

11/23/15

ACCESS PTA Special Boundary Review Meeting Agenda

7 p.m. call to order

Community meeting reports and scenario information updates. A parent mentioned that Paul Anthony, school board member, is an active participant on the N/NE PPS Facebook site, which is a very active site. Mr. Wood had a meeting with Karl Logan on Thursday, and he had no new information. Karl Logan was at the Roseway Heights meeting on the 18th, and felt that the ACCESS families were the most articulate. No one at the meeting was aware of any new information that has come up on Facebook or at the community meetings so far. Heather Kent was at the DBRAC meeting at CIO and the format for that meeting was small group discussion, with no large group comments. We discussed the obvious inequity between the PPS schools, and also that some schools have programs funded by school foundations or grants (such as our Mandarin program) while others don't. Middle Schools vary, and some schools, like Laurelhurst and ACCESS, have core teachers also teaching some specials which increases the variety of classes.

ACCESS parent survey results and review of draft talking points- Heather Kent. Results will be posted tonight. There were 119 respondents, 2/3 of whom were elementary families. There was a fairly good distribution from different neighborhoods. Highest ranked priorities were: central location, adequate facilities, room to grow, and building condition. Parents brought up the fact that the EPA is watching Tubman for cadmium, as there are higher air levels of cadmium there and they couldn't identify the source.

Other ideas that came from the survey included having our own building, stability, adequate time to plan for a move, and support from staff and community. No staff answered the survey but Mr. Wood's impression is that their feelings are fairly similar to those expressed by parents on the survey.

Of the 3 building options on the table, 40% would prefer Tubman, 30% RCP, 15% Kellogg, and 15% other.

Among the HS options currently available, 49% of parents said they would send their child to Grant (which is the neighborhood school for some of those respondents), 42% to their neighborhood school, and 9% to private school. If there were an ACCESS cohort at Grant 75% would go there. 10-15 respondents specifically mentioned concerns about Grant. Most families supported a cohort within a bigger HS as opposed to a stand alone program. Several mentioned that there is no Mandarin offered at Grant, and that ACCESS students should be able to take Mandarin at their HS. It was mentioned that DBRAC has expressed that the ability to continue programs such as language into high school is a priority. Parents feel that ACCESS students should have both opportunities to continue current offerings, such as Mandarin, and also opportunities for advanced and accelerated classes.

Principal announcements and updates. Mr. Wood had conversations with the principals at Lincoln and Cleveland high schools, and both are interested in having ACCESS high school students in their schools, but neither have additional space. Mr. Wood plans to talk to Greg Wolleck (the senior director

of HS along with Shea James) next who might be able to address space issues at the high school level.

Advocacy- assignments and information. Heather handed out a sheet with talking points for DBRAC meetings. She brought up the issue of advocating for growth at grades beyond 3rd grade. Now that the current growth plan is fulfilled, there are only 2-3 openings per grade which makes it very difficult for older students who need ACCESS but who missed out on applying to ACCESS for 3rd grade. A parent brought up that we should also grow 1st and 2nd grades and have complete classes at each of those levels, and our wait list reflects the need for that. There was discussion of the potential conflict between having space to let in to everyone on the wait list versus the need to balance our numbers in terms of gender and ethnicity and the fact that PPS should be providing better TAG resources at neighborhood schools so that more students could do well at their neighborhood school. It was noted that an issue that comes up at TAGAC meetings is that many families wait to try to make it work at their neighborhood school, and only realize that ACCESS is the only option that will work for their child in upper elementary grades. A parent asked about looking at free and reduced lunch data to see if the strategy of admitting most students at 3rd grade is actually helping increase diversity, which is the goal. Mr. Wood notes that we do have data from last year's applicants, but that was the first year applicants were asked about free and reduced lunch status. Karl Logan told Mr. Wood that DBRAC and the Board really don't want or need specifics about our growth plan, but just that we need growth.

Specific plan for the King meeting and general advocacy were then discussed. Talking points include the need for growth in general, a central location, increasing the middle grades to 3 strands in order to have the opportunity for electives and serve the need, "vertical articulation"=the opportunity to continue classes such as Mandarin as they go on to HS, and the need for an ACCESS high school program with ACCESS students going as a cohort to one of the central high schools such as Lincoln or Cleveland, both of which have IB programs and Mandarin.

It was asked if we need to state specific numbers for growth, and noted that 550 students would allow for growth by an additional strand at 3rd-8th plus a full class at 1st and 2nd grades.

There are parents going to the DBRAC meeting tomorrow 11/24 and also to the board meeting the same evening. Parents can also send letters and emails to DBRAC, the superintendent, and the board. Heather Kent is going to go to the board meeting and try to speak, and we have several parents who have volunteered to speak at the King meeting as well as 1-2 students.