

Correspondence from Tim Born with response from Chris Kloeppe:

Dear Board members:

I will keep this brief and thus ask that you consider the content and not take offense if the manner of presentation seems abrupt.

I know that each of you have put in a great deal of time and effort in trying to put forth the best option for siting the new school and thus bring to the public for a vote. However, I fear that if the focus remains on siting the new school and going thru to dot the I's and cross the T's and ultimately bring to a vote the site you feel is best that it will again fail.

I believe it will fail because just simply picking a new site for the school and maybe throwing some fixes for a couple of other buildings in the mix to draw votes is still just a bandage on a bigger developing wound. The facilities needs and sites of those facilities goes well beyond the more immediate need of the one high school. Many are like me and simply aren't going to vote to build a new high school until we see a more comprehensive twenty to thirty year plan to address the issues that we all know are there in the other buildings and the sites of those buildings. Many of the problems we have now are a result of not having the immediate and a tie-in to the longer range plan twenty or more years ago.

If that had existed we just may not be facing as many hard to solve problems now. So why move forward with a bandage and leave the same main wound existing to continue to get worse.

1. The data I found from real estate suggests that the southwest will continue to grow with more well-to-do families, the south will continue to grow with middle and up families while the North and Northwest will continue to grow with middle to under-middle to poor families. Ok let's say you build Central HS on the North property, from the data Centennial is in the wrong place within 10 years – some suggest you then build another new HS to the south-southwest. Well, then you have a school in a poor area and one in a well-to-do area ---- Are you going to bus students again, end up in court again or what???

2. Are the elementary schools in the right locations for the future growth predictions?

3. Are the middle schools in the right locations for the future growth predictions? There are already complaints from people for the amount of criss crossing occurring for families to get their kids to their respective schools. That will grow to be more of a problem.

The last group of board members said they had a long-term plan yet couldn't seem to articulate it to the public. Nor could they make a case for their new high school proposal being a part of an acceptable medium and long-term plan.

I believe that if you wish to get a favorable vote (and especially one that is a dominant majority to really get public buy-in) you MUST be able to present a discernable medium and longer range plan that the people can look at and agree that it is not only possible to do but provides a path to its accomplishment. As is, if we vote to just build a new High School and maybe some other facility improvements we KNOW there will be another proposal put in front of the public for more bonds and tax increases in the future. Those issues will cost even more and the district will be even less-prepared

to handle those issues because of still not determining this bigger picture need that existed twenty years ago, is more of a problem today because they didn't address it then and will be an even bigger issue in the future if we continue to just bandage and not prepare plans for sites and needs for many years into the future.

Thank you and with respect,
Tim Born

Dear Mr. Born,

Thanks so much for taking the time to share your thoughts about Unit 4's facilities planning process. We plan to share your letter with the Tier Two Facilities committee at their next meeting on March 31st.

When we created the Special Board Committee on Facilities back in January, we specifically charged them "to provide recommendations on a long term facility plan." Certainly the discussion from the last Tier Two meeting about possible site locations and configurations for a new or renovated Central High School received a lot of attention in the local media; however, as you rightly point out, that should be only one part of a clearly communicated overall plan for Unit 4's facilities.

The facilities needing the most attention (that were covered at last week's meeting) include not just Central but Centennial also; Edison Middle School; and the three non-renovated elementary campuses (IPA, Dr. Howard, and South Side). A proposal has been made to both increase capacity and simultaneously add programming at the middle school level by expanding IPA to K-8. Growth in Champaign and Savoy, along with a few possible sites for future schools, has also been discussed. All of this information will need to be taken into account.

Unit 4 serves the entire population of two cities and the surrounding unincorporated area. We take very seriously our responsibility to provide an equitable and excellent education to all segments of our community. Since the economic segregation you describe in your email is unfortunately beyond the control of the school district, we must instead focus on creating thoughtful policies -- like schools of choice, feeder schools (for middle schools), and fair districting (for high schools) -- that promote excellence throughout the district. Locating and maintaining facilities is a key part of this vision, balancing the geography of future growth with preserving accessibility for underserved populations.

In May (or thereabouts) we have asked the Tier Two committee to report to the Unit 4 Board on the following: "location of facilities, collaborations/partnerships with other public entities in the Unit #4 District, and finance/referendum schedule." Our hope is to include as many community stakeholders as possible in the development of our facilities plan, since the reality of long-term planning is that it lasts only as long as the Board that creates and articulates it.

We hope that you continue to follow our efforts
(see especially <http://facilityplanning.champaignschools.org>) as we work to flesh out the kind of
medium- and long-term facilities planning you describe, and we welcome your feedback.

Sincerely,

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