

**Decatur Classical School
Local School Council**

Minutes Meeting on Thursday, October 16, 2014

- Meeting called to order by Jeannette Schar at 6:40 pm.
- Roll call:
 - Members present – Jeannette Schar, Kristin Boeke-Greven, Steve Fix, Timothy McCaffrey, Victoria Giambrone, Laura Symons, Susan Kukielka, Marianne Sharping, Katherine Thomas, Arthur Regalado, and Roland Paulnitsky. Absent – Norman Gelfand.
- Approval of Agenda:
 - Amendment: addition of agenda items under New Business
A. Square 1
 - Motion was made and approved by unanimous voice vote to approve amended agenda.
- Approval of Minutes:
 - Motion was made and approved by unanimous vote to approve amended minutes.
- Principal's Report:
 - Decatur's 2014-2015 10th day enrollment was lower than projected, but SBB funding will remain intact; the 10th day adjustment would have been a \$922 reduction.
 - Budget transfers cleared negative lines (Stride Academy license, Brain Pop, etc.); \$17,115 unallocated SGSA funds remaining
 - Reassigned teacher assigned to Decatur, Mr. Antonio SanAgustin at no cost to the school; he will act as a primary sub for the school and stay for the remainder of the 2014-15 school year.
 - Mrs. Chanmi Chun announced her resignation effective Oct. 24, 2014; Mr. SanAgustin will sub for Mrs. Chun's classes until the position is filled.
 - The 1st and 5th grade classrooms were selected to participate in the Invention Convention.
 - Coffee with the Principal scheduled for Oct. 28th at 2:10 pm.
 - Custodial staff is still at 1; a temporary custodian has been assigned to the school; Ms. K is still waiting for official word from the board for permanent staffing solution.
 - Progress reports were distributed October 10, 2014.
 - Decatur held its first Open House for prospective parents on October 15, 2014 with approximately 75 in attendance.
- Old Business:
 - Kristin Boeke-Greven presented a historical perspective of expansion and reported on the work of Expansion Committee; the presentation is available on the Decatur website.

- Alderman Capplemann of the 46th Ward spoke to the LSC and public; highlighted his tenure as a teacher and social worker prior to becoming an alderman, and his continuing efforts to advocate for children; the Alderman highlighted revitalization throughout the Uptown community noting that the revitalization was guided by research done by the Urban Institute; Revitalization guided by 3 goals – 1) Big box anchor store (Target opened in the community), 2) Reconstruction of the Wilson “L” stop to make it a destination point (construction has already begun), 3) Renovation of the Uptown Theatre; the Alderman also noted that surveys of the Uptown community wanted to prioritize keeping Stewart a public school.
- The Alderman answered questions from the public: Would Decatur be combined with a neighborhood component? Alderman Capplemann responded that he would support the wishes of the principal when it comes to keeping Decatur a selective enrollment school; Why are current neighborhood schools underutilized? The Alderman responded by saying the demographic of the community are mostly couples and/or young professionals, very few families live in the area largely because much of the real estate is comprised of 1-2 bedroom condos/apartments. Given those demographics there are not many kids that can fill the schools; Why would the Uptown community welcome a school like Decatur? The Alderman responded by saying that the community wanted to maintain Stewart as a public school, not a private or charter school.
- New Business:
 - Motion was made and passed by unanimous vote to approve the Square 1 fundraiser.
 - Motion was made and passed by unanimous vote to approve the CIWP.
 - Motion was made and approved to set the number of speakers and time limit (1 minute) for Public Comment with 10 yays and 1 abstention.
- Public Comment:
 - Speaker 1: I love Decatur and there's a lot of stress in 5th grade. While I'm fortunate to have a good neighborhood school many of my friends do not.
 - Speaker 2: I would like very much for Decatur to have a 7th and 8th grade available to its students. It provides students options.
 - Speaker 3: My wife is very concerned, while we want a 7th and 8th grade, safety issues do not take precedence over our kids' having a safe environment.
 - Speaker 4: I trust that the LSC and Expansion Committee has explored every option and I say go for it. Give all our children a lovely home for 7th and 8th grade.
 - Speaker 5: I am familiar with the area as a prosecutor. I invite you to look for yourself. This is a dangerous area, not an area for a school or for kids. Take a drive yourself in this neighborhood.
 - Speaker 6: I want to ask the LSC to give everyone a vote, one child, one vote. I think CPS giving this first bone to us is something we shouldn't just jump on because it's what we've always wanted.

- Speaker 7: Thanks to the LSC for doing all this work. Please add afterschool programs to your list of concerns. What unites us is the pursuit of excellence and that should not be compromised.
- Speaker 8: All agree that everyone here wants a 7th and 8th grade. I have major concerns that we are desperate to get that and are jumping at the only opportunity without it necessarily being a good one. Don't want parents to get disenfranchised because of distance.
- Speaker 9: I don't think that the answer CPS is giving us is good enough. It's not good enough to limit ourselves to the options that we are looking at. Urge CPS to give us a better option.
- Speaker 10: I've been here long enough to appreciate that we may be looking at our only option. Please reconsider the one child, one vote or one vote per family. We've all chosen to live in the city and there is no fully safe place in the city. We owe the look.
- Speaker 11: This is a great opportunity, one that shouldn't be passed up. The opportunities of a bigger building, expanded space is quite exciting. It's what's inside the school that matters not what's outside.
- Speaker 12: We just joined the Decatur family. We need more selective enrollment seats. We do not have enough for any of our students.
- Speaker 13: I want my kids to have the opportunity to go to 7th and 8th grade at Decatur. I went to the neighborhood where Stewart is and I know there's a lot of apprehension but it's because of the unknown. Go sit and enjoy the neighborhood, it seems acceptable to me.
- Speaker 14: I really encourage everybody to go to Uptown and stay there for hours like I have so you can form your own opinion about Uptown. If I knew the majority of people wanted it or not, I think that would be valuable information.
- Speaker 15: What happened to Trumbull? Do we have any lobbyists for Trumbull?
- Speaker 16: I think this is the first legitimate offer on the table and we should listen to the kids that spoke. They are 12 and just don't belong in a school with 2000-4000 high schoolers.
- Speaker 17: I happen to teach at school that is walking distance from Stewart. I am witness to the community and school on a daily basis and I have never felt that my personal safety or the safety of my students are in danger.
- Speaker 18: I just finished the 5th and 6th grade extravaganza with my older child. I would love for my current 5th grader to continue his classical education in an appropriate middle school setting.
- Speaker 19: What can we do to make this neighborhood better? I can assure you that the mayor and all the other politicians in charge are not going to let what is arguably the number 1 school in the state of Illinois to have drive by shootings around it.
- Speaker 20: It is CPS' decision to move the school. We should do the move because it is in the best interest of the school as a whole.
- Speaker 21: I brought some data and want you to make the decision based on cold hard facts. Make up your own mind.

- Speaker 22: I would ask all of you to go to the area and went there myself and was surprised by the revitalization. I think it is a beautiful building and we have an Alderman willing to work with us.
- Speaker 23: I need to know more about the deal. How will the curriculum change? There are a lot of things that I still need to know but I'm glad to know we are going to talk about it.
- Speaker 24: My main point is that Uptown is on the upswing but not there yet. Did you put in a proposal in writing to the Alderman of Trumbull? I think there is room to pressure him there.
- Tim McCaffrey: One of the things I started doing to educate myself about the whole process was to meet with my representatives about the availability of public funds to expand Decatur. It is a very political process. It is not a short term process. Holding out for an expansion of Decatur is probably at best a 4-5 year plan, years down the road. There is no guarantee it will help us long term.
- Jeannette Schar: The conversation continues. We are here to be your advocates and want to hear from you. We need to open up the discussion because there is an opportunity to go back to CPS. It is an extraordinary opportunity. I strongly believe in our collective thoughts and our collective ability to look at expansion with great courage. We are hearing you. We will always put our children first.
- Ms. Kukielka: It has been a long process. There is one thing I know. I hate those letters. That our children have to get those letters. An 11 year old and 10 year old should not have to get those letters. I believe we have a common goal in this room. If our common goal is to have a 7th and 8th grade, then it will work wherever we are. I promise we will take care of the children wherever we are. CPS is doing its due diligence. Let's do it together and keep the common goal in mind.

- Next Meeting: Thursday, November 20, 2014.
- Meeting adjourned by unanimous voice vote at 8:43pm.