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PUBLIC HEARING AT)
) Date: 6/28/06
JOHN MARSHALL REGARDING)
)
CLOSURE/CONSOLIDATION)
)

A hearing was held in the above-captioned matter beginning at the hour of 6:42 p.m. on Wednesday, June 28, 2006, at 520 Northeast Ravenna Boulevard; Seattle, Washington, 98115-6460.

REPORTED BY: Thad Byrd, CCR

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1 Seattle, Washington; 6/28/06

2 6:42 p.m.

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4 MS. FLYNN: Good evening, my name is
5 Darlene Flynn. I'm the school board member from District
6 2 where we are right now.

7 I'm here tonight with school board members Mary
8 Bass, Sally Soriano, and I'm sure you recognize to my
9 right, Superintendent Manhas. And we also have at the
10 front table Michelle Corker-Cury from Superintendent
11 Manhas' senior staff.

12 The hearing tonight at John Marshall is to
13 receive public testimony on the superintendent's
14 preliminary recommendation on school consolidation and
15 closure.

16 This testimony will be available to the
17 superintendent and the school board members as they
18 carefully consider this issue. The superintendent's final
19 recommendation is scheduled for public release on July
20 5th.

21 The subject of this hearing is the John Marshall
22 building. The John Marshall building is proposed for
23 closure as part of the superintendent's preliminary
24 recommendation on school consolidation and closure.

25 The hearing format is the testimony will be taken

1 in the order of those who have signed up, starting with
2 telephone sign-ups followed by walk-ins. Each person,
3 whether representing an organization or as individuals,
4 will be given three minutes to speak with a 30-second
5 alert. And actually we also have someone here who will
6 give you a one-minute warning. We ask that you respect
7 these time frames.

8 If you're speaking as an individual, please
9 introduce yourself. And the court reporter that we have
10 here capturing the testimony for the evening has asked if
11 you would please spell your name for him, and then his
12 record can be completely accurate.

13 If you're representing a group, please state the
14 name of your organization and its mailing address. If an
15 individual is conceding their time to another person,
16 please acknowledge that at the microphone. You must be
17 present to do so.

18 All testimony is being recorded and documented by
19 a court reporter. This hearing is to receive public
20 testimony only. Any issues or questions raised during
21 this public hearing may be addressed in the
22 superintendent's final recommendation on school
23 consolidation/closure. No responses will be provided at
24 the hearing tonight.

25 We must also keep the hearing to 40 speakers in

1 fairness to all schools and communities impacted by school
2 consolidation/closure.

3 We will begin testimony with the first name on
4 the list. There are six translators available. Is there
5 anyone in the room who would need translation services
6 tonight?

7 So we will begin the testimony this evening with
8 Carol Simmons.

9 MS. SIMMONS: We must demand that the
10 district stop the school closure process. For one thing,
11 there has not been an accurate cost saving analysis done
12 on each school in the district which has been recommended
13 for closure.

14 And secondly, the recommended closures are
15 discriminatory against certain groups of students.

16 Fortunately, there has been a cost saving
17 analysis done on the John Marshall Alternative School
18 building, and this analysis found that it would cost more
19 to relocate these programs than if they were left to
20 remain in the John Marshall building.

21 The district would be fiscally, morally and
22 educationally irresponsible if they moved the John
23 Marshall programs to other sites, as doing so
24 disproportionately impacts certain groups of students of
25 color, low socioeconomic students, special education

1 students, and teen parent students.

2 The John Marshall Alternative School building is
3 set on a serene site close to four major bus lines and
4 business facilities, which offers students many
5 opportunities.

6 It is within walking distance to Greenlake, which
7 makes environmental experiences and physical education
8 activities an important adjunct to the school. These
9 students deserve this location.

10 The programs offered at John Marshall are diverse
11 and educationally sound. The Marshall Transition Center
12 for Behavior Disorders, special education students, is
13 extremely effective in mainstreaming students into the
14 John Marshall Alternative Middle and High Schools.

15 Middle school re-entry students are enrolled in
16 classrooms which are self-contained. And then when they
17 are ready, they're mainstreamed into the alternative
18 middle school.

19 There is also an alternative high school program
20 for students who wish to attend John Marshall by choice.
21 Additionally, there is a teen parent program with a
22 daycare center and an outdoor playground.

23 The evening school program is located at John
24 Marshall also where the teachers often coordinate
25 resources between the day programs and evening school.

1 Many of the students who attend John Marshall
2 have been excluded from other schools and have found a
3 caring educational environment where they are achieving
4 academic and social success.

5 Now, the big question the district will ask is
6 why can't all these wonderful programs be housed in
7 another building? Well, the answer is clear.

8 One, leaving John Marshall Alternative School in
9 the John Marshall building costs less than moving it to
10 another site. Other sites, which the district has
11 selected as possible relocations, cost more.

12 Two, the school has plans for expansion into a
13 dual-language academy.

14 Three, most importantly, however, is that by
15 uprooting and moving the John Marshall students and
16 programs disproportionately impacts students of color,
17 special education students, low socioeconomic students and
18 teen parents. These special populations thrive at this
19 school.

20 This population is fragile, vulnerable, and
21 valuable and deserves these programs at this school on
22 this site. Thank you.

23 MS. FLYNN: Gordon MacDougall followed
24 by Don Alexander.

25 MR. MACDOUGALL: My name is Gordon

1 MacDougall, and I've spoken at a couple of these meetings
2 already, so I think I'd like to take some time tonight
3 just to speak about my experience here at John Marshall.
4 I've been working here for my second year, and I worked
5 hard to get into this school.

6 I've been in the district for five years now.
7 And when I saw what was happening here, I wanted come.
8 This school serves a variety of purposes as we've just
9 discussed, and it's moving forward.

10 There's data gathering that shows numerous
11 successes. Even though we have a transitory population,
12 people move in and out, it seems like we're small, there
13 are a lot of things going on here.

14 All the programs that were spoken to with the
15 last speaker work very well together and support each
16 other and do all they can to support the students in this
17 district that really need us.

18 The students that need us, you know well.
19 They've been mentioned. We know who they are, and we take
20 care of them. We take care of them very well as the data
21 suggests and supports.

22 So I'd like to see the John Marshall program
23 continue. I'd like to see it in this building. It's a
24 wonderful building that could accommodate us. I think it
25 would be costly to move us.

1 If per chance we had to move, I'd like to see us
2 stay together because we work very well together, the
3 diverse programs that function as one program and lead to
4 students' success. Thank you.

5 MS. FLYNN: Thank you. I have Don
6 Alexander followed by Mary Lee.

7 MS. LEE: Okay. My name is Mary Lee.
8 I've been with the district for about three years. I'm a
9 certificated math teacher, and I've had several six month
10 contract jobs.

11 I also always take jobs with special ed. folks
12 when I get a chance, and I ended up at Marshall one day at
13 the end of March or the beginning of April and was
14 fortunate enough to be assigned here for the rest of the
15 school year to the 45 day room on the third floor.

16 I was not a contract because I'm a math teacher
17 and it's a special ed. position, but I happen to have a
18 certain ability to work with special ed. folks.

19 In the special ed. room on the third floor, we
20 got the students from all over the district who had
21 committed acts such as bringing a knife to school or
22 shooting a gun or whatever, and they were great kids who
23 had just done something wrong, really bad.

24 Anyway, so I really enjoyed the students. I
25 wanted to let you know just a little bit more about the

1 job. We were in the room with the kids from 9:00 until
2 2:00 when they went home. They had an hour for PE, and so
3 it was I and an IA in the room with the students.

4 If I needed to go somewhere or take care of a
5 family that had come in, or if the IA needed to go
6 somewhere, there was always another aid or another
7 instructor who knew about the children on the third floor
8 to come in and take our place, and we could do that same
9 thing for the other teachers.

10 At the end of the day after the students left,
11 all the folks in the BD program and I in the IAS program
12 as the only teacher would meet in a conference room at
13 2:00 and discuss the day.

14 We would talk about the kids who were having a
15 very hard time. We would share their backgrounds, maybe
16 phone calls that had been made home, and we would make
17 plans for the next day.

18 And this team that developed was probably the
19 first real team that I've ever been on, or maybe I was too
20 dumb before to recognize it. I worked in industry for 20
21 years, and I do know a lot of faculties in the school
22 district, or more than one anyway.

23 And the feeling that you got when you were in the
24 room talking about the students was a good one. We would
25 -- if somebody did something, we felt free to talk to them

1 about it, and we always left the room as a team.

2 Now, I would like to also say don't move. It's a
3 great location. But whatever you do, don't break up this
4 faculty. One person cannot handle a 45 day room stuck at
5 the end of a hall. I don't care if it's at Roosevelt,
6 Garfield or Rainier Beach. We need to discuss the
7 behavior of our students and the issues that come up with
8 the families and with the district with our colleagues.
9 Thank you.

10 MS. CALDERWOOD: I'm Stevi Calderwood.
11 I'm married to Jeff. He's a teacher here, and I think
12 he's been here for more than 12 -- 14 years maybe. Her
13 husband hired Jeff, and he's been very happy here. He
14 loves the kids.

15 So I probably don't have much new to add except
16 I've seen the improvements physically and financially to
17 this building, and it's an amazing sight. And I can see
18 where other people might have their eye on it. It's a
19 nice piece of real estate, and I hope that politics and
20 real estate have nothing to do with your idea to close it.
21 We'll all be watching real careful, thanks.

22 MS. FLYNN: Charlie Mas.

23 MR. MAS: My name is Charlie Mas. Let's
24 see, I don't want to end up complaining, so I'd better
25 start out complaining.

1 I think that when the district approached this
2 closure and consolidation thing, every piece of paper that
3 you used to work on this project should have written
4 across the top in big letters, "all outcomes must result
5 in net positives for students."

6 And if you had taken that perspective, you would
7 not have put the John Marshall community in the situation
8 that they're in. And the situation that they're in is
9 it's very difficult for them to believe that this change
10 is going to result in a net positive, because although
11 you're telling them, "Hey, we're not terminating the
12 program. We're just relocating them," you're not telling
13 them where they're being relocated to.

14 And so it's impossible for them to accept this
15 uncertainty as a positive, and I'm afraid the trust isn't
16 there for them to just take your word for it.

17 That said, I also have a complaint about the
18 posters that say, John Marshall out plus APP in equals
19 racism. For those of you who read Dr. Drake's letter, the
20 three-page letter followed by 20 pages of additional
21 material, I'm the author of the 20 pages of additional
22 material.

23 So if you want to call me a racist, come up here
24 and call me a racist to my face or afterwards. That'll be
25 fine. We'll talk about it.

1 Just as the district could not presume that the
2 change into the uncertainty in a net positive, I don't
3 think the community was right to assume that the change
4 into the uncertainty is going to be a negative, so who
5 knows?

6 What would probably be best is if somebody had
7 told these people where they're going so that they could
8 have some basis for having an opinion about the change.

9 And if you had taken in the perspective of
10 students, and if it had been your goal to create net
11 positive changes for students and you'd had that
12 perspective, you never would have said, "Well, we're going
13 to move these programs, but we don't know where. Don't
14 worry about it." People worry about it. When faced with
15 certainty, people presume the worse.

16 All right. Well, I don't want to with
17 complaints, so let me end on something positive. A
18 program that I work with and that my children are in was
19 faced with this exact same situation. We'd been in a
20 building for over 20 years. We'd been very successful in
21 the building, and we got the word, "We're kicking you out.
22 There's no room for you here. We don't know where you're
23 going. Don't worry about it."

24 We started looking around for a solution. We
25 said, okay, that decision's out of our control. That's

1 going to happen. Let's see how we can proactively
2 cooperate with the district to get a result that we can be
3 happy with, and I would encourage the community and the
4 district to work collaboratively and cooperatively to find
5 some result that works well for the students to create a
6 net positive for the students.

7 MS. FLYNN: Do we have any additional
8 sign-ins?

9 This is Elaine Schmidt.

10 MS. SCHMIDT: Elaine, S-C-H-M-I-D-T.

11 Okay. I don't want to repeat the things that
12 everybody has said. So I'll just say, first of all, the
13 impression I got tonight is it's incredibly sad to me to
14 see teachers who are working so hard come up here and have
15 to ask to keep their school together. We should never as
16 a district be in a position where that's happening.

17 By the way, I'm not a member of the John Marshall
18 community. I'm a Seattle School District parent, and I am
19 a member of the Alternative Coalition, and I was a member
20 of the School Board Advisory Committee on Alternative
21 Education.

22 I came to tour this building a few weeks ago
23 because I -- well, I was interested in it for a variety of
24 reasons. And what struck me is that when they were
25 talking about closing it, they were talking about a whole

1 bunch of different programs. And it could be relocated
2 somewhere, and they didn't necessarily know if they needed
3 to stay together or not.

4 This is a school. It's not a bunch of separate
5 programs, and the people who work in the building have
6 expressed that much better than I can.

7 But these are special kids in a lot of different
8 ways, and they're very much in need of being treated with
9 respect and with love. And every school closure should
10 be, wow, we've got this great new space for you. And the
11 community should be going, thank you. And if that's not
12 what's happening, then it can't go forward. Okay, thanks.

13 MS. FLYNN: Sheri Toussaint.

14 MS. TOUSSAINT: I didn't come here
15 planning to talk, but there's not very many folks that are
16 here, and I just feel as a parent in the public school
17 system that I'm obligated to say something.

18 And I think the biggest travesty for me in all of
19 this is the unknowing. I understand that there's
20 deficits. I understand that there's issues.

21 But when people don't know where they're going to
22 go, and when people don't know that they're going to go as
23 a whole community, no matter how small they are, if the
24 school is designed to have small class sizes because
25 that's their choice or because the school's been neglected

1 and they've been forced to have small class sizes,
2 whatever the reasons being, the children and the parents
3 really need to know where they're going.

4 I think another hard thing for schools is to
5 continually be on these closure lists, and then the shock
6 of being taken off the closure list and will we be back on
7 it the following year.

8 That's difficult for successful schools to move
9 forward and to build their program and to encourage other
10 people to come.

11 And I just really think that when we make these
12 recommendations, that we should really take into
13 consideration that it's -- I'm not saying you're not being
14 serious about it, but that you really think about the
15 effects of it, and that maybe it's not as public that
16 these recommendations are made that you first of all go
17 through them very seriously, and then announce it to the
18 public what you're going to do, because it's really
19 devastated a lot of communities.

20 And you can see by how many people are here
21 tonight -- I don't know what number meeting this is that
22 I've attended, but it's a lot, and it's ongoing at the
23 schools that I come from and the other schools that I
24 attend their meetings to try to see how they're feeling.

25 And so don't think that people don't care about

1 their building. If they don't have a loud voice here,
2 it's not that they aren't wanting to fight for their
3 school. They aren't able to be here, and I worry about
4 that. I worry when there's a low turnout that it might
5 make you think that they feel okay about what you're
6 doing. They don't.

7 So please really think about what this is going
8 to do to our community as a whole for the Seattle Public
9 Schools. Thank you.

10 MS. GRAHAM: I'm not a John Marshall
11 parent, but --

12 MS. FLYNN: Spell your name, please.

13 MS. GRAHAM: Debbie Graham, D-E-B-B-I-E,
14 G-R-A-H-A-M.

15 As I said, I'm not a John Marshall parent, but it
16 seems to me there's important programs here at John
17 Marshall. And I feel really concerned that there's been
18 no suggestion as to where they would go and in what form
19 and which ones might survive and which ones might not.

20 I think that a population is served here that
21 maybe doesn't have a lot of parents that can attend a lot
22 of meetings and make a lot of noise, and that maybe in a
23 way that makes them easier to target.

24 I'm just really worried about that, and I came
25 tonight, and unfortunately had to be late, but hoping to

1 hear what you guys are planning to do with these programs.
2 And I don't know that that's taken place, but I'll ask
3 people in the audience. Thank you.

4 MS. SOLEMSAAS: I work at John Marshall.
5 My name is Eilene Solemsaas, E-I-L-E-N-E,
6 S-O-L-E-M-S-A-A-S, and I'm here to lobby to keep this
7 program in this building.

8 We're on the bus line from all parts of the city.
9 There's not much transfer that needs to be done for our
10 kids. The starting time -- the kids come from all over
11 the city. Some of them have to get up at 5:00 and 6:00 to
12 get here in time for school.

13 If they have to go to a building where they would
14 have to take two or three buses, they're not going to
15 come, or they'll be late and then they're in more trouble.

16 And so my -- I'm looking at the cost projected
17 for moving our students, and it doesn't seem like they're
18 going to save much money this year, maybe next year and
19 the following year, but it's certainly going to cost a
20 large amount of money to bring it up to the amount that
21 it's here now, and they're good programs.

22 Another point is this looks like a school. Our
23 kids should come to a school that looks like a school. I
24 understand they're building a new building for South Lake.
25 They've been in portables at all kinds of schools. And

1 our kids have come from South Lake, and they've said it
2 isn't a school. Why should I go to school there? Why
3 should I do my best?

4 Marshall looks like a school, and I lobby to keep
5 this building open with us in it and put another program
6 in with us. And there's room, and we can do well with
7 both of them. Thank you.

8 MS. FLYNN: At this time we're calling a
9 conclusion of this hearing. I want to thank each and
10 every one of you for your participation. I know many of
11 you have attended many meetings. We're very grateful for
12 that.

13 As a reminder, the superintendent will present a
14 final recommendation on July 5th for the public hearing
15 regarding the final recommendations, scheduled for July
16 19th at 6:00 p.m. in the John Stanford Center Auditorium.
17 The school board will vote on the final proposal on July
18 26th.

19 Mr. Alexander, did you care to testify tonight?

20 MR. ALEXANDER: Yes.

21 MS. FLYNN: This is Don Alexander. We
22 actually had concluded, but since you came in and since
23 you were signed up in advance, go ahead.

24 MR. ALEXANDER: Thank you. I want to
25 thank you folks for being so nice. Of course, you usually

1 are, but you do very bad things.

2 Anyway, the reason -- I'm with SOS, Save Our
3 Schools, and CEASE. And what our concern is, or at least
4 my concern is not so much in the closure of the schools,
5 but why?

6 To my knowledge, and to people that I've spoken
7 with, which is a lot people, no one knows what you folks
8 know or no one suggests that they know what you folks
9 know.

10 If you want to close these schools, I would
11 suggest that you allow us to know why that is you want to
12 close them.

13 So far we're able to say that since you don't
14 know or since we don't know what you know, then it's very
15 possible you are being disingenuous. And I know that
16 that's a bad suggestion in Seattle that a bunch of people
17 who are elected by the people would be disingenuous, but
18 it happens. And in this case, I think we've found the
19 golden rod.

20 The fact that you want to close, or so it's been
21 said, this school, allows me to believe that you are not
22 either very American in that America's supposed to take
23 care of the least of us, and the children that go to this
24 school are, in fact, the least of us.

25 And if we don't take care of them, we know that

1 there are entities out there that are willing to take care
2 of our children, Walla Walla, Monroe, county jail, city
3 jail.

4 And you folks seem to not only don't give a
5 confound as to whether or not our children graduate to
6 these higher echelons of learning, Walla Walla and Monroe,
7 but you seem to thrive on the fact of preventing them from
8 going to other institutions such as U.W. and other
9 institutions.

10 Some folks may think that one place is as bad as
11 the other, but we do have experience that Walla Walla is a
12 little worse than U.W., maybe not much, but the difference
13 is the children think it is. And we would hope that you
14 would do something to prevent our children from getting
15 that kind of education by keeping them in this school.
16 Thank you.

17 MS. FLYNN: So with that, I will for the
18 second time call a conclusion to the hearing, and thank
19 each and every one of for your participation.

20 Once again, the final recommendations from the
21 superintendent are due on July 5th. These are preliminary
22 recommendations we are holdings these hearings on. We'll
23 receive the final recommendations in a week or so.

24 There will be a final public hearing that is
25 scheduled for July 19th at 6:00 p.m. in the John Stanford

1 Center Auditorium. The school board will vote on the
2 final proposal on July 26th. Thank you.

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4 (Whereupon the hearing adjourned.)

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1 STATE OF WASHINGTON)

2) ss.

3 COUNTY OF SNOHOMISH)

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5 I, the undersigned Notary Public in and for the
6 State of Washington, do hereby certify:

7 That the foregoing proceedings held on the date
8 indicated on the caption sheet were reported
9 stenographically by me and thereafter reduced to
10 typewriting under my direction;

11 I further certify that the transcription of the
12 hearing is true and correct to the best of my ability.

13 Signed this day of
14 , 2006.

15

16

17

18

19 Notary Public in and for the

20 State of Washington, residing

21 at Edmonds.

22 My Commission expires 4/29/09.

23 CCR No. 2052

24

25