

Central High School Relocation Study

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Social Impact Analysis

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Disclaimer

The social impact study is intended to identify potential tradeoffs for the decision-making process. Information about demographics for each scenario was generated using 2000 and 2010 Census data. Due to unknown changes, such as fluctuations in immigration rates, birth rate changes, or changes to the high school districts, the future population could vary significantly. In the social capital inventories there is an inherent bias towards the present because future amenities are unknown. Analysis of the interviews may reflect the author's biases. See Appendix A for complete responses to interview questions.

Executive Summary

The Champaign Unit 4 School District is currently considering options for the future of the two high schools, Central and Centennial. The district will likely remodel or rebuild one or both of the high schools and many sites throughout the Champaign area have been suggested for a new school.

Residents of Champaign and Savoy are diverse and each individual family has unique needs and preferences for the future of the local high schools. The *Social Impact Analysis of the Central High School Relocation Study* examines some of the social dimensions of high school locations. Census data from 2000 and 2010 were used to outline demographic characteristics of the district. “Walkingshed” maps displaying population and area amenities attempt to show geographical differences in social capital. Interviews with approximately 30 individuals were used to characterize stakeholder perceptions.

Population is currently most dense in the central part of the district, but growth is mostly occurring near the edges of the urbanized area. Racial and ethnic groups are currently somewhat stratified, as are incomes, thus the locations of the high schools may benefit some residents more than others. A school located in the south or southwest part of the district might disproportionately impact lower income or minority families due to transportation burdens. In light of the Consent Agreement, further outreach to low income and minority families to address potential siting concerns might be of value.

An assessment of the amenities and residential population within one mile of the school sites is a way to consider the structure of neighborhood social networks. Students, parents, and staff may benefit from access to other nearby resources and persons unrelated to the school may enjoy spectating at extracurricular activities or volunteering with programming. “Walkingshed” maps can be discussion starters for participants in the decision-making process.

Opinions and concerns about the future location of Central High School vary widely. The most common subjects of discussion among interviewees were facilities for athletics and other extracurricular activities, differences in location and accessibility, and the need for significant building and facility improvements. Educational programming is also a major priority for many interviewees, which has implications not only for the design and location of school buildings but also for the structure of secondary education for the whole district. Participants frequently mentioned equity, sustainability, history and tradition, planning for the future, the urgency of problems, and the decision-making process. Each individual has her or his own priorities, many of which are in direct conflict with the priorities of other constituents. An analysis of the interviews does not produce a clear consensus of opinion, thus significant negotiations and compromises may be necessary in order to come up with a solution that is satisfactory for most people. The responses from approximately 30 individuals illustrate the breadth of views about the future of Central High School. More public engagement would help the District quantify the strength of opinion about particular aspects of the future school.

Information from the Social Impact Analysis can help stakeholders weigh the merits and deficiencies of particular sites. National trends in school siting have changed several times in the past and ultimately no outside authority can mandate the best course of action for the Unit

4 community. As the discussion among the school board, parents, school staff, and the wider community continues, these pros and cons of proximity to population, connection to social networks, and stakeholder viewpoints should be discussed.

Scenario Summaries

Current Location

(Provides a basis for comparison – already eliminated from District options)

The current location of Central is near the densest areas of the district but is far from developing areas. The school is fairly close to areas with concentrated minority and low income populations, which is particularly beneficial because these populations may have less access to transportation. Central is in a neighborhood with many amenities for students, parents, and staff. In particular, it is near to many organizations and businesses downtown, parks, Illinois Terminal, and other schools.

Interview themes:

- **Athletics and extracurriculars:** Central’s location works fairly well for most families in terms of extracurricular activities that happen at the school, because access is good. On the other hand, many people feel that participation in sports and other extracurriculars would be enhanced in terms of both quality and quantity at a site where facilities were all in one place. Some students have difficulty getting rides to practice locations.
- **Accessibility and location:** Because the school is in the dense heart of the community, the potential for students to walk or bicycle to school is high.
- **Building and facility improvements:** The building has high quality architecture but due to space and design constraints, some desired improvements might not be possible or might be too expensive. Space is a major issue.
- **Programming:** It might be difficult to add additional vocational programs at the existing building. Most existing academic programs could continue to function at the current site, but storage and pull-out spaces are limited.
- **Equity:** The current location is convenient for many minority and low income families. Many people feel that resource distribution between the two high schools is inequitable, however, because of the lack of facilities directly on Central’s campus.
- **Sustainability:** Making use of the current building would conserve the resources already invested there. Active transportation modes are more possible at Central than most other locations.
- **History and tradition:** Many people have a lot of nostalgia for the current building.
- **Planning for the future:** Adaptation to future technologies might be constrained in the current building.

Alternative Core Location

(Country Fair, Solon, or Garwood sites)

An alternative location within the core of the community would likely still be near to dense population areas but would also probably be far from new housing developments. Depending on the location, access for minority and low income populations could be low or high. Other core sites have more businesses and organizations, parks, and schools nearby, but none are as dense as the resources in Downtown Champaign. Several core sites were eliminated from consideration because although they have good access to nearby amenities, land acquisition might require the use of eminent domain which could spark significant political controversy.

Interview themes:

- **Athletics and extracurriculars:** At a core location, it is likely that many (although perhaps not all) of the extracurricular facilities could be onsite, enhancing participation in a location that is still fairly accessible to students and families.
- **Accessibility:** A significant number of students would still be able to walk or bike to an alternative core location.
- **Building and facility improvements:** With a new building, it could be designed to accommodate all desired functions, but it would likely not have the architectural charm of the old building.
- **Programming:** The building could be designed to incorporate new programming needs, especially up-to-date vocational facilities. Both core locations are fairly close to Centennial, thus it might be possible to share some programming.
- **Equity:** An alternative core location may or may not be very accessible for minority or low income families. Discrepancies in facilities at the two high schools could be more equalized.
- **Sustainability:** A new building could be designed to be very energy efficient. A location in the core of the community might still allow for high usage of active transportation modes.
- **History and tradition:** New traditions would develop at a new building but some historical grounding would be lost.
- **Planning for the future:** Up to date technologies could be installed and the design could be more adaptable to future needs.

Fringe Location

(North, Northwest, or South fringe sites)

A location on the edge of the community could be located in a developing part of the district but might discourage development on other edges of the community. It would also be relatively far from the areas that are currently most densely populated. A new school on the south or southwest edge of the district might place an unfair transportation burden on some minority or low income families. Few amenities currently exist near the fringe options, although it is likely that more

would develop in the future if a school is built. The southern fringe sites might increase access to University of Illinois resources, especially in terms of the Illinois Research Park, but residential development might be constrained due to University ownership of land. The northwest fringe site is geographically close to Parkland College, but currently access is poor because the site is isolated by the interstates. The northern fringe sites may be near to many businesses but are less accessible from the majority of the urban area due to I-74.

Interview themes:

- **Athletics and extracurriculars:** A school built with ample acreage on the periphery of the community would allow onsite facilities for nearly all extracurricular activities. One potential drawback, however, is that bus access (particularly at odd hours of the day) might not be good enough to allow families of all income levels to participate.
- **Accessibility and location:** The number of people who could currently walk or bicycle to any of the fringe sites is significantly lower than the status quo, although with future housing developments those numbers would likely increase. With land use constraints, however, it is unlikely that a fringe site would ever reach the numbers that are possible at the current site.
- **Building and facility improvements:** With a new building, it could be designed to accommodate all desired functions, but it would likely not have the architectural charm of the old building.
- **Programming:** The building could be designed to incorporate new programming needs, especially up-to-date vocational facilities.
- **Equality:** Fringe locations could potentially be difficult for minority or low income families to access. Both high schools could have equal facilities, however.
- **Sustainability:** A new building could be very energy efficient. Use of active transportation modes would likely be lower at an edge site.
- **History and tradition:** New traditions would develop at a new building but some historical grounding would be lost.
- **Planning for the future:** Up to date technologies could be installed and the design could be more adaptable to future needs. Extra land might be available for future needs.

Introduction

The Champaign Unit 4 School District is currently considering options for the future of the two high schools, Central and Centennial. Central High School is an older facility and the school board has suggested several sites on the periphery of the community on which to build a new school. The Champaign Planning Department has identified other sites within the city where a school could replace an existing or vacant land use.

The decision of where to locate a new high school or how to renovate the old one will impact not only the 3,000 high school students in Champaign and their families, but also the future

development of the city as a whole. Residents of Champaign and Savoy are diverse and each individual family has unique needs and preferences for the future of the local high schools. As a component of the author's capstone project, this study will examine some of the social dimensions of high school locations, including inequalities and differences in social capital, as well as identify issues of concern in the school siting debate.

Background on School Siting

Schools are an important component of the physical and social fabric of neighborhoods and cities. As development of residential and commercial areas occurs, schools are often incorporated into the planning to accommodate additional pupils that will move into the area. In Champaign, for example, the high school that was originally constructed on the site of Central in 1868 was called "West High School" because it was on the western edge of town.¹ Elementary schools Southside and Westview were named for similar reasons. Over time, the town developed around the schools and today they are very much in the core of the community.

During the baby boom generation, school construction trends shifted direction. Although school districts continued to build schools in areas where development was occurring, the amount of land for each school site increased significantly. The National Council on Schoolhouse Construction (NCSC, today called the Council of Educational Facility Planners, International or CEFPI) stated in 1949 that "most school sites are too small. Modern schools require sites larger than were considered necessary a generation ago. Larger areas are necessary because of the continued expansion of educational programs, the greater use of schools by the entire community, and the necessity for sufficient space for both present and future building needs."² At that time, the NCSC recommended a minimum of ten acres plus one acre for every one hundred students for a secondary school. By 1958 it had revised its recommendation to a minimum of 30 acres plus one acre for every one hundred students.³ Centennial High School, with its campus of 36.5 acres constructed in 1963, was likely a product of such recommendations.

Changes in culture also contributed to changes in the way schools were sited. Increased use of automobiles required additional space for staff and student parking. Cafeterias were built at many schools so that students no longer returned home for lunch. Schools did not have to be within walking distance of the homes of students.⁴

Today, opinions about school and community planning are shifting once again due to concerns about quality of life; "traffic congestion is increasing; municipalities spend funds on building new infrastructure in far-flung development, abandoning their investments in existing neighborhoods; open space seems to be vanishing. In reevaluating growth patterns, communities are also

1. Smith, Lauren. "Champaign Public School History." <http://www.champaignschools.org/News/0910/Champaign%20School%20History%2011-13-09.pdf>

2. McDonald, Noreen C., 2010. "School Siting: Contested Visions of the Community School." *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Vol. 76, No. 2, Spring 2010

3. Ibid. McDonald, 2010

4. Ibid. McDonald, 2010

5. Council of Educational Facility Planners, International and United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2004. *Schools for Successful Communities: An Element of Smart Growth*.

assessing how and where they spend their education dollars. Investments in schools at once respond to and influence growth” states a recent CEFPI guide.⁵ Some critics have argued that recommended school site sizes are not sensitive to local contexts and “have prevented schools from locating in neighborhoods, leading to low rates of walking to school; the closing of existing urban schools because they do not meet size requirements; and new housing developments near greenfield school sites.”⁶ In response, CEFPI “issued new guidelines in 2004 without recommended minimum size standards, allowing more flexibility in school design.”⁷

In spite of these policy updates, school planning processes may still adhere to earlier minimum site size recommendations. A study of school planning processes in Maryland and Virginia found that “most school facility planners first evaluated available sites to see if they met size requirements and then presented the school board with estimates of pupil transport cost, walkability, and connection to neighborhoods among those that met those requirements. Arranging the process in this way eliminates small sites from consideration early, without considering their potentially unique location advantages.”⁸ Many school districts chose large sites because they wanted to provide “ample parking, drop-off areas, and athletic fields;” to accommodate future growth in enrollment by leaving space for additions in the future; and to “provide insurance against construction problems.”⁹

In the end, each community must decide what type of school campus is best for its residents. Educational policymakers acknowledge that “neither large schools nor small neighborhood schools are appropriate everywhere. The challenge is to develop a process that considers the tradeoffs before choosing goals for the siting process, and that gives school districts flexibility in implementing their plans.”¹⁰ Some states, including Illinois, have set limits on maximum acreages for schools, tied to funding assistance. For a high school the State of Illinois Capital Development Board will not assist with funding for a site greater than 20 acres plus one acre for each additional 100 students in capacity.¹¹ For a school with a capacity of 2,000 students, the Capital Development Board would help to fund a site with a maximum of 40 acres.

Unit 4 Facility Planning

In 2007, the Unit 4 School District initiated a long range strategic visioning process with significant participation from community members. Called the Great Schools, Together initiative, approximately 75 individuals participated in a vision committee and topical working groups. Over 265 others attended a series of ten community forums. The district developed strategic goals in six categories (student achievement and well-being, stewardship and accountability, faculty and staff excellence, engagement of parents and the community, diversity, and facilities) with short and long term priorities for each.¹²

6. Ibid. McDonald, 2010

7. Ibid. McDonald, 2010

8. Ibid. McDonald, 2010

9. Ibid. McDonald, 2010

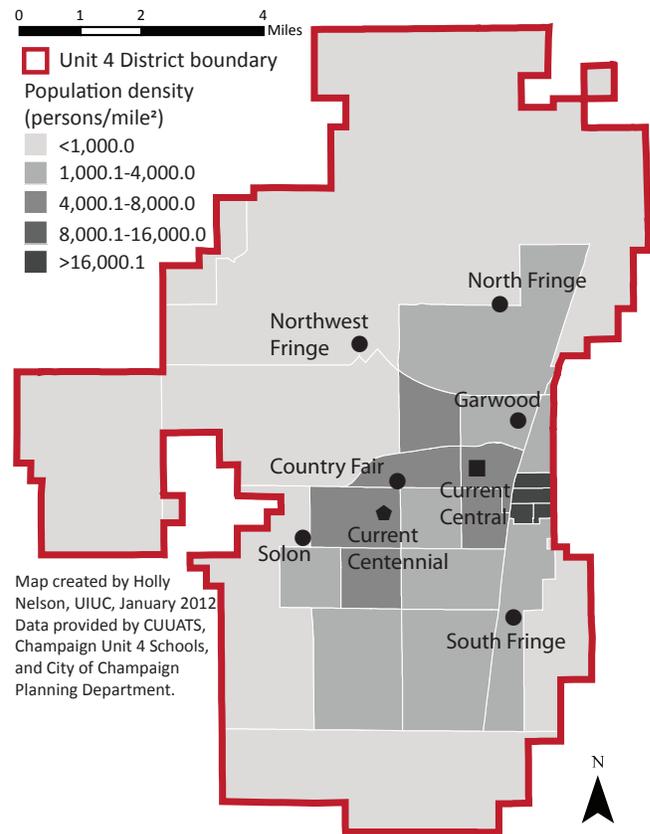
10. Ibid. McDonald, 2010

11. State of Illinois Capital Development Board. “List of Eligible School Construction Program Expenditures For Construction of School Facilities.” October 2010. <http://www.cdb.state.il.us/forms/download/School%20Construction%20Law%20Project%20Standards%20Oct%202010.pdf>

12. Champaign Unit 4 Schools. *Great Schools, Together: Unit 4 Long Range Strategic Plan*. Adopted 9/15/08

Of particular relevance to the current high school discussion, participants sought more effective two-way communication with the community, equity between facilities, identification of locations for new school facilities, and the creation of an educational programming team for long term facility and infrastructure improvements. The facilities group had an ultimate goal to “revitalize, build, and maintain facilities that are safe, sustainable, and allow equitable access to programming across the District.” Many topics of discussion from the *Great Schools, Together* process were repeated in stakeholder interviews for this study, suggesting that some issues have yet to be addressed.

Figure 1: Population Density by Census Tract



Demographics

Population

Population density is currently highest in the central part of the district. The highest population densities are on the University of Illinois Campus; however, most residents are University students and do not have school-age children (see Figure 1).

Table 1: Snapshot of Unit 4 enrollment patterns, 2002-2011

Grade Level	Enrollment		Avg Annual Enrollment Change over 10 years		Max rate of Year of max		Min rate of Year of min	
	2002	2011	Change over 10 years	Max rate of change	Year of max	Min rate of change	Year of min	
Elementary	4171	4481	36.2	1.026	2010	0.984	2004	
K	685	798	14.1	1.063	2011	0.976	2008	
1	678	752	9.3	1.052	2011	0.939	2005	
2	663	735	9.0	1.054	2008	0.945	2006	
3	722	727	1.6	1.075	2006	0.929	2007	
4	737	730	0.0	1.067	2010	0.934	2004	
5	686	739	7.3	1.070	2003	0.934	2009	
Middle	2047	1962	-8.9	1.017	2005	0.965	2007	
6	680	683	1.3	1.077	2008	0.940	2010	
7	705	622	-7.6	1.047	2009	0.919	2011	
8	662	657	0.6	1.073	2003	0.890	2004	
High	2842	2745	-10.2	1.025	2003	0.968	2010	
9	780	828	7.2	1.108	2004	0.912	2006	
10	754	649	-9.7	1.081	2005	0.910	2007	
11	704	686	-0.7	1.113	2006	0.945	2004	
12	604	582	-0.7	1.060	2009	0.871	2008	
Total	9060	9188	14.5	1.012	2003	0.990	2004	

Within the Unit 4 School District, the student population is growing slightly (see Table 1). Enrollment at all grade levels has fluctuated considerably over the past ten years, but the overall number of students has increased an average of 0.15 percent each year. The number of elementary students has increased most significantly, at a rate of 0.8 percent (about 36 students annually). Some specific grade levels have seen recent increases of up to 10 percent in a single year.

Middle school and high school enrollments have been somewhat more stable, with average annual losses of 8 to 10 students, although some years have seen growth. If the higher growth rates in the elementary schools continue and those students enroll in Unit 4 middle schools and high schools, additional secondary school capacity may be needed.

The general population of the district is increasing, with higher growth to the west, southwest, northeast, and southeast of the district (near the edges of Champaign and Savoy). Within the core of the district, most areas are holding steady or slightly losing population (see Figure 2).

Race and Ethnicity

The population in Unit 4 is racially and ethnically diverse, but subgroups are somewhat stratified (see Figures 3 and 4). Residents in rural areas of the district are predominantly white. Areas at the north and northwest edges of Champaign are relatively diverse. North and northeast Champaign have significantly higher concentrations of black and Hispanic residents. Downtown Champaign is almost uniformly white. The area around Centennial High School is diverse. Mostly white and Asian residents live in south and southwest Champaign and Savoy.

The Consent Decree, which was in effect from 2002 to 2009, required Unit 4 to examine racial equity within the district, especially with regards to transportation burdens. Although a judge ruled that the district had fulfilled the requirements of the consent decree, racial and ethnic inequities are still a hot topic.

No matter where a new school is located, some families will have to travel farther to arrive at school. Some of the proposed school locations might not be politically feasible given

Figure 2: Population Change by Census Tract

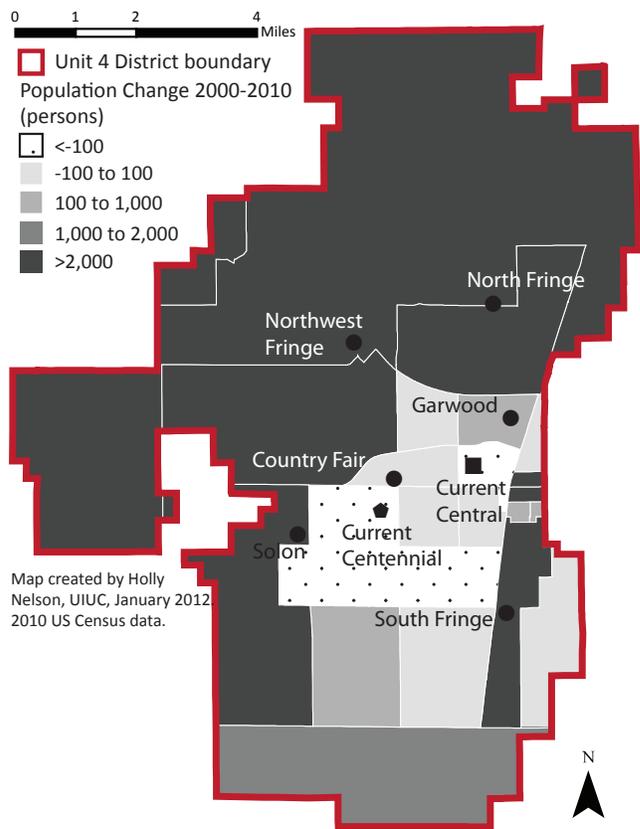


Figure 3: Density of Race and Ethnicity

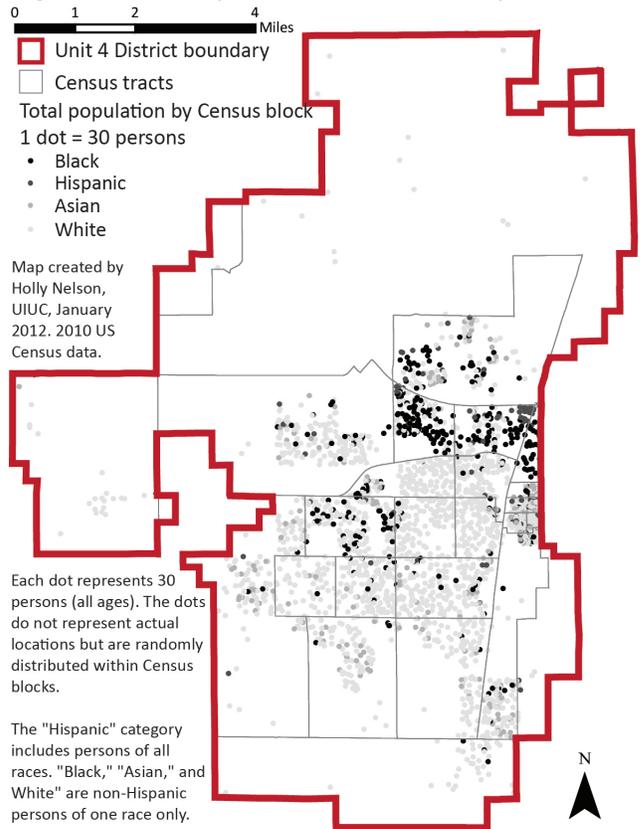
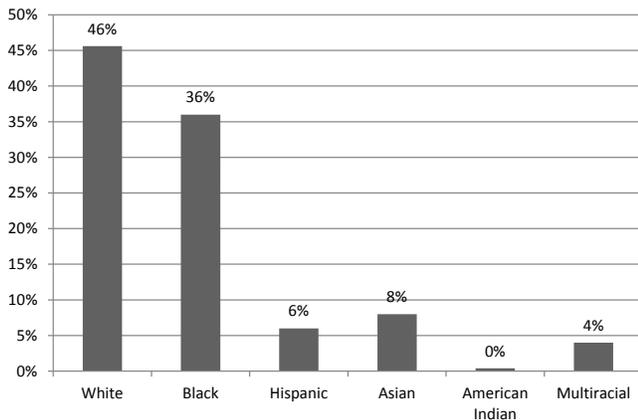
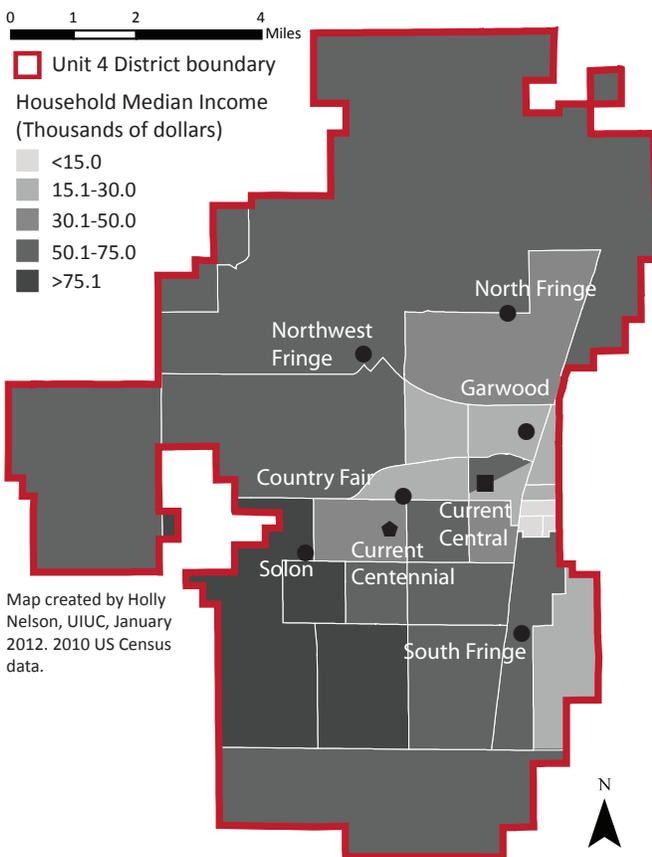


Figure 4: Unit 4 Student Ethnicity



Source: February 27 presentation at BOE meeting, "Effects of a One High School Model"

Figure 5: Household Median Income



the historical sense of mistrust that many black families have towards the district administration. Due to stratification of the black population, a new school located on the south or southwest side of the district might present an unfair transportation burden to those residents.

Income

Residents in the Unit 4 School District are somewhat economically stratified (see Figure 5). Approximately 46 percent of the district’s population qualifies as low income.¹⁴

Median household incomes are generally higher near the outskirts of the district, with the exception of the east side (predominantly University students). Residents with the highest median incomes live on the southwest side of the district. Residents with lower median incomes live mostly in the north-central part of the district. Additionally, according to the 2008 demographic study of the district by McKibben Demographics and Cropper GIS, most multi-family housing units (which tend to be more affordable) are located in the north-central, west-central, and eastern areas of the district.¹⁵

A new school located on the south or southwest edge of Champaign would disproportionately impact lower-income households and give an advantage to higher-income households, in terms of transportation burden.

14. Statistic from February 27, 2012 presentation at Unit 4 Board of Education meeting, "Effects of a One High School Model"

15. McKibben Demographics and Cropper GIS. *Champaign Community Unit School District #4 Demographic Study*. April 2008

Social Capital Inventories

“Social capital” is a term used to describe the value of social networks. It refers to the formal and informal linkages that people make with one another for both private and public benefit. We increase our connectedness with one another by joining organizations such as the Parent Teacher Student Association or the high school soccer team, or informally in the random daily interactions we have with people on the bus, in the park, or at the grocery store.¹⁶

In the consideration of the future of the high schools in Champaign, many of the formal structures within the school that help people to build their networks will be the same regardless of the school’s location. A high school will likely have a marching band, a theater program, a softball team, and a math club no matter where it is located. Depending on the type of facilities that the District chooses to construct, there could be modest additions to current programming, such as the addition of a lacrosse team or a technology club.

Outside the walls and grounds of the high school, opportunities for social interaction may vary significantly based on its location. Although it is extremely difficult to measure social capital, an assessment of formal and informal spaces for interaction in a given area is one way to make a comparison between different parts of the community. Amenities in the area serve as resources not only for the high school students, but also for parents and staff who may be able to combine trips to the school site with other errands.¹⁷

The areas shown in the “walkingshed” maps below are the neighborhoods within a ten or twenty minute walk from each proposed school location. Many high school students do not drive either for economic or age reasons, thus the ability to walk to other places is an important consideration. Students are able to be more independent when they can take care of their own transportation. Some of the sites may not be of interest to students, but do bring together adults who may or may not have any connection to the school but nonetheless participate in the structure of the neighborhood.

An additional point of reference is the measurement of total number of people living near the school. Neighbors of the school have the chance to interact with students as they pass by (either positively or negatively). Parents of students living near to the school may find it easy to drop in for a conference with a teacher or to attend a performance. Some other adults such as retirees or alumni enjoy the opportunity to visit the school for special events. Furthermore, property values near to schools tend to be higher because of their value as community resources.¹⁸

While these measures of social capital are imperfect, they do help to illustrate the very real differences in the feel and function of each potential neighborhood and the chances for interaction among community members. As community members weigh options for the future of the high schools, walkingshed maps can be used as discussion starters (see Figures 6-12).

16. Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Simon and Schuster, 2000.

17. Amenities in the area were located using walkscore.com, which measures the walkability of a neighborhood based on the assets located within one mile of a given intersection. The site returns a limited number of assets in each category, thus some sites have “more than 15 restaurants” to indicate the limitation of the website. Additional sites were located using Google Maps and the author’s knowledge of the area as a lifelong resident.

18. Weiss, Jonathan D., 2004. *Public Schools and Economic Development: What the Research Shows*. KnowledgeWorks Foundation.

Figure 6: Social Capital: Current Central High School Site

Significant Cultural Sites

- ① North First Street Farmer's Market
- ② Champaign County Historical Museum
- ③ Champaign Public Library
- ④ Mckinley Family YMCA (moving soon)
- ⑤ Springer Cultural Center
- ⑥ Downtown Champaign
- ⑦ Illinois Terminal

Situated near the heart of Champaign, the current 6.5 acre Central High School site is surrounded by social capital. Approximately 8,794 persons live within a 20 minute walk of the school.

Within one mile of the school, there are approximately 5 daycare providers, 9 fitness clubs, more than 16 restaurants, 7 coffee shops, 6 grocery or convenience stores, more than 15 other shops, 10 parks, 9 churches, and 14 banks.

Several major social and cultural sites are close to the current Central site (see list at left). Illinois Terminal provides excellent bus access and several bicycle routes pass near the school.

Dropping off multiple students may be convenient for parents due to the proximity of 9 other schools, including the Pavilion, Holy Cross, Southside, Dr. Howard, Franklin, Edison, Judah, Stratton, and the Academic Academy.

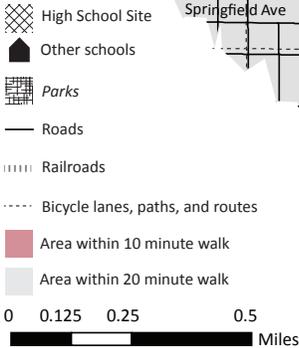


Figure 7: Social Capital: Southern Fringe Site

Significant Cultural Sites

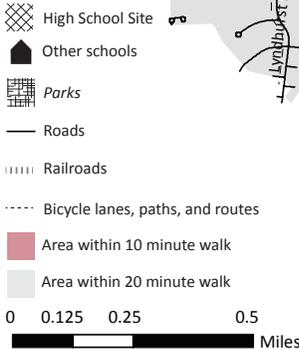
- ① UI Research Park
- ② Fox Drive Office Park
- ③ University of Illinois

The proposed 60 acre southern fringe sites are located on First Street at Windsor (shown) and Curtis in Savoy and have some social capital base. Approximately 1,833 persons live within a 20 minute walk of the Windsor site.

Within one mile of the school, there are approximately 3 daycare providers, 4 fitness clubs, 14 restaurants, 0 coffee shops, 2 grocery or convenience stores, 4 other shops, 1 park, 2 churches, and 6 banks.

A few major social and cultural sites are close to the Windsor site (see list at left). The most significant resource is the University of Illinois Campus, extending several square miles to the north of the site. A few bus bicycle routes exist near the site.

Dropping off multiple students may be inconvenient for parents because only one other school is within a mile of the site (University Primary School).



Map created by Holly Nelson, UIUC, February 2012. Data provided by CUUATS, City of Champaign Planning Department, and US Census Bureau (2010 data). Data on nearby amenities located using Google Maps, Walkscore.com, and the author's knowledge of the area.

Figure 10: Social Capital: Northwest Fringe Site

The proposed 70 acre Boulder Ridge sites are located to the northwest of Champaign in an area that has not yet been significantly developed. It has a weak base of existing nearby social capital. Approximately 4 persons live within a 20 minute walk of the school, although the Boulder Ridge Subdivision is located to the south and has approximately 998 persons. If additional roads were added, a portion of this population would be within walking distance of the site.

Within one mile of the school, there are no daycare providers, fitness clubs, restaurants, coffee shops, grocery or convenience stores, other shops, or parks. There is one bank and 4 churches. The only major social and cultural sites that are close to the current Boulder Ridge site are Parkland College and Dodds Park, but these sites are currently difficult to access because there is no bridge over I-57 on Duncan. No bus or bicycle routes pass near the site.

Dropping off multiple students may not be convenient for parents because there are no other schools nearby.

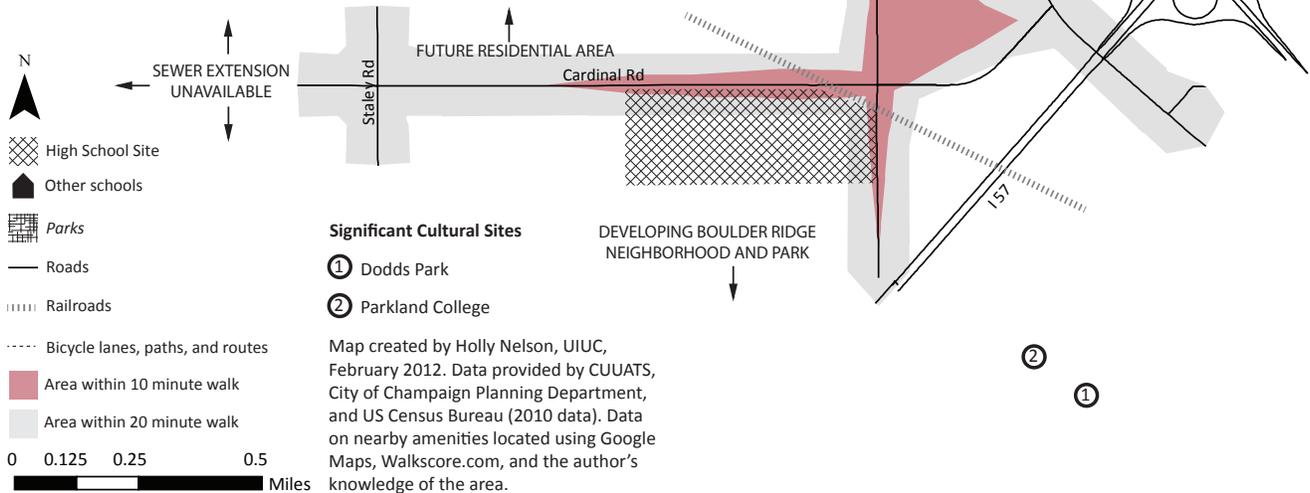


Figure 11: Social Capital: Northern Fringe Site

Significant Cultural Sites

- ① Marketplace Mall

The 60 to 72 acre northern fringe sites are located at the north edge of Champaign on Olympian Drive between Prospect and Market and have a small base of social capital. Approximately 1,271 persons live within a 20 minute walk of the school.

Within one mile of the school, there are approximately 0 daycare providers, 0 fitness clubs, 9 restaurants, 1 coffee shop, 3 grocery or convenience stores, 1 other shop, 1 park, 0 churches, and 1 bank.

Few major social and cultural sites are close to the northern fringe site (see list at left). Marketplace Mall is located just outside the 20 minute walking radius but provides additional employment, shopping, and entertainment venues. Bus and bicycle access to the site are currently limited but might be increased in the future.

Dropping off multiple students may be inconvenient for parents because no other schools are located within a mile of the northern fringe sites.

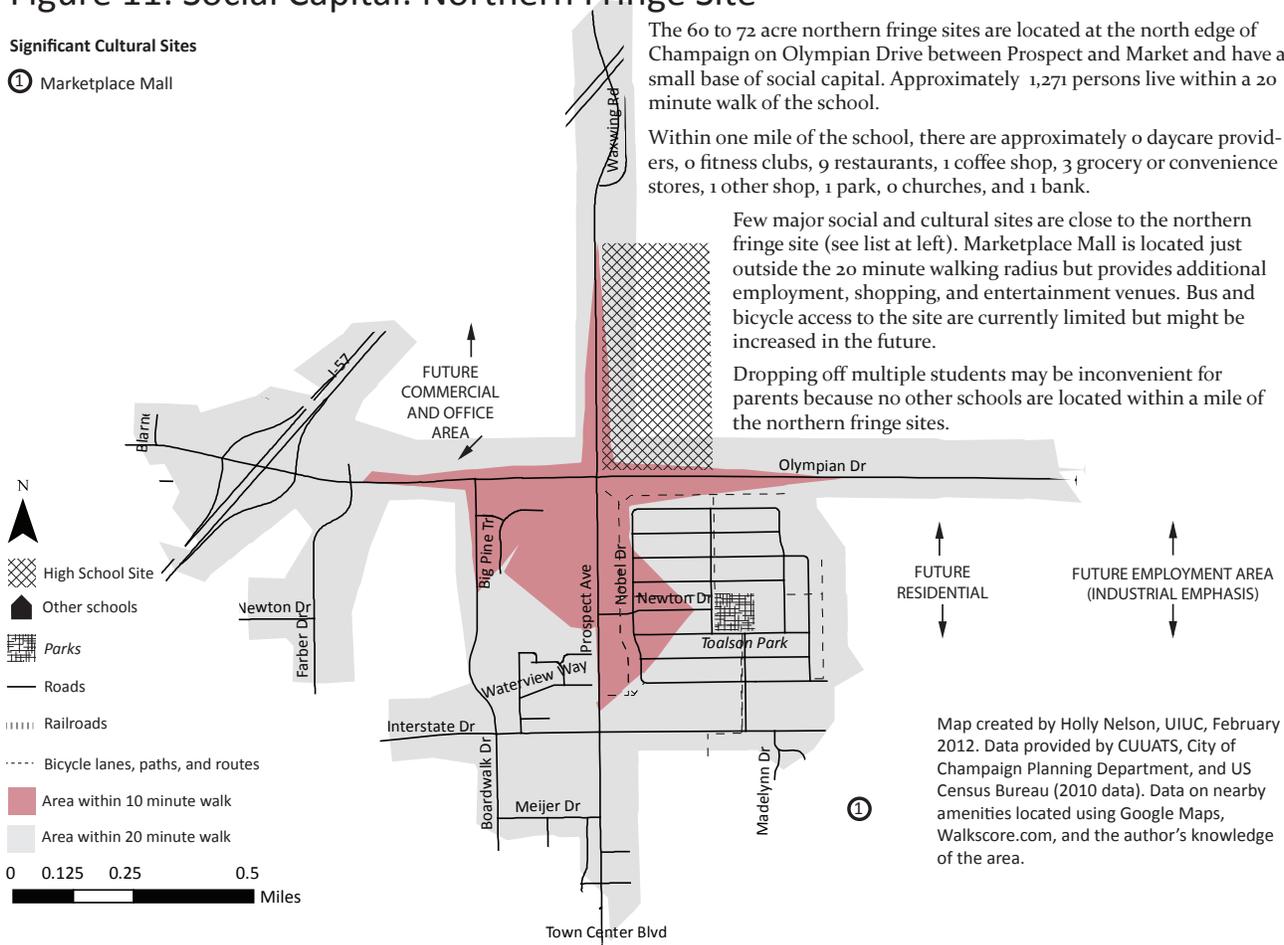


Figure 12: Social Capital: Garwood Site

Significant Cultural Sites

- ① North First Street Farmer’s Market
- ② Champaign County Historical Museum
- ③ Randolph Street Community Garden
- ④ Don Moyer Boys and Girls Club
- ⑤ Springer Cultural Center
- ⑥ Downtown Champaign
- ⑦ Douglas Branch Library
- ⑧ Illinois Terminal

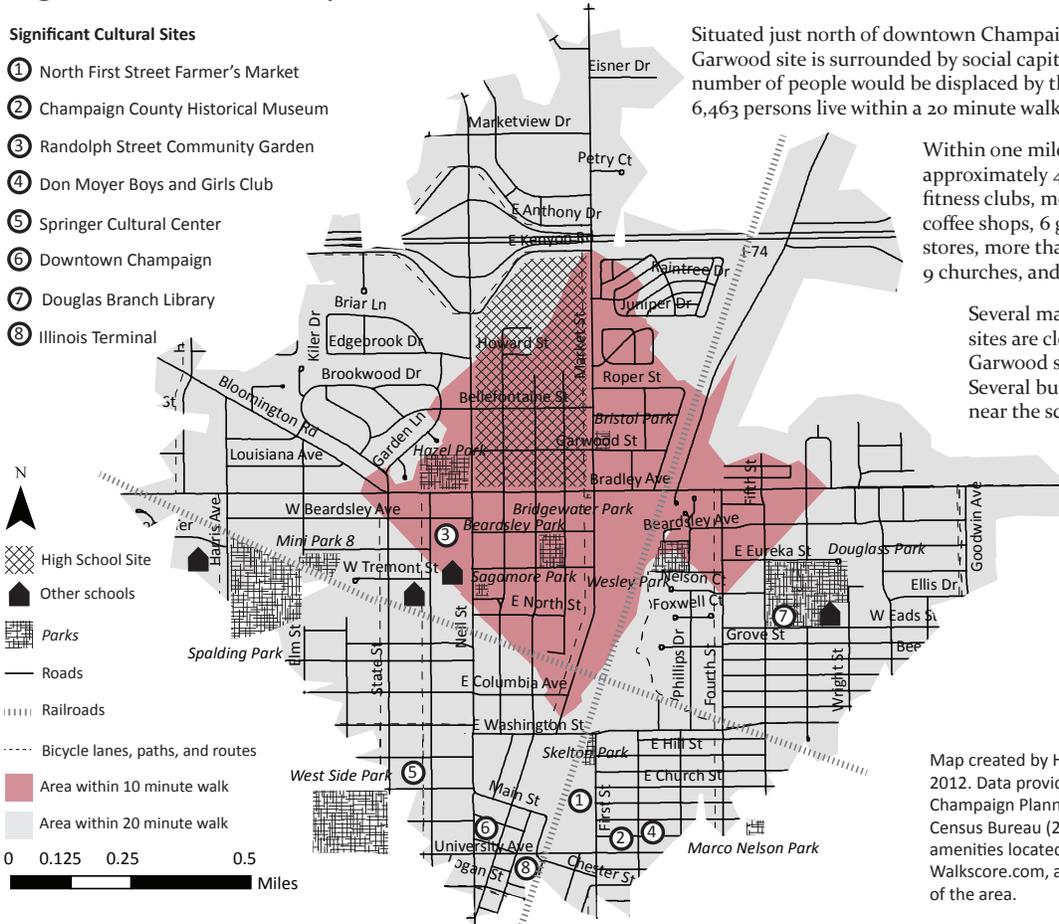
Situated just north of downtown Champaign, the proposed 55 acre Garwood site is surrounded by social capital, although a significant number of people would be displaced by the site. Approximately 6,463 persons live within a 20 minute walk of the school.

Within one mile of the school, there are approximately 4 daycare providers, 4 fitness clubs, more than 16 restaurants, 7 coffee shops, 6 grocery or convenience stores, more than 14 other shops, 7 parks, 9 churches, and 11 banks.

Several major social and cultural sites are close to the proposed Garwood site (see list at left). Several bus and bicycle routes pass near the school.

Dropping off multiple students may be convenient for parents due to the proximity of 4 other schools, including Stratton, Booker T. Washington, Franklin, and the Academic Academy.

Map created by Holly Nelson, UIUC, February 2012. Data provided by CUUATS, City of Champaign Planning Department, and US Census Bureau (2010 data). Data on nearby amenities located using Google Maps, Walkscore.com, and the author’s knowledge of the area.



Stakeholder Perceptions

Methodology

Approximately 30 persons participated in the social impact interviews. Each participant had the opportunity to respond to seven questions (see Appendix A) and responses were confidential. The interviews were largely informal and respondents could offer any general comments they wanted to share at the end of the interview.

The author sought out persons who had been outspoken in the past and others known through her personal network. Each interviewee was also asked to recommend additional participants who might have a strong opinion about the future of the high schools. Undoubtedly, there are biases in who was selected to participate, who chose to participate, and how the author interpreted the responses. The author did her best to find people with diverse opinions, social circumstances, and contexts within the community. The author had no past connection with 23 of the 30 participants and none were close friends. Respondents included current and past political officials; past, current, and future parents of high school students; current Central faculty and staff; alumni; religious leaders; and others in the community with strong opinions about the school.

In the analysis of the interviews, comments of interviewees are shown in quotes, but the comments are actually paraphrased. The author did not use a recording device during the

Summary of Themes

The problem of what to do with the high schools in the future is complex and most interviewees acknowledged a variety of factors that might drive the decision-making process. Participants most frequently mentioned the issues of extracurricular facilities and accessibility of various locations. Building improvements and programming needs were also popular topics of discussion. People also brought up concerns about equity, sustainability, history and tradition, planning for the future, urgency of needs, and other concerns about the decision-making process. As persons representing many facets of the diverse district, opinions differed greatly and consensus was not apparent.

Athletics and Other Extracurriculars

A large portion of the discussion about the future of the high schools revolves around extracurricular programs, especially athletics. Participation in after school activities is a draw for many students. As one interviewee said, “sports facilities should be a priority because lots of kids get to college through sports. Sports have a lifelong learning component.” Team sports also have other benefits: they are “an opportunity for people to learn to work together and stay physically fit.” Other extracurricular programs such as band and theater are also highly successful. One parent of future high school students remarked that their family was looking forward to the music and drama programs. Another interviewee added that the “fine arts are outstanding. Kids choose to come here for the extracurriculars.”

Most people can agree that extracurricular activities are a major strength of both high schools, but there was some disagreement on whether the current facilities are a positive or negative aspect of Central. One person remarked that Central’s athletic programs have been “good in spite of not having fields. No one has said we can’t do something because of it.” Another believes that the “current facilities are really good, they’re just not on location. The booster clubs do a great job. The soccer and softball fields are top notch (with new lights, concessions stands). But it’s not equitable between Central and Centennial.”

Facilities for sports and other extracurricular activities should be improved, according to 15 of the interviewees. The band room was cited by several persons as in need of major improvement. “Poor acoustic design contributes to hearing problems for the band directors and different sections of the band cannot hear one another;” space is cramped, storage spaces are unsecured and not near the band room, and lack of temperature control causes problems with instruments. Much beloved Combes Gym works fairly well for games but “even having basketball practice is challenging because we only have two gyms.” To schedule all of the teams in limited gym space, practice times range from 6:30 AM to 9:30 PM, making schedules more complicated for families.

Many other problems arise because the majority of athletic facilities are located offsite. One person mentioned that “bussing and carpooling to athletic activities is not conducive to extracurricular participation and keeps certain kids out.” “If all the facilities were onsite, it could increase student and parent involvement. Students just hanging out after school could watch sports. Many spectators don’t even know where the sports are. Some kids can’t participate because they can’t get to other sites. At Centennial you can spectate at multiple events in the same afternoon,”

remarked another interviewee. Having athletic and other extracurricular facilities in the same location may foster increased interaction and improve student involvement: “at Centennial people are engaging with one another after school. At Central people just split. People don’t get to see all the options in which they could engage.”

On the other hand, many interviewees were concerned about extracurricular participation at a fringe site due to accessibility. “If Central was on the edge of town, it would disproportionately discourage people who don’t live in rich suburbs from attending and participating, factoring in the proportion of the population that doesn’t have access to transport. The central location encourages people to come to activities at the school. The locations of McKinley and Centennial still encourage that ability,” asserted one person. Other members of the community may find it less convenient to attend events at the school if it is located elsewhere; “on the fringe there will be less participation. Neighbors may decide to visit spontaneously if it’s in town. Foot traffic is crucial.” With a more distant school, we are “truncating the degrees of freedom for kids to be able to get around on their own. We need to keep schools in locations where it is totally safe for students to get to and from school or practice on their own. We should make it possible for anyone to participate regardless of transportation options.”

In all, most people admitted that the problem of extracurricular activities is a complicated one: “where we are now is problematic because of distant facilities. If we build on the edge we’ll need more facilities to allow practices contiguous to the school day. If it’s on the edge some parents will have difficulty, especially if they were reluctant to participate before.” Another remarked that “currently it’s difficult because of the parking issue. But it’s also equidistant from everybody.” A third said that location “probably doesn’t have too much influence. If you’re keen on an activity, you’ll do it. But you could add extramural activities in another location. Parental involvement might be jeopardized if the site is further away.”

A few felt that the location of the school does not significantly influence participation in extracurricular activities; “participation may be a function of socioeconomic status, of who has access to transportation. For many kids the location doesn’t matter because they can afford to drive anywhere.” Another mentioned that participation in activities such as music is somewhat “elitist” because those who join “come from supportive family backgrounds and have had lessons or other opportunities in the past.”

Location and Accessibility

Another major topic of discussion among stakeholders, closely tied to the topic of extracurricular activities, is the issue of the high school’s location and accessibility. Many interviewees would prefer a more centralized location for the high school because of ease of accessibility. One interviewee said that “the school should be within walking distance to something. We should maximize active transport to the location. Outside the highways there is limited access and the bridges are narrow.” One person asserted that “kids that are going to walk can do so in this location,” but another argued that “some people nearby can walk but not others. Our family might be able to walk to a different location.”

Having a more isolated site was seen as potentially both positive and negative. One staff person noted that because Central is “close to public streets, it leads to attracting a non-student element that is not as healthy. A site off of main streets a significant distance will keep outsiders away. If it is separated from the road by a green space it will limit accessibility.” Limiting access and using surveillance might be easier at a site set back from the road.

Several interviewees were very concerned that a new school on the edge of town would generate significant sprawl in the future. One person feared that ‘it would be a game changer for Champaign if sprawl wins. The costs are extremely high to send police, fire, snowplows, or ambulances to the edge. Everything is interconnected.” Another was concerned that in the decision-making process, “no calculation of the true cost to the community is made. We need to add the cost of kids and families getting to school for four years. The costs of lives lost in accidents on the way to a fringe site should be included.” Another noted that “a disproportionate focus on athletics could be a waste of land and resources.”

Accessibility is somewhat different for students than for adults because as children they do not always have access to the same transportation resources and many are too young to drive themselves. One staff member worries that “if the school is out there and not in the neighborhood” it may be detrimental because “lots of kids walk to get here early or stay late for help,” especially with the current emphasis on relearning subjects that are shaky before moving forward. An alum noted that “the ability to walk to all three schools I attended is something I cherish. This town allows a sense of independence that doesn’t require a car or a parent. Proximity to downtown allows for open lunch, going to West Side Park or the library; the chance to interact with an urban setting. I learned to be an excellent parallel-parker at Central.”

Many interviewees felt that the current location of the school has benefits for programming, especially in terms of generating community involvement. Central is “a traditional type of high school facility located in the heart of the community. It’s able to draw upon rich resources such as the library, and University of Illinois,” especially because they are geographically close. One parent mentioned that “historically there has been a lot of community support,” but also admitted that “there are some downsides to the current location. It’s good for us but not for people living to the north or south.” The neighborhood also benefits from having a school, according to some stakeholders; “schools are important parts of communities, the anchors.” One interviewee noted that “the location is a strength for the community but not for the high school itself.” Another person said, “a priority is to find a location within current city boundaries. I would prefer not to see a cornfield site. School is part of the community and vice versa. Redevelopment is important. The location helps kids develop a sense of respect for the neighborhood. They won’t have the same interaction at a greenfield site.”

Several interviewees were frustrated that the school district had not been more proactive about gradually purchasing land around the school to add athletic fields; “buildings came up for sale nearby at some point but we failed to take advantage of opportunities, even within the last two years. There is a consistent failure to plan.” One person admitted that “the location is the trickiest thing. . . We should have planned decades ago to acquire land. It should be in one of the closest outlying spots.” Another wonders “if we could expand towards the apartment buildings

and create a new campus area between Church and University. I'm not convinced that that's not possible. Accessibility is huge. It will change the entire climate of the school. In the rush of getting something new we need to remember what we like about this building."

Numerous respondents see both positive and negative aspects of the current building and its location. One interviewee mentioned that "the location near lots of residences is both a benefit and a detriment." Whether or not participants like the current location of Central, opinions varied on the adequacy of the facilities.

Building and Facility Improvements

Interviewees expressed a range of opinions on the state of the building and its use as a high school facility. Several respondents like the current building and location and think that it is sufficient; "I would venture to say that Central is built better than Centennial and the middle schools. The building is pretty good and has lasted a long time. The building has a certain charm - it has a sense of place that is difficult to reproduce and helps create psychological cohesion, loyalty, familiarity, ownership, and pride," said one participant. An alum recalled that "sports were not hindered by sharing park district facilities or sharing the football field with Centennial. It's crazy not to think about sharing - we don't need to waste land. In terms of the arts, there's nothing special about the facility but it didn't hurt the program. There are plenty of classrooms for the AP program. Four walls and a roof housed everything I needed in a high school." Another participant was confused about the timing of the high school facility discussion: "Nothing bothers me about the current facility. Something has to be done eventually but I'm not sure this is the opportune time with the economy the way it is. It might be better to wait." Another person said that "having parking, a real stage, air conditioning, and a big gym sound exciting and gives different opportunities but there's something to be said for being able to work with less and turn it into something."

For some, the building needs a lot of work but may or may not have the potential to accommodate a high school program. One participant complained that "the building has been in benign neglect for a long time. It's difficult to accommodate the changing aspects of high school education."

Another believes that the problem is more complicated: "Some of the problem is just due to money. I don't think it's impossible to upgrade this building. . . There were no three-prong outlets or phone lines when the school was designed. Because it's so solid, it's hard to update it in a way that could work for a high school."

Many other respondents believe the current building is insufficient for a high school facility. One interviewee succinctly expressed a common sentiment: "It's old. We need a new school. It has served its purpose." Another person believes that "the facility is in our way."

The most widely mentioned improvements were facilities for athletics and other extracurricular activities, air conditioning, technology, and parking. One staff member asserted that "during summer, August, and May it's really bad. This building was made to have cross ventilation but that doesn't happen because of the theater addition. The cinder blocks retain heat. There are some rooms in the building without any ventilation." Others were concerned about technology updates, even just for safety purposes: "the wiring is obsolete in most rooms (one outlet in a room,

for example). This is a fire hazard.” Teaching methods could be improved by “getting things up to date such as smartboards, projectors, calculators, manipulatives, etc.” Parking was mentioned frequently: “We need parking for teachers and students. It’s not as welcoming because it’s hard for people to get here.” Another interviewee suggested that “The logical thing to do to take care of the parking issue is to make it a school where kids don’t need cars.”

Space is also a major concern for many interviewees. One staff member reported that “It’s definitely too crowded. There are thirteen teachers in nine classrooms in the math department, for example, which means teachers can’t be in the rooms for planning. . . Storage is bad. We need more space to pull kids out for extra help. Rooms with extra shared space in between them would be great. There’s no staff cafeteria for eating or a social space to mingle. It feels like we’re getting squeezed.” “We have to have longer passing periods because of the congested hallways. We’re out of space,” stated another staff member. Although the school is crowded, some felt that the compact layout of the school was actually positive: “the compact campus has everything in one little space. It helps things work well.” Another asserted that “the school has a history of being a “family” - people in different departments are friends. That could really change if the building” is more spread out. The physical high school facilities also relate to the type of programming it can have.

Programming

Although a few persons were concerned about the level of academic achievement, 19 persons believe that Central has a strong educational program. “People who want to focus on academics go to Central,” said one interviewee. Interviewees mentioned the strength of advanced academic programs frequently. “There are programs for kids in advanced studies. Lots of advanced college prep. For minorities there are quality teachers but there could be more,” asserted one person. The general breadth of courses is also good: “Central has a good variety [of courses] for the size it is. In theory it should prepare students well for college,” stated an interviewee. “The fact that Central is part of the Unit 4 system is a strength. The strong academic program would be equally strong regardless of location,” remarked another.

Many interviewees consider the staff a critical part of Central’s academic program: “teachers select Central as a teaching location because they’re there to educate kids,” stated one person. The culture of Central emphasizes cohesion and supportiveness to help students achieve their potential. A staff member commented that “teachers and students feel supportive and work well together (we’re a family).” Another person said, “there’s a younger teaching staff with no preconceived notions and a good counseling staff, especially those working with African American students. They are engaged in the students’ lives.” “There’s an established faculty. They are working hard to meet the needs of students. From a programming standpoint they are doing a very good job,” stated an interviewee.

A few interviewees felt that programming should be a priority and the facility and its location should be a secondary consideration. “The relationships between teachers and students are the most important to student learning. It’s something you can’t measure or see. . . The facility is less important than supporting human relationships,” asserted one parent. Another participant stated, “The overall district approach must change. There is a large number of low income students and

we're not meeting their needs. We need to come to grips with the 21st century student. There is more need for services outside of the classroom. We have an opportunity to start looking at the high school as a capstone experience, a connection between the needs of students and the district. . . We need a high school that meets diverse needs. We need two or three campuses rather than one." Some individuals mentioned the need for changes to the educational model rather than a simple renewal of facilities. One person believes that "we should look at contemporary educational and architectural trends for the building. It needs to be a well-rounded school." Several interviewees would like to see more vocational education and other alternative education models: one person suggests, "non-Baccalaureate programs aimed towards some higher education that are technologically oriented, with skills like fixing computers and programming. We need a district wide model and a reconfiguration of the middle school model too, with at least one K-8 school with a looping of staff to stay with kids for a few years. The bottom line is that the program should drive the decision rather than land availability."

In planning for the future of the high school facilities, several interviewees desire a reimagination of the high school facilities based on the future of education. For one participant, "the number one priority is a building that will serve students of the district for the next many years. What educational opportunities can we offer to prepare kids for life in the 21st century, whether it is vocational, AP classes, extracurriculars, exposure to different things? The educational mission and goals need to drive the process. What is needed in the building and on campus to make a high school? We need to explain what we want it to be and then let that drive the design, location, and layout." Another interviewee cautioned that "education focus is important. Not just an attention-catching facility."

Many people would like to see a better education system in Champaign in the years to come. One interviewee hopes "that teaching methods will continue to improve, and test scores will improve. Most importantly that kids' desire for learning improves." For some, the facilities will have a direct impact on the students' educational success; "I hope that more students who don't take school seriously now will have more pride and be inspired to work," stated one participant. Another person hopes "that the high school could really and truly be an educational mecca tied into the UI with all the resources there. We need to develop a level 'A' school in all areas of education. We have too many resources to not be a number one community in education." Many stakeholders aspire to high standards; one person hopes "we have a school that provides one of the best educations around and that rivals the top Chicago schools. I hope that people come here to see a model of how to educate. That will require the best staff and students wanting to learn. Parents and facilities play a role too."

Equity

As described in the demographic analysis above, there are several dimensions to the question of equity and location within the district. Socioeconomic and racial inequalities were considerations for some interviewees. Many are also concerned about discrepancies between the two high school facilities in the district. Although diversity can be a challenge for programming, eleven interviewees also see it as a major strength of the district.

Many stakeholders appreciate the variety of families in the district. One parent noted that “I like the socioeconomic diversity and life exposure. Schools where all the kids are being challenged at the same level isn’t real life.” Another person said that “the diversity of the student population offers unique opportunities to learn about different ways of life. This is a unique community.” At a programming level, “it’s not bimodal or town-gown. There are options besides a college/non-college track. People can interact with everyone but specialize in AP courses or shop etc.” People appreciate that the high schools are “a microcosm of society.” Diversity benefits the students because “kids who leave Central do well and aren’t scared of the world. Public school exposes people to different worldviews and gets people out of their comfort zones.” Although not explicitly mentioned, the emphasis on diversity as a strength may indicate that many stakeholders would be upset if redistricting or other factors contributed to a decrease in the diversity of the high schools.

The current location of Central is convenient for many low income and minority families. As one person noted, “the location within the heart of the community draws from economically diverse areas, even within walking distance.” Another interviewee worried that “if the schools are in the suburbs, there will be an implicit exclusion of people of different backgrounds.” For one interviewee, a hope for the future is “that the district would get the needs of lower income students” Another person’s priority is “a quality education for all so that each child is prepared for college. Not to create additional hardships on parents or children regarding accessibility. It’s at the heart of the community now but what will happen if that changes? We need to ensure that people don’t fall through the cracks.”

Some people feel that there is a major inequity between the two high schools. “It is humiliating for the students to be visitors at home. Kids are changing for games inside a port-a-potty!” exclaimed one interviewee. Central may be seen by some people as “ghetto” or less adequate because of its age or facility deficiencies: “when families are moving into the community, a school with fields is more appealing than an urban or inner city school,” remarked another.

The geographic location of the school also has implications for redistricting. Depending where the high schools are located in the future, the attendance boundaries could shift. One observant interviewee noted that “a western school would be especially problematic because the Centennial and Central districts would switch and then the same kids would have to go to the older school. If there’s property within the Central district, it should be a priority.”

The high school site will be a benefit to those living around it, but in some cases a few homes or businesses may be displaced. As one person noted, “it’s a toss-up of who benefits and loses. The minimum disruption should be a priority. I don’t like the idea of kicking people out of homes.” Using eminent domain could spark controversy.

Sustainability

Regardless of their opinions on location or the type of high school facility that should be built, many stakeholders place a priority on sustainability. One interviewee noted that “energy efficiency is key.” Another thought that programming could benefit from an emphasis on sustainability because it could “lead to keeping a sense of school pride and spirit, and a sense of historical

grounding.” “These are not times where we can throw money at problems like we did in the past. We need to think about building better buildings, especially in terms of heating and air conditioning and multistory layouts,” asserted another participant.

For some, however, location and sustainability are intimately connected. “We need to manage as efficiently as possible with what we have. Knocking buildings over isn’t sustainable. The world can’t afford us and the community can’t either. With the economic downturn and energy costs rising, the cost of services is going up. We need to learn to live within our means and think about what we can afford over the long haul. It’s amazing what you can live without and live pretty well,” stated one interviewee.

History and Tradition

History and tradition were also emphasized by nine respondents. A high school was first built at the current location of Central in 1870. Other buildings were also used on that site for elementary and middle schools before the current building was constructed as a junior high school in 1934. The high school program was moved into the current building in 1956 and served as the only high school in Champaign until the mid-1960s. As an institution that has been present in the community for over 50 years, people associate a lot of memories and nostalgia with the building; “there is a strong sense of tradition that is tied to the building for many people.” Whether or not an interviewee wanted the high school program to stay there, respondents often admired the building: “The history of the building can’t be duplicated. The 19th/20th century architecture and tile work is beautiful. Combes Gym must be duplicated.”

Planning for the Future

A priority for many interviewees was adequate planning for the future, in terms of land and space needs, educational methods, and technology. Likewise, examining the state of all district facilities and creating a vision for the future was frequently mentioned.

Several people mentioned that the district should acquire “enough acreage to support the building, parking, and extracurriculars. We should go with a large tract because we will fill whatever space we have.” Because of the current issues with space and inability to fit all extracurricular activities onsite that developed over time, many stakeholders would like to be well-prepared for contingencies in the future. One interviewee asserted that “we need to do it the right way so that it will last 2-3 generations (40-75 years). I’m not as concerned about the edge of town because it will likely move. Just don’t skimp on the facility. Think about the space requirements. Don’t cut corners.” Others felt that “space is important but parent and guardian involvement is important too.”

Educational methods have changed significantly since the construction of both Central and Centennial, thus many people are concerned that the design of the building and grounds must for the high schools must remain flexible to allow for changes in programming. Several interviewees were concerned about vocational education; “the UI always needs people in trades. A single high

school is the most effective way to do vocational education. Shops require ongoing upkeep. A 1960s shop doesn't work in the 1990s. Plastipak also needs workers."

Anticipating future changes in technology was also a popular priority. "We need a building that can last and adapt to changing needs and technology," said one interviewee, "so that outside resources can be incorporated." Another agreed, saying "we need to prepare for the technology that will be used in 20 years. We need a facility that can expand as the world expands." Use of technology will help to prepare students for future occupations; "most jobs will be in technology in the future," asserted one participant.

Several interviewees mentioned the possibility of a multipurpose function for a new school building. One parent noted that "we should look at incorporating spaces for community events. I was struck by the school at Chattam-Glenwood. Events are held at the high school kind of like they are held at the library. It goes beyond academics." Creating a school with multiple uses might help generate support from a wider base of community members, beyond those with children.

Thinking about the future is not limited to the discussion of the high school facilities. One interviewee hopes that "the district would truly become 21st century in its visioning." Another would be glad to see "Unit 4 gets its facilities under control and that start investing in real ways. The first impression we get of schools is really important." A third person hopes "that we will think outside the box and resist the pressure to take the easy way out. That we will successfully predict what people will appreciate for the next 20, 40, 60 years. We need to build for 2050, not 1990." "We need to look at the whole system. The system is broken. About 75 percent of the kids [from Central] enrolling at Parkland end up taking remedial classes. I would love to see the district have real choice," said an interviewee.

Several people were concerned that finances would significantly limit the possibilities for a new high school facility; "we need to spend the money now and do it correctly. The district might "cheap out" and not pay for high quality things. Don't look at others to figure out the bare minimum. Look at what our students need." One person fears that "we're not going to solve the problem. If we don't get community support we'll continue to drift. . . The problem has been ignored for 30 years and the money goes really fast." Another fears that "if we don't spend money on education, we'll end up spending it on incarceration. Outreach is important. If we don't take education seriously this could happen. We don't want to see kids miss out on opportunity. Roadblocks like money shouldn't be a cap on investment in education."

Urgency

Several interviewees have become impatient with the decision-making process because problems at Central and Centennial continue to grow. A failure to address current problems could lead to further disengagement of families in the future. One interviewee is afraid that "in 100 years the exact same conversation will be happening. We are losing trust from the community about the funds raised in Promises Made Promises Kept" and the district needs to "make a decision, sell it, and stand by the product." Another participant is concerned that "Champaign schools won't reach their potential - this has been demonstrated by the profusion of private schools and outmigration to St. Joseph and Mahomet."

Many believe that new and remodeled high schools will help unify the student bodies, which has been a significant concern in recent years with rising discipline problems. One interviewee hopes “that young people in public school will have the opportunity to attend a modern facility and have a sense of ownership and pride.” Similarly, another person hopes that “students would come to be engaged” and “that the district will see other ways of dealing with discipline.”

Decision-Making Process

A common concern for interviewees was the process of making a decision about the future of Unit 4. Some fear that particular factions of the community will control the discussion. Others are concerned that arguments will lead to rifts within the community. Many are looking forward to finding out what will happen.

The process of involving the community is important to many people, to avoid control by specific interest groups. One participant noted that a “top down-decision without community input that could make the community even more divisive and less engaged. Catering to a special interest group or addressing one issue without accounting for the whole picture” could be problematic. Another said that “community is difficult. Living together with people that you will see again and again - we have to figure it out. It’s a small town and everyone knows each other. We need to be careful of framing things because of disagreements.”

Because the community and the interests of individual families are so diverse, some people fear that the high school decision will cause major conflict. One official fears “that the city will become divided through this decision” and asserted that “everyone needs to give their opinions in this process. This city is very argumentative, which could derail the process, and the only ones who will suffer are the kids.” Another interviewee lamented the complexity of the problem; “I think people are often pro this or that because they think there’s an easy solution. It’s complex. We can’t do a cookie cutter thing. The community has a complex social past that needs to be accounted for. The school serves different needs for every person. We need to be as flexible as possible within the constraints. We need to look forward in demographics but also to the past for history.”

A few interviewees are very hopeful that the revitalization of the high schools will bring big changes for the district, if the process is well-orchestrated. One interviewee hopes “that the new superintendent will bring a brighter future. It’s more complicated than it has been. That she and the board will work with the community, both listening and sharing; it’s a revolving door. That she will tell concerned people how they can help make the schools better.”

Conclusion

The future location of high schools in the Unit 4 District has many social implications. The location and distribution of the District’s constituents, as well as their individual perspectives on the siting issue are key considerations. Formal and informal linkages between the schools and surrounding amenities are somewhat intangible factors that may influence the success of the high schools in the future.

The current location has many advantages in terms of accessibility, especially for minority and low income students. Many community resources and a dense population base are located nearby. The current building has architectural and historical value, and its reuse would conserve resources. Space is very constrained at the current site, so some improvements and future programming needs might not work there.

An alternative core location maintains most of the accessibility benefits of the current site and still provides access to a significant network of social resources. Facilities for athletics and extracurriculars would likely be excellent, and many additional facility and programming needs could be accommodated. Access may or may not be equitable for minority or low income families. Space would be somewhat constrained. Energy efficiency would be more easily integrated up front.

A fringe location has fewer general accessibility benefits but might have some participation benefits for extracurricular activities. Additional facility needs, especially for athletics, and other programming changes would have ample space. Access would likely not be equitable for minority or low income families. An edge site would probably be somewhat isolated from community resources, but energy efficiency could be incorporated in the initial building design.

Information from the Social Impact Study can help stakeholders weigh the merits and deficiencies of particular sites. National trends in school siting have changed several times in the past and ultimately no outside authority can mandate the best course of action for the Unit 4 community. While most of the information from this study is qualitative rather than quantitative, it addresses the human, emotional side of the school siting decision. Even if some sites may have significant flaws in terms of more quantifiable factors such as transportation, fiscal, or environmental impacts, constituents may have less tangible reasons for selecting a particular site. As the discussion among the school board, parents, school staff, and the wider community continues, these pros and cons of proximity to population, connection to social networks, and stakeholder viewpoints should be discussed.

Acknowledgments

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Appendix A: Interview Questions and Responses

The order of responses has been randomized to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

Q1: What do you see as the strengths of Central High School (as a program, not a facility)?

- A tradition of strong academic excellence, tradition, location is a benefit to the downtown. It's a strong community entity. Good at sports, the location is good for parents. It's easily accessible.
- Academics are as sound as they've ever been, there is a good focus on what we expect students to learn, good leadership, telling kids what content they can expect to learn. Athletic programs are as competitive as ever, competing at a very high level (ie best swimming program for a school without a pool), numbers of kids participating has been constant despite constant travel
- Central has strong AP classes and honor programs. Mostly good teachers. A good sense of tradition.
- Don't know it well.
- Everyone has a default response: tradition - both academic and sports. Academically it's a fine school. I put 2 boys through this school. Cultural diversity is a huge strength - it's a microcosm of society.
- Faculty, diversity of student body, curriculum. Weaknesses: facilities and community involvement
- History is the main strength. Also, a local stereotype is that if people want a nice facility they go to St. Thomas More. If they want to concentrate on athletics they go to Centennial. If they want to teach/focus on academics they go to Central. People select Central as a teaching location because they're there to educate kids.
- I can't speak to the actual academic program, but I would say that it's equivalent to Centennial. The centrally located urban campus has limitations in that it's landlocked, but Urbana was the same and gradually acquired properties - we failed. Especially with the YMCA building. I have no use for a school on 60-80 acres - SPRAWL - I will oppose because it can't be sustained in the long haul and I hate bussing. We made the best of the situation by sharing the football field. It makes sense in a time when our wants have to be rationed - we can't do what we've done in the past and maintain sustainability. I would venture to say that Central is built better than Centennial and the middle schools. It has changed multiple times in function. We could convert Central to a 9th-10th grade and make Centennial the high school campus (better for the long term cost and avoidance of sprawl). This may not be the answer but it's an example of thinking creatively. People will object no matter what is decided.
- I don't feel like the schools rose to the potential of the student body. The size and demographics mean that we should have schools ranking among the best in the state. Unit 4 is like a dampened coal fire - it hasn't burned as brightly as its potential. I am astounded that teachers have remained at any point in Unit 4 based on the lack of support from the administration.
- I don't know how it compares with other schools. Things that benefitted my sons were options to try things like architecture, autocad and drafting. They may not be directly college prep but they give skills for practical occupations and professions. Not all kids are headed for college. Smart kids who don't do AP classes aren't forced to work as hard as they could. Kids aren't necessarily forced to study or challenged. The range of classes is good for kids at different levels. There are opportunities to try various subjects such as art, psychology, or cooking or CISCO. I've never felt like I couldn't get a decent response from counselors, deans, etc (although not everyone has had this experience). I like the socioeconomic diversity and life exposure. Schools where all the kids are being challenged at the same level isn't real life. I like the Little Maroons program because it brings in people who wouldn't normally be there.
- I have no firsthand experience. We are looking forward to the music program, drama, being involved, athletics (things we're excited about, academics - especially the AP track. We've heard good things about the faculty.
- It has a strong college prep program. It has a very positive atmosphere for extracurriculars for a certain part of the school - band and theater are great. There's a younger teaching staff with no preconceived notions. Good counseling staff - especially those working with African American students. They are engaged in the students' lives.
- It has changed a lot in 18 years. There are good academic courses offered. Teachers and students feel supportive and work well together (we're a family). There's a good variety for the size it is. In theory it

should prepare students well for college. Athletics are good in spite of not having fields. No one has said we can't do something because of it. There's a good relationship with the community and families.

- It's a school that brings together people of different backgrounds - less stratified than many schools. The sense of tradition there (due to the building) is beautiful.
- It's centrally located and easy for kids to get to. The longevity and the historical background are strengths. The staff really take ownership of the kids. The school takes on community ownership - it's a community educational facility.
- It's in the middle of town. My son can walk home for lunch. It has a wider range of economic classes. The kids seem friendlier at Central compared to Centennial.
- Lots of good programs - science and mentoring are particularly good. Opportunities for AP classes. Good staff, band department.
- Opportunities throughout Unit 4 area unmatched in the area - AP classes, extracurriculars, etc. The staff are highly qualified. There is a strong sense of tradition that is tied to the building for many people. The diversity of the student population offers unique opportunities to learn about different ways of life - this is a unique community.
- The central location - it's easier to get to around the community compared to regional schools. More AP offerings. A decent work-study program.
- The diverse population in terms of race, socioeconomic class, family educational background, career background, ethnic (24 countries?). We have a strong vision of how students learn best. We are reshaping the curricula, teaching, and grading. We are empowering students, reflecting on learning vs. doing - practicing to perform. Preparing kids for college. The staff are well-educated and are people who care about kids and want them to succeed. There's a sense of family - Centennial is more divided and cliquish. I really like the collaboration that happens here. We have professional learning communities that meet once a week.
- The fact that it's part of the Unit 4 system. The strong academic program would be equally strong anywhere - they will develop tradition and excellence in a new school - groups of kids will gel and form their identity. The location is a strength for the community but not for the high school itself. Kids that are going to walk, can, in this location.
- The location is a strength - parents can get there easily. Lots of people live nearby and if it were further away it would be more of a chore. This is evident because Central has much more parent involvement than Centennial. It's so much a part of the city - the architecture makes it really part of the core, especially being built right up to the sidewalk. Unit 4 has good arts offerings, music, dram, sports - well-matched and alternates who's better depending on the year. My kids went through Central and did well. There aren't enough AP classes. The blended classes are great.
- The location. Economic demographics are well-mixed. The economic diversity helps drive social diversity. It's not bimodal or town-gown. There are options besides a college/non-college track. People can interact with everyone but specialize in AP courses or shop etc. Strong band, music, theater programs in spite of the facilities. Excellent AP courses. I was well-prepared for going forward. I experienced no lack of education moving on to an East Coast liberal arts college. I got a well-rounded education.
- The school is rich in tradition. The families of students are involved an above average amount. It is located in a community with good resources. Education is really valued in CU.
- There are programs for kids in advanced studies. Lots of advanced college prep. For minorities there are quality teachers but there could be more.
- There's an established faculty. They are working hard to meet the needs of students. From a programming standpoint they are doing a very good job.
- Tradition. It represents the original high school in Champaign. A lot of community members are connected that way. Diversity - pride in our school in spite of disparity in facilities.
- We cater to all intellectual abilities - from AP classes to functional life skills. It's one of the most diverse schools I've ever encountered. We have a great mix of students. Theater, Band, and sports are all good (on & off depending on year). Academically I've been very happy with the teaching staff overall. I've had 2 kids here.

- We have a strong curriculum and a strong selection of courses. AP and accelerated are great. It's the same with athletics, lots of extracurriculars and clubs. There's variety for kids with different interests. Diversity is a strong point - lots of different ethnicities and cultures are present. There's support in place for kids with lots of needs. There are counselors and other resources, as long as the kids take advantage of it.
- World class high school. Academics, humanities, sciences are very strong. The diversity of students is close to unmatched. Fine arts (drama and music) are outstanding. Kids choose to come here for the extracurriculars (rather than go to a private school or even Centennial).

Q2: How does the current facility contribute or not contribute to the strengths of Central?

- Centrally located - lends itself to bringing the community in. Antiquated facility - curriculum is presently difficult to implement, size of classrooms is small, lack of athletic facilities in central location weakens the sense of school spirit.
- Don't know it well.
- Has anyone looked at the current structure?
- The history of the building can't be duplicated. 19th/20th century architecture and tile work. Combes Gym must be duplicated
- It is seen as the lesser of two buildings. Because it's north of University it's seen by parts of the community as less than adequate. It's dated. It lacks AC and we are living in a society that's used to AC.
- It's a lovely building. The location near lots of residences is both a benefit and a detriment.
- It's a lovely old building. The details are really special. No AC is a problem. It's inadequate for band.
- It's a traditional type of high school facility located in the heart of the community. It's able to draw upon rich resources such as the library, and UI (also geographically close). It has a compact/contiguous (not sprawling) facility which keeps people in close proximity to one another.
- It's definitely too crowded. There are 13 teachers in 9 classrooms in the math department, for example, which means teachers can't be in the rooms for planning. Band is crowded. We're still limited in some technology - even just electrically. The age of the school can be problematic because kids think of it as a run-down old building which I think affects their mentality. They don't take care of it. They might have more pride and scholarship in a new school. Storage is bad. We need more space to pull kids out for extra help. Rooms with extra shared space in between them are great. There's no staff cafeteria for social/eating space to mingle. It feels like we're getting squeezed.
- It's old. We need a new school. It has served its purpose.
- Little to none. It's an old building. There's a huge problem with sound (acoustics) that's detrimental to the band instructors (cement blocks rebound sound). The building is landlocked. It looks like an old school. There's bad lighting on the second and third floors and no AC.
- No athletic facilities except volleyball and basketball. I love the theater but it's small. Staff and kids love the feel of the building (the marble and woodwork). But the walls can't move - it's limiting. It's limited in parking. It's common for schools to be air conditioned - the reality is that most kids grow up in air conditioned homes. We need technology upgrades - we are limited by the electrical systems. The cafeteria is an awkward fit. It limits our possibilities for having a closed-campus lunch. Having open lunch is strange because there is nothing nearby to go to. Educationally we're a lot more collaborative these days in work and education worlds. We can't move the desks and don't have extra rooms. The band room is tiny.
- Nothing bothers me about the current facility. A pool would be nice, but the Y is there. I like the facility. Something has to be done eventually but I'm not sure this is the opportune time with the economy the way it is. It might be better to wait.
- Schools are important parts of communities - the anchor.
- The building has been in benign neglect for a long time. It's difficult to accommodate the changing aspects of high school education. Did this neglect contribute to the closing of the vocational tech program? It needs a lot of interior work.
- The current facilities do not contribute to Central's strengths, rather they hinder them. The central location within the community is the one positive. There is not enough space to accommodate current

programs.

- The current facilities probably do not contribute much to the school's strengths but I don't know that it deters the students as much as some people say. The wiring and technology are problems and so are heating and air conditioning. Historically there has been a lot of community support, especially from townies. There are some downsides to the current location - it's good for us but not for people living to the north or south. It's central to the town. It's close to transit routes but that can still be a barrier for kids in extracurriculars. It was difficult for my son playing sports. Having it way out on the edge would be problematic too.
- The current location is good. The new school wouldn't be centrally located. It needs updating.
- The facility is in our way. I do like the history of the building and the tradition. The art deco architecture. We have five computer labs and the library - we need more computers (in every room!). We really need more meeting spaces.
- The facility is outdated - it can't keep up with the technology changes, the gyms are too small, and the classrooms are old-fashioned. The sad thing is that the parents who aren't involved don't care one way or another where it is. Those who are involved only see the drawbacks. The architecture of the building has a warmth due to all the wood. It's not cold like some buildings. Neighbors such as the elderly people on Elm are able to be involved because of the proximity, or to just be familiar with people younger than themselves. They can be engaged in education long after their own children have come and gone. Normally people without kids find it easy to disengage. The proximity helps keep the tendency of people to generalize about one another in check.
- The lack of internet and ability to get cabling in. Some of the problem is just due to money - I don't think it's impossible to upgrade this building. The computer labs need more staffing to enable low income population to work after school. We need tech people that can help with problems instead of just monitor. We need a MAC lab. The limited sports facilities limit participation because of rides but it will be worse if we move far out. Not having AC is limiting. I would love to do summer camps. These things could happen in this building (although no central AC). There were no 3 prong outlets or phone lines when the school was designed. Because it's so solid, it's hard to update it in a way that could work for a high school. We have to have longer passing periods because of the congested hallways. We're out of space.
- The location is a strength. Bussing is always an issue - getting students from place to place. Both high schools have an issue with no space to expand.
- The location within the heart of the community draws from economically diverse areas, even within walking distance. Sports were not hindered by sharing park district facilities or sharing the football field with Centennial. It's crazy not to think about sharing - we don't need to waste land. In terms of the arts, there's nothing special about the facility but it didn't hurt the program. There are plenty of classrooms for the AP program. Four walls and a roof housed everything I needed in a high school.
- The location, the compact campus with everything in one little space. It helps things work well. Buildings came up for sale nearby at some point but we failed to take advantage of opportunities within the last 2 years. There is a consistent failure to plan.
- The tradition certainly contributes. The spacing and layout of the building forces people to interact with the entire student body on a daily basis. Other strengths are present in spite of the facility.
- There are some intangible benefits - it has an aura of coziness and comfort. The curriculum and athletics have outpaced and outgrown the physical plant. Originally we had 6 sports, now we have 21. There were also fewer academic subjects back then too. It was designed before technology or cell phones. Retrofitting it is difficult.
- There's a wonderful gym for volleyball and basketball. For drama there's a beautiful old theater. I've been there many times - my son got to be in a production in 5th grade. They have performing arts space. The relationships between teachers and students are the most important to student learning. It's something you can't measure or see. Human relationships. The facility is less important than supporting human relationships. It could use a better computer lab for graphic design, but this is secondary. Faculty offices should be accessible. Are the coaches and faculty accessible? Does the cafeteria help or hinder? I don't know.

- Things need to be updated. It's not feasible in the old building. With the expense of renovating we wouldn't be able to.
- We are dealing with young adults/teens who are growing a lot intellectually. I don't like open lunch because kids need more guidelines. They are interacting with outsiders at the park or downtown. They need lunch facilities at the new school - perhaps like Parkland with lots of choices. The building has outlived itself. We need a new facility with state of the art technologies. Facilities have to enable teachers to teach information technology and go beyond Google/Facebook/texting. We need to take advantage of new technologies for research and knowledge.
- Westside park isn't an ideal recreational space but it works. To give people more choice in secondary academic programming, we could put programs that require less space at Central. The building is pretty good and has lasted a long time. Providing for technology is a challenge but I don't buy the argument that putting up and all new school is better. It's a slash and burn mentality - I hate sprawl! The building has a certain charm - it has a sense of place that is difficult to reproduce and helps create psychological cohesion, loyalty, familiarity, ownership, and pride. There's no technological solution to complex social problems. Schools since 1950 were built 1 story and crappy.
- We've made as many modifications as we can - such as computer labs and installing projectors. We've done our best but not having fields makes it difficult and makes our relationship with Centennial different. The rivalry with them is different than with Urbana because we have to share stuff. Parking is a pain - but no guarantee that with a new building that it would be remedied. I like the idea of a new Central but I like the current location. Will it have the feeling of community and support if we move out? Will we still have that feeling?

Q3: How could the high school facilities be improved (existing site or elsewhere) to enhance Central's strengths?

- Air conditioning and more efficient HVAC systems. There could be a nice shiny band room. You could add anything on site, next door, or in the vicinity. I would add things that could be shared with the community as appropriate. This question is easy ammunition for building a new school.
- As a district we have not planned for the future. Urbana picked out an area and eventually added green space and parking around the school. About 15 years ago the neighborhood was going down and we could have done the same. We've known we've had issues and haven't bothered to address them. The addition didn't help much in the long run. For example, no science rooms were added.
- Athletic fields are important. We do have access to open space but we could maybe have more. If we're totally landlocked it could make a big difference. Ideally we could have open space right next to the building. Transportation is not ideal for athletics but it's not that far.
- Being able to see the athletic fields is important. Gives kids a chance to see what they could be. More gym space is needed - teams are practicing from 6:30 AM to 9:30 PM. It would be great to have everything on one campus. Everyone should have a parking spot (even staff aren't guaranteed one). Current facilities are really good, they're just not on location. The booster clubs do a great job. Soccer and softball fields are top notch (ie new lights, concessions stand). Not equitable between Central and Centennial
- Central needs a lot of remodeling. Technology and facilities need to be updated. Urban sprawl is a concern - we can have a great new facility but it would draw people farther out.
- Don't know it well.
- Getting things up to date such as smartboards, projectors, calculators, manipulatives, etc. With a new school I think we would get athletic facilities but I don't know that the new building would take care of the classroom part.
- I don't know the exact structural shortcomings. We should acquire property and buy things gradually rather than waiting until it's too late. The logical thing to do to take care of the parking issue is to make it a school where kids don't need cars. Technology needs to be improved. The building is a valuable resource.
- I would consolidate the two high schools to pool resources instead of trying to duplicate them. Schools in the western suburbs are that size and work just fine. Champaign and Urbana do this all the time by sharing resources like police and fire. With a larger school there would be a critical mass of students

to offer unusual classes. We should provide athletic and physical fitness opportunities on site. Sports are a learning opportunity for people to learn to work together, stay physically fit. It's a shame that the current facilities are offsite.

- If we stay in place, we have to be more aggressive about taking land to the north. We have to take advantage of opportunities. The cafeteria could be better, especially with more closed lunches. The electrical load is problematic. There could be other changes - such as the example of Khan academy. Maybe in the future kids won't be in high school for four years anywhere or things will be more self-paced.
- I'm kind of ambivalent about the facilities. The overall district approach must change. There is a large number of low income students and we're not meeting their needs. We need to come to grips with the 21st century student. There is more need for services outside of the classroom. We have an opportunity to start looking at the high school as a capstone experience - a connection between the needs of students and the district. A relationship with staff, counseling, a wraparound family approach. We need a high school that meets diverse needs - 2-3 campuses rather than one. Vocational education - like the academy - non Baccalaureate programs - but aimed towards some higher education. Technologically oriented - skills like fixing computers and programming. We need our own sports and fine arts complex but I'm not sure we need 80 acres. It could be about the size of Urbana. We need a district wide model and a reconfiguration of the middle school model too - at least 1 K-8 school with a looping of staff to stay with kids for a few years. The bottom line is that the program should drive the decision rather than land availability.
- It is shortsighted not to undertake a study on how to update the building. We need an assessment of the real weaknesses - can't just make assumptions on what can and can't be done. What are the true needs and costs?
- It needs to be better organized with more advance computer labs, an updated theater, bigger classrooms, better electrical systems, AC, Wi-Fi, department offices, dedicated bookrooms (books are currently stored in the theater, under the gym, in the vault, etc.). We need cabinets, bookshelves, a better environmental system (heating and AC). The furniture is old. The building should be organized by department with more lecture halls to do presentations. Basically everything needs to be bigger - we are bursting at the seams. The number of classrooms is too few. We should build in extra rooms for growth. Parking for both faculty and students. New technology, desks for group work, our own football field, track, pool, bigger band room, practice rooms, reading areas.
- Keeping the school in the same place is not feasible, even with sports elsewhere. The Franklin option is good because the school is still central. Edison should continue to be used - the auditorium is great and it's really good to have kids spending time at the library. The Beardsley park area has lots of rentals, is near downtown, and the properties aren't expensive. It could be politically difficult due to white flight.
- Lack of space and lack of technology need to be remedied. Having sports all over town is problematic. New building needs to be done in a way that fits the learning pattern of kids today. We need a 21st century building - we're maxed out on electrical capacity which restricts labs and technology. Accessibility is a concern. We need to improve the school climate - the cafeteria must be large enough to have a closed lunch - there are lots of discipline issues associated with open lunch. The athletic facilities could be better - at Centennial people are engaging with one another after school - at Central people just split. People don't get to see all the options in which they could engage.
- Lighting and day lighting, heating/AC. It's not possible to do much with the building itself. The kids don't seem to care much about the ambiance of the building. More green space would be a real plus. The park is problematic. The crowded hallways can lead to negative interactions. The actual layout can be difficult. It's difficult to get to classes around the building if you're taking a diverse schedule. A swimming pool and bigger gyms would be nice, even just for PE.
- More space is needed. The 2 gyms don't make sense. There is little parking in the neighborhood and it's an old building.
- Sports are the real problem. If the city gave us West Side Park we could put all the sports there. There are no problems aside from sports. It's a good location that combines all the neighborhoods. I'm not a fan of bussing, which will happen if the school is in the hinterlands. I see so many kids walk to Central.

- Technology and air conditioning are priorities. During summer, August, and May it's really bad. This building was made to have cross ventilation but that doesn't happen because of the theater addition. The cinder blocks retain heat. There are some rooms in the building without any ventilation. We need environmentally sound energy stuff - this building is probably inefficient. I'm very fond of the building. The art deco style and beautiful architecture and craftsmanship give it character. New buildings are all about speed and tend to be quite disappointing. Our building looks better than Centennial and it's older. Some maintenance issues could be solved such as chipping paint. More upkeep from year to year is needed. For example, it is cheaper to buy a new projector than replace the light bulbs. More planning and investment is needed for long term upkeep.
- The administration has never considered hiring an urban planner so there is no long range planning (assuming that the administration would even listen). There needs to be better handling of demographics, housing and development. They need to go before the city council. There should be integration of housing and thinking outside the box. Taking options on the land around Central to the north especially would have allowed for expansion over the years. They sold the old elementary schools, which could have been reused as the population expanded again. We're covering land in the county fivefold as compared to the growth in population. There are good soils here. We need to be looking at the whole picture.
- The band and music programs, and athletic facilities need more space. The computer lab and network are inadequate. Science rooms could be improved. It was built as a junior high. Human behavior has changed since this building was designed.
- The band room could be better. The building is too small for the number of students. PE has to go elsewhere - they need a place of their own. Art is important. Unfortunately it's all about money sometimes.
- The number one thing is a new school. Or if absolutely necessary, how can we remodel minimally until we can afford a new school.
- The size of the rooms, lack of AC, size of the gym - too many people to fit into the space at big games. It's not a building for a 21st century education. Education has changed - it's different than it was previously and we can't go back. I can't think of much that is the way we want it. The vocational area is unsafe. The dining facility can't accommodate the kind of food preparation we want to do and it can't fit everyone. The courtyard is like a prison. A closed lunch is needed because kids don't come back. School enrollment has gone up 80 kids/year for the last 5 years.
- We have to go to West Side park to do activities. We need a new building. The schools in Bloomington were built around athletic facilities. We need enough space for athletics, PE, band. We should look at contemporary educational/architectural trends for the building. It needs to be a well-rounded school. Do kids feel cheated here? I'm not sure. Centennial is old too. The kids accept what they have. There will be some impact if its relocated. Some kids will be displaced. I worry about bussing and transportation.
- We need a 22nd century vision if we're going to keep a school for a long time. It's tough because technology is changing fast. We need a campus with facilities for extracurriculars. We have a high free and reduced lunch population and it's difficult for those kids to get there. We started running activity buses for sports. We need a concept where we can put students and faculty in groups and have common areas by department. Classrooms not for just one subject to allow scheduling flexibility. We need open space, gathering space, places where students can gradually release from the rigid schedule and transition to college life. There could be more time in their schedules just for studying. We need a greater set of multi-purpose areas.
- We need a facility that allows for a common campus for extracurriculars. When we go to Normal and Normal West there's a lot of common activity. Kids are able to be more aware of activities and spectate more. With softball/soccer/etc. Faculty and students have to make more effort. Football and swimming have to use Centennial facilities. Transportation is an ongoing problem. Multiple gyms would yield better practice times. Auxiliary gyms would make winter practices easier. The current size of the gyms only allow one team at a time. Also they are not together, which means PE students have to move through the building cutting time and making noise. The gym is too centrally located - kids are apt to just stop by. The crowding of the hallways with bottlenecks at the stairways is problematic.

- We need more space in general. A classroom for each teacher, pull-out or tutoring space. A more modern facility - smartboards, more computer labs or portable computers. It would be good to have athletic facilities on the same ground. We might be able to have more diverse student participation. Getting rides is tricky now - it would be easier for families. We need public transit right there. There would be more school spirit if the facilities were right there. We need parking for teachers and students. It's not as welcoming because it's hard for people to get here. AC is needed - we lose a lot of learning time. The heating fluctuates between hot and cold. Handicap accessibility needs to be improved. We only have the one elevator.
- We need our own football facilities at the school, and our own athletic facilities.
- Wiring is obsolete in most rooms (one outlet in an office, for example). This is a fire hazard. Poor acoustic design in the band room (contributing to hearing loss for the band directors) which means that different sections of the band can't hear one another. Need more space for assemblies, recording space. The school is landlocked and there's a lack of parking. Could be more accessible to different parts of the community if located in a different place. Need larger ensemble spaces, instrument storage is unsecured and not near the band room, bathrooms are distant and substandard. Athletic facilities are disgraceful - PE kids walking back and forth through hallways disrupt classes. Bussing and carpooling to athletic activities is not conducive to extracurricular participation and keeps certain kids out. Temperature control is needed because computers get overheated and band instruments are damaged, causing a higher repair budget. The shelves aren't big enough for instrument storage. Band/Music/Theater needs a separate space with multi-rehearsal spaces. A dance space would be nice. Band equipment trailers get stuck across town in the event of rain (causing loss of practice time).

Q4: If Central is rebuilt or renovated, what factors should be priorities in the decision-making process?

- #1: What we want out of a 21st century high school. #2: Accessibility - we spend a lot on transport. If the school is more centrally located then location is less of an issue. We could have distance learning options too. Central should prepare students to make a living - many kids have to take remedial classes at Parkland.
- A building that teaches kids the way they learn today, designed to last 100 years (who knows how we will be doing it in the future). We want to educate kids exceptionally, with a facility that allows us to be one of the best downstate schools. Adequate classrooms, science labs, vocational space (cooking, auto, plumbing), band areas - space is the only thing constraining the band). Sports facilities should be a priority because lots of kids get to college through sports. Sports have a lifelong learning component. Gym classes could be much better. It should be a priority to keep the school within the center of town but there aren't any 40 acre locations north of Centennial. If the school is located outside the center, it should be close enough to residential areas so that some people can walk. The community will adjust and grow around the new school. Historically, schools were built at the edge of the community because it was the only land available. I don't want to take properties unless it's the best option for a lot of other reasons. Franklin is my favorite site, although it has issues with asbestos in homes and acquisition costs. Olympian drive is problematic because of inexperienced drivers on Prospect, the NW sites are problematic because we're growing towards the edge of the district. Country Fair would be good for the prep/HS site but underachieving kids will get lost in the system.
- A priority is to find a location within current city boundaries. Prefer not to see a cornfield site. School is part of the community and vice versa. Redevelopment is important. The location helps kids develop a sense of respect for the neighborhood. They won't have the same interaction at a greenfield site. The school should be within walking distance to something. I don't like the idea of kicking people out of homes either. It's a toss-up of who benefits and loses. The minimum disruption should be a priority. Maximize active transport to the location. Outside the highways there is limited access and the bridges are narrow.
- A quality education FOR ALL so that each child is prepared for college. Not to create additional hardships on parents or children regarding accessibility. It's at the heart of the community now but what will happen if that changes? We need to ensure that people don't fall through the cracks.
- An in town location is a priority. Technology, green HVAC/green building, expandability, sports, arts,

(assuming great classrooms), parking is a last priority. People are not their cars - the parking was done poorly at Centennial. A single high school would be fine - it depends on your perspective growing up. It wouldn't be a problem to compete against Chicago students. We can have more than one team too.

- Athletic facilities, fine arts. The band room is too crowded, theater needs better storage and acoustics, classrooms where students can work in groups, technology space, climate control, storage. Trees are important.
- Classrooms, top technology, ability to interact with students in their homes. There wouldn't be as wide of a gap. Kids could help one another. It would help with the attraction of top quality educators.
- Education focus is important. Not just an attention-catching facility. Racial equity is important. Who can afford to drive (honor the consent decree).
- General community access is important but not everyone will be pleased. Enough acreage to support the building, parking, and extracurriculars. We should go with a large tract because we will fill whatever space we have. Safe traffic flow will be important on a large site, both outside and within the building(s). Budget should not be an issue. We should have a facility that matches the programs and we shouldn't sell the downstate schools short. We will lose families who might be interested in living here in the future. The building should be aesthetically pleasing and offer all kinds of programs - not just varsity athletics, and we need the facilities to support these things. Storage can't be overestimated. Multiple rehearsal spaces needed. Uniform storage is needed. Other schools don't have to deal with the conditions that Central students and faculty face.
- I feel that they've already decided. Accessibility is a huge concern. Lots of families are at the poverty level. They are less mobile and their ability to get to school is limited by location. A lot of edge schools don't even have sidewalks to get there. It needs to be more tech savvy. Wi-Fi for sure and we need to prepare for the technology that will be used in 20 years. We need a facility that can expand as the world expands. I would love a lovely theater facility. We could use the auditorium in many ways for speakers and community presentations. It has to be user friendly so that many groups can use it. Parking is an issue. Street parking bothers the neighbors and visitors have trouble finding a space. Having a big parking lot also has a big impact on runoff though.
- I'm torn. I want new and fancy stuff, but location is still a big difference. Currently we have more emphasis on relearning subjects that are shaky before moving forward - coming in early or late might be problematic for some of our population (accessibility). What makes a good school is the teacher/student relationships.
- It needs to be built in the best interest of kids. We need to provide resources like making sure there's bus to get kids to practices. The number one priority should be academic but I'm not sure that it should be based on improving test scores.
- It should be built in the most green way possible - with geothermal. We need to project future space needs. Parking is critical. The location is the trickiest thing. Central is centrally located but we should have planned decades ago to acquire land. It should be in one of the closest outlying spots. I do worry about if the school is out there and not in the neighborhood (although isolation might be good in some ways) - lots of kids walk to get here early or stay late. A lot of people love the neighborhood school idea. There will be a lot more driving on the edge. Better transit is needed.
- Land. We need more space but land around the school is not cheap.
- Location is an important consideration. Social impact, transportation logistics, the opportunities it creates for the entire community. The school could be used after hours for programming for the whole community. A forward-thinking design that is adaptable for the future. We should take advantage of the city's strengths - ie park district, Parkland, UI.
- Renovation is not an option. We shouldn't put a ton of money into it for a high school. We need to think about a plan for both high schools. I can think of a lot of negatives of one high school but I know the district has to consider that Centennial needs a ton of work too. We can't be chintzy. We need good academic and vocational facilities. I think we should build a new high school with space for extracurriculars. We shouldn't limit the property size. Champaign can only grow to the north.

Savoy can grow towards the south. We should plan ahead so that we're not limited in 50 years by land. I would like to see someone help the community understand that taking over an inside area will be problematic. We want students within 1.5 miles but because of the factors involved, there's no option without eminent domain.

- Space is important but parent/guardian involvement is important too. We need a building that can last and adapt to changing needs and technology. Energy efficiency should project towards the future. Openness and sunshine should be priorities. Technology such as audiovisual equipment so that outside resources can be incorporated. We should look at incorporating spaces for community events. I was struck by the school at Chattam-Glenwood - events are held at the high school kind of like they are held at the library. It goes beyond academics. We need more parking space for staff and students (it's the antithesis of what I believe in but it's a reality). A cafeteria that provides options - encourages kids to stay on campus for lunch. The current one is crowded and loud. Foreign language is important - we need exposure and thinking that is intellectual and on a broader perspective (we should have that K-12).
- Technology, better classrooms, use technology that is available everywhere.
- The board is looking more at what is happening in various schools. It's troubling that kids are still getting on buses to go to other schools for high level classes. I am very much for a K-8 system. 2 year increments for students is bad. The site at Bradley and Neil would be great because it could get high school kids working more with elementary students. Thinking more about sustainability is good and should be a high priority.
- The cafeteria, bathrooms, and locker rooms could be improved but it's not a serious problem. I like the auditorium, the old gym, and Sealy Hall. They have done a good job of using the space they have. I like the library and have no problem with the art room. Our exchange student loves it.
- The impact of where it is and how far it is from the current location is crucial. We need to minimize the impact of relocating it. Is the same location feasible? I would not agree to move outside of the central location unless there is absolutely no other choice. A western school would be especially problematic because the Centennial and Central districts would switch and then the same kids would have to go to the older school. If there's property within the Central district that should be a priority.
- The location is important. Enough room for everything we need (growth included). We need to make sure it accommodates us for quite a few years. The classrooms are important - we are scrambling for desks and rooms. Energy efficiency is important - the windows are leaky here. We need a bigger parking lot.
- The location should stay central. Serving the needs of the majority of students - not just a small percentage who might play sports. Keeping a focus on economic diversity. Environmental and energy aspects should be highly considered. It can lead to keeping a sense of school pride and spirit, and a sense of historical grounding.
- The number one priority is a building that will serve students of the district for the next many years. What educational opportunities can we offer to prepare kids for life in the 21st century, whether it is vocational, AP classes, extracurriculars, exposure to different things. The educational mission and goals need to drive the process. What is needed in the building and on campus to make a high school? We need to explain what we want it to be and then let that drive the design, location, and layout.
- We are looking only at Central but we need to be looking at the secondary system as a whole. There's a lack of career or vocational education. We have a recurring class of repeat freshman. Up to high school, people can only be retained one year. In high school they have to pass the credits. Chicago is experimenting with 9th grade campuses to get kids off to a good start. An 8-9 academy would be a way to help. Just rebuilding Central doesn't address all the issues.
- We need a design that keeps human relationships in mind. How can you enhance student learning via relationships. I'm an advocate for smaller schools. The larger the facility, the less relationships are supported. Schools should be embedded within the communities they serve. Having people, institutions, adults, neighborhoods, stores, the university close is better for establishing relationships, having eyes on the street, knowing who people are, seeing people. Proximity = connection, or least it's possible. We don't have to rely on infrastructure - taxation, traffic flow, gas conservation, environmental

sustainability, parking lot. A centralized location is a priority. It's a balancing act - compromises are necessary on both sides. I don't feel strongly that the school has to stay there. There can be creative reuse of old space. Adapting for today's needs. The priority should be looking for spaces that keep kids close to homes, employment options, while still providing extracurriculars. We don't need completely new construction. It's a myth that new construction is more cost effective. It's a mindset that's hard to escape from.

- We need adequate provision for (as yet) undiscovered technologies. We need to stay flexible to evolving technology. The location is critical. The high school, library, and post office ought to all be near the heart of a city. We should give opportunities for kids to see people downtown living their daily lives - we shouldn't relegate them to the edge of town. The sports facilities should be on site. We need room for projected growth. Energy efficiency is key.
- We need to do it the right way so that it will last 2-3 generations (40-75 years). I'm not as concerned about the edge of town because it will likely move. Just don't skimp on the facility. Think about the space requirements. Don't cut corners. The core of the city would be quite difficult. Because we are close to public streets, it leads to attracting a non-student element that is not as healthy. N/NW site off of main streets a significant distance will keep outsiders away. If it is separated from the road by a green space it will limit accessibility.
- We need to think about enough room and room to grow. We need to build new (not renovate). Technology impacts the building's organization. Attractiveness is important - the students behave differently based on looks. It should be modern but have some personality. We should put some of the old architecture into the new building. We need a clear main entrance or entrances on every side that are monitored so that it's accessible but secure. We need a security station at each door that requires IDs. The organization of the building is important - in terms of the flow of hallway traffic - we currently have a lot of bottlenecks. We need an environment conducive for learning that makes students feel that that's what we're here for. We need something comfortable yet serious. We need a modernized, welcoming, organized cafeteria.
- We need to think about how the programs could best be situated. We could use a magnet concept and put in programs that require minimal space. There are lots of creative people out there who could come up with solutions. These are not times where we can throw money at problems like we did in the past. We need to think about building better buildings, especially in terms of heating and air conditioning and multistory layouts.
- Who's going to be using the space? Needs to be big enough to support the population. Is it more effective to remodel as a high school or repurpose it?

Q5: How do you think the location of Central (now and in the future) influences the decision of students and families to participate in extracurricular activities?

- Big issue for people without transportation. Most practices are not at the high school, which does influence participation.
- Convenience-wise, quite a few kids participate in sports. You never know what will happen with the border sites. We should make it so people don't have to go far. Gas prices are rising and it should be convenient. A lot of families are struggling.
- Currently it's difficult because of the parking issue. But it's also equidistant from everybody. A new facility has to be on the edge because there's no space.
- Distance probably plays a role in extracurricular participation. Facilities make a difference - access to sports fields, what it's near to - such as theatres, parks, clubs, etc.
- For minority students it would be difficult if the high school was built in Savoy. The poor community needs access to the school.
- Going forward we'll have to change if we're going to turn kids out ready for college. We need to look at eleventh/twelfth grade and make sure they are college ready. College prep must be a part of the program. We should be concerned with education in the county, not just in Champaign.
- Humiliating for students to be visitors at home. Curb appeal is lacking at current Central. More kids could see what they could do. The athletic director drove over 6,000 miles last year just to supervise sporting activities. Kids are changing for games inside a port-a-potty.

- I think it's the same regardless of location. The district has buses to get kids everywhere. The quality of participation might go up - more sleep for swimmers, for example. Getting kids interested in activities might be easier. More sports could potentially be added such as lacrosse or boys volleyball. The parking situation currently might deter parent involvement.
- If all facilities are there, it could increase student and parent involvement. Students just hanging out after school could watch sports. Many spectators don't even know where the sports are. Some kids can't participate because they can't get to other sites. At Centennial you can spectate at multiple events.
- If Central was on the edge of town, it disproportionately discourages people who don't live in rich suburbs from attending and participating, factoring in the proportion of the population that doesn't have access to transport. The central location encourages people to come to activities at the school. The locations of McKinley and Centennial still encourage that ability.
- In terms of math team or scholastic bowl it doesn't seem to make a big difference. I don't know about athletics. If we go to one high school, it's one basketball team, etc. There might be more course offerings. We've always been good at coming up with alternative locations for activities - I'm not sure how it impacts the kids. It does hurt the PE program.
- It does. Our school is seen as an inner city school - we have an image issue. With a new school on the edge of town it will be viewed as a new start and will improve the image (but how long will that last?). The location will have a tremendous impact.
- It doesn't hinder them. Kids and parents may complain but it's not a big deal. Our kids didn't care - kids are in sports for the social aspect. Parents want kids in sports to stay out of trouble or get scholarships or just to keep their brains active. The current sports situation works because the town is the size it is.
- It probably doesn't have too much influence. If you're keen on an activity, you'll do it. You could add extramural activities in another location. Parental involvement might be jeopardized if the site is further away.
- It's a confined urban setting. If we want to make the best use of it, we should figure out programs that require less space such as wrestling and gymnastics. Having a larger high school you get put in a larger competitive class but you decrease the number of students who can compete in the major sports. Look at buildings and figure out what works best there to accommodate the strengths and limitations.
- It's landlocked - which is negative - we don't have our own facilities. It doesn't necessarily dissuade kids from participating but it makes it more difficult. If everything were on site, it would be better. Families might be able to get their kids more easily. Being centrally located is nice. Being way out there will take a lot of time and kids will have to change bus routes.
- Many people struggle with adequate transport. Not having athletic facilities and the high school near to people means people of modest means can't just drop in and participate as much.
- My concern is that so many things have to be offsite. There are issues and concerns with transporting back and forth. There aren't enough activity buses. Transit is possible but isn't that direct.
- Now families who choose not to go there because of a disadvantage (tend to be more affluent moving or sending kids to a private school). If you are dependent on transit it's much more difficult. Other than sports its accessible for more students than not. In general Centennial is also accessible but not as good as Central (most people don't think about that until the school is done though. It's a plus that we can use public transit. It give kids a choice to stay at school at all times of the day. Setting it up so that it's possible for parents to get there can help to not perpetuate cycles of poverty. If we want our community to be stellar, we need to help all kids.
- One thing we're losing in the community is truncating the degrees of freedom for kids to be able to get around on their own. We are too car dependent. Keeping schools in locations where degrees of safety are possible for kids - not designing/thinking through the community to make it totally safe for students to get to/from school or practice on their own. Not thinking about these things with any facility. We should make it possible for anyone to participate regardless of transportation options. Educational/recreational literature says that sports could be done at the park district rather than at the school.
- Overall there's not a huge effect with the current location - participation is at a pretty high level. The African American population is not in one location anymore but facilities are near enough that people

can still participate. I would be really concerned if the school was to the northwest.

- Participation may be a function of socioeconomic status. Who has access to transportation? For many kids the location doesn't matter - they can afford to drive anywhere.
- People are (for better or worse) attracted to curb appeal (a shiny new building). If you want kids to be involved, it has to be convenient for them. Some families choose Unit 4 for the activities available to them. Participation will be enhanced on a campus that accommodates all activities.
- On the fringe there will be less participation. Neighbors may decide to visit spontaneously if it's in town. Foot traffic is crucial. Cars are isolating, which is the antithesis of what you want in a school.
- The current facility makes it difficult to encourage kids to participate. They have to go elsewhere for almost everything. We need to make it easy. If the perception of the schools are inferior or superior everyone looks at it that way. The consent decree is an example of the perceived differences. If we just fix one school, we've moved the problem to Centennial. Having one school would eliminate inequities.
- The current location eliminates some people. Some people nearby can walk but not others. The current location is not conducive to generating camaradery and school wide support of athletic activities. Centennial currently always gets first pick of shared facilities. One campus would be a really great idea to solve the bickering between the two parts of the district. More honors classes, more flexibility in scheduling would be possible. A prep school could be good for younger students. A better facility could attract more families and spur economic development.
- The more centrally located, the more access for low income and centrally located families. A certain population of kids will participate regardless. The music program is elitist. Kids who come from supportive family backgrounds. Kids who do it have done stuff in the past. Some things are more open like the art club or French.
- We do have families and kids who don't go out for something when they see the transportation issues (less so with the buses but it's expensive for the district). When families are moving into the community, a school with fields is more appealing than an urban or inner city school. There are families who look at that. Fortunately some people know that Central has good programs. It becomes tiresome. Last year we had to contract with the MTD for the band.
- We'd better have a good plan for transport. The school is a good magnet here for the neighborhood. On the outskirts to the north or Savoy, we're going to displace families. Logistically it will have an impact. It will be rough at first but people will adjust.
- Where we are now is problematic because of distant facilities. Even having basketball practice is challenging because we only have two gyms. If we build on the edge we'll need more facilities to allow practices contiguous to the school day. If it's on the edge some parents will have difficulty - especially if they were reluctant to participate before.

Q6a: What are your hopes about the future of Champaign's high schools?

- Better facilities - we deserve better. Make a decision, sell it, and stand by the product. Purchase land and build athletic facilities right away.
- Champaign schools reach their potential. That they finally see the importance of hiring an urban planner, to think through how the community is continuing to grow.
- Community sees an opportunity to become engaged and the administration seeks input/approval. Cooperation within the community (ie business partners) - take advantage of local resources. That the new school(s) spur ALL students on to higher achievements.
- Continues to be a good school. Don't combine the high schools because it limits kids participation and offers fewer opportunities. Keep progressing in educational opportunities, especially with the upper level classes.
- Continues to excel academically. Bricks and mortar are secondary to the quality of education, which comes from the teachers, and involvement of parents and families. Siting and urban fabric are important.
- I hope that both schools become better. Having a fresh/soph and junior/senior campus would be tough - there are lots of kids at different levels (advanced or behind). I hope for high academic standards. I hope we have an accessible facility, but also one that is more inviting for others to participate.

- 40 • I hope that we have good climate control. We need Wi-Fi - currently it's difficult to use You Tube and

other resources. Lots of kids have phones with access and could use them as tools with Wi-Fi.

- I hope we find a place within the city limits that's truly accessible. I hope it has enough land around it that sports can happen there. It's something that keeps kids involved in sports. We need to include arts and performance programs. We need a long term facility that adapts to technology.
- I hope we have a school that provides one of the best educations around and that rivals the top Chicago schools. I hope that people come here to see a model of how to educate. That will require the best staff and students wanting to learn. Parents and facilities play a role too. Schools don't have air conditioning and building codes are outdated. The teachers with AC were able to get in 2 extra weeks of teaching due to a more comfortable temperature in the classroom. It impacts learning and teaching. The kids deserve the best.
- I hope we have more space, more modern technology and facilities. I hope it helps us to have a more unified school. I hope that more students who don't take school seriously now will have more pride and be inspired to work - especially for low socioeconomic status kids.
- Keep the majestic building character.
- Sustainability is the number one priority. We need to manage as efficiently as possible with what we have. Knocking buildings over isn't sustainable. The world can't afford us and the community can't either. With the economic downturn and energy costs rising the cost of services is going up. We need to learn to live within our means and think about what we can afford over the long haul. It's amazing what you can live without and live pretty well.
- That it could really and truly be an educational mecca tied into the UI with all the resources there. Develop a level A school in all areas of education. We have too many resources to not be a #1 community in education.
- That it is a warm and nurturing environment for my kids. Which involves the people. Especially services for my child with autism. I want my kids to love learning and be inspired. The middle school has been rough except for music and athletics. My kids have been really challenged. I hope they make really good friends in high school.
- That the district would truly become 21st century in its visioning. That the district would get the needs of lower income students. That students would come to be engaged. That we would use technology as a tool (ie STEM) - most jobs will be in this area in the future. Smaller settings is the best way. That the district will see other ways of dealing with discipline.
- That the new superintendent will bring a brighter future - it's more complicated than it has been. That she and the board will work with the community, both listening and sharing - it's a revolving door. That she will tell concerned people how they can help make the schools better.
- That the plans for the high school mesh well with the middle school and elementary plans. We need to work with the private schools if the grade structure is changed. We should look to how private schools structured their grades and why.
- That the school will continue to do well. That if we go with an infill site, we'll find something that works for families. I like Country Fair but there could be concerns for those businesses. We could have had some K-8 schools but lost the opportunity. Now we're stuck with three middle schools and we'll probably end up building another middle school when what we need is K-8.
- That there continue to be strong facilities for education and strong academics. That the school helps to continue to foster acceptance of people from different backgrounds.
- That through the community engagement process they'll have enough information to match most people's perception of what should happen.
- That Unit 4 gets its facilities under control and that we start investing in real ways. The first impression we get of schools is really important. They must be built in town.
- That we continue the trend of an atmosphere of learning rather than doing. That we can get a new building that meets our needs (it seems like we're always making do). That we continue the Central "family" feeling.
- That we continue to produce high quality students and citizens prepared for the world ahead of them. That the community sees that Unit 4 is turning a corner. There are lots of positive things going on - the biggest entering Kindergarten class last year. The magnet program. Lots of high schoolers with

- scholarships. I hope that more people will see us headed on the right path.
- That we revisit what we're doing with education. We need to bring back vocational education. The UI always needs people in trades. A single high school is the most effective way to do vocational ed. Shops require ongoing upkeep. A 1960s shop doesn't work in the 1990s. Plastipak needs workers.
 - That we stay update with computers. That the high schools can keep up. That we manage to get a good education for the kids. That we are adequately staff. That we have the needed programs for the kids.
 - That we will think outside the box and resist the pressure to take the easy way out. That we will successfully predict what people will appreciate for the next 20, 40, 60 years. We need to build for 2050, not 1990.
 - That we've been through the worst. That teaching methods will continue to improve, test scores will improve. Most importantly that kids desire for learning improves. Mentoring will be really important in the future.
 - That young people in public school will have the opportunity to attend a modern facility and have a sense of ownership and pride. That athletic facilities will be at a common site creating more school spirit.
 - We are very optimistic about the future. Money is available to get the project going and we can build something so much better. My spouse would like to be on the facilities committee.
 - We need a modern contemporary high school. Maybe we need to build two! Economically it makes more sense. We need to connect more with the UI - it's in the top 25 Universities in the country. It's hard to get pros when they're looking at such old schools for their kids.

Q6b: What are your fears about the future of Champaign's high schools?

- I don't like the idea of consolidation. There would be restricted spots in every activity. I'm afraid that transportation will be inconvenient for more people.
- I worry about the state because it is financially unstable.
- If the schools are in the suburbs, there will be an implicit exclusion of people of different backgrounds. A disproportionate focus on athletics could be a waste of land and resources.
- If we don't spend money on education, we'll end up spending it on incarceration. Outreach is important. If we don't take education seriously this could happen. We don't want to see kids miss out on opportunity. Roadblocks like money shouldn't be a cap on investment in education. Good salaries for teachers and good guidelines are important. The program we have at the church sends a message that education is important.
- I'm afraid that finances will take away from important things (a 10-12 school is an option that might be cheaper but is not beneficial). Transitions are difficult for kids - into new facilities with new teachers. There's some value to a little bit of competition in town (that's part of life). It keeps you on your toes. There could be reasons for kids to not go to the school.
- I'm afraid that they'll demolish the old building. I have a lot of nostalgia for it. Is a new building as structurally sound as the old one? Demolishing it is difficult because of attachment. I'm worried that if we're at Country Fair people will look out the window and see Taco Bell instead of the houses we see here. Having parking, a real stage, AC, and a big gym sound exciting and gives different opportunities but there's something to be said for being able to work with less and turn it into something.
- In 100 years the same conversation will be happening. Losing trust from the community about the funds raised in Promises Made Promises Kept
- Need to spend the money now and do it correctly. The district might "cheap out" and not pay for high quality things. Don't look at others to figure out the bare minimum - look at what our students need. I fear that they will build on the North side. People who live on the north side don't own property and there's a lack of investment. Renters aren't paying the taxes. People who live on the south are paying the majority of taxes so the school should be built there.
- Overcrowding. Involvement coming only from a small number of people or a couple of vocal groups. I don't like it when the process gets hijacked.
- People might not go to a new school if the opportunities aren't good.
- See the school become an "army barracks" or prison (new building?). See the building go. Making a decision without considering the possibility of renovation.

- Sprawl.
- That a certain segment of the community will lead us to one high school.
- That Champaign schools won't reach their potential - this has been demonstrated by the profusion of private schools and outmigration to St. Joseph and Mahomet. That unethical actions such as the hiring of the new superintendent will continue.
- That finances and economics will drive the decision-making. It was a big mistake to put the addition on Central. It was a band aid that bought us 15 years but we should have just built a new school.
- That kids will not be able to access certain activities. I'm afraid of favoritism, but that could happen anywhere. That special needs services won't be up to par and prepare my child for college and independent learning. I occasionally worry about my daughter walking home after school in the dark. If my kids were driving, I would worry about safety. I don't worry about drugs, etc. because my kids are involved in activities. I worry a little about fighting students walking home through my neighborhood but have no real complaints.
- That nothing will happen.
- That the city will become divided through this decision. It isn't about anyone's resume, it's about trying to find the best way to educate kids. It's about the kids.
- That the continued political influence in education prevents us from doing what we need to do. Cutting corners on the wrong things. That student achievement continues to slide - enabling negative societal influences.
- That the district will continue doing the same thing and continue to neglect some students. In trying to lure back affluent white families the district will move in direction of punitive measures towards African American kids. How can the district assist those families so that behavior won't be necessary. Different ways of handling students - hiring people who have different skills to connect students to resources. Culver shifted the blame from parents to focusing on how schools can meet students' needs.
- That the trend of taking money away from education continues. I fear for the individual students. The current population of students will be so influenced by technology that schools won't know what to do with them. There's a real lack of supervision.
- That we might forget about the student - in mandating for the future, don't forget. I would rather see a small school with a well-directed plan for students than a large school that ignores needs.
- That we will build a "Trails of Brittany" or "Ironwood" or "Copper Ridge" style high school on the edge with lots of land and a huge parking lot. That no calculation of the true cost to the community is made. We need to add the cost of kids/families of getting to school for four years. In the last 20 years post offices were built in sprawling facilities at the edge of town. Costs for the PO department were cheaper but the time and gas costs for individuals were higher. The costs of lives lost in accidents on the way to a fringe site should be included. I could keep my refrigerator in the garage but that would mean I'd have to walk outside every time I wanted some food.
- That we're not going to solve the problem. If we don't get community support we'll continue to drift. One high school threatens the careers of some. Do we put staff where they want to be or where we need them? The problem has been ignored for 30 years and the money goes really fast. Edison is almost 100 years old.
- The behavior of some kids is completely out of control. If we don't get it under control it could be terrible. Or if we dedicate so many of our resources at the expense of other things it could be a disaster. The climate of the building has changed a lot in the 12 years since I graduated. It's a small group causing problems.
- The money issue. Tight financial times and the need for a large referendum. How long can we put it off? We need to make it understandable to the voters. I'm also concerned about the option of two campuses, which would increase the number of transitions - there are lots of things that affect kids in that process.
- That people will continue to have a kneejerk reaction. The same perception that Mahomet and private schools are better. There are real issues, but comparing the good students, Unit 4 is better. That people will continue to be frightened of race/otherness. That the schools won't be built in town. It would be a game changer for Champaign if sprawl wins. The costs are extremely high to send police, fire, snowplows, ambulances to the edge. Everything is interconnected. Schools are a defining part of a city.

- The reverse.
- The school has a history of being a “family” - people in different departments are friends. That could really change if the building is sprawling.
- Top down-decision without community input that could make the community even more divisive and less engaged. Catering to a special interest group. Addressing one issue without accounting for the whole picture. Discipline and academic issues won’t be addressed.

Q7: Do you have any other comments about this issue?

- A parking lot would be nice.
 - Athletics - storage is a huge problem. There’s stuff everywhere. The West Gym, the stage, science classrooms. The curriculum is advancing but the physical plant isn’t keeping up. This school could alleviate issues at Edison. Maybe it could be a dual elementary school and middle school? Parking is a problem - we interfere with the neighbors. With the current personal fitness emphasis in PE there’s no place to do it. We waste so much time unlocking and relocking things from storage. A school with a public library, swimming pool, and health club would help get the public’s buy-in and would be a facility for the whole community.
 - Everyone needs to give their opinions in this process. If we were Normal it would be easy because of the sprawl mentality. Conversely, Bloomington has no choice but to take land. We have choices, which makes it difficult. Some people are dedicated to the core. The distances really aren’t that significant. We do want to promote walking but we can’t stop the way people do things. This city is very argumentative, which could derail the process, and the only ones who will suffer are the kids.
 - I like Central - I sent a kid there. Kids who leave Central do well and aren’t scared of the world. Public school exposes people to different worldviews and gets people out of their comfort zones. We keep kids safe, give them a good education, and get them out of their comfort zone.
 - I like the theater - the only thing it needs is a curtain. I feel very nostalgic about the building. It can still serve as a middle school but even then they will need to fix the AC and tech issues. There’s going to be summer school here this summer and there will probably be health issues with the teachers and students. A lot of people say that the best option is to build new. I’ve wondered if we could expand towards the apartment buildings and create a new campus area between church and university. I’m not convinced that that’s not possible. Accessibility is HUGE. It will change the entire climate of the school. In the rush of getting something new we need to remember what we like about this building.
 - I think people are often pro this or that because they think there’s an easy solution. It’s complex. We can’t do a cookie cutter thing. The community has a complex social past that needs to be accounted for. The school serves different needs for every person. We need to be as flexible as possible within the constraints. We need to look forward in demographics but also the past for history. The school board is construction-happy. Long term planning has depended on the whims of the board. Construction isn’t a cure-all. We have to start with people. Ideally I would love a performing arts high school but that’s just a pet project - it doesn’t drive my ideas about CU. When design becomes more important than human needs, that’s scary. Community is difficult. Living together with people that you will see again and again - we have to figure it out. It’s a small town and everyone knows each other. We need to be careful of framing things because of disagreements.
 - I would prefer it to stay where it is. Secondary choice would be an infill site. Building a third high school would be a good option. Parking - have we actually studied how many kids park at Central compared to residents? One school causes big problems because fewer students can do each activity. We need to make room for vocational training - there’s no room at Central.
 - I’m worried that they won’t do anything but I know that Dr. Wiegand tends to pursue a goal until it gets done.
 - It’s frustrating that we’ve been talking about it for years. We need to pick a site already. I would be shocked to find out that it would be cost effective to renovate. That would be a mistake. I hope that they build a new building.
 - It’s not always clear why we are having this discussion (now) in particular - this needs to be clarified/ explained more.
- 44 • Keep it centralized as opposed to the outskirts.

- Location is the hard thing. If we were a university we could just buy up houses. The building just isn't meeting the needs of the students.
- Savoy is growing and there's not the barrier of I-74 to deal with. Still has good access via Curtis road interchange. The Franklin site is pretty well centralized. Prefer the north or south university tracts. There's a transportation safety issue that kids will use the interstates for in town trips to school. Not good for kids to be driving all over the place for athletics.
- School climate - if there's a new school it has an impact on school climate. Location included. If there's an overkill of bussing it harms the student. Does a school have to be a magnet school to be built in an African American neighborhood? Will it be a racially identifiable school? My greatest concern is the climate of schools. Discipline has been a problem for minorities. There's a tremendous amount that can be eliminated with interaction in the minority community. Urbana uses local parents who know the children as hall monitors. It fosters accountability. Without it there's no resolution. It helps to deal with unexcused absences and parenting things. We need community forums. A level of minority faculty is required - not just football coaches.
- Some of these things may not be possible in a regular school. We could have charter schools instead of a one size fits all model. There could be unique partnerships with community orgs.
- The ability to walk to all 3 schools I attended is something I cherish. This town allows a sense of independence that doesn't require a car or a parent. Proximity to downtown allows for open lunch, going to West Side Park or the library, to interact with an urban setting. I learned to be an excellent parallel parker at Central. The vibrant downtown and economically diverse community brought me back to Champaign. There are plenty of arguments for 60 acres but do we really need it when 15 acres and shared space will suffice? Without sports are there any things that could be done on site or adjacent? There could be good ways to take care of the athletic problems.
- The biggest issue with a new school is that if we don't involve the MTD and have really easy access from all parts of town it's a disservice to the kids. Within the city limits is important. We need to work with the whole community - the park district, busses, businesses, etc. - to make it a reasonably workable location. People would take transit if it was easier - that's a big issue. School can't be everything for the kids. I don't want to see it out by St. Thomas More or Savoy - it's unconscionable that we would consider doing that. Why do that if we don't have to. It was so helpful that my kids could get themselves there. It wouldn't have been the same if we had gone to Centennial. I'd like to see a nice looking building (just like Central?) but with other assets. I would want a 3rd high school - financially not good, plus then Central would truly become the ghetto school. A new school won't fix all the problems but might draw some people back from private schools.
- The lawsuit hurt us and private school attendances have increased. It's unfortunate but it's helped to alleviate overcrowding. The school can still serve those who need it and those who choose to be there. It left more room for kids to move up into the upper level. Property values are key. Schools keep neighborhoods strong. People within a few blocks to a mile love it. People will build more and more houses on the edge of town, which could lead to conversion of single family houses in the core into apartments. Then parking becomes an issue.
- There's somewhat of a conflict of interest that Savoy is not represented by the planning process (by contracting with the city of Champaign). Some city council members like the Bristol site. If building will be reused for other educational/administrative purposes, it's going to have to be renovated anyway.
- Train tracks at Franklin are a concern. Complaints from neighbors about parking on streets are a concern. Crossing University Avenue is dangerous. Normal schools were built in the middle of nowhere but are now surrounded by houses. School was originally on the West side of town, in a growth area. Moving north makes the most sense.
- Unit 4 has not made an effort to go out into the community and engage. They're repeated the same format over and over. Why aren't we doing new things. We need more community engagement with visuals for choosing a location - perhaps a huge map and possible locations, with roads, moving pieces, what happens with transport, etc. See work of Michael Pyatok of Oakland, California. I can't think of an occasion where interactive visualization has occurred. Locations of high schools and

churches are based on where infrastructure ends and where land gets donated. Schools should stimulate what happens in a community. They have a high tax cost. Rural schools will soon get a boost from windmills, which could mean more flight of students out of this district.

- We need to keep up with the expectations set by the sales tax referendum. What hasn't been said is that our educational vision will drive what we do in terms of one or two high schools and which site we choose. The bottom line is that we need to invest in our kids. We've had discussions as a board privately but they need to be discussed publicly - people don't always have access to all the information.
- We need to look at the whole system. One problem we've run into is that the previous administration was fixated on building Normal West. The board is now looking at how to stay centralized. We need the city's help but they're short on resources. Country Fair will require \$10 million to clear it. The Board is not going to use eminent domain. It should be close to Parkland to take advantage of vocational education programs. The system is broken. About 75 percent of the kids enrolling at Parkland end up taking remedial classes. I would love to see the district have real choice. We need K-8 buildings and competition within the district.
- Whether we have one building or two campuses with split grades, kids will find their comfort zone. There are real city costs to putting the school on the edge of town. The school district and the city have mostly the same constituents and it will hurt them. We could have a quality facility in the core of town - a European community would never build out on the edge. Centers of activity are an insurance policy for a quality downtown/core. County facilities moved out of downtown Urbana and now it struggles.