

Community School Proposed Relocation to Bellagio Road School
Community Meeting
7-8-02
6:00 PM

Introductions (Frank Gonzalez, Community Outreach Dept)
Meeting will close at 8:15 p.m. Questions will begin at 7:15 p.m.

Speakers Present

Davida Shapiro
Robert Villapadua
(remainder listed below)

History of the Move to the Bellagio Road (Genethia Hudley-Hayes, LAUSD Board)

She knows CMS is dedicated to working together and building consensus. Doesn't want rumors flying about. She was initially interested in putting permanent facilities here and got 6.6 million in general funds for building at LACES. Genethia got the idea of moving to Bellagio Road when the board voted to close the Newcomer Center. On 28th of May, she asked the district to look at feasibility and how quickly it could happen. She is not in favor of losing magnet schools from district 1. But ultimately fell on side of children, her real constituents. She looked at CMS and knew we would always be cramped . . . only thing we can do is add second story, given history with LACES. Jim McConnell at facilities looked into it and said there is support for CMS to have the Bellagio site. At that point, the facilities department contacted Carol Dodd and Pam, and Genethia contacted Pam re possibility, and asked Pam if she can put the process in place for the community to consider the move. She wants the children to have enough space to play and to be, and for school to become everything it can become. It is an award winning school that deserves its own campus. People came and met with Genethia and complained that all voices have not been heard. We have to affirm everyone's right to be heard. She wants to make sure everyone knows how all this got started.

[OBJECTION BY PARENT OUTSIDE THAT NOT ALL PARENTS CAN FIT IN MULTIPURPOSE ROOM AND WERE BEING DEPRIVED OF THEIR RIGHTS TO HEAR. MEETING ADJOURNED AND RESUMED OUTSIDE]

[Recap of History by Genethia Hudley-Hayes].

Facilities Benefits of moving Community School (Mitchell Stark, Project Mgr LAUSD New Facilities)

Looking at second page of handout attached to agenda, recaps differences between CMS and Bellagio Road.

Cost savings: to do what we planned here, it would cost approx 6.8 million
4.2 million of class size reduction and 1.2 in BB, so there was a shortfall in what we needed to do

To move CMS to Bellagio and would cost 1.7 to 2.0 million (includes costs expended to date, and demolition of current CMS site, removal of bungalows, etc)

Prop. BB update at Bellagio Road (George T Stewart, Complex Project Mgr, Facilities Services Division, Local District D)

One project under construction, Internet services (95% completed)

Safety and Tech (fire alarms, communications)

Air Conditioning, Dec. 10, 2003 predicted start date

Painting (start 2/1/03)

Restrooms upgrade (presently underway)

Main office (painting in process)

School has been well kept over the years with 9 outstanding trouble calls

The Educational Component (Pam Marton, Principal Community School)

Genethia wanted to know what we would have done when construction starts here at CMS. We have nowhere to go to be away from construction. That is a great safety concern as well as concern for teachers being able to teach. One great benefit to Bellagio yard is separate from classrooms, whereas here yard is right in front of classroom doors. Upper grades have play yard on both sides. Bellagio has full size library, and currently classes cannot do teaching in library to help students learn how to find books and learn Dewey decimal system. Full size computer lab exists in Bellagio. Here computers are not hooked up to Internet. Bellagio will allow teaching to access tech on the web. Auditorium would be such a gift to our humanities magnet, which would help with drama, orchestra, etc. All parent meetings, rainy day activities, can take place there, whereas now they have to be curtailed. School is set up so ideal grade level learning spaces exist outside each classroom, like a private patio, for children to continue learning in outdoors setting. Full size classroom for CATCH program. Art studio/science lab would be available so Artist in Residence can stay and teach in one space as opposed to moving from class to class and fearing messing up the existing classrooms. Play area will be half grass and will enhance our physical education program, which was the poorest rated program at our school. School's proximity to excellent resources for our school, like UCLA, Seeds Elementary, School of Science/Art, mentors, Getty Museum, Skirball and Armand Hammer.

After school program: Current runs to 6:00p.m. We want to continue running both at new site and here. This summer Crescent Heights is allowing us of campus for camp, and hopefully that will be able to continue into the next year so people who can't drive up to Bellagio late at night could retrieve their children here closer to home. Pam shared that she is happy we are having this meeting tonight, and is an advocate of all points of view and wants to hear what everyone has to say. Speed with which this has happened is difficult and commends Council on efforts to poll parents.

Magnet Schools and Transportation (Carol Dodd, Local District D Superintendent)

She has seen the changes since she was principal of CMS. At the end of her tenure the deal was made to move to temp. LACES site. Decided at last minute not to move school in August and instead in December (had to unpack everything). This is a school we can all be proud of for what it stands for. She shared that although it is difficult to lose a magnet at this location, do we mourn that more than we look at opportunity for children to benefit from all that this school has to offer. Magnet selection will remain the same, so we don't need to worry about that. Regarding desire to create another magnet at this location, they are interested but that is not discussion for tonight. Transportation becomes issue for some people, some better and some worse, but distance will not exceed legal limit for magnets to transport student on bus (75 minutes is legal limit, one way).

Question and Answer Period

Raymond Fitzgerald

Son in 2nd grade. What will happen if we do not move, given construction and tear down of all buildings and pollution and dust? Second was re after school program. Don't want to move to Bel Air, one of reasons we chose school was location. Other was because of gifted administration and faculty. I don't want to go but think its best option.

Dr. Brian Bohn

Works for LAUSD as research associate back in 90's. Graduated from Harvard with high honors. This move is a direct frontal assault on whole concept of community schooling. The LAUSD has come forth with importance of parent involvement on student achievement. LAUSD could take money wasted on Belmont and improve this site. This is institutional racism to cover up instructional cost effectiveness.

Patrice Fisher

We are all intelligent and can make this decision on our own. There are a lot of people out there in support of the move that won't come up to speak because it is very scary to do. Has been enrolled for many years, and would follow Pam and the faculty and district administrators wherever they go. Has been at another school under a different faculty, and knows what a treasure we have here at Community. Think about what it will be like if we stay. Or to lose Pam, who has such vision. Was in a school where parent involvement is not allowed. We can't stay here with construction at LACES

Fanahi Williams

She lives one mile away, but she will move where the school goes.

Leticia Wells

Sent child here based on location of school. Lives in Gardena and doesn't think child's route will be less than 75 minutes and she is concerned with distance from herself and her daughter. How soon will school be moving?

GENETHIA response: She honors what parent has to say about her concern for her daughter's commute. Item comes to board on 7/9 for receipt, and will be voted on 8/13. "RECEIPT" means 1st discussion about item, but no voting. Will be voted on 8/13. No action taken tomorrow, but people can come and speak on issue tomorrow. We could move on 14th if vote goes that way.

Vincent Jeffers

New parent, as stakeholder. We were thanking God kids got into school at all. From Hollywood, already a bad drive, and won't be easy to drive to Bellagio. Involved in school in Hollywood where created support council and had rug drug out from under them. This is a carrot and stick situation. Idea of LACES tearing up their yard and will money be provided for our construction . . . feels like a bird in the hand with these promises. May get a call from the LAUSD that says we're moving, and we don't have say in where or when. Not looking forward to kids being subjected to construction for indefinite period. People working at this school feel strongly and he leans towards what they feel.

Robert Booker

Manages apartments and property in this area and lives here. Hears commute and transportation issue are main thing. A lot of people have put their time into this community and school and want it here. We have to do whatever it takes to stay here in this community. Once we get to Beverly Hills, do criteria change?

Mark Sazer

Value Pam and staff. People didn't choose this school because of the site. Hasn't spoken strongly on this yet, because built web site and has moderated the Yahoo web site, and wanted to remain a neutral arbiter. So much animosity and the e-mail lists have been used inappropriately. We need to pull together as a community. Recognize we have the same profound love for this school and our children, and let's move on.

New parent, and looking forward to fact that 4 minutes away, and could come and help and participate a lot because she is close by. The new site sounds incredible, but has conflict about it. Read an article why Bellagio was closing down; said busing was an enormous cost. How much is busing going to cost our school? For us, it will be a 45-minute drive one-way, but bus ride will take longer. Can't participate in school if it is so far away. Doesn't want her child wondering why some people have huge mansions as she drives through Bel Air

John Ward

Wife's question is if we don't move, there is planned wiring here for air conditioning. Is it going to happen?

{RESPONSE} Yes.

When?

{RESPONSE} Trenching. Will start on August 14th if move does not go forward.

They love the short drive to current campus, but loves idea of big school. Teachers want this; I want happy teachers and principal. Could be really upset about the drive, but if look at it in terms of future kids it is not only about his child and his drive, but about future kids. The school is not going to change its diversity so that cannot be a concern. Excited to see his kid running in a couple of acres instead of running around here.

Brian Cousins

Has daughter coming in here and one at LACES. Inconvenience to go to Bel Air and doesn't like Bel Air and big houses. Will this facility really improve their lives? Other daughter went to Hancock Park, they had a lot of music and room, and it did help his daughter. This is a funky space and he likes it, but the staff should get what they want. One concern: Diversity. Racism permeated his childhood and he wants his kid to be around many different colors. Claims that we are going to select the same way is bogus, because people will think their chances of getting in will change and will not choose this school.

GENETHIA RESPONSE: She is a product of LAUSD. She understands what this issue is. What he is saying is not true and this process will hold. We got magnet schools as result of Crawford vs. LAUSD. Bottom line is the percentages cannot be changed. This will not become a school for rich white people's children. People will get points in same way. Hundreds of other families will apply and the points will be allocated the same way. Almost every magnet in the system has the same race ratios because of this system. Magnets are built to alleviate the harms of racial isolation. The percentages cannot be changed.

Haskell Humes

One child in 5th grade and one at LACES. Has a lot of ambivalence about the move and has been to a lot of meetings. Difficult to be on side of not moving, and reason is what this school will look like. The racial make up will change. In some areas it is more difficult to get the colors to come to the school. This area is a balanced. I have a son who will benefit for the enlarged campus. The long term is not good for the SES disadvantaged. The inconvenience and burden is greater on those that have economic burdens. The distance plays a part, even if transportation will be provided. Sometimes both parents work.

Rena Jacobs

Parent here and at LACES and has been on Council. The process has been taken very seriously. This is a democratic process and the vote has been taken. If we could turn this into an ideal situation no one would move. In a few moments you will see how dark this site gets. What promises are made are very different from what happens. We have to think of the future. She started the CATCH program here and the dream is that every child will receive a mentor. It is not going to happen in this small space.

Sherry Marks

Outreach Coordinator of CATCH. Before she came she was with UCLA's program for several years. Worked with principals from over 350 schools. She can unequivocally say, of those she met Pam is really one of the only ones she would want to work for. She is the reason Sherry came here and why a lot of what happens here happens. Pam is behind good ideas all the way to make it happen. She can go somewhere else easily and has had offers. Hopes you will follow her lead and unite as a community. Question: It was murky whether the move had to be decided by the Board. Does it have to?

GENETHIA RESPONSE: Yes.

Deborah Olivier

Child currently attends Roscomare. They have several elementary schools in their area. There is gated community of Bel Air, and there are a lot of middle class areas as well. Hundreds of parents have been coming together to try to get the Bellagio site for a public middle school at the Bellagio Road site. She is flabbergasted that there is no notice going on about this issue. She has two questions: What was democratic decision making process to move CMS rather than create middle school in that area, and why was that community not informed, and why does this seem to be a fait accompli decision before the vote?

GENETHIA RESPONSE: Democratic process happened amongst the CMS community. The stakeholders she refers to are the children at this site. The bottom line is LAUSD is not going to put a middle school at Bellagio Road. There is a multibillion-dollar shortfall. She needs to be honest that it is not going to be happening in that area. They need to build schools where the communities are most impacted/overcrowded, not the Westside. They would have to build a gym and all the facilities that LACES never got. She will speak to their community to let them know that.

Leonard Isenberg

Teaches at Palisades and is getting credential to go into administration because despises administrators. Reading "Smaller is Better". These things always take place in 11th hour. Charm of this campus. . What about moving up to Bellagio Road while they build up this school and then move back here. "Span school" somehow implies deficiency but LACES is one of best performing schools. We bus children to Palisades and the children are visitors for 4 years. People are on an equal footing at this location.

Monette Morgan

Teaches 2nd grade and is lead teacher. Honored because staff is best she has worked for in her life. Nothing like this exists anywhere else. She would go anywhere to be with this staff. Especially after open court training, she is so excited to be able to use the library a lot, but can't imagine how to do so if we stay here. During learn process, our council had 4 times as many members because we refused to follow the rules. That is our attitude here. The board tells us what to do and we try to follow rules when we can, but we have found ways to get around them. On a bad day it will take her longer to get there, and she is not an early bird teacher, but what we have at CMS it is SO worth it. Wherever we go, we will have no "Visitors"

GENETHIA: "Visitor" means when there is an achievement gap between those bused and those that aren't. The traveling children's scores do not match those of the children in the attendance area. Every semester the gap is closing.

Gayle Yokley

The school is wonderful. But they are not equal to putting the child on the bus every morning. She would never see her child and we would never see her at the meetings. What happens to the parents who are not moving with the school?

GENETHIA RESPONSE: The LAUSD will have a conference with those parents concerned, and a sign-up sheet will be sent around.

Tracy Carness (Town Hall Co-Chair)

All the people sitting here should come to Town Hall meetings. Reach out to your council and talk to them. They are making time for all of us here. Second point: She won't be here for 20 years, so wherever they have to say she will follow and listen. She cannot afford to live in this neighborhood. She is here because of Pam Marton. She drives 45 minutes every day to get them here on time. Also, she was a product of busing. Lived in south central and went to Kennedy in Granada Hills. She received a great education. We live in LA, and we drive.

Jennifer Rosky

Three children. Her commitment to CMS is long term (has new baby). She is with Pam wherever she is and wherever CMS goes. Not opposed to busing . . . she was bused because no schools where she lived (through high school). So lucky to walk to school or drive 5 minutes). There are places in US where there are no schools. We are lucky for another opportunity for a great school. There will be a better school facility 45 minutes away (round trip)

Ed Elhaderi

Cannot imagine calling CMS Bel Air magnet school. School founded by community leaders for racial harmony and kids from different backgrounds and culture coming here. Yes you can bus kids to Bel Air but how can you bus parents? How can parents

participate? That is what makes this a wonderful school. We have wonderful parents and that is what makes this school possible. How are we going to achieve parent participation?

MITHCELL STARK RESPONSE: Look at how many parents live 2 miles or more from the current site (many hands raised). How many would continue to participate if move (many hands raised)

Tony Sherin

Seems like a done deal that CMS is moving. If we had known that there would be a lot less contention. The move was presented as a really hard sell. He admires Pam and thinks she is a world class principal. Seems like he shouldn't say anything.

Tony Devito

There is room for 121 more students at new site. Would CMS grow?

RESPONSE: It is a possibility. That is up to the magnet office.

For a lot of people the issue is socio economic diversity. Yes the ethnic diversity is going to stay. It is part of the magnet process. Is there a way to guarantee a zip code diversity? Is there a way to weight that?

RESPONSE: The point system is weighted based on ethnicity and socio-economic diversity. IT is determined by your local school and ethnicity and is designed to ameliorate poverty.

Last questions is what is future of this site whether we move or don't move. We hear different things, and is it possible to kick us out.

RESPONSE: LACES cannot kick us out. IF CMS moves, LACES will get all of this space. Not a parent from LACES has said move CMS. She has not received any e-mails that said they did not want to move. LAUSD can kick CMS out anytime.

Margot Page

Has worked for 4 other LAUSD schools and lives on west side. Not convenient to move. There is rumor that Pam has intimidated teachers into the move and that is simply not true. Pam is the best. She has met a lot of other administrators and we have such a unique community and school is because Pam is a "do it" person. She involves parents and doesn't keep them out like other principals. Underrepresented Latino population and there are lots of them on the west side.

Carl Mueller

Has tried to position himself in the middle and on the healing that is going to be required. There is going to be a lot of healing needed. This does seem like a fait accompli. If it is, Genethia should get up and tell us that. If not, we need to let the people know about what is going to happen if the move takes place and the possibility of a new magnet

CAROL DODD: This site is not your school. This school is what we make it, what the parents make it, what the administrators make it, what the teachers make it.

GENETHIA: It is true. There are other magnets in Watts and other poor areas and there are no problem sending people into those schools for the education (not for the area). It really is about what you do with where you are. She doesn't defend everything the district does. The district is all of us and how willing we are to make the schools work for every kid. Bottom line is what do you value and if you move to Bellagio you will take it with you. If your value is only because you are close to your school you will lose it. On separate note: Marlene Canter really wanted to be here tonight and could not.

David Gould

Lives one mile away from school, and commute will have large impact on their daily lives. From personal experience, his son had very hard time with school phobia. Had to drag son out of bed screaming to bring him to this school. Through hard work of Florita and Pam and wife, his son flourished at hands of Pam and Florita. Every time they have had an issue Pam has been right there for them. If he can entrust Pam with his screaming son he can trust her with this decisions.

Emily Piccus

Feedback in support of and against the move was taken fairly by the Council Reps and feedback enabled them to make just and fair democratic decision. Why put down Bel Air. It is a big world out there and we shouldn't be drawing lines because of size of houses. We can do this and handle it.

Edmond Rodman

Kids are now at Palms Middle School (and 4th grader here). His kids had a fantastic experience here and have maintained friendships with the kids here. Grew up in Anaheim and, being He wish he was the ethnic minority. This is social change and has yet to hear a convincing argument that will maintain this diverse status at this site.

Michael Williams

Transportation planner for LAUSD school. Also a parent at CMS. Aware of how process works for school selection and where money goes. When Walgrove decision set, he was asked to get information on transportation, and looked at how transportation was paired with LACES currently. \$4.2 million planned for construction here would last 40 years for transportation. LAUSD is committed to a 75-minute maximum ride time. The average time throughout the district is approximately 60 minutes. Some routes that extend 90 minutes come from Chatsworth or San Pedro. If you have a 75-minute or less ride now, you will continue to have it by shortening your routes (they are required to do so and if you have a longer ride you need to tell transportation).

Question: Are statistics kept on how often rides show up late?

RESPONSE: YES. Called interruption of service report. 99.3% average on-time service.

Question: Statistics for Bellagio?

RESPONSE: Overall routes run 99% on time and contract routes run about the same. Bellagio is included in that count. (323) 324-1423 is number to call (his number) if you have any transportation concerns.

GENETHIA: We are over time. This was not adversarial or hostile and people say what they need to say. She gives her gratitude and thanks for everyone coming out. The process will continue.