

Community Meeting for the Proposed Co-Location of Disney II School with Marshall Middle School
(O'Hare Network)

April 15, 2013; 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Location: Schurz High School, 3601 N. Milwaukee Ave.

CPS Staff in Attendance

Lachlan Tidmarsh, Peter Rogers, Dan Kramer (Principal of Schurz), Bogdana Chkoumbova (Principal of Disney II), Paul Flaherty (Principal of Marshall), Anna Alvarado, Shane Smith, Lynda Williams, MahRukh Mian (Face Manager), Camille Unger, Christopher Gamble, Leigh Reber, Lauren Kunicki, Carmen Velez, Melva Ryan, Jason Major, Emily Thompson, Efren Castenada

Brief Summary

The purpose of the meeting was to receive public comments on the proposal to co-locate Disney II School with Marshall Middle School in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-230. CPS officials made a presentation regarding this proposal. Most comments were positive toward the proposal and expressed confidence in Disney's staff and community to manage any future traffic and logistical concerns. Concerns were raised about the lack of Disney II's available outdoor space. Many speakers supporting Belding and requesting overcrowding relief were present, specifically by closing underperforming charter schools in the area. Support was also expressed about the renewal of Kid Watch Plus's lease in 2015. There were 144 registered attendees and over 50 registered speakers.

CPS Presentation

Peter Rogers, Chief Financial Officer, welcomed those in attendance and introduced the meeting. Mr. Rogers presented an overview of the proposal to co-locate the Disney Magnet School with Marshall Middle School and summarized the past and upcoming meetings around the proposal (3 meetings in total). Key issues and concerns that have already been raised around the proposal include: the need to ensure that the co-located schools are well supported, potential impact on Kid Watch program (at Marshall Middle School), enrollment policy for Disney II High School expansion, parking and general space around the school, and plans to address overcrowding in many surrounding schools. Lachlan Tidmarsh, Chief Information Officer, then explained the meeting rules and procedures. Around 5:20 p.m., the meeting was opened for public comment.

Public Comment

Bogdana Chkoumbova , Principal of Disney II Magnet

The Disney II teaching team is very interested and excited to work with the Marshall Middle School team.

Paul J. Flaherty, Principal of Marshall Middle

Mr. Flaherty has heard glowing testimony about the programs at Disney Magnet and the Kids Watch Program. He is confident in Marshall's ability to educate students with special needs that account for 22% of Marshall's population. Marshall has several staff members that support these students. School

report card notes that Marshall's academic achievement is above average. Each school will have a dedicated entrance. Existing parking lot has 26 spaces. Proposal states that there will be new features such as A/C units in all classroom windows, however, the building is old and needs many repairs.

Karen Steel, Parent of 2 kids at Disney II Magnet, President of Disney II PTA

Ms. Steel is concerned about city's school system as a whole; there are too many issues to list. If these issues persist, people will continue to abandon the public education system of the City of Chicago. Ms. Steel is confident that everyone wants the best for their children, so the Board of Education should make decisions which reflect this desire. Ms. Steel strongly urges the Board to make a swift decision and mobilize resources as soon as possible in order to effectively launch the expansion of middle school at the Lawndale location. As a parent, she empathizes with the concerns around co-location; however, as a Disney II parent, she does not support action which jeopardizes Disney's plans.

Heather Yutze, Principal of Belding Elementary

Speaking on behalf of parents, staff, and community members, Ms. Yutze spoke about the serious concerns around the overcrowding at Belding. Currently the school is operating at 139% capacity, with classrooms holding up to 38 students, children meeting in food storage closets, and no private office, not even for herself.

Ms. Yutze questions the Board's decisions around the privatization and closing charter schools. Failing charter schools have seats that are desperately needed, but she wonders whether CPS has the courage to close them, given their preferential treatment of charter schools to neighborhood schools. Ms. Yutze is also concerned about the District's capital plan, public financing, and funding formula. She thinks the District is not very transparent about the funding formula it uses. Overall, Ms. Yutze reminds the Board that there are many schools like Belding that are desperate for relief from overcrowding, and to please do not forget that in its plans.

Michael Westfall, Librarian at Belding Elementary

Mr. Westfall is concerned because Belding is on a fast trajectory to lose its library, lunchroom, and other key spaces in order to accommodate all of the children. Belding is growing rapidly in primary grades and it's only going to get worse as kids progress through the grade levels. Belding desperately needs to keep these facilities so that we can create the best learning environment for all of our students.

Shelley Magness, Parent of 3 children at Belding Elementary, Community member of 18 years, 5th-6th grade teacher at Belding

Focus primarily on 3rd grade child. Currently in a homeroom of approximately 37 children. Gives such credit to her teacher, volunteers, and aides who come in to assist with the management of this classroom and ensure that students are getting the best possible education in a highly critical time in education. She asks that the Board take these concerns very seriously and consider Belding when looking at all of the possibilities for her part of Belding's community

Brian Murphy, Teacher, Coach, Member of LSC at Disney II Magnet

Mr. Murphy asked that Board provide assistance in expanding Disney II's extracurricular programs. Learning is supplemented by physical and mental activity and emotional support. Disney II has limited

green space and is not up to par with other schools in the area. Mr. Murphy asked that the Board provide adequate consideration in Disney's expansion plans.

Latisha Ariola, mother of two daughters graduated from Marshall and two other children at Patrick Henry

Ms. Ariola is concerned about CPS's proposal for the students from Falconer to be transferred to Ames. She feels that this proposal is inconsiderate of her children at Patrick Henry and Haugen. CPS has not mentioned anything about the future of her children. There will be fewer students at Patrick Henry and Haugen so that CPS has a reason to close the school, and without telling the parents. Ms. Ariola will not allow children to be taken on another bus to another school when we already have a school in their neighborhood. Ms. Ariola is not against Disney II expansion, but she is against being told where to go and not having the option for another school. She wants CPS to be transparent about its plans for whether or not her students will continue to go for Marshall for 7th and 8th grade, and if so, for how long.

Eileen Schnep, Parent of two children at Disney II Magnet

Ms. Schnep is in favor of co-location of the Disney II and Marshall schools. She is not concerned about student traffic, as many students rely on CTA for transportation, and she believes that any other concerns will be thoughtfully addressed by Disney II, parents, and community members.

Timothy Meegan, Teacher at Roosevelt High School, Father of two children

Mr. Meegan is not in favor of the community meetings as he believes they are disingenuous to the Chicago people. Mr. Meegan strongly believes that the number one indicator of a school's success is poverty, and that the City of Chicago is completely ignoring this factor. Thurgood Marshall serves all kinds of students, much like Roosevelt, and they do a good job. There is no magic bullet to improving education. Closings that are taking place city-wide are about money, about hedge fund operators making money off investments. Debt service is \$30M for the next 35 years. This does not need to happen. People of the City of Chicago need to stand together and say "NO!"

Rachel Crawl, Mother of two daughters at Disney II Magnet, LSC Chair

Ms. Crawl continues to be inspired and amazed by the Disney leadership. Success of Disney's academic and economic model is evident. Community engagement by taking care of the property, managing traffic to ensure safety, and establishing business partnerships are all ways in which Disney II demonstrates its great success. Look forward to participating in the Disney expansion. Look forward to the challenge and thank the District for its support.

Christine Wilbur, Parent of 3 children at Disney II Magnet

Ms. Wilbur supports Disney II expansion. It will especially benefit gifted students. Disney challenges its students to grow and develop skills in new and created ways. Gifted learners are offered lots of opportunities to improve in lots of creative ways. She stated she was grateful that children are a part of school that truly cares about students. She is inspired by her Disney II experience, and is pursuing graduate school to support the education experience.

Devoir Engle, parent of Disney II Students, resident of proposed Lawndale campus

Mr. Engle supports Disney II expansion. New program will be a model for future expansion projects to come. Request that expansion be properly funded to ensure that it is a well-rounded, supported educational experience. Look forward to working with the appropriate Chicago leadership to ensure that the project is successful. However, not all of our neighbors see the same opportunity that his family does. He's seen too many families leave the city because they do not have access to the "golden ticket" to the high-performing academic facilities. We need to give all Chicago community members equal access to quality education.

Kathryn Barnabee, Executive Director of Kid Watch Plus

Ms. Barnabee is both professionally and personally invested in how this proposal impacts Kid Watch Plus. To maintain the quality of Kid Watch, she asked CPS to respect Kid Watch's need for a safe environment. Do not infringe on Kid Watch space, especially hallways and bathrooms. It's important to Kid Watch that its space remain safe and secure. She asked that Kid Watch be a partner in the future Disney/Thurgood Marshall site. She hoped to renew Kid Watch's lease with CPS.

Jennifer B [missing last name], Parent of Belding Students and LSC Chair

Ms. B is concerned because Belding is highly overcrowded due to the influx of young families that have moved into the area. There has been a lack of response from CPS to address this problem. CPS has a bias of supporting charter and private schools. Belding community is forced to leave due to the crowding. Do not have access to the quality education. Would like CPS to open some neighborhood schools. Belding community needs more public, neighborhood elementary schools, not selective schools, not charter schools.

Darlene Stone, Founding Member of Disney II Magnet School and Assistant Principal

Ms. Stone thanks the Board for their support of the Disney II expansion. Disney has built a culture of parents and teachers who trust each other and constantly strive for outstanding academic performance of its students. Need to keep the best teachers for the school. Need to be able to recruit, hire, and maintain the best teachers. Should be allowed to have the children of school staff attend the school in which they work.

Yuna Lee, Teacher at Disney II Magnet

Approximately 4 months ago, Ms. Lee had the opportunity to address her proposal to the Board. Initially, Board's proposal has sent a clear message that students are the primary intent and focus. Need time, resources, and personnel to support the expansion and continually increase Disney's effectiveness.

Caroline Blicky, Parent of 3 children at Disney II Magnet, member of LSC

Ms. Blicky is extremely confident that Disney II will have a positive impact on its students. Ms. Blicky volunteers to help students after school to ensure safe transportation of students after school, so she sees this impact every day. She knows that Disney II can educate an additional 200 students across the community, and she believes that every student chance deserves a chance at a non-selective, high-achieving high school seat.

Roberta Wilke, Director of Greater Independence Park Neighborhood Association

Ms. Wilke has lived across Independence Park for many, many years. Pride, energy, and creativity that happens in her community is amazing and the co-location of Disney and Marshall is good for our community. Would like to see the current list for 7th grade be eliminated and expanded for an additional 50 seats. Best interest of Kid Watch to remain in its current location and for lease to be renewed.

Sarah [missing last name], 7th-8th grade Science teacher at Belding

Sara believes that it is completely unfair that 37 children need to share her attention and that they are not able to push their chairs into their lab tables completely because it is too overcrowded. Unfair that special education and ESL students receive their services in shared offices. ESL students receive their services in food storage lockers. Unfair that nurses must see students next to clerks who answer the phones. Nonetheless, colleagues continue to meet AYP and make academic gains. Watching and waiting for elected officials to step up and do something to take care of these kids.

Elisa Carlson, Director of Non-Profit Dance Company at Marshall

Ms. Carlson stresses the importance of partnership with arts programs because it encourages community involvement and interest in the arts. She focused on narrative work, translating it into movement and allows opportunities to create art in a local neighborhood. Ask that serious consideration be given to the absolute facilities that serve the students in the best possible way.

Brit Connel, Parent of 3 children at Disney II Magnet

Ms. Connel is confident that students are safe and instructed well at Disney II. She hopes that Chicago will eventually become a world-class city in terms of education. Need to support success stories and listen seriously to parents' concerns. Need to provide funds for aides, assistants, social workers, clinicians in order to provide adequate support to students. The more we provide models of excellence, the more other schools can learn from it and improve their own systems. Need to know that Chicago Public Schools can succeed if all of us help one another.

Juan Gutierrez, Principal of Patrick Henry School

Mr. Gutierrez asks the Board this question: What is the future of our 6th grade students? His answer is Patrick Henry School. Over the past 3 years, Patrick Henry has been a level 1 school and a high-achiever in the O'Hare Network. This neighborhood school is working, so CPS needs to invest in this school that *is working*. Mr. Gutierrez asks the Board to support Patrick Henry to ensure that success continues at Patrick Henry.

Susan Strongdowd, Retired Educator of 35 years, Student Teacher from Disney I, Member of Greater Independence Neighborhood Association (GIPNA)

Over the past 10 years, GIPNA has worked with community members and school staff to raise money for schools, build a community garden, etc. Support Disney II expansion. She would like to request a 1.5 mi radius proximity lottery for 7th and 9th grades. She would also like to reset the 7th grade waitlist for Disney II so that the lottery may run again for the 50 extra seats. Please renew lease for Kid Watch program, as it has been an extremely valuable asset for the community.

Owen Brew, Chief of Staff for Alderman of 45th ward

Mr. Brew read statement from the Alderman of the 45th ward. The Alderman was absent from the meeting due to a conflict with a neighborhood conference. The Alderman believes that the expansion of Disney II is positive, but it comes with challenges such as limited outdoor space. Proximity 7th and 9th grade lottery be run again and for a 1.5 mi radius around the high school (as opposed to 2.5 mi radius). Would like CPS to re-run lottery for 7th grade seats in the interest of fairness to the community. Third, would like to extend the lease of the Kid Watch Program. Finally, would like to strongly encourage CPS to create a capital space plan for schools on the NW side and for the O'Hare Network. These schools are overcrowded and strongly need additional capacity.

Roberta Salis, Chairperson of LSC for Murphy Elementary School

Ms. Salis believes that Disney II is a marvelous school, but the Disney II expansion is disruptive to the community. Murphy is also doing marvelous things, and that needs to be recognized. Murphy is a neighborhood school that accepts all students in the local community—it does not have the option to limit its enrollment like Disney does. CPS is not addressing the overcrowding issue and is much too focused on the magnet school, rather than focusing on the neighborhood schools. Bring more resources to the neighborhood schools so that students can succeed just as well as those students in magnet schools.

Kathryn Smith, Special Ed Teacher at Marshall

Ms. Smith is confused and appalled by proposals made by other parties. To GIPNA, what about a family living 1 block north of Irving? Or families living just outside the 1.5 mi radius? To those who have said that we need more quality high schools on the NW side, what about Lane Tech, NW College Prep, and the very school we sit in right now? Disney II's oldest class is currently 6th grade. Belding is severely overcrowded; no child should have to eat or learn in a broom closet. Need more elementary seats. Marshall has supported the need for elementary seats. We are proposing that Marshall be a neighborhood middle school, a nurturing, supportive middle school environment that will prepare them for high school.

Heather Aiken, GIPNA President, 17th District Police Advisory Chair, 19 year Resident of Independence Park

Ms. Aiken supports Disney II expansion in the neighborhood. After discussions with Alderman and various stakeholders, GIPNA has revised its proposal 4 times. On behalf of GIPNA, Ms. Aiken would like to request that proximity lottery for grades 7 and 9, with 1.5 mi radius, as it enables local students to walk to schools to minimize traffic and congestion. She also requests that CPS re-run the 7th grade lottery, and also keep the Kid Watch program.

Anna Urquiza, Parent of 1st grade student at Patrick Henry

Ms. Urquiza asserts that the time to act is now. She hopes that the Board will contemplate the possibility of expanding this school to 7th and 8th grade because it is a good, high-quality school. Don't take decisions about our students' future without listening to our voices.

Magdalena [missing last name], Parent of students at Patrick Henry

Magdalena represents all the parents of students at all schools that are closing. At Patrick Henry, many youth there are worried because they don't want these changes that CPS is implementing. Children

should also have a voice. She hopes that the Board listens to the voices of this community because the community has a simple ask: no more closings, give us more resources. Specifically, Magdalena requests a 7th and 8th grade expansion at Patrick Henry.

Raymond Wohl, Former Teacher at Irving Park Middle School, Current Teacher at Marshall, Member of Raise Your Hand (coalition to support transparency in CPS)

Nearly 50% of schools in O'Hare Network are over 100% capacity. How is this acceptable? Disney II Magnet School has room for their 7th graders, so they need to be allowed to bring these extra students into the school. There is no need to rush to change Marshall at a time when 100 schools are at upheaval in our city. There are only 50 spots open in the entire neighborhood under Disney's current plan. This plan will cause Kid Watch to close in 2015. Media has been shut out of this hearing because comments from first hearing have not been shared with the public.

Dorothy Barret, Mother of 3 children under the age of 6 (attendees at Disney preschool program)

Ms. Barret is opposed to Disney II's location at the Marshall middle school. She feels that Disney II does not properly address the severe overcrowding issues on the NW side. Why has CPS been busing students from over 3 miles away when there is a middle school sitting 2 blocks away that is half empty? There is such a small chance to get into Disney II, so she wonders why CPS does not offer a quality neighborhood school where every student can be accepted.

Leroy Marks, friend of Dorothy Barret

Mr. Marks asserts that adding a proximity overlay is a slap in the face to the parents. Independence Park area is most impacted by this transition. Disney II adds little to no value to the community, as it creates a larger divide between the lucky few and those who are not as lucky. Kids in the community are losing their libraries, lunchrooms, and study space because of severe overcrowding.

Jenny Zuluaga, Disney II Parent and long-time partner of Marshall

Ms. Zuluaga agrees with all praise about Disney that has been expressed by other parents and staff. Marshall teachers and principals have a great passion for education and middle school structure and reform. They are pursuing constant professional development, expansion of after school programs, and other special services for students. The school was founded on principals of social justice and they deserve to co-habitate without sacrificing the quality of the education they are receiving.

Evan Solis, Reading Specialist at Belding

Ms. Solis works with struggling readers, students reading at 3 grade levels below or more than where they are supposed to be. She is passionate about saving these students from falling through the cracks. However, Ms. Solis' classroom is currently located in the girls' bathroom. This is a highly disruptive environment that does not serve the needs of the students. Additionally, Ms. Solis is responsible for implementing a computerized Map test. However, the school's computer lab holds only 25 working computers and most classrooms have over 30 students. This makes testing conditions unbearable. Test scores have still risen, but how much more can they rise if Belding is not given more resources?

Jeanne Albina, 3rd Grade teacher at Belding

Ms. Albina has 37 names on the classroom roster, many with learning disabilities, ELLs, and repeating grade levels. Overcrowding has caused severe disruptive in the learning environment. Principal has worked tirelessly to improve the conditions. Close the failing Aspira Charter School and reopen it as a high-performing, truly public school. Also, Belding needs a great deal more bandwidth. Students

Ethan, 6th grader at Disney II

Disney II has given Ethan a better education and a better life. Classes are challenging but fun. She is hoping that this will continue at the new school, preparing me for college and the rest of my life. Please help Ethan and classmates in learning at the new school.

Katie Kosizick, Involved with Belding School since 1993

When moving to the neighborhood, Katie thought she would never be a supporter of CPS schools. However, she has come to see the great value of neighborhood schools and the benefit they bring to the community. They are the bread and butter of what CPS can and should do for its students. CPS needs to focus its priorities on the basics, and not get caught up on the bright and shiny magnet schools, charter schools, etc.

Zack Crane Davis, Special Ed Teacher and LSC Representative at Marshall

Need to ensure that students at Marshall are receiving the same quality of education as everyone else. Need to know what the future of Marshall students really is, in order to ensure that they are prepared to be the global, responsible citizens that CPS promises. No question that Disney is a success, but think about the money that has been discussed this evening and the difference that it would make if those same investments were made in Marshall and other similar schools.

Theo Pensuck, resident of GIPNA Neighborhood, lives two doors south of Marshall school

If the 1.5 mile radius is not part of the deal, Theo will most likely have to move their business outside of the neighborhood. Parking would be a major problem if 1.5 mile radius is not enforced. Marshall is a great school and Kid Watch is an outstanding program that serves the members of the community very well. If CPS takes this program away, it would be taking away a vital resource to local community members and parents. Don't want to lose the Independence Park that has been the heart of our community. What has CPS been spending so much energy and money expanding these schools on the NW side when there are so many other schools on the South and West sides that are suffering so greatly?

Daviana, Student at Disney (6th Grade)

Supports Disney expansion. Came to Disney as a 2nd grader. Has the potential to create an incredibly successful high school. Disney expansion will have a positive impact and will create new opportunities for learning. It will be an incredible place to learn.

Sam and Aiden, Student at Disney

Only been at Disney for one year, but have already created a strong bond with the school. Expansion will be a fantastic opportunity for both Disney and Marshall. There may be challenges, but nothing that can't be fixed. Need cooperation from both sides to create a win-win opportunity. Its programs have

been very valuable and enjoyable for students and we need to continue expansion of these resources to ensure the students.

Dennis Gregurt, Parent of Disney Students

Need more quality high school slots on the NW side. Administration needs to support Disney II expansion, as well as expansion of middle school seats. Commends CPS for listening to the community and taking the time to host meetings to gather concerns.

Mary Mills (Liz), Resident of West Walker Neighborhood (directly north of proposed HS), runs after school program for Murphy students

Advocates for the implementation of a 1.5 mi neighborhood lottery. This radius more than incorporates students from Belding and Murphy, so it serves both populations. Would also allow more local students to attend Disney High School.

Joann Pepper, Mother of 3, Resident of GIPNA Area, Member of IPAC

Would like Board to consider guaranteeing seats to those that live in the neighborhood, as the Board considers the Disney expansion. Concerned about how expansion will work with current park programming. Who will address the damage that will be done to the field due to the increased utilization? Also, how will the congestion be alleviated? Would like to request a proximity overlay that will give those that live in the GIPNA neighborhood priority to attend the new Disney campus.

Dorie Westmire, Resident of Disney II HS area, Member of West Walker Civic Association

West Walker Civic Association is excited about Disney II coming to the neighborhood. Propose for the Disney II proximity lottery to be run at 75% of the seats at a 1.5 mile radius.

Sherry Berland, Member of Disney II Expansion Team

Disney II is the opposite of an elite school. It is not a selective enrollment school, run by lottery. Pilot Light, a new culinary arts program, is just one example of Disney's greatness and demonstrates how Disney leads by example and supports the achievement of all Chicago students, not just its own. Disney provides access to rigor to all students. However, Disney cannot continue to support its students if CPS does not provide enough resources. CPS needs to make good on its promise to raise the bar for its students.

Anna Fafford, Resident of 3900 block of Dakin, President of Park Advisory Council

Will likely be increased usage of the park due to the Disney expansion. This usage will conflict with existing programs and interferes with the plans that the park has to develop its programming. Park Advisory Council needs the Board to be transparent about the impact to the park as a result of its decisions. Would also like a commitment from CPS that none of the park's programs will be impacted, as well as a financial commitment to maintain the park's status as a neighborhood gem.

Public Comment concluded around 7:10pm.