

Dear Neil

Please forward this to Chris Koeppel, Steve Carter and anyone else on School Board or Tier Two committee or in administration you think appropriate to address the issue(s). The emails I have for these persons are all bouncing back.

Dear Tier Two Committee

I am sincerely hoping, as a member of KC,C committee, I can actively support a Unit 4 school referendum this autumn; I plan to so if rationality prevails as the outcome of Unit 4's current process. I'm hopeful on the basis of what I've seen so far.

I've read and studied the 2008 Demographic Report - quite excellent and professional. Eight years have elapsed and where are we now, really? I've collected and analyzed 14 years of data. This data is attached in a spreadsheet which I distributed to KC,C last year and I've attached below.

I see nothing in the data to suggest that we are in a demographic crisis in terms of enrollment.

According to recent figures, Central High School has 1,250 students.
According to recent figures, Centennial High School has 1,494 students.

At the high school level, enrollment appears flat or even declining. We must build for the present and plan for the future because EVENTUALLY the district will POSSIBLY need to accommodate 3,400 high school students; Champaign and Savoy both enjoy modest growth. But I can't predict the future student population with that same sense of certainty held by some persons of influence. I can only look at the data and see what it suggests.

Several factors make prediction difficult. Foremost is student mobility. We can't assume that every student in grade 8 will enroll in high school, nor can we predict how many high schoolers will suddenly appear from elsewhere.

Also, I understand that a private "Academy" high school is soon to be built in Champaign and will be functional by 2018. In the absence of any data whatever, we may infer that mobility of high school students will become MORE of an issue, not less. Public high school growth might even turn negative. This suggests that project plan phasing might be a necessity for our public high school(s).

Another concern or issue that has NOT been addressed to my own satisfaction as an activist voter, is exactly WHY our two high schools have to exactly match with a capacity of 1,700, as long as that figure (or even larger) can be accommodated at a later date? I've heard that "athletic concerns" drive these numbers. In my book, these concerns are a red herring, especially when I look at athletic participation numbers of students in our two high schools. If Bloomington-Normal can accommodate a 300 student variance between high schools, why can't we? We've successfully managed a gap of 240.

The data suggests a carefully planned phased approach to growth - an "urban infill" plan which meets needs for the next 8 - 10 years with plans outlining future development. These plans should then accommodate - architecturally and financially - a phased (and expected) expansion when as student population approaches a point of real need.

I have other minor issues, but the district's mystical attachment to 1700 per school and 3400 total is beyond me. Yes, there have been a few reasons offered, but they don't make sense to this citizen.

Sincerely,

Mark L. Middleton