interpretation. He said no, they are not considered the same. **Quinn** – Not that we don't have to do it, but we could still do it (citizens speak) as a practice if we chose to. **Keenan** – If we chose to, sure.

**Quinn** – Thinks that as a matter of consistency and in the interests of having people participate in public government, thinks it behooves us to do that. That just requires (in the Policy) including Committees in the Policy as a change. This is a first reading so these are suggestions. Also has an issue of our general (Board) policy of not responding to people who address the Board. Our Policy says that "the public is welcome to comment on or ask questions" of the Board. If they are

going to ask questions but we are not going to respond, it is defeating the purpose of our stated Policy. Would like to see us look at a way to provide that. As the citizen who spoke mentioned - about having a dialogue. Thinks Board members should be able to talk about the topics that are raised. We don't need to get in a dialogue necessarily with the individual at that time. Perhaps if an issue is raised, we as a Board can discuss it and consider it a discussion topic. If we need to hash this out further in Policy, she would be happy to do that.

**Rowden** – Thinks it would be helpful that if people who address the Board have questions and want a response back, that they could provide their phone number on the green form (request to address the Board). Then the Board has the opportunity, if so inclined, to call them back.

**Board member Nancy Lee Carlson** – Thinks it is very important that every citizen has the right to address a Public body. But she doesn't want to participate – to have 25 people come up here to say one certain thing and to reinforce my political agenda because they are going to be on TV. You can sway all sorts of things. And people making dialogues – it is important yes, but I may not know the information. In certain instances, we cannot discuss certain things in the public venue because it is private. There may be certain ramifications that we may not be totally aware of. So when people ask questions, I don't want to give them an "off the cuff" answer because she thinks that is inappropriate and imprudent. Certainly doesn't want to be placed in the position to be swayed one way or the other without looking at all of the facts, finding out all of the information.

An example – when we realized we had a problem in the SIP program. It went through the proper channels. The issues were resolved. It is important that people come to the Board, but this is not their only ability to come. They can come to the Superintendent, go through the whole Chain of Command. They can write letters. Unfortunately sometimes the Board meeting is the last resort. But there are many other ways of communication.

That way we can look at something, find out the answers, talk to a group of people and be able to give the citizens true and correct answers. Whether or not they agree or disagree with us. Carlson isn't comfortable with an "off the cuff" dialogue because she doesn't know all of the facts in that situation. It has to be investigated. As an elected official, I must use my best judgment and for me to gather those facts. For herself, she is not interested in being "off the cuff" because she needs to research her answers, they need to be well thought out.

**Quinn** – So what is our final disposition of this Policy? Do we send this to Policy Committee or bring back for another reading?

**Board member Jim Ekeberg** – Said that it isn't here for First Reading, it is here for discussion. He would refer it to the Policy Committee. **Quinn** – Can we do that?

**Chapman** – Asked if that is what the Board wishes to do? No objections received. Said that if any Board member has anything to share, he suggests sharing it in writing to the Superintendent.

## **B. Review of Board Members Authority and Responsibilities**

**Millar** – As individuals we don't have authority to direct staff unless we are given that authority by the Board. At the last meeting, we had an issue that came up where information was not made available to the Board for a particular topic until the day after, even though other Board members had that information. It creates a very bad feeling amongst the Board members when these types of things happen. Just wants to reiterate, as Board members we shouldn't be directing staff to not be giving information to Board members first so they can be prepared for a meeting. Or withholding information which we have had issues with in the past. Just wants to make sure that we are clear on that everybody has access to information that is supposed to be given to the Board.

**Keenan** – Are you saying that some of the administration was told by someone not to give other Board members information?

**Millar** – That is his impression. Knows that in a particular instance here, it was available the day before the meeting and we got the information the morning after the meeting when we had a number of people that were speaking on the topic. That information would have been helpful.

**Keenan** – Has no idea what he is talking about. **Chapman** – He doesn't either. We have the point.

# Status Report on Facilities Study by Architectural Firm

Ref: **Architect Status Report outline**

Click here to view: [www.fcwpta.org/pdf/Architect\\_status\\_report.pdf](http://www.fcwpta.org/pdf/Architect_status_report.pdf)

**Audio of Presentation given at June 10<sup>th</sup> Facilities Committee meeting** (27 minutes)

Click here to listen: [www.fcwpta.org/audio/audit\\_presentation\\_061008.wav](http://www.fcwpta.org/audio/audit_presentation_061008.wav)

**Keenan** – We have the architectural firm here today. Pat Callahan is going to make a presentation. A few months ago, we had the Facility Audit outline in our packet. It went through exactly what we were looking for from the architectural firm. Just wants to point out that the architectural firm is not making any decisions, the Facilities Committee is not making any decisions. Thinks the administration gives some direction to the architects but this is not a final product that will come with decisions. It is just information for long-term planning and hopefully information that will help us make better decisions as we go down the road.

**Architect Mr. Pat Callahan** – His purpose in being here tonight is to give the Board a brief update as to where we are with the Facility Audit. Currently we have completed our interviews with the principals and have provided you with a draft copy of that. We encourage you to read that because we believe that is really the heart of this audit. These interviews really show the personality and nature of the buildings as it both utilizes and services the deliveries to which it is designed. It is that aspect of the audit that we are focusing our attention on as we create a custom model for each individual building so that it provides the BOE and the administration as to how the buildings are being utilized. That can be used as the district moves forward on making improvements, expansions, utilizations. The information is truly available within a comprehensive report. It also pulls forward the information, such as Health, Life, Safety – so that information is gathered. Again it is done, not on a district-wide level but on an individual building level. There will be individual comprehensive studies by school and the data will support that. In conjunction with that, we are having the demographic portion of that done (by a third-party) which will then be fed into the building information model.

We met yesterday with the Facilities Committee to review with them, in a working session, our status, our example school Pleasant Hill (PH) – say example, because this is truly a customized methodology in terms of creating an audit that we are going to make sure we are going to have the information necessary. The customized report provides a great deal of data collection. Our schedule is that we will be providing the BOE a final audit for consideration in September. The preliminary report will be prepared and ready in August. We are utilizing the summer months to complete all of our information gathering in the fieldwork as well as the information models. Happy to answer any questions the BOE has.

**Rowden** – Asked if the PH example was the only one that there is at this time?

**Callahan** – that is the only one available in that format. **Rowden** – Would like to know as you approach the audit and begin to put together a presentation that you will be giving to us in August, you said that you needed some direction? Wondering what direction you have been given?

**Callahan** - We had a discussion yesterday (in Facilities Committee) regarding capacities of buildings. There are three methodologies used to determine the capacity of a building – one is a national average. They do not believe them to be an accurate capacity of a building. Second is what we call “core capacity”. Core capacity is the fact that we have support space with a facility, which is actually 2/3rds of the building’s square footage. Classrooms are truly one 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the school building. Whether it be multipurpose space, hallways, toilet rooms, gyms, multipurpose rooms. Those are the spaces that often drive the capacity of a building because of the sheer limits of time for those rooms to be utilized by the entire student population. The third (Classroom) is what you have already derived when coming up with a class average size as a target to determine the capacity of a building based on the number of students that can be put into classrooms. The discussion yesterday with the Committee was that methods 2 and 3 (Core and Classroom) be used in conjunction. By way of example, Winston Campus has the advantage of the elementary side having the junior high amenities. So therefore, those Core spaces are probably not going to impact that school as much as perhaps Pleasant Hill.

**Rowden** – Besides capacity, are there any other things driving the final audit report?

**Callahan** – No, the audit report is really data driven. It is the physical data of the buildings. When the report is complete, you will have a great data of information. How that information is parsed and sorted and manipulated to drive the answer to a question. If the Board says what is our capacity of our junior highs? We can then derive that information directly from that not only to determine what the classroom capacity is but the specials and support spaces as a result.

**Rowden** – Is capacity data taking into consideration the location of a building and the population as far as numbers? For example, communities slowly spread out, grow here then here. Thus we have all of these boundary issues. People often ask why Paddock feeds from here and then over here? It just doesn't make sense when everybody around here can go to Paddock but obviously the community didn't develop unilaterally and easily. When doing this study, are you also looking at the capacity of neighborhoods?

We are learning from our demographic report we are pretty much at capacity in single family homes. Our multiple family dwellings aren't bringing in that many children. So in that case you have some neighborhood schools that are surrounded by single family homes. In some respects, it makes sense to have a neighborhood school surrounded by single family homes to stay together vs. a school that is out like Plum Grove JH which is not easily accessible by any neighborhood.

Rowden is asking - in the comprehensive study, is that taken into consideration when you are giving us a report on the capacity of our buildings?

**Callahan** – The demographer has been instructed to use the existing boundaries to identify the class populations based on grade level. Our work focuses primarily on the building and its capacity. The capacity of a building is what it is. The influences of that capacity, the influences of how that building can support perhaps a boundary or a neighborhood is derived from the information put into the building model. That information will be available to the BOE when it starts creating/doing some of those manipulations at some point in the future. Will say that the building locations and their proximity to the furthest point in that boundary area will be identified in the report. Some of that data information will be infused but there will be no suggestions as far as building capacity as it relates to a boundary. However believes that the report will result in you (BOE) extracting that information to help the BOE in those discussions to make those decisions.

**Quinn** – Attended the Committee meeting (yesterday), heard the presentation. Thinks there will be some great quality information that the BOE will get out of this and looking forward to that. Wishes that the presentation was here at the full Board meeting. She had expressed objections at the last Board meeting that this Facilities Committee was going to screen what the full Board was going to see. And was going to give direction to our auditors and that in fact did happen at the Committee. Thinks that it is not the way for us to go. This is a very important topic that the full Board should be involved in. Quinn would like to make a motion that we (BOE) when giving direction do that as a Committee of the Whole. Any direction that is given to the auditors comes from the Board as a whole.

**Chapman** – This is not listed as an Action Item, we don't need to take action.

**Keenan** – Asked what information was screened? **Quinn** – We didn't see the presentation here that was given in committee. **Keenan** – You have the presentation that was shown.

**Quinn** – Had to ask for that for the Board.

**Keenan** – Time out. They brought copies to the Committee meeting to give to the Board members. They didn't give it to the Board members because you asked. The architects brought the copies to the meeting to be distributed and nothing was screened. There is no screening of any information.

**Quinn** – the auditors were instructed not to give the full presentation tonight.

**Keenan** – Replied - By the superintendent for timeliness.

**Quinn** – The Superintendent was not present when that decision was made. That direction came from the Facility Committee. Just thinks that it is very important that the entire Board be involved in this process. There are issues like capacity and three of the Board members were not in attendance (at the Facilities meeting) and didn't hear that discussion. Rowden brought it up and we discussed it a little bit now on what the issues are on the different ways to measure capacity and how the Board should be directing you (architects) to go with that. Doesn't know what other questions are going to come along

that they (architects) may need to be given direction between now and August. Asked Callahan, between now and August will you be needing more direction to do your job?

*Ref:* **Spotlight on the Board notes for the Facilities Board Committee meeting held June 10<sup>th</sup>.**

Discussion begins on page six regarding the Facility Audit.

*Click here to view:* [www.fcwpta.org/pdf/d15\\_june\\_10\\_2008.pdf](http://www.fcwpta.org/pdf/d15_june_10_2008.pdf)

**Audio from Facilities Board Committee Meeting held June 10<sup>th</sup>**

Includes statements concerning the Facility Audit's timeline, request for additional meetings, full Board participation and committee member's commentary of consensus.

*Click here to listen:* [www.fcwpta.org/audio/facility\\_audit\\_direction\\_061008.wav](http://www.fcwpta.org/audio/facility_audit_direction_061008.wav) (5 ½ minutes)

**Callahan** – We may request a Committee meeting to discuss issues that we see in the field. But at this point in time, the majority of our work will be data collection and building the information models in anticipation of the report for August. **Quinn** – Would like to see that done as a Committee of the Whole and not as a Committee where one or two Board members can make that decision for the Board as a whole.

**Millar** – Thinks this should be a Committee of the Whole. This information affects the entire district. As a Board, these are going to be the biggest decisions we are ever going to make in our Board careers. It affects the entire district, every person's property values potentially - depending on what happens. Again thinks that we should all be involved in this process. Doesn't want to have a report and have nobody believe that it is valid.

**Keenan** – Doesn't get what the architects will be presenting that would affect home values?

**Millar** – There is going to be direction. Again, picking out the methodology could possibly change which schools would be targeted for being over capacity. That was a decision that was made at the Committee meeting. Millar thought as a Board that we decided we didn't want that, that Committees weren't working and that we should have Board discussion where everyone would be involved. On something like this, Millar doesn't feel comfortable. This has so many implications for so long.

**Keenan** – What are the implications? All the architectural firm is doing is gathering data. The capacity decision was the first decision that was made (in Committee) and she didn't even talk about it. Thinks it was Phillips and the architecture firm that were the ones that said this is the way we should go.

**Rowden** – Asked the Board if there was any concern with doing this as a Committee of the Whole going forward so we are all getting the same information? Does anyone have any objections to doing that? **Chapman** – Well I think our architect says that he doesn't know if they need another meeting. **Rowden** – She is just saying that if there is a need for a meeting, is there an objection with having it as a Committee of the Whole? Heard two people say that they think that is a good idea. Does anyone think it is not a good idea?

**Carlson** – This is a very important measure for our district going forward with our facilities. But we are getting raw data. They (architects) haven't been directed to be doing anything other than providing us with raw data so that this Board can make a decision. Doesn't think it is proper for the Facilities Committee to make that decision - that would be the Board as a whole. We as a Board can take the raw data and interpret it the way we want. Doesn't see the home value issue. Doesn't think one school is better than another. Doesn't feel that one junior high school has a better reputation than another. Thinks that we as a group will take that raw data and extrapolate what we wish to do. Thinks we are simply getting the physical information that we need about the buildings using capacity as our architects explained, using a combination approach is probably the strongest approach used by other districts. If we want to make decisions on boundaries, closing schools, building new ones – that is all decisions we would make. We are just getting the raw data. Now, we don't have any raw data, we have not asked the committee to filter that data for us. Doesn't believe the Committee has.

**Rowden** – When direction needs to be given – asked Carlson if she thought it should be a Committee of the Whole?

**Carlson** – If there is direction. Carlson has no objections to the Committee of the Whole issue. What she is saying is that – when they come back (architects) they are just doing physical inventory. That is not a Committee of the Whole that is the Board. There are no Committees.

**Rowden** – Do you think that it should be a Committee of the Whole when the information is gathered and presented? **Carlson** – Thinks it should be the BOE acting as the BOE.

**Rowden** – Okay, that's the entire Board. What about (giving) direction?

**Carlson** – Asked the architects, is there any future direction (needed) other than what you have?

**Callahan** – Replied, not that we anticipate right now.

**Carlson** – Stated - So if a decision is to be made, I'm sure they will call a Board meeting.

## Action Items

### Plum Grove/Carl Sandburg JH Schools' Boundary Lines Clarification

**McKanna** – Explained that up until 4 years ago, the district enabled a parent to go to a school and make a request to change schools. If the principal said there was space (at the school), you could go to that school. That was changed about three years ago. Students had to go where the attendance lines (boundaries) indicated. Exceptions were made in rare cases for special education and if someone had a daycare service in a particular area. A question was raised about the administration changing attendance lines. Since McKanna has been in the district, that was done once and it was brought to the Board of Education. The BOE did vote to change the boundary for a neighborhood south of Euclid. There is a letter (in the file) from the former Asst. Superintendent (Administrative services) to some parents (in Dawngate) that says that they are to remain at Plum Grove JH as the map appears so. We are honoring that tonight in terms of that particular part (of the map). In the past, we have made mistakes as an administration in letting people come and go (to a school) as they wanted to.

Referred to the map (on the overhead, in the Board packet, on the Web site). Said that the "blue" area on Oaksbury is an area that they believe needs to be fulfilled (to go to Plum Grove JH). Some parents in the audience said that the area between the PG JH areas should also be PG (rather than Sandburg). Wanted to make sure that there was no perception that the administration was making boundary changes because only the BOE has that authority. Asked Garwood to give some details/background on the issue.

**Garwood** – In referring to the overhead of the boundary map for the Dawngate subdivision, Garwood showed and explained the streets in question as to whether they belong to Plum Grove JH (PG) or Carl Sandburg JH (CS). There was some communication from the former Asst. Superintendent before his retirement regarding boundary lines but that information did not formerly make into the VersaTrans system (used by the Transportation department). That system has the actual house/street numbers in it to determine which school a student would attend. The color coded map just highlights an area and determination is more difficult on the boundary line streets.

Many people had been told that their house belonged to PG and now are being told that it is designated for CS and their boundaries had been changed. There were FOIAs (Freedom of Information Act requests) from citizens for information. When the administration went through that information, they compared the map with VersaTrans and found an error in the map. Is asking the Board to make those areas officially for PG. Redo the map later. Map was done in 1999. Change made in 2004. It had been PG all along, error made when the map was changed in 2004.

Garwood has received a number of requests to look at other addresses (in Dawngate). Said that if you go back to 1992, those areas (requested) have always been designated for CS. But as McKanna stated, exceptions had been made in the past. Garwood is just asking the Board to permanently make the areas in "blue" for PG.

**Carlson** – Said that she was on the Board in 2004 when the boundary lines were determined. What was happening was that people were changing schools on a regular basis because they didn't like the teacher, they didn't like the color of the neighbor, there were a million reasons. Then that Board decided – and she remembers this PG issue. That Board wanted to get as a balanced decision as they

could. Thinks that as a school district we should not make exceptions except in rare instances. Thinks we need to go back to this original map because she has kept documents going back to 2004 and they show the same thing. That those (lines) were what we decided. People had been routinely allowed to move. **Garwood** – At this point, we have not allowed exceptions to be made by an individual building. They all have to be cleared through his office in order to be absolutely sure there is consistency.

**Carlson** – Right, that is a new decision that a lot of people are not aware of. Historically, whole blocks would move and their kids would go to a different school because they simply asked the principal. So things can be skewed a little bit. It hadn't been that those were decided (by the BOE), it was a routine practice and that's how it was done for many years. In 2004, the BOE decided that they would not allow that anymore. That Board said simply that they couldn't keep doing this.

**Garwood** – One of the other concerns he heard is that "my neighbors across the street go to a different school". Unfortunately, wherever we have a boundary, that is going to be the case.

**Garwood** – Just to clarify what he is asking (the Board) is for two areas to belong to Plum Grove. The areas that his predecessor had determined before his retirement – along Oaksbury and the other area has been PG all along, just now has it colored differently. Historically that area was always PG. There was not an official decision by the BOE to change those boundaries. We don't know if the mapmaker moved the color a little bit, not quite sure how the colors changed.

**McKanna** - Some Dawngate parents have been saying that since the beginning of time, they have been going to PG. Doesn't know if it behooves (the Board) to take some time to deal with the community, because this is a serious issue at least to them. Perception of home values - because some parents will say if their house is in one attendance area over another, their house would be worth more money. The demographics of our schools are different. The quality of our staff is similar; the programs are similar – no matter which school you go to. But we have some elementary schools that are 50% minority and others that have very few. We have every discrepancy that you can think of.

If we put the schools up there (on the overhead) to see how close they are. They are very close. It gets into a lot of issues. Like why are the kids in Hoffman Estates (Thomas Jefferson) literally going past PG to (attend) CS. The reason is that if you didn't, you would make kids that are literally across the street from Plum Grove JH go to Sandburg. This is not an easy issue. It is a very emotionally laden one that we should bring to the Board's attention. It is not straightforward.

**Garwood** – Wanted to add that PG is our largest JH. It has grown in the last month or so by 30 or 40 students. There is not a whole lot of room there to put some areas in without squeezing other areas out. That is his concern. That is a factor to consider if boundaries are ever considered for change.

**Quinn** – Agrees with McKanna about needing to understand this is a community issue. She is concerned that we found some errors, there are probably other errors. Doesn't want to be revisiting this issue every month because we found another issue because of the discrepancy between the map and VersaTrans. Would like to look at it a little more comprehensively. Is a little leery about using VersaTrans as the "gold standard". Thinks that is something the Board is addressing a little later (in the agenda) when we talk about updating the map for VersaTrans and the authority to generate our own maps which is fabulous for having up-to-date data. Really glad we are not making exceptions any more because that has caused a lot of the chaos that currently exists. So would like to look at it a little more further.

**Garwood** – There are two key areas to look at – one is the physical map (here) and VersaTrans. Those are the only two sources we have. There is Board Policy that describes the boundaries in words. Not an easy way to look at it and probably also prone to error. Thinks that VersaTrans is probably the most accurate way to look at it.

**Quinn** – Thinks that is true and has a feeling that we are going to find more things where the map doesn't reflect the discrepancies that you have found here already. Because we have such community concerns, she is just wondering – if there is no urgency – can we make sure that we really looked at all of the possible discrepancies so we don't have to come back and address it again. Do you think there is any problem with doing that?

**Chapman** – Said that in the absence of any Board action, if he understands right, the “blue” areas (on the map) would continue to go to Plum Grove. The other areas would remain as they are. As Quinn says, and he agrees, we ought to look at those other areas affected.

**McKanna** – Except that we have received an email or two from parents telling us that they are in the Carl Sandburg area and are already registered and planning to go to Plum Grove JH next year.

**Keenan** – Isn’t that a past practice issue, that isn’t a map issue. Since 1992, that map has been pretty consistent. The reason that those people have gone to other schools is because they asked the principal to go.

**Rowden** – Stated that she lives on a boundary line and the other side of the street goes to a completely different school. She remembers back in 2004 when the Board stopped allowing exceptions. She knew people that literally moved across the street because of that. So there are people that, because boundaries were defined and regulated as they should have been, made big adjustments in their lives to accommodate that. So we have to be very careful in making these kinds of determinations because it can open up a “whole can of worms”. There may be other errors.

**Garwood** – Even in the absence of other areas, he would just caution that if any changes are made, you are bound to hear from many more people about changes.

**Rowden** – This relates to where she was going regarding the architects. She doesn’t know how long it has been since boundaries have been looked at or maps have been looked at to see if they are accurate. Maybe this is something the Board needs to be looking at or putting on a timeline for the next couple of years to come because clearly things have changed.

**Garwood** – Said that he gets calls a couple of times a month where the people say a realtor told them that they would be in a particular school (and it isn’t correct).

**Millar** – Just wanted to clarify that the vote tonight is just to confirm what was presented. Asked if there were objections about it from the public? **Garwood** – Not that he is aware of.

**Chapman** – Said that some of the people who addressed the Board are in the “pink” areas (Sandburg) and they prefer to go to Plum Grove.

**Millar** – But the vote is just for the “blue” areas to go to PG. The action item is to confirm that area?

**Quinn** – The “blue” area is not a change. It is just a reaffirmation of our current map.

**Chapman** – Motion is for the “blue” areas on the map (Dawngate map shown) to be designed for Plum Grove. **Garwood** – That does not preclude looking further.

**Quinn** – We are going to continue to look into the parent concerns in this community.

**Motion unanimously approved 7:0**

## **Board Discussion and Reports (resumed)**

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Facility/Architectural/Real Estate Committee**

##### **Sidewalks near Marion Jordan**

**Rowden** – Asked if this topic was skipped over? **Chapman** – There was no discussion.

**Keenan** – It got tabled because of timing. **Quinn** – There was discussion in the Committee about it.

**Keenan** – No action was taken. **Rowden** – Asked are you not looking into this right now? She thought it was interesting because in the Board packet, there was information about a new program through IDOT about *Safe Roads to School*. **Keenan** – The money is up for this year, it is not part of the Committee at all. Craig Phillips is looking at that completely differently. The city doesn’t have money for sidewalks this year. So until their new fiscal year comes along, nothing is going on.

Ref: **Spotlight on the Board notes for the June 10<sup>th</sup> Facilities Committee meeting**

Discussion regarding Marion Jordan sidewalks begins on page one.

Click here to view: [www.fcwpta.org/pdf/d15\\_june\\_10\\_2008.pdf](http://www.fcwpta.org/pdf/d15_june_10_2008.pdf)

## Action Items (resumed)

### Capital Projects to be considered for the 2008-09 Budget

**Millar** – Thinks this (capital projects) is pretty generous given our financial condition (deficit of \$3M). He is all for capital projects and getting some of these things done. Is just uncomfortable right now with the actual number without having the ability to review where we were at last year. This is a huge adjustment to the budget. **Chapman** – His understanding is that these projects, if they are approved for the budget – will be bid and the Board will have to act on those bids. The work would not be completed until spring or summer next year. So if the projects look like they are going to put us in considerable difficulty, we can make the decision then.

**Miller** – Then there is no rush to approve the projects themselves. Unfortunately Millar was not at the (Facilities Committee) meeting when these particular items were discussed. Millar is assuming that staff feels these are the most important items. It is just difficult (for him) without going through the whole thing with Craig Phillips. Here (referring to report) is \$50K for Paddock roof repairs and plumbing. Some are from Life Safety categories. It is difficult without having the discussion. The \$2.9M is a real number for the curtain wall replacements, seems pretty high.

**Rowden** – Has some questions. Where did the \$2M (dollar figure) come from?

**McKanna** – George Lingel (business office) put that in the Board packet. When the budget originally came to you, there was concern by Board members that there were no capital improvements in the budget whatsoever. The goal was what would those capital projects look like? It went to the Committee (Facilities) and this list came out of Committee. Lingel was told to find \$2M out of our \$134M budget, some monies that haven't been expended this year, some other places to carve out money which Lingel did and documented it in the budget.

**Lingel** – Looked through different areas of the budget where monies could be taken for the capital projects – Operations and Maintenance, Professional Services, etc. Was looking for monies budgeted but not yet totally spent. Explained where there could be extra funds in several different areas. Said that next year's operating budget is difficult (to find funds) from what he has seen because of staffing and so forth. Said there are still funds in utility costs now. However the way utility costs are escalating, there may not be excess funds there. There is also a line item under Contingency. There is still a fund balance for life/safety but has not yet been budgeted. But in order to use that, we would have to write amendments.

**Millar** – Regarding the \$500K contingency that is showing not being used - we have a deficit of \$2.5M dollars. It isn't there (Contingency). Logically it is not really there because we are in the hole for \$2.5M. His main concern is the number being that large. He is the one that voted against the budget because there were no capital improvements in there. He is all for capital projects, just has to make sure we can afford them.

**McKanna** – Asked if Chapman's point was pretty good? If we (administration) come back in November/December sometime and say that we could do something over spring break if we are much better on the budget. Then you (Board) can decide whether to spend that much money or not. You will have to vote it as you go along. **Millar** – It is just harder to change (at that point). We have to remember that it is going to come up; we have to remember that it (money) is not there. The mechanism is different. Rather do it right the first time then try to catch it later because a lot of times you don't catch it later.

**Keenan** – Totally agrees with Millar. However, there are a couple (of projects) that you have to do. You have to do something with Pleasant Hill's roof and you have to do the Winston Campus paving. She doesn't want to spend reserves at all either. But with 20 buildings, \$2M is not very much money to keep these buildings habitable. You can't not fix some of these roofs. We have to pave the parking lot. Doesn't know about the other stuff – carpeting, plumbing and mechanical.

**Quinn** – The bottom line is that we will be spending reserves to do large capital projects. Disagrees with McKanna that we aren't spending any money on capital projects. We have \$1.4M in capital outlay in Operations and Maintenance. **McKanna** – That is just keeping the building up.

**Quinn** – Understands it is for routine maintenance, capital outlay projects. We are spending money - just not for large projects. **Keenan** – Doesn't think it is for routine maintenance. She thought it was for emergencies. **Bob Strande, Business Manager** – It is for the general concept of keeping the buildings the best you can. It is not for waiting around for something to happen. We don't have it outlined item by item but we know on average that we are going to spend \$1.4M.

**Keenan** – Asked if that was a historical average on what it takes to maintain our buildings to keep them up to speed? That's not the roof at Pleasant Hill or the plumbing at Paddock?

**Strande** – That is major capital expenditures (roof and plumbing). It is not the \$1.4M for maintenance to keep this district as it is year to year, without major capital improvements.

**Quinn** – What she is saying is that to do the major capital improvements, we are essentially going to have to spend into reserves. She is not necessarily adverse to that. If these are urgent projects like PH's roof which needs to be done, there are issues at Paddock that need to be done. If it is prioritized in the sense that we put the most urgent projects first – she thinks the district has to do that (spend into reserves). Thinks that is just responsible management of the district. When we are talking about curtain walls, which are a "B" item according to our Life Safety Study – not an "A" item. Thinks we need to do the "A" items first. Conceptually, we need to do the top items first. This list (of items) which by the way was done in the Facilities Committee . . .

**Keenan** – No, it was not. McKanna and Philips put it together. We (committee) did not have input into what was put in this list. **Quinn** – Said that is completely untrue, she was at the Committee meeting. She would like the things on the list (to be done) to be the top priority items. Right now, she doesn't think that is entirely true. For example, PH it is a partial roof instead of a full roof. Not sure what the priority is exactly for Paddock relevant to the other roofs. In essence, she just wants to make sure that we are doing just the most important things. If we need to spend more or less than \$2M to get the most urgent requirements done – then she thinks the district should do that.

**Chapman** – Well the issue is - what amount of money we are going to put in the budget? The recommendation from the administration is \$2M. Each of these projects will be reviewed as they come forth and he assumes that priorities may change as we go through the year. Chapman would like a motion to put the \$2M dollars in capital projects in the 2008/2009 budget.

**Quinn** – Asked if that motion included the \$2.9M then for the curtain walls?

**Lingel** – No, that is not in there (budget).

**Quinn** – So this \$2m - The original proposal was to expend unexpended funds which really aren't there because we are "in the hole". We are \$2.5M in the hole but we haven't expended \$500K. It is not there to be expended; it is only a bookkeeping issue. Thinks we should strictly put it in the future year and say we are expending reserves in the future year. If we are not going to approve it to be expended later in the year, which she believes is what Chapman is suggesting. You are suggesting that we would be amending the budget later on?

**Chapman** – No, I am suggesting that we put this in the budget. But before we do each of these projects, it comes before the Board. Then we will know – we should be halfway through the year and know where we are financially. Then the Board may decide, based on our financial situation – that we don't want to go forward.

**Quinn** – She is not sure what would change in our knowledge of our financial situation. In theory, she would go with that except she is not sure this is a list that should be done.

**Chapman** – What we are voting on tonight is whether \$2M will go in the budget. This is the list that is recommended by the administration at this time.

**McKanna** – Said as he put forward to the Facilities Committee, this list can change. We are trying to get \$2M in the budget for capital improvements. Thinks Phillips can come back as you (Board) go through the year, and say here is the priority, here is the "A" list.

McKanna can see some of this changing (list). When the architect's (facility) study comes back, some of these issues (capital projects) can change based on what they tell us. We are trying to get the money in there (budget).

**Vote on original motion which is to include \$2M for capital projects to be included in the 2008/2009 budget.**

**Quinn** – Would like to add request for administration to bring us a prioritization list.

**Chapman** – That it is not part of the motion but thinks that is the understanding we have.

**Approved: 6:0 Millar abstained.**

## **Executive Session**

The Board went into closed Executive Session at approximately 10 p.m. They were expected to vote on several items upon their return to Open Session.

For information on items not covered in this edition of *Spotlight on the Board*, please refer to the District 15 Web site at [www.ccsd15.net](http://www.ccsd15.net) check the "Quick Links" menu for "BOE Agendas". From there you can access a "Summary of Board Actions" for all Regular Board of Education meetings.

Written by: *Jennifer Mondy*  
[fcwnews@comcast.net](mailto:fcwnews@comcast.net)

Posted: *Tuesday, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008*