



Louisville Branch

NAACP

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June 23, 2014

The item to which the Louisville Branch NAACP rises to speak about this evening is "Approval of Project and BG-1 Form for New Elementary School at Norton Commons. We are neither in favor of it nor opposed but believe you the Board and School District Administration must provide answers to the public before proceeding to in our opinion add another problem and issue to a district which constantly struggles with items which can be avoided at the inception of decisions which all too often come back to bite.

One, your consultant Gary Orfield has said in every report and presentation made to you and your predecessor Boards that the housing patterns in Jefferson County has led to many of the problems JCPS faces in the diversity arena and that this community at large faces. Before deciding to say build an elementary school in Norton Commons what work and study has been made to understand the current and projected diversity (particularly from a socioeconomic composition)? We dare to venture and say none. And if this is like several recent decisions, those residing west of I-65 will carry the diversity burden. You need to address and answer this question in a public meeting where the public can question and participate, other than being allowed three minutes to speak.

Two, have you asked the staff why your data guru specialist said in June 2013 and I quote, "We don't need additional schools, not as long as we have other schools to put (the students) in". We have attended work sessions over the last year and that question has yet to be raised and answered. The community needs an answer from you before proceeding with a vote on this matter.

Three, in the projected 2013-2014 enrollment Atkinson Elementary School was shown to be at 59% of capacity. This is at what you report to be one of your best performing elementary school. Should you not be about the business of filling those seats prior to making a decision to add more capacity?

Four, the projected construction cost of a new elementary school is \$15 Million. The annual operating cost is \$2.5 Million. In a district which is continuously strapped for money for basic operations where will this money come from? Hopefully, not from the decimation of a school in another community where a school building is part of the lifeblood for that community.

Finally, in conclusion this community deserves from each of you the very best and here the very best means answering in a public forum the questions we have raised along with those others may raise. A race to a decision to satisfy some real estate developers' interests over that of the larger community is not acceptable.

Raoul Cunningham
President

Raymond M. Burse
Chair, Education Committee