

**Tucson Unified School District No. 1
Governing Board Special Meeting
Cafeteria
Keen Elementary School
3538 East Ellington Place
Tucson, Arizona**

**June 4, 2004
6:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

Present:

Joel T. Ireland, President
Judy Burns, Clerk
Bruce Burke, Member
Adelita Grijalva, Member (arrived at 6:10 p.m.)
Mary Belle McCorkle, Ed.D., Member

Also Present :

Roger F. Pfeuffer, Superintendent Designee
Jane Butler, Senior Legal Counsel
Patti Lopez, Ed.D., Deputy Superintendent/Chief Academic Officer
Judith Knight, Ph.D., Chief Business Officer
Anna Rivera, Ph.D., Senior Academic Officer – Leadership
Susan Wybraniec, Executive Director, Human Resources
Elaine Rice, Retired Administrator on Special Assignment
Marcus Jones, Director, Engineering and Planning Services
Guy Ferro, Real Estate Manager
Estella Zavala, Communications Specialist
Abel Ramirez, Principal, Keen Elementary School
Norma Johnson, Policy Coordinator
Bridget Auvenshine, Director of Staff Services to the Governing Board
Mary Alice Wallace, Senior Staff Assistant II to the Governing Board
Sylvia Lovegreen, Senior Staff Assistant I to the Governing Board
James Baker, TUSD Division Chair for AFSCME
Phil Brenfleck, Moderator, School Community Partnership Council
Elsa Gutierrez, Spanish Interpreter
Carlos Elenes, Spanish Interpreter
Kim Ragland, Sign Language Interpreter
Shelly Camp, Sign Language Interpreter
Tamara Flanagan, Sign Language Interpreter
Steve Leal, Tucson City Councilman
Col. Steve Ruehl, 355th Operations Group Commander, Davis Monthan Air Force Base
Lt. Beth Tucker, Davis Monthan Air Force Base
Janie McLaury, Community Relations, Davis Monthan Air Force Base
Mike Toriello, 355th Civil Engineer Squadron, Davis Monthan Air Force Base
Other Air Force personnel
Kendall Burke, Representative from Tucson City Development

Also Present (continued):

Chris Lopez, Keen Neighborhood Association
Sarah Gassen and photographer, *Arizona Daily Star*
TV Channels 4, 9 and 11

ITEM

ACTION

SPECIAL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER – 6:04 p.m.
Joel Ireland announced that signers for the hearing impaired were present. Elsa Gutierrez made an announcement in Spanish regarding the translation equipment available.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

No action was required or taken at this meeting.

1. Introductory Comments

Roger Pfeuffer began with comments in English and Spanish regarding the translation equipment and the Spanish interpreters present. He continued his comments with a timeline regarding events concerning Keen Elementary School since school year 2000-2001, accompanied by an overhead presentation in both English and Spanish. He announced that the Governing Board would be voting on the future of Keen at a meeting on July 6th. He further stated that regardless of the Board vote on July 6, agreements that had been reached with the Keen Relocation Committee would be honored regarding assignment of students to the three designated schools or to Keen if it remains open, transportation would be provided to students to the three designated schools, teachers would be given a choice of assignment if Keen remains open to the newly assigned schools or back to Keen, and Abel Ramirez would remain as principal if Keen remains open.

2. Presentation by Davis Monthan Air Force Base Personnel

Col. Steve Ruehl made a presentation on behalf of the Air Force regarding their concerns – safety of the children attending Keen, the noise impact on the educational experience of the students at Keen, a history of the base in Tucson including flight take-offs and landings, their proximity to Keen Elementary School, and statistics regarding accidents involving Air Force planes worldwide.

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DISCUSSION ITEMS (continued)

3. Community Presentation – The Keen Neighborhood Association

Chris Lopez presented on behalf of the Keen Neighborhood Association expressing the desire for the school to be kept open, appreciation for what Davis Monthan does for the community, and also recognizing opportunities that would be available to Keen students at the other designated schools. She also stated that if the school closes, the building should not be used as a storage facility or become an eyesore in the neighborhood.

4. Public Hearing/Meeting pursuant to A.R.S. §15-341(A)(36)

Joel Ireland opened the public hearing by reading letters in support of the closure of Keen Elementary School from the Honorable Janet Napolitano, Governor of the State of Arizona; the Honorable Robert E. Walkup, Mayor of the City of Tucson; and William Bell, Executive Director of the State of Arizona School Facilities Board. He then reviewed the rules for speaking at the Public Hearing and stated that an interpreter would translate remarks in Spanish for the Board.

The following persons spoke during the Public Hearing:

Maria De La Ossa – Expressed appreciation for Davis Monthan but spoke against closing the school.

Jeneiene Schaffer, Co-chair of Tucsonans for Quality of Life – Expressed that it is the Board's responsibility to keep this important and vital public school open.

Rose Garcia, Principal of Keen from 1992 to 2001 – Spoke in opposition to the closing of the school; did not believe the school was in danger.

Sylvia Campoy – Spoke in opposition to the closing of the school; believed it would be discrimination against children of color.

Marie Manchenton – Spoke in favor of keeping the school open; believed the Air Force was engaging in scare tactics.

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DISCUSSION ITEMS (continued)

4. Public Hearing/Meeting pursuant to A.R.S. §15-341(A)(36) (continued)

Mike Manchenton – Spoke in favor of keeping the school open; believed closing was discriminating against the Keen students, and transporting by bus would be more dangerous than the planes flying over.

Lourdes Rodriguez (Spanish speaker; interpretation by Carlos Elenes) – Spoke in favor of keeping the school open; does not believe the air traffic and noise are good reasons to close the school.

Pedro Muñoz (Spanish speaker; interpretation by Carlos Elenes) – Spoke against closing the school; believes it is an issue of discrimination; wonders why others of similar circumstances are not being closed. Requested that the school be kept open.

Ricardo Bravo – Suggested other options for Davis Monthan to eliminate jets flying over Keen; also said if Keen is closed, why not Mansfeld and the University of Arizona.

SPECIAL MEETING RECESSED – 7:10 P.M.

SPECIAL MEETING RECONVENED – 7:25 P.M.

4. Public Hearing/Meeting pursuant to A.R.S. §15-341(A)(36) (continued)

Oscar Garcia – Spoke to keep the school open for the kids.

Celso Ortiz – Points made were there are other schools in the flight path and they aren't being closed; waste of time for travel and safety concerns in busing students; if school is closed, is the neighborhood going to be bought out and moved? Keep the school open for kids and his grandkids.

Juan Aguero (Spanish speaker; interpretation by Carlos Elenes) – If the school is closed there will be vandalism and retaliatory things; keep the school open.

[Comments from Sylvia Campoy in the audience that the translation is not accurate and that it needs to be very accurate since this is a public record.]

ITEM

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SPECIAL MEETING RECESSED – 7:35 P.M.
Joel Ireland recessed the meeting to address the translation issue.

SPECIAL MEETING RECONVENED – 7:40 P.M.

DISCUSSION ITEMS (continued)

4. Public Hearing/Meeting pursuant to A.R.S. §15-341(A)(36) (continued)

Javier Aragon (Spanish speaker; interpretation by Elsa Gutierrez) – Family immigrated to Arizona but now lives in terror of falling planes and other fears; wants the school kept open for their children.

Dalia Orozco (Spanish speaker; interpretation by Elsa Gutierrez) – Family is new to the neighborhood; children previously attended Myers, also in the flight path; why isn't that school being closed? Concerned about busing and transportation not being convenient for families that work to pick up their children.

Juan Puente – **[Name was called but Mr. Puente did not appear.]**

Marina Lara (Spanish speaker; interpretation by Elsa Gutierrez) – Wants the school kept open for her children and for the parent education classes.

Dick Bayse – Suggested talking to the Air Force to change the flight path 5 degrees off the present alignment to reduce the flights over the populated areas of Tucson and a number of schools.

Brenda Vega – HeadStart parent; concerned about lack of transportation for parents so they can attend meetings at schools, and the money for Keen going somewhere else.

Alba Boteo (Spanish speaker; interpretation by Elsa Gutierrez) – Closing the school is an injustice to the children. What is the motive for closing the school? Every neighborhood needs a school; she asked to keep the school open.

Billie Erickson (5th grade teacher at Keen) – opposed to closing the school. It is unique – after school programs possible because of no busing. But do not vote to keep it open and then close it a year later – no band aid approach.

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DISCUSSION ITEMS (continued)

4. Public Hearing/Meeting pursuant to A.R.S. §15-341(A)(36) (continued)

Mark Mayer – Former member of the Davis Monthan Task Force in the early 1990's. No one paid attention when issues of safety at Keen were raised at that time. Rings hollow to hear it now. Believes the Air Force is dictating to the community unnecessarily.

Becky Jo Montijo (President of the Duffy PTA) – Described the outreach efforts of the Duffy principal to the Keen community; the diversity of Duffy; the various programs available at Duffy and efforts to make transportation safe for the children.

Mary Haney – Commented that information was given to parents about the closure. Had wanted the school to stay open but not as it is. Some requests were made for making the school safer and more sound proof but nothing happened. Believes the new schools have a lot to offer and that it is a good idea to put the kids in a more diverse setting. Concerned about child going to Mansfeld next year because it is in flight path, too.

SPECIAL MEETING RECESSED – 8:10 P.M.

SPECIAL MEETING RECONVENED – 8:20 P.M.

DISCUSSION ITEMS (continued)

4. Public Hearing/Meeting pursuant to A.R.S. §15-341(A)(36) (continued)

Joel Ireland opened the floor for persons who had already spoken to speak again since he had no more Speaker Cards.

Michael Manchenton (second time) – Closing Keen will not guarantee that Davis Monthan will stay open, and keeping Keen open will not automatically mean Davis Monthan will close. The school needs to stay open for the benefit of the kids in the neighborhood.

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DISCUSSION ITEMS (continued)

4. Public Hearing/Meeting pursuant to A.R.S. §15-341(A)(36) (continued)

Maria De La Ossa (second time) – Regarding safety, is there a guarantee kids will be safer at another school? Haven't received information that Keen not closing is the only thing keeping the base from closing. The kids need their school.

Mary Haney (second time) – Regarding KidCo, helpful if transportation to KidCo was available or if a KidCo could be opened in the neighborhood. Also suggested monitors to help with the busing, and transportation for kids if they are sick and parents don't have transportation to come to the school to pick them up.

Mary Schiltz – Closing the school is discriminatory, a detrimental impact on the community and unfair to children. Money approved for the school has gone somewhere else. Minor repairs were made but air conditioning was not put in. Keen is a year round school in session until June 24.

Priscilla Petersen – Is a volunteer at Keen. Was fully informed about what was going on. Was against closing the school at first, but got on the Relocation Committee. After studying, visiting schools, the Committee chose the three schools that would best fit the needs of the Keen neighborhood. The diversification the children are going to be exposed to is going to be wonderful. Asking her neighbors to look at this as a positive thing. Asked the Board to make its decision a permanent one.

Mary Schiltz (second time) – Title 1 or PACE funding now allotted to Keen will not follow children to new schools. HeadStart Program has been shut down. As Attorney General, Janet Napolitano previously issued an opinion that there was no problem with schools in the APZ (Accidental Potential Zone) operating. Believes DM would not close – reviewed all the capital improvements made at the base. Keen 50 exists to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the school.

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DISCUSSION ITEMS (continued)

4. Public Hearing/Meeting pursuant to A.R.S. §15-341(A)(36) (continued)

Joseph Ahumada – Does not think it's a good idea to close the school. Disputed the distance from Keen to the new schools and the time to transport students. Has volunteered at the school to help girlfriend who is a teacher at Keen. Doesn't think kids will fit in at other schools; they have a comfort level at Keen.

Peggy Agredano – Parent and grandparent of former and current students at Keen and a neighborhood resident. Asked the Board to consider DM's safety record before deciding to close the school.

Maria De La Ossa (third time) – Believes children will lose their culture if they are taken out of Keen and put in different environments.

Mary Schiltz (third time) – Discussed the negative impact on student safety and environment by busing them to different schools.

Monique Hernandez (Co-Chair of the Relocation Committee) – Didn't want the school to close but began to look at the positive side. Believes the three receiving schools offer more to students. Thinks parents are not being involved and are at fault for letting this become a political fight. Encouraged parents to become involved and step up for their children.

Marina Lara (second time) (Spanish speaker; interpretation by Elsa Gutierrez) – "...even if our students move to another school, they will still be strangers in the other school."

Dick Bayse (second time) – "...since it seems to be the Air Force that wants this school closed, did they offer to pay us for it?"

Mary Schiltz (fourth time) – Questioned why the Air Force was taking such an active role in trying to shut down the school. Believes it is not permissible under the Department of Defense guidelines.

Mary Haney – (third time) Believes kids will fit in at the new schools. No different than if kids' families moved and the kids had to go to a new school.

Adelita Grijalva made remarks in Spanish to the audience to apologize for problems with the translation.

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DISCUSSION ITEMS (continued)

Joel Ireland announced that the Board will vote 30 days after the public hearing, on July 6th.

**PUBLIC HEARING AND SPECIAL MEETING
ADJOURNED – 9:00 P.M.**

Approved this 13th day of July, 2004.

TUCSON UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. ONE
By



Judy Burns, Clerk, Governing Board

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Minutes\6-4-04Special