

Community Unit School District 300

**Board of Education
Regular Meeting**

Monday, January 28, 2008

Transcript of Discussion and Vote on Agenda Item 5.0

**Secondary School Boundary Changes
and Grandfathering
Effective 2008-2009**

Meeting held at:
Carpentersville Middle School
100 Cleveland Avenue
Carpentersville, IL 60110

Transcribed By:
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for Office Team

Transcript Begins

Board President Joe Stevens

As a matter of protocol, so you understand what I'm doing, I am going to call the question for a vote, and once that question is seconded, then we will have a Board discussion. That's the way the protocol works because that is next on our list. So under the Roll Call Item 5.10, I would like a motion please for approval of the secondary school boundary changes effective 2008-2009 as listed, which would be ABC Proposal No. 3 for High Schools, ABC Proposal No. 10 for Middle Schools, and Grandfathering current grades 7, 9, 10, and 11 with no district transportation provided.

Board Member Mary Warren

So moved.

Board Vice President Karen Roeckner

Seconded.

Board President Joe Stevens

Excuse me. Mr. Ryan?

Board Member John Ryan

I was going to suggest a motion, but Mrs. Warren beat me to it that we separate each of the three and address them on an individual basis.

Board President Joe Stevens

I have anticipated this as a possibility and I have checked with *Roberts Rules* and with legal counsel and one board member, as a consent item could be changed, could request that they be voted on individually. So, are you requesting that?

Board Member John Ryan

I am requesting that.

Board President Joe Stevens

All right. So then I would ask that you withdraw that motion. It's no longer in order.

Board Member Mary Warren

I have no problem modifying my motion to taking the proposals separately.

Board President Joe Stevens

Mrs. Roeckner?

Board Vice President Karen Roeckner

I withdraw the second.

Board President Joe Stevens

Thank you. Could I have a motion please for approval of the ABC Proposal #3 for the High Schools?

Board Member Mary Warren

So moved.

Board Vice President Karen Roeckner

Second.

Board President Joe Stevens

Discussion?

Board Member John Ryan

Mr. Stevens, I was not part of the Board of Education when the elementary school boundary process took place. I had the luxury of being able to view that from the outside looking in without any liability. Needless to say, that's not an option for me this evening. I take the responsibility very seriously. I had some concerns and will continue to have some concerns, with no offense intended to the ABC Committee or to those individuals in the administration who supported them in terms of that process. My major concern was the data that was being used. We know that it has proven to be not quite what it panned out to be, for a variety of reasons. I also had some misgivings about the process in and of itself how it worked. But, not being on the Board at that time, you know, I wanted to allow that process to work – and it has – and we're here this evening.

Just to address a couple of the folks who seem to have the notion that this is a foregone decision: Nothing is farther from the truth. You know we had three public opportunities for people to come personally and air their concerns. As Mr. Stevens said, we have had multitudes of emails received that were forwarded directly to each individual Board member. Every one of us got every email that was sent. And so nothing could be further from the truth. I would like to allay your concerns as best I can that what's going to happen here this evening is a predetermined conclusion.

We met on the 19th of January as a Board to conduct a work session. No action could be taken legally at that meeting. We discussed the findings amongst ourselves and we tried to reach a consensus, but nothing was decided as it will be in the next couple of moments. You know, in looking at these proposals, none of them, in my opinion, are going to solve all of our ills. And I don't want this to be a decision, at least on my part, of having to choose the lesser of two evils simply to have to revisit this again in a number of years.

Taking a look at Proposal 3 versus Proposal 10, the difference that we're talking about here is merely 29 students the first year. You know, I shared my concerns with my constituents as well as with my colleagues. I, in my one Board member's opinion, my opinion and my opinion alone, I felt the boundaries, at least in terms of Proposals 3 and 6, probably did go a little bit too far to the east.

You'll see what my vote is here in a couple of moments. But I just wanted to let you all to know, to the best of my ability, that this is not a foregone conclusion. This is simply just not a rubber stamp and that all of us, in our own way, have given a lot of time, trouble and credence to all of your concerns. I want to make that just as clear as I can. Thank you.

Board President Joe Stevens

Thank you. Mrs. Clark, are you still with us?

Board Member Monica Clark

Yes. I am.

Board President Joe Stevens

Anytime you want to jump in you need to let us know otherwise we'll just keep on going here.

Board Member Monica Clark

All right. Thank you.

Board President Joe Stevens

Did you wish to make a comment Mrs. Clark?

Board Member Monica Clark

No. I'm still listening. Thank you.

Board President Joe Stevens

Mrs. Warren?

Board Member Mary Warren

Yes. Thank you. At our Board work session on the 19th, we spent a tremendous amount of time discussing each of the proposals. We have not only received all of the public comment and emails, but spent time at those public hearings listening to your comments.

One of the things I need to clarify, because in many emails that we received there seemed to be some misconceptions that residents emailed in to "vote". Public comment is to look at proposals that the Board is authorized to vote on. We had a tremendous email campaign, from basically ONE subdivision and a couple of other minor subdivisions, and because we do look at addresses, we know where comments are coming from.

I know in any boundary change there will be people who will be unhappy because we don't like change. As a Board member, it's our job to look at the entire District and to look at our guiding principles of how to best serve the 20,000 students that we have in our charge.

At our work session, we basically focused on Proposal No. 3 and Proposal No. 10. We had discussion on No. 6. We disagreed with some of the premise of how it was laid out and basically spent our time focusing on those two. The difference between the two is Proposal 3 is going to be a more long-term fix. When I say long term, I'm talking about maybe seven to ten years. We live in a growing District. We've been growing since the 90's, and anyone who buys a home in the District needs to know that when you live in a growing District boundaries change; they are fluid. It's one of the consequences of buying here.

But, looking at those, the problem with Proposal 10 as compared to Proposal 3 is it does not do enough to alleviate the populations at Dundee-Crown and Jacobs. It leaves those buildings at capacity with residential areas still growing within them. We built onto those schools three times since I've lived in this community. They are maxed out. There should be no idea of continuing to build onto Dundee-Crown and Jacobs. We put our finances toward building a third high school. Hampshire was a high school; It was a middle school high school. And we have a brand new beautiful facility that will help us with our continued growth in the future. But, if we don't move enough students out of Dundee-Crown and Jacobs, both of those schools will be overcrowded. That is not what anyone counted on.

We have to move attendance zones. We're trying our best to meet the needs of students. We are sensitive to the fact it is more difficult for high school students to change schools. We've had some students who've emailed us and they're anxious to go. They are usually in the minority.

We also have to balance those facts with our financial responsibility to this District. I've sat on this Board since 2001 and worked very hard to go through a 31 million deficit to get our budget even. We are not going to go back in debt because of a few emotional issues.

I have the utmost faith in our staff because I have seen them do it before - that whatever decision is made, transition teams will be in place to welcome students into their new educational facility. And with the support of their parents at home, they are going to have a great change. I believe that firmly. I've seen it done before. With that, I'm very much supporting the administrative recommendation on these proposals.

Board President Joe Stevens

Anyone else wish to comment? Mrs. Roeckner? I'm sorry. Do you wish to comment?

Board Vice President Karen Roeckner

I know we have a lot of people out there and we've received a lot of emails. We do read them all. I think we've had 150 in the last, I think, two days. And as a Board member who sat on the ABC team and was at every meeting and worked with all the 50 community members who provided input into this boundary proposal back the Board, I think they did a great job in coming up with different ideas to help us relieve overcrowding at our high schools. I agree with Mrs. Warren. I think what our administration has recommended is a great idea. It will work well with our students.

I have been in a situation, like many of you, where my students have been moved. My children have been moved three times and I didn't move. I'm still in my same house in the last ten years. So I know what it is to have to deal with transition in moving your students from school to school, and that's why the Board has worked hard and looked at the grandfathering as well. So I do have a lot of confidence in our administration and our principals to welcome your students to their new schools. It will be a change. And as I've said, I've been there. My students and my children have been there themselves.

I agree with administration and I look forward to our plans. Thank you.

Mr. Stevens

Mrs. Miller? Mr. Stanton?

Board Secretary Anne Miller

This is not the first time that I, or many of you out there, have sat through boundary changes, high school boundary changes. It's not an easy thing, and I'm not going to reiterate the comments regarding input. No decision has been made. We'll see how the vote turns out.

When I was a student years ago, I transferred my sophomore year of high school. I vowed at that time that that was something I would never do, if I could ever avoid it, to my students (or) to any of my children. When I got on the Board, that was the same vow I made, not only for my students but others as well. It's not an easy change. We can say that grandfathering will take care of that because you have the option of staying in your base school. That only solves part of the problem. It doesn't take care of the issue of getting there. It doesn't take care of the issue if you are the only child within your subdivision that is still going to the school because others are going to another school.

The problem we are faced with, that I see that we're faced with, is we have a lot of public comments that come in that saying vote for 10, don't vote for 3. Most often the comments that come in are from those people that are going to be affected. Those that are indirectly affected – the students that are still in those overcrowded buildings because they are not physically moved – we don't hear comments from them. So we have to weigh those public comments against the wealth of information that we have: that we have received from ABC Committee, from the process they've gone through, from what our administration recommends.

One of the things I have stated early on is the Boundary Committee, the ABC Committee, was charged with looking at numbers. In my mind, and this is a mental flaw that I may have, I have a very hard time of segregating moving numbers from the academic program. In our work session on the 19th, Mr. Hay discussed a little bit more about the academic program and he took our different high schools and each of the proposals that were presented and he said it's not going to matter really. The programs that have issues we've addressed those. We're working towards that.

I like the idea of the least amount of students being moved. I like the idea of listening to what people have to say. I don't see that either one of these proposals, whether it's 3 or 10, is going to effectively address the overcrowding we have at Dundee-Crown or Jacobs. And I see long-term, down the road, that there's going to have to be changes. I want to affect the least amount of students at this point in time so that I'm not double affecting them down the road. As that growth comes in, and whether we need another high school out west or we need to put more students out into Hampshire, there's going to have to be changes made. I don't want to make changes now and then again three years from now that will affect the same students.

Board President Joe Stevens

Thank you, Mrs. Miller. Mr. Stanton?

Board Member Chris Stanton

I guess I'm kind of glad we split them (the Board votes on high school boundaries, middle school boundaries, and grandfathering) up because I'm struggling with the first one.

As I looked at (Proposal) 3, it's NOT really the administration's recommendation. It is the ABC Committee coming back and working with the Board and going to the work sessions and the administration kind of actively participates. It's really this group (the Board) that's going to make the change.

As we looked at this, we struggled with: How do you rely on the ABC Committee that spent a multitude of hours of their time in trying to come up with the best three plans and this is what came to us. As you look at them (the proposals), you could probably tweak each one and start to play in the lab and fix it the way you think it needs to be fixed and maybe not take all of the logic the group put into these plans.

Long term, I kind of agree with Mrs. Miller that we're not going to fix everything tonight, regardless of which plan we pick. Because it depends on the housing market and what comes where and who's going to shift through the District. But there is a concern with the other two high schools that the more folks you leave behind, the more overcrowded those schools (Jacobs and Dundee-Crown) are going to become. And as some of the emails stated, just make this school bigger, make that school bigger. I mean, that brings in a whole other set of problems for those individual high schools.

It's not an easy job being a parent and making this decision. It's not an easy job being a Board member and making this decision. I will tell you I am from the Hampshire side of the community, but I live almost in Elgin so I probably could have gone to U-46 schools and been closer to those. It's a chore. We talked about a lot of things through the work session in trying to grandfather the children in. Allow them to finish their education the way they started it which is, I was big on that, that these kids came in as Freshmen and they charted out where they wanted to be by the time they were going to end up to be a Senior.

One of the other things I asked for in the information last week was the different colleges that these kids go to from the three high schools. Because there's this misconception that the programs aren't in this school or aren't in that school. Each of the three high schools had very similar colleges that the kids attended. In fact, Dundee-Crown had a little bit more impressive record just because the number of schools that the different kids went to. Percentage wise, each of the high schools were sending the same number of students to those colleges. So, I mean, to me that was impressive.

I just want to say, as we vote tonight, a lot of thought has gone into this by this group, by the ABC Committee, by the administration and certainly by the parents of the children that are affected. I look forward to making it through the vote and making it through the process, especially for the children.

And that was a goal of ours, to grandfather. Let the kids who are going to change schools, going from middle school to high school, make that transition into their new schools. There was some indication that there wasn't going to be transportation for kids – it was the

grandfathering kids that we weren't going to provide transportation for. Certainly we are going to provide transportation for kids who are targeted to their new schools.

That's all I have.

Board President Joe Stevens

Mrs. Clark, I'm not asking for a vote, but if you wish to comment, now would be the time.

Board Member Monica Clark

It's a very short comment. I want to say I have 100% confidence in our decision because we have utilized our ABC Committee to its fullest. Those people who gave of their time certainly looked at this because they had just as much at stake as the Board does, making sure their children receive a quality education. And so when we make this decision, it is not done lightly and we counted on the ABC Committee to do their job and I think they did a fantastic job. I, for one, have 100% full confidence that we looked at all of the avenues that we possibly can.

Tonight I realize we are going to make some people very unhappy. We're going to make other people very happy. So be it.

And that's all I have to say.

Board President Joe Stevens

Thank you, Mrs. Clark.

My comment would be a little bit of all of the above. First of all, I many times get asked what we get paid for being Board members, and I just want to reiterate we get paid zero. We do this because we believe in public education. We're trying to do the right thing for our community. We take this job extremely seriously. We do read all of the emails. We do answer all of the phone calls that come to us. We do go to the public hearings to be able to actually encounter people and talk with them.

And this is one of those situations where it's a bit of a lose/lose. No matter which way we go, we're going to be making someone unhappy. When I talked with folks at the public hearings, it was, well, "Make that family unhappy; don't make my family unhappy." When I really got down to it, grandfathering was actually what I got talked to more than where the person would actually end up, school wise. When I asked for a definition of grandfathering, the interesting thing was – it wasn't just the child that's in that school, but is forevermore whatever child comes from my household should be grandfathered to that school. Well, then we'd never change boundaries. Because if that family continues to have children that continue to go to that school, we'd never change boundaries.

I'm impacted by Mr. Ryan's comment that there are only 29 students difference. But I am also impacted by the fact that one of the principles we went into this with, and the ABC Committee looked at this, is that there's an overcrowding issue at Dundee-Crown and there's an overcrowding issue at Jacobs. It's NOT that we're trying to fill Hampshire High School. There's overcrowding at the other two schools that's not resolved if we don't move students out.

I also share Mrs. Miller's concern and I actually disagree with Mrs. Warren. I think we're going to be doing this much sooner than seven to ten years. I think that we're going to have an overcrowding problem and we may, in fact, have to address this again. The fact of the matter is, we have to shift things to the west in order to be able accommodate the growth that's taking place.

With regard to grandfathering, I think all of us emotionally would like to do that. And I will tell you that while I do not have any children currently in District 300 schools, my youngest son, we moved and transferred him into Jacobs in the middle of his Junior year. It wasn't even at the beginning of the year. It was the middle of his Junior year. And I want to tell you we had a lot of difficulty at home with that decision. But I also want to tell you that literally within five days, he was fine with where things were at and we were still upset.

The children usually adjust much faster than the parents do. It is emotional. It is difficult. You do sometimes separate friendships. It is very, very difficult, but I don't know that it's avoidable.

With regard to the District's recommendation, and I believe we concurred that we do not provide transportation for people who are grandfathered. But the bottom line is we hope people don't choose to grandfather, because that will only exacerbate our problem. However, if they do choose to grandfather, which is what we got a lot of public comment on, then it is not the District's responsibility to add cost to all the other taxpayers that support this District to bus those students. It's then a family responsibility and it's a family decision. And we looked at that very heavily, that we cannot penalize the other families within the District to satisfy several subdivisions' families. That would not be appropriate. This is a very, very difficult decision.

And again, no matter which way we go, someone is going to be unhappy, but we're going to be calling for that vote shortly.

Dr. Arndt do you wish to add anything?

Superintendent Dr. Kenneth Arndt

Just let me add a few more things. The statement was made earlier that the staff would make sure that whatever the decision the Board makes, it will indeed work. And that's just not the administrators, but it's all the teaching staff and support staff because we understand how emotional this decision is for all of our families.

Some things that have not been mentioned, but definitely are going to be what we're going to work towards.

We're trying to make sure no student in 300 (except special education or NCLB students) next year rides a bus more than 30 minutes. In fact, at our last meeting, the Board approved additional busses so we can accomplish that goal. So that is our goal for all kids (except special education or NCLB students) next year. No long bus rides. 30 minutes or less.

In regards to “will the students have the same extracurricular opportunities,” I contacted IHSA last week and spoke with their Executive Director, Mr. Hickman. He understands our unique situation. They will also work with us, because we do not want to have a student or athlete be denied an opportunity to participate in a sport he or she presently participates in.

And lastly, but most importantly, we are going to make sure that our students receive the academic programs that right now they are accustomed to. But again, it’s become extremely difficult because of the large class sizes at Jacobs and Dundee-Crown because we seriously have too many kids in those two schools.

Again, we will make sure that whatever the decision of the Board, that it does work in our kids’ best interest.

Board President Joe Stevens

If I could just add a couple of comments, too. A nightmare scenario is that if we make the decision to approve No. 3 and kids move out of Dundee-Crown to Jacobs and everybody’s grandfathered at Jacobs, you could see trailers at Jacobs because we will not be able to accommodate everybody if they are grandfathered. It could be a problem. We need to face that reality as well, that this is not an easy solution. And with that, if there are no other questions, I would please ask Mrs. Miller to call the question.

Board Secretary Anne Miller

Could I make a comment first?

Board President Joe Stevens

Sure.

Board Secretary Anne Miller

The three recommendations from the ABC Committee, 6, 10 and 3 met certain criteria that was set out by the Board. Those three proposals passed the ABC Committee coming up to the Board. All three proposals, based on our work session – we put 6 aside – would work for the administration for our schools. Either of the proposals, 3 or 10 – since 6 didn’t carry much weight – would work and would address and did address the issues that ABC was tasked with.

Board President Joe Stevens

As we’re calling the question, just for clarity, we are voting either yes or no on ABC Proposal No. 3 for high schools and that’s the only question being called. Mrs. Miller would you call the question?

Board Member Mary Warren - Aye

Board Vice President Karen Roeckner – Aye

Board Member Monica Clark (via telephone conference call) – Aye

Board Secretary Anne Miller – No

Board Member John Ryan – No

Board Member Chris Stanton – No

Board President Joe Stevens – Aye

Board Secretary Anne Miller

Motion carries 4 to 3.

Board President Joe Stevens

Could I have a motion please for approval of the ABC Proposal No. 10 for middle schools?

Board Member John Ryan

So moved.

Board Vice President Karen Roeckner

Second.

Board President Joe Stevens

Is there any discussion?

Board Vice President Karen Roeckner

Just quickly, looking at why we chose Proposal No. 10 over Proposal No. 3, we were trying to keep the students traveling with the same cohort of students through their educational experience. We know that at Dundee Middle School students will split to three high schools as we have seen in neighboring districts. But Proposal No. 10 allowed the students from Gilberts Elementary School to then go on together to Hampshire High School and Proposal No. 3 actually split them again. Once again, that was the reasoning behind Proposal 10.

Board President Joe Stevens

Any other comments? Mrs. Clark, do you have a comment on the proposal on the table?

Board Member Monica Clark.

No, I don't.

Board President Joe Stevens

Mrs. Miller will you call the question?

Board Member John Ryan – Aye

Board Vice President Karen Roeckner, Aye

Board Member Mary Warren – Aye

Mary Miller – Aye

Board Member Chris Stanton – Aye

Board President Joe Stevens – Aye

Board Member Monica Clark (via telephone conference call) – Aye

Board Secretary Anne Miller

Motion carries, 7-0.

Board President Joe Stevens

Could I have a motion please to grandfather current Grades 7, 9, 10 and 11 students with no District supplied transportation?

Board Vice President Karen Roeckner

So moved.

Board Member Chris Stanton

Second.

Board President Joe Stevens

Is there any discussion on that motion? Mrs. Roeckner?

Board Vice President Karen Roeckner

I just want to clarify so that everyone understands that current 7th graders may elect to stay at their middle school for the following year and as long as transportation is provided by their parents. And then, current students in their schools in Grades Freshman, Sophomore and Junior can stay at their schools and be grandfathered in as long as transportation is provided. So hopefully, that clears it up. I think we had some comments during sessions that their Sophomore would not be allowed to stay in that school. So I just want to be sure that everyone understands what that means.

Board President Joe Stevens

Any other comments? Go ahead Mrs. Clark.

Board Member Monica Clark

I just want to clarify. I had a little interference. Mrs. Roeckner said transportation would be provided?

Board President Joe Stevens

Would NOT be provided.

Board Vice President Karen Roeckner

Would NOT be provided.

Board President Joe Stevens

Would not be provided.

Board Member Monica Clark

Would not. Okay. Just wanted to make sure.

Board President Joe Stevens

Are there any other comments? Mrs. Miller would you call the question?

Board Vice President Karen Roeckner – Aye

Board Member Chris Stanton – Aye

Board Secretary Anne Miller – Aye

Board Member Monica Clark (via telephone conference call) – No

Board Member John Ryan – Aye

Board President Joe Stevens – Aye
Board Member Mary Warren – Aye

Board Secretary Anne Miller

Motion carries 6-1.

Board Member Mary Warren

Mr. Stevens, I just wanted to make one comment before our audience members leave. The information coming to you on grandfathering will be a very short timeframe and you must take action if you want your student to stay at their current school. I just want to make sure everyone is clear on that – that they (Transcriptionist note: incomplete).

Unidentified voice from audience

What do you mean we need to take action? What do we need to do?

Board Member Mary Warren

You will receive a letter where you are going to need to check that, “Yes, we want our child to stay there. We understand we (the family) will provide transportation,” and sign it and send it back (to the school). I just want that clarified so that everyone is aware of that and if they want to do that option of grandfathering, that they will do that. The letter will be coming home with your student, but it is a short timeframe because we have high school registration coming up very quickly. So please be aware of that.

Board President Joe Stevens

Dr. Scarpino, maybe you could go out in the lobby. Dr. Scarpino is making his way out to the lobby and will be addressing that process.

Dr. Kenneth Arndt

He’s right up there by the poster.

Unidentified voice from the audience

It’s real easy for Miss Clark to sit there and talk on the phone the way she is and I understand she’s got business concerns, but you cannot tell me that tonight’s meeting was not preordained already. You cannot tell me that.

Board President Joe Stevens

I am telling you that. It was not preordained.

Unidentified voice from the audience

(Not understandable)

Board President Joe Stevens

That is certainly your option, sir.

*** TRANSCRIPT ENDS ***

Certification

I, Roberta Glab, of 4006 Oak Avenue, McHenry, IL 60050, an employee of Office Team, 2800 W. Higgins Road, Suite 180, Hoffman Estates, IL 60195, 847 885-6228, hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the discussion and vote on Agenda Item 5.10, Approval of Secondary School Boundary Changes Effective 2008-2009, recorded on cassette tape on January 28, 2008 at a Regular Meeting of the Community Unit School District 300 Board of Education held at Carpentersville Middle School, Carpentersville, IL 60110.

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