

**School District of Philadelphia**  
**New Ryan Avenue School**  
**Community Engagement Meeting**  
**Thursday, February 21, 2019**

**Introduction**

Dr. Rhodes:

- School District is currently choosing from two options and is seeking community feedback
- Questions and concerns to be written on cards
- Boundary meetings will also be held with the public

**Official presentation**

Dr. Rhodes

- Meeting Norms:
  - o Treat each other with dignity and respect.
  - o Help keep the conversation and agenda on track by staying on point and on time (max. 2 minutes).
  - o Balance your participation – speak and actively listen with an open mind.
  - o Allow others to participate – all points of view are important to hear.
  - o Respect other points of view, even when they differ from your own.
  - o Contribute to meeting goals – topics outside the agenda will be documented and tabled for a later time.
  - o Assume positive intent.
- What SDP is Trying to Accomplish:
  - o Schools in the Lincoln catchment (JH Brown, Forrest, Holme, Mayfair and Pollock) are above capacity.
  - o Enrollment continues to increase.
  - o The District has estimated a projected seat deficit of 2300 in school year 2022-23 if no action is taken.
  - o Success of the project is achieved through:
    - o a balanced enrollment,
    - o overcrowding of the Lincoln catchment schools eliminated,
    - o and the development of a school, and improvements at the existing schools, that provide 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environments.
- Background Information
  - o Held community meetings from April to September of 2018 to seek feedback from the community on the New School grade organization which was overwhelmingly in favor of a K-8 over a middle school organization.
  - o Decided the Grade Organization for the New School will be K-8.
  - o Issued a Request for Proposal for a development team to design and construct the New School.
  - o Issued a Request for Proposal to conduct an enrollment study and define a new catchment area for the New School.

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- Project Updates
  - The Board of Education approved the selection of Gilbane/Stantec as the Developer at the December Public Action meeting. Gilbane/Stantec is:
    - Ranked 1<sup>st</sup> nationally as K-12 Builder and Designer.
    - Has extensive track record of leading K-8 development/design/construction in both the Philadelphia Metropolitan area and the greater region.
    - Completed 136 schools as a team.
    - Following a review of the site, the School District and Gilbane have identified two potential locations for the new school. A final decision on the location will be informed by:
      - Walking Distance
      - Safety and Security
      - Traffic
      - Environmental Considerations
      - Stakeholder Feedback
      - Construction Cost
    - The proposed location will be presented to the Board of Education and the Superintendent for approval.

- Team Introductions

Terry McKenna/Luis Vildostegui

- Gilbane Development Company is the developer/Gilbane Building Company is the builder
  - Largest K-12 developer and contractor in US, Stantec is largest engineer/designer in US
- Stantec
  - Philly office
  - Stantec model requires that architects, engineers and designers all work collaboratively
  - Leading designers for K-12 in US
- Site: has been studied in-depth
  - Have looked at several other sites also
  - Building may take different shape than the pictured areas, this is a rough estimate
  - Site A
    - Northern site
    - On top of baseball and softball field
    - Change in slope from Meehan to new school
    - Would build trail from Meehan to new school
    - Kids don't cross traffic lanes once on property
  - Site B
    - More southern site
    - Location of original Abraham Lincoln high school
  - Walking distances
    - In general, site A has longer walking distances, crosses traffic

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- In general, site B has shorter walking distances, could create path without crossing traffic
- From Rowland: In General-
  - Site A – 4 city blocks
  - Site B – 1 city block
- Access to locations
  - Site A
    - Clear, unobstructed lines of sight
    - Rowland drive lanes, will be redesigned, with separate drop off and bus loops
    - There will be a walking path to Ryan Ave. drop off
    - Observed current walking is mostly Meehan students near the site A area
  - Site B
    - Traffic is constrained
      - Lincoln loop would also have to be used for new school
      - Parent drop off in front of school- new location
    - K-8 students would need to cross the parent drop-off lane to access play fields
    - Current drop off rhythm would be interrupted on Ryan Avenue and traffic will buildup
- Safety
  - Site A
    - New school would bring activity, lighting and security to the site near Pennypack Park – improving the level of safety for the entire campus
  - Site B
    - Higher visibility from both Ryan and Rowland avenues
- Existing Environmental Constraints
  - 5 sites were originally reviewed
  - Site A
    - Will be built over existing baseball and softball fields
    - Clean soil, easy construction of building
  - Site b
    - Will be built over the existing playing fields and abandoned foundations of the former Lincoln high school
    - Will cost money to remove existing foundations
- Community use
  - Site A
    - Relocate baseball and softball fields for HS
  - Site B

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- Sports fields used by community to be relocated
- Interactive feedback
  - See attached poll results – one audience member complained that he did not have a cell phone and another audience member complained that multiple online polls could be answered
- Frequently Asked Questions – Danielle Floyd
  - **Question:** What are plans for start and end times to address safety and climate?
  - **Answer:** The start and end times will be decided by the New School’s principal in collaboration with Lincoln High School’s principal. Additionally, the Administrative Team from Lincoln, school police and local Philadelphia Police meet frequently to address safety and climate issues.
  - **Question:** Will the Head Start Program remain at Holme Elementary in light of the changes?
  - **Answer:** We will be evaluating where families are coming from for the program and make plans based on family needs.
  - **Question:** What specific improvements are planned for the Lincoln catchment schools? How will overcrowding be addressed while the new school is being built?
  - **Answer:** The District’s Chief of Schools, Assistant Superintendent and Chief Operations Officers have begun discussions with the Lincoln catchment schools to discuss the impact of the grade expansion including their educational program and facility needs. Specific improvements have not yet been identified. Our first step is to develop and finalize the educational program and the program will inform the needed improvements.
  - **Question:** Is Gilbane the group spearheading construction of the additions to the other schools?
  - **Answer:** District staff will be meeting with the Principals of the surrounding schools to discuss the implications of their grade expansion and space needs. Once the program is finalized, staff will identify the facilities costs.
  - **Question:** What is the plan for the Austin Meehan building when the new school opens?
  - **Answer:** The plan is to demolish the Austin Meehan Middle School.
  - **Question:** Where will the community fields be relocated to, if Location B is selected?
  - **Answer:** If location B is selected, the athletic fields will become a separate project and their location will be determined at that point in time.
  - **Question:** What is the proposed budget for the new school?
  - **Answer:** The budget is tentatively \$70M for the new school.
- Next Steps – Danielle Floyd
  - Questions are on the parent portal and also online for people to respond – poll open until next week.
    - <https://goo.gl/forms/00sY5RrBOFmU2wFq1>
  - Minutes will be posted
  - Meeting information will be sent to parents from their Parent portal accounts

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- Summary will be provided to the board of education from community feedback
- March 14<sup>th</sup> meeting with community at 6 PM at Lincoln HS to present final site selection and building design
- Enrollment study confirming building capacity, educational program, and building floor plans happening now
- Construction tentatively starting in May 2019. Pushing for 2020-2021 completion.
- Additional information posted on website
  - [www.philasd.org](http://www.philasd.org)

Questions – Danielle Floyd

- Survey was received by the School Advisory Council. Can it be forwarded to parents?
  - Yes
- Why not demolish Meehan and build new school there?
  - Meehan is needed for enrollment until the new school is ready
- Are most people expected to walk?
  - Currently about 60% walk (no transportation is provided for those walking 1 ½ mile or less )
- Why were so many questions asked
  - There is no perfect solution
  - Both sites were shared with the Board and the Board asked for feedback
- What will separate the two schools
  - This is not known at this time but will be determined as part of the design
- Will Meehan stay?
  - Meehan will be demolished
- Where will the school yard be for either site?
  - Once a location is decided, a separate space will be determined as part of the design process
- Isn't a longer walking distance better, since many students are obese?
  - Exercise is good
- What type of enhancements will be done to existing schools?
  - It is recognized that investments will be needed at existing schools
  - Principals will be informed quarterly to review & inform on the progress of the new school
- Did you consider the site where Lansing fields are located?
  - SDP does not own this site
- Why is site B being considered when the majority of the community wants site A?
  - Board of Education has asked for feedback on both sites; information from both community meetings will be presented at the next Board meeting
- Why not route traffic through Meehan and put parking lots there?
  - Meehan will not be demolished before the new school opens
  - The slope prohibits queuing of buses

Danielle Floyd thanked Bobby Heenan for his support