

**BEAR FLAG and CAROLINE WENZEL ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS  
COMMUNITY MEETING  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2007  
6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.  
Bear Flag Multi-Purpose Center**

Facilitator  
Susan Miller, Associate Superintendent  
Learning Support Unit B

**Attendance:**

47 Parents/Community  
14 Students  
11 Staff  
2 Principals  
15 District Staff

**Talking Points:**

- Declining enrollment is across the district and we are looking at under utilized sites. We need to better utilize facilities to remain fiscally solvent.
- Need to recognize the fiscal impact of smaller enrolled schools such as Bear Flag as this is the smallest elementary in the Sacramento City Unified School District with less than 200 students. We lost two teachers last year and are facing the loss of 2 more teachers this year due to declining enrollment. Projection for next year is 6 teachers at Bear Flag. This impacts educational programs as resources are cut.
- Last year we chaired a 7-11 Committee with stakeholders from across the district to look at declining enrollment and utilization of facilities in the district.
- There is a proposal to blend Caroline Wenzel and Bear Flag and how to use this site at Bear Flag on an interim basis and permanent basis.
- Last year we closed Marion Anderson and continue to examine our capacity at school sites across the school district.
- We don't want to cut the value of a smaller elementary; research shows that 500 students in an elementary are effective. If we were to blend the students we could fall within the 500 capacity that is available at Caroline Wenzel.

**Comments:**

- Caroline Wenzel classrooms are a bit smaller.
- Number of students at Caroline Wenzel seems to be skewed—current numbers and projected numbers need to be looked at again.
- What about the effect that blending has on students? Perhaps renaming the school? Activities to build community, etc.
- My child is special needs—how can we weather that? It's bad for real children.
- Can Bear Flag and Engineering/Sciences School be combined at the Bear Flag site?
- It's not fair for veteran Bear Flag teachers to be looking for a job when new Caroline Wenzel teachers get to stay.
- Community member is concerned about safety of children and possibility of an empty school in the neighborhood.
- The way the contract is written now a new teacher could stay and a 20 year teacher from Bear Flag could be without a job. It's not fair. New teachers can wait their turns for a job.

- Bond measure for the Engineering/Sciences School does not state it has to be built on Sojourner Truth site.
- Community members are concerned about safety of community members if more high school students are in the area.
- Need to put parents, teachers, administrators and students together to facilitate the transition process.
- My daughter adjusted to class splits at her school, but it concerns me. I am not sure where I will be as a teacher and it is upsetting.
- What happens if community “repopulates” with children (by 2014 this area should be up to 2,000 student population count).
- Need to talk to Caroline Wenzel 6<sup>th</sup> graders to see how the transition really went this year.
- I have a Charter school math and science program—that has been looking for space.
- We have a nice school at Caroline Wenzel. The music program, my daughter has made new friends. She transitioned very well.
- Board meeting on March 1, 2007, 6:30 p.m. at the Serna Center—as a Conference Item.

**Questions:**

**What is the capacity of Bear Flag?**

*The capacity at Bear Flag is 373 students. The maximum capacity is 414 students.*

**What are the sizes of the classrooms at Bear Flag?**

*Each classroom is 960 square feet.*

**How do you arrive with enrollment projections?**

*Trends and attendance data over the years.*

**Will current programs remain?**

*Last week the Principals and District staff met at Caroline Wenzel to review programs from both schools and the requests to retain these programs. First, we identified classrooms for the numbers of students projected for the attendance area. Next, we determined that space is available at Wenzel for the Music, Library, PE and Health, Literacy Center, the 5 Special Education Programs, and Healthy Start if the schools are blended and it is determined to continue these programs. 4<sup>th</sup> R has 2 portables on the campus. If the Children’s Center would be the program of choice to continue we would need to identify a space. 4<sup>th</sup> R has offered to share space with the Literacy Center. The Keyboard Lab at Bear Flag has not been used for the past 2 years. This is a program under a specific grant with specific regulations. Bear Flag has not used the program as a SAIT school under specific guidelines for instructional minutes and programs according to SAIT. We would need to identify a space for the Keyboard Lab due to the amount of equipment if it should be move to Caroline Wenzel.*

**Are portables at Caroline Wenzel permanent and do they have air conditioning?**

*Yes.*

**Is 4<sup>th</sup> R a subsidized program?**

*4<sup>th</sup> R Program is subsidized care with state guidelines.*

**Are Con Cap and permit students counted in 2007-2008 projections?**

*No, permits are renewed yearly on space-availability, as are Con Cap students.*

**You're not thinking of children and teachers.**

*We will work together to develop a transition plan. This is very important to all of us.*

**Will a special Open Enrollment occur? Was this figured into plans for next year?**

*There would be a special Open Enrollment for both schools if the Board should decide to blend the two schools. These students would have priority over other students in the district that may have requested Caroline Wenzel according to Board policy.*

**What happens to the Bear Flag facility if schools are blended?**

*The Board would determine for what new purpose the school would be used.*

**We would no longer be able to articulate with preschool if we all moved to Caroline Wenzel like we do at Bear Flag.**

*We would work together to develop a plan to continue to find ways to continue articulation with our programs.*

**What happens with Open Enrollment students who are presently at Caroline Wenzel?**

*Once students are accepted through Open Enrollment they become a "neighborhood" student and are included in permanent student counts.*

**What are the other proposals? Others to be combined? Every year? What is the five-year plan?**

*Proposals are brought to the public through school Board meetings.*

**Will the preschool program remain at Bear Flag?**

*Yes, it will stay as long as there are students.*

**Who makes the final decision?**

*The Board makes the final decision on March 15.*

**Move will affect articulation between preschool and kinder teachers.**

*Will need to make sure articulation is maintained.*

**The gist I get is to make room for an interim facility. How long is the interim Science and Engineering Program supposed to last?**

*Bear Flag is being considered as an interim facility. As plans are designed, we obtain community input and the board takes the action. September 2009 is the date scheduled for permanent housing. The Sojourner Truth property is owned by the District and is under consideration as the site for Engineering and Science.*

**Where are we really going? What is the issue?**

- *Declining enrollment at elementary schools with all its implications.*
- *Loss of revenue--\$60 million over the last five years.*
- *High School redesign identified specific needs for high schools.*

*Across the nation, districts are dealing with declining enrollment and declining budgets. There is no easy answer. It's the big picture we are considering. We closed one school last year. We called each individual family to keep the neighborhood together. To break even we have to have 500 students. It is the reality as 20 + schools in the elementary are under 300 students. To leverage our funds and to provide solid educational programs we need to review our resources. The Board makes a decision based on data and community input.*

**What are we doing—why smaller high schools but not smaller elementary?**

*Our elementary schools are losing enrollment across the district. Bear Flag is the lowest enrolled school in the District. We have to be fiscally prudent. When we are making decisions, we try to cause the least amount of disruption and keep in mind our fiscal responsibility.*

**How will students deal with the transition?**

*Principals will work together to ensure an easy transition.*

**What is the chance of Bear Flag teachers getting a spot? What will be the vacancies?**

*Truer numbers on enrollment do come later in the spring. Together the Human Resources Department and the Unions will work together to provide teachers opportunities for positions based on student enrollment allocations and seniority. There is a specific process with teachers if a school is closed. They could go, and it does become their choice to go to the new site as projections and staffing are reviewed.*

**Will the 6<sup>th</sup> grade students at Caroline Wenzel go to Sly Park this year?**

*Students have a trip to Marin this year.*

**There was a Math and Science Charter that wanted to come into the district. Why build Math and Science in the Pocket Area?**

*High school redesign was studied and completed over many years. There was community involvement to look at comprehensive and small high school reform to support students at the high school level for their needs and programs.*

**How will student need and academic success are addressed?**

*Staff and administration will work closely with students and parents to facilitate the process.*

**What happens to students on permits?**

*Depends on actual enrollment and space available. Permits are renewed annually.*

**Can we guarantee students at Bear Flag get to stay together in classes at Caroline Wenzel?**

*No. We cannot guarantee that students stay together with friends. These decisions are based on program and academic needs.*

**How many students are coming to Bear Flag? Isn't that just the same?**

*If the Engineering and Sciences Small High School is located on an interim basis at Bear Flag, it would start with only 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades—approximately 200 students.*

**What about teachers at Bear Flag? Seniority issues in blending?**

*Once numbers of students and staffing needs are determined, the teachers' union will work with staff and Human Resources to facilitate the process.*

**Transportation for students who now live more than 1.5 miles from the school?**

*Two additional stops have been added to the area north of Riverside. There are 39 additional students who will be served from Bear Flag. This year we have 6 students along Riverside. Buses hold 84 students. (A map was distributed of the two attendance areas showing the bus stops for next year.)*

**What are the sizes of classes or the number of students in classes at Caroline Wenzel?**

*K-3 is capped at 20; Grades 4-6 can be enrolled up to 33.*

**Has the District taken into account some of the apartment management changes that could affect the student count?**

*Yes, that is a part of the projection formula.*

**What happens to the Bear Flag facility after the Engineering /Sciences school site is built?**

*There will be continued discussion about facilities use district wide.*

**Why not make Bear Flag a permanent site for Engineering/Sciences School? Why buy property?**

*The decision to build on Sojourner Truth site has not been made yet; the property is owned by the District.*

**If decision is made to close Bear Flag, will the District continue to work with community on the usage of the Bear Flag facility?**

*Communication will continue with the community, and a transition process for students and staff at both schools will be implemented.*

**Do teachers have to re-interview for positions?**

*No. This is based on vacancies.*

**What about principals?**

*Principals may have to interview or they may be placed.*