

**Decatur Classical School
Local School Council**

Minutes Meeting on Wednesday, November 5, 2014

- Meeting called to order by Jeannette Schar at 6:40 pm.
- Roll call:
 - Members present – Jeannette Schar, Kristin Boeke-Greven, Timothy McCaffrey, Victoria Giambrone, Laura Symons, Susan Kukielka, Marianne Sharping, Katherine Thomas, Arthur Regalado, Norman Gelfand, and Roland Paulnitsky.
 - Absent – Steve Fix.
- Approval of Agenda:
 - Amendment: switch items A and B in New Business
 - Motion was made and approved by unanimous voice vote to approve amended agenda.
- Principal's Statement:
 - Letter was sent out via email to the Decatur community on November 4, 2014.
 - Ms. Kukielka: In the years that I have been here, there have always been two priorities noted on surveys: a 7th grade and a gym. We know we have outgrown this building. There are children who need private spaces and teachers need private spaces. In asking for all of these years, for the first time ever CPS has responded. They have answered us. We are the school, the children are the school, the LSC is the school, you are the school, I am the school, the teachers are the school, and not the brick and mortar. It is the only option CPS is offering us. I do not know it is a done deal. CPS will only consider Stewart as an option for Decatur school. Due diligence is what CPS wants to do. We need to know your concerns, it's that important. Your voice matters. We need to hear from you. Our dream of a bigger and better Decatur can happen but I don't think it will happen on this campus. You, along with our staff and students can make a bigger and better Decatur Classical school. I will do the best I can no matter where we go, but today we can only talk about the option of Stewart as the bigger and better Decatur Classical school because that's what we've been charged with by CPS and that's the way to do due diligence. If we don't go back to the table with our concerns we have not done our due diligence to say what we want our bigger, better Decatur Classical to look like that will impact thousands of children for many years to come.
- Old Business:
 - Kristin Boeke-Greven reported on the work of Expansion Committee; the Decatur Expansion Committee met on October 8, 2014 to discuss historical overview and actions taken to date; Kristin, as the chairperson of the Expansion Committee, gave the formal recommendation to the LSC from the committee, who voted unanimously, to support CPS to do their due diligence and explore Stewart fully as an option for Decatur's expansion.

- New Business:
 - The board discussed the method for collecting concerns, questions, and opinions from LSC members, Decatur parents, and stakeholders.
 - Motion was made and approved that the LSC move forward with the letter writing method of collecting parents' and stakeholder's feedback and then publish the results of the feedback. The motion includes a reminder to parents that this is a way of surveying their opinions and that all the letters will be shared with the LSC and CPS. The motion was approved with 10 yays and 1 nay.
 - A motion was made and approved to conduct a survey with 2 questions. The first question would ask – do you prefer to go to Stewart with a 7th and 8th grade or do you prefer to stay in the current facility with no prospect of a 7th and 8th grade in the foreseeable future; the second question would ask – regardless of your preference in question 1, "I have the following the concerns about Stewart" and identify a number of concerns with a fill in the blank at the end and a statement that the survey is advisory and not a vote. (One vote per student) The motion passed with 8 yays, 2 nays, 1 abstention.
 - A motion was made and passed by unanimous vote to table agenda item VIII. Vote – LSC's position on exploring viability at Stewart Elementary School.
 - The board discussed negotiations with CPS to explore expansion viability at Stewart; Kristin Boeke-Greven read the working document listing concerns that would be presented at negotiations with CPS.

- Public Comment:
 - Speaker 1: I love Decatur and I want to stay here. Please don't move us. Not everyone would move to the new school.
 - Speaker 2: While I like the idea of a gym, a cafeteria, a 7th and 8th grade, and a bigger school overall. I don' like the idea of looking over my shoulder or having police keep a close eye on us on the playground. That would be the reality of moving to Uptown, something I am not comfortable with.
 - Speaker 3: I am in favor of CPS pursuing the move because I need to know as much as possible about the opportunity. On behalf of the PTA board, we ask that you appreciate that the LSC is comprised of volunteer leadership and that you support them in their decision today and in the future.
 - Speaker 4: My family is in favor of the move to Stewart. We are aware of the area and believe our children deserve a 7th and 8th grade.
 - Speaker 5: I am in favor of expansion. I think we need it. If we move there, to Stewart, are you confident that our children are safe? Safety is more important to me than opportunity.
 - Speaker 6: I do want expansion. I voted to support CPS' due diligence on expansion but I personally hope that they see that Stewart is not a viable option.
 - Speaker 7: I am in strong support for relocation to Stewart. What is the timeline for CPS to expect us to get to full, efficient capacity?
 - Speaker 8: I want to ask the LSC to consider the children, the community formerly at Stewart. We are taking over their neighborhood school.

Please engage the community leaders and try to understand better how they feel.

- Speaker 9: I have been seeking compromise since hearing about Stewart. I appreciate the transparency, but even this gives me problems. This should have been done first; a survey should have been done first.
- Speaker 10: To my knowledge, no students have been hurt in schools in that area. There is a budget deficit next year. Larger schools with a larger parent base will thrive much better than smaller schools. You need Stewart.
- Speaker 11: I agree that we should move to Stewart, I agree it is not a perfect solution, but I believe with the community, as parents, we can get a lot done from our elected officials.
- Speaker 12: We support the expansion of Decatur to the Stewart building. There are schools bursting at the seams. We have to go somewhere where there is TIF funding or become a neighborhood school and that is not something people want on the table.
- Speaker 13: My family supports the relocation to Stewart. It's not the perfect plan, but is a good plan that will help expand the education that our kids can get and gives them two more years to get that. I don't have problems with the area.
- Speaker 14: When I voted for my LSC representatives, I knew they would make the hard decisions with our best interests in mind for the current community and future generations. I urge the LSC not to take the vote but to do as you've been charged to do as our representatives. I stand up with Uptown, Stewart, and my LSC.
- Speaker 15: Decatur rocks. When Stewart happens, you guys are going to feel safe. I understand safety concerns, but you don't want that worry that your child feels in 6th grade.
- Speaker 16: The idea of more children getting the education we've come to enjoy at Decatur is the reason why I 'm speaking here. I think more children should have an opportunity for more seats for a good education.
- Speaker 17: Thank you for listening. No one has been damaged by casting their opinion in a democracy. It is not going to sell to that community. This process has been done backwards.
- Speaker 18: I do not feel like opinion has been listened to. I am against Stewart. We are playing into CPS' hands. I am for expansion but not Stewart.
- Speaker 19: There are a lot of assumptions being made about the area around Stewart. It is a thriving community and culture. We shouldn't make assumptions on the neighborhood based on statistics. We should consider a couple of tours of the community if we do go.
- Speaker 20: We should be having constant discussions about safety if this move should occur. Let's not let our own fears prevent us from exploring this potentially amazing opportunity that has come our way.
- Speaker 21: I am for the proposed move to Stewart. The magic of Decatur is not the building. It's us, what we can do. I see really great opportunities. Our children are more important than any fear we have about safety at Stewart.

- Speaker 22: I am angry at what my boy has to go through right now. I resent what we have to go through. It's not fair. You younger parents will see what you have to go through.
 - Speaker 23: We are in favor of relocation to Stewart. This is a bigger move for CPS.
 - Speaker 24: Safety really does trump everything. Is our child's learning worth life and limb? I favor expansion, but I would rather have my child take another test than not be able to take a test at all.
 - Speaker 25: We have concerns about safety, however our concerns for safety are outweighed by our needs for 7th and 8th grade. It is important to make sure CPS knows our safety concerns.
 - Speaker 26: Safety is paramount. I feel safer in my neighborhood school than I would at Stewart.
 - Speaker 27: Our bright babies deserve to enjoy their elementary experience. What were the statistics when Stewart was open?
 - Speaker 28: I think it is important just to know where everyone stands. It will influence my thinking. The gun crime statistics are real, so take a look at them.
 - Speaker 29: We can do this. It is the safety in the school that matters and not what's around it. Too much testing, we don't need it.
 - Speaker 30: These kids are put under so much pressure and I'm turning into this crazy mom that I don't want to be. My husband works for the CPD and he had no qualms about Uptown so I am for the move.
 - Roland Paulnitsky: I am concerned for safety for everybody. I am concerned Stewart is a safe passage school. I would need more help at a school like Stewart.
 - Norman Gelfand: The decision made by CPS will affect far more children than the children in the school now. We need to make sure that CPS understands that they need to make a commitment to make a school like this thrive not only for kids now, but ten years for now.
 - Jeannette Schar: We raised our hand for the 4 north side schools. We were told Trumbull was off the table. Courtenay was not going to work. I raised my hand on behalf of the community to raise our interest in Stewart because it was the only building left. I would have disappointed far more in the Decatur community had I not raised my hand.
- A motion was made Jeannette Schar, seconded by Krisitn Boeke-Greven and passed by unanimous vote to table agenda item VIII. Vote LSC's position on exploring viability at Stewart Elementary School.
 - Next Meeting: Thursday, November 20, 2014.
 - Meeting adjourned by unanimous voice vote at 8:55pm.