

March 21, 2009

Why build when City High isn't full?

As a future City High parent and current president of the City High Alumni Association, I have watched in dismay over the past three years as the Iowa City Community School District has neglected to adequately address the concerns in our community regarding overcrowding at West High and declining enrollment at City High. Two years ago, the decision was made to avoid redrawing school boundaries in favor of a policy that sent all new students to City High regardless of address.

Now, there still is overcrowding at West High (projected to be 101 percent capacity and growing in 2009) and declining enrollment at City High (projected to be at 88 percent capacity in 2009). In addition there now is a large discrepancy between the number of kids who qualify for free or reduced lunch (26.7 percent at City and 17.5 percent at West).

At the March 10 school board work session, I sat in disbelief as our elected board members brainstormed costly options such as adding on to West High or building a new high school to alleviate overcrowding at West. All the while there was no significant discussion about redistricting when it is the clear and obvious solution to the population problem as well as the free and reduced lunch disparity.

This avoidance of addressing the real issue affects the quality of education our kids receive at both schools. I urge concerned citizens, parents and alumni to get involved before it's too late and we are spending millions more on unnecessary building projects.

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