

Ogden/Jenner Community Meeting #3

April 25, 2017- Ogden HS (West)

5pm-7pm

Attendance:

Jim Dispensa, Chief Herald Chip Johnson, Alderman Burnett, Network 6 staff, Jenner and Ogden parents and community members

Presentation- 15 min (CPS):

Herald Johnson started the meeting by previewing the 4 topics for discussion and pertinent questions; he provided an upcoming timeline of events/decision making

- Purpose of community meeting
- Previous meeting recap
- Process
- Area of Focus

Jim Dispensa asked to hear from new audience members; explained the agenda for the evening

Dominica thanked the audience, asked for new speakers, and explained the rules for speaking

Public Participation (90 min):

Speaker 1: As a single parent of 2 children at Ogden East, I have been at all meetings. I have been reluctant to speak due to the SES focus on those who disagree. I have been disappointed based on the volume of representation from both Ogden and Jenner. At the last meeting, I felt the Jenner parents felt very angry. We need to come together as a community. I haven't heard a real plan or strategy. I know Principal Croston has been out and we need to know who will be the principal. Right now, Ogden is not overcrowded, so we need to move forward with a plan.

Speaker 2: I live across the street from Ogden, I apologize for my accent. I'm concerned that my child will be taunted by the Jenner teachers or not as prepared. I want to assure the children at Ogden will be treated the same.

Speaker 3: I am a community member. I was at the last meeting. My husband and I think that as a tax payer in Chicago and using resources for utilization seems like the right thing to do. I want to encourage CPS and leadership that there is a lot of anxiety to constantly communicate with us.

Speaker 4: I am a parent at Ogden. I am Hispanic I grew up in public school in Miami. Initially I was pro merger but I don't think it's the right decision at this time. We have to change course. We no longer have the significant overcrowding. There are too many unknowns. We are looking at a national and local

level. We don't know what is going to happen from Devos or TIF funding. Given all of the unknowns, it's not the right time.

Speaker 5: Hi I am parent in the Ogden district. We have a lot to learn about Ogden as a Kdg mom. When I first learned about the merger I tried to keep an open mind, the more I've learned I am really struggling with it. It seems like a good idea on the surface, but the benefits are not clear to me. There are execution concerns and whatever happens this awareness brings about change. Schools are a part of the solution. Ultimately hard work and perseverance will take us forward. I am very optimistic.

Speaker 6: I am DP coordinator at Ogden HS. I love this school. I'm partial to the HS. Recruitment is a joy and easy. I sell to 8th graders- we have a extremely diverse population because we pull from all over the city. I don't think demographics is an issue. The big issue to me is about the configurations. The configurations for the West campus don't seem that great. I want to make sure that's considered. We want to make sure when you're considering it, think about the 3rd configuration. Please make sure you're working with Sarah Levin and Dr. Nash downtown. They can help to make sure it works. Jenner parents make sure you know we have a robust Art program as well.

Speaker 7: I work at the CTU. I have asked my neighbors about the merger. A lot of questions we don't have a formal position on the merger. I can tell you from other mergers that the negative is that teachers and staff positions are in jeopardy. I am afraid that Jenner's staff would be affected. On the SW side, 10 teachers were not rehired. We do have to protect our members.

Speaker 8: I am a CTU field rep for Jenner. I urge you to have these conversations. I think there needs to be a more developed plan regarding staff retention. What we know is critical to school mergers is the retention and discipline, parent concerns.

Speaker 9: I am a Ogden parent. This is my first meeting. Please make the ppt public because it has good data. I had a concern regarding real estate development. I didn't see any data reflecting that. Please include near and far projections to help our decision making.

NOTECARD ?

Financial problems years ago?

Speaker 10: I am a parent of Ogden ES. I feel divided. I like the idea of optimizing the space. I like the integration to get more diversity. My questions are: are there other merger cases/data. I advocate for middle school-8th grade being its own building. I am curious to if there's a phasing in of the merger. Adding in K first and so on. This will help the parents plan. The merger is going to cost. What is the cost and retraining planning?

Speaker 11: I am parent at Ogden for over 10 yrs. I have no hesitation can handle multiple campuses' and I think the kids are eager to meet new friends. Ogden East was intended a K-8 school. It is extremely overcrowded due to the 6-8th at another school. If teachers are retained and admin are involved the Jenner teachers will just need training like the Ogden teachers.

Speaker 12: I live in the Gold Coast. I am a community member. I think it's a great idea. The whole community is watching. It seems to be a fiscally Sound idea. My kids went from 6-12th grade with a world education. I am all for it.

Speaker 13: I was born in Cabrini and went to Jenner from K-8th. I am in support of the merger. This is my first meeting. It's shocking to hear the comments. People are afraid and fear decisions. A kid's future

shouldn't be determined by their address. It makes sense financially. I think this is the right thing to do. For a global and national reason. We need to win on a global level. I am in support.

Jim Dispensa reads Note Cards:

Q1- If Ogden East is no longer overcrowded, what problem are we trying to solve?

In response- audience member asks: how are we going to accommodate all of the newcomers that will be coming based on new construction and CHA housing?

Jim responds- the likelihood an area will increase the number of housing units is not a significant reason to forego a decision to move forward. We have to leverage the existing capacity we have available today. It's not today we are going to ignore the future. We have good future data to predict units and families, but we have to ask what % of families will choose to send their students to magnet/private schools. District leadership has been confronted with these issues.

Audience member asks for CPS to share this data with the public.

Jenner parent responds, are they going to bus my kid?

Dispensa states that the configurations are not finalized yet.

Q2- How much longer does CPS need to make a decision?

Audience member- What is the board's plan for the teachers coming over for Ogden and the newly signed contract?

Dispensa responds- I have to push the May 15th date to wait and understand if there will be a proposal to decide what the decisions will be.

Audience member- states that tenured teachers are put into a reassignment pool, what's cited here is the old contract's language.

Dispensa- This is a very specific question that I cannot answer.

Audience member- What's the difference between a merger and consolidation? What are the implications?

Dispensa- They are the same.

Audience member: What has happened in the past with consolidation?

Dispensa: CPS will work closely with both LSCs. The most important work is the planning. May15 – August 30th is the time both schools are planning the transition details. Transitions are only as good as the collaborators. We have seen great people engaged in the past.

Audience member: At the May 15th meeting will we discuss details?

Dispensa: It's not a meeting. A decision will be made by May 15th.

Audience member: I don't understand why there is a merger?

Dispensa: There is a proposal.

Dominica : A combined committee submitted the proposal. Talk to the committee members for the details.

Audience member: The Jenner families do not understand why there is a merger.

Audience member: What is the process for making a decision?

Johnson: We do not have a process yet. There are many people involved. We think people need to hear something by May 15th. I was involved in the 50 schools closings. Those plans were clearly detailed and articulated. Jenner was on the list to close. By grace, we kept Jenner open. I wanted to build Jenner as neighborhood schools. There's a lot involved in doing that. Our CeDo has created a plan that involves integrity and academic excellence. We still need to hear from the community before creating a plan. Once we hear everything we need to sit with all stakeholders to create a plan by May 15th. The intent tonight was just to hear from the community. This started with the Next Level people wondering if this could happen. There has been a lot of work done by the community. Once we hear everything, we will take it to the table.

Audience member: You have about 500 people at these meetings. Start having fundraisers to build Jenner up. CPS is broke and we can't rely on them. Ogden has great fundraisers. Use the audience you have to build Jenner up.

Johnson: We have heard very few Jenner voices because they live everywhere. We have discussed building Jenner.

Audience member: The prosed scheduled is January for more community meetings. What will be the purpose? It seems like there will be no more input after a proposal.

Johnson: At that point, we will have a proposal. There will be meetings after a proposal is created.

Dispensa: You are looking at the published meetings that are required by law. We will need more meetings to discuss planning.

Audience member: For overcrowding, just build more floors at Ogden.

Johnson: We don't have the funds. There's a lot that goes into that.

Audience member: Between May 15th and August what other opportunities will there be for non-LSC parents.

Dispensa: I imagine both LSCs will want more parent input. There is a lot of work to do and with work comes meetings. You'll be surprised how those meetings can bring 2 separate schools together.

Audience member: Will they both still be neighborhood schools?

Dispensa: Yes

Audience member: When one schools closes the kids at the other schools failed. I'm a product of that in North Lawndale. The students don't feel welcome. Families can't travel to the new schools – especially the poor parents. It will never work. Please do not close Jenner. Consider Jenner. You are taking away from our kids.

Johnson: Jenner is not closing. Respectfully, I have seen transition plans really work and have schools have moved up to level 1+. We are keeping our integrity so you don't feel bamboozled. You can reach out to me or anyone on the cabinet. We need to hear your voice.

Audience member: The proposal to close Jenner is a valid point.

Dispensa: We have to wait to hear the proposal.

Audience member: There is a proposal to move all kids to different buildings.

Audience member: As long as the kids are safe.

Audience member: I heard that one school will be closing because teachers have to re-apply.

Dispensa: There is a difference between a school and building. The school includes the people. The building is just the structure.

Audience member: Are we sure that the high school stays?

Dispensa: After the May 15th deadline we will want more high school voices included.

Johnson: Years ago there was a proposal to push the high school into Wells. Attention is on the high school. The administrators are doing a good job at the high school. Croston is recovering. Dr. Shelton could not make it. Thanks to everyone for coming.

Audience member: I still don't know why we are talking about this

Johnson: This is your first meeting? There have been conversations about what to do with Jenner and about Ogden over-crowding. The community groups submitted a plan. CPS decided to honor the plan by allowing a steering committee to consider the proposal. Then we scheduled 3 community meetings to hear comments and concerns. We will develop a plan to present to the community our findings.

Audience member: Who writes the transition plans?

Dispensa: There are a lot of people who work on the plans within Dispensa's office.

Audience member: Is there a template of the plan? The uncertainty comes from not knowing about the decisions that are being made.

Johnson: The last plans included academics, social emotional, and detailed logistics. We have to make sure everything is covered.

Audience member: Can we get a sample?

Dispensa: Yes, and they can always be improved. We want to over plan.

Johnson: Thanks to NUUP and Next Level and those who added to the discussion. Your voice is very important. I want all kids to have all kids receive an excellent education. I promise that we will get back to you by May 15th.

Closing: Thank you.