

# WHY THE NEW EAST BLUFF SCHOOL SHOULD BE BUILT AT THE CURRENT GLEN OAK PRIMARY SCHOOL SITE.

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**INTRODUCTION:** There are three reasons why the new East Bluff School should be built at the current Glen Oak Primary School site: 1) Centralized Location; 2) Public Support; and 3) Urban Renewal.

- 1) **CENTRALIZED LOCATION:** It is important for the new East Bluff School to be located in the center of the attendance area. Such a location increases attendance and decreases busing costs. The current Glen Oak Primary School is the most centrally-located of the eight proposed sites.
- 2) **PUBLIC SUPPORT:** Building a new school at the current Glen Oak Primary site would guarantee that the enterprise would enjoy enthusiastic public support. It is important that that District 150 avoids conflict and further delay in the selection of a new school site in the East Bluff. The Glen Oak Primary site has the support of Mayor Ardis, Alderman Manning and several other City Council Members; all the neighborhood organizations that have expressed an opinion on the subject; the Heart of Peoria Commission; and the pastors of several churches in the area.
- 3) **URBAN RENEWAL:** It is impossible to successfully separate children from the neighborhood in which they live. If the East Bluff fails, any school within its boundaries will fail. If the new school is built in the heart of the East Bluff, city and community leaders will be given an opportunity to revitalize this area of Peoria and attract new families, new businesses and new taxpayers.

**DESIRABLE AMENITIES** near the Glen Oak Primary School site:

- 1) Boys and Girls Club (806 East Kansas);
- 2) Heartland Community Health Clinic (2321 North Wisconsin);
- 3) Firehouse #10 (3316 North Wisconsin, only 12 blocks away);
- 4) Saint Francis Medical Center (including new Children's Hospital)
- 5) Local Churches (including Prince of Peace, New Beginnings Ministries; Glen Oak Christian; and Saint Bernard's Parish);
- 6) Glen Oak Park (including expanded Peoria Zoo, Luthy Botanical Gardens, new Children's Museum, tennis courts and Tri-centennial Playground). For junior high school students, Glen Oak Park should be a 15 minute walk from the school.

## UNDESIRABLE AMENITIES near the Glen Oak Primary School site:

Three local bars (Mad Dog's Wisconsin Tap; Sparky's Ringside Bar and Grille; and Rubee's) are located near to the site, south on Wisconsin. However, these three establishments have co-existed with the Glen Oak Primary School for many years and have NOT been known to cause any difficulties for the students or faculty. It would be reasonable to assume that these three bars will NOT cause problems for a New East Bluff School at the Glen Oak Primary School site either.

## COST OF LAND ACQUISITION at the Glen Oak Primary School site:

It has been argued that it would be too expensive for District 150 to purchase the property necessary to build a New East Bluff School at the Glen Oak Primary School site. However, the site becomes affordable if the school board does three things: 1) Chooses to construct a two-story school; 2) Chooses the most cost-effective footprint for the school; and 3) Re-evaluates how much money is available for land acquisition.

- 1) District 150 should build a TWO-STORY SCHOOL, rather than a one-story school. This would reduce the footprint of the necessary land from 8-15 acres to 6-12 acres. A two-story school would also be more energy-efficient, saving on heating and cooling costs over the life of the new building.
- 2) District 150 should choose the MOST COST-EFFECTIVE FOOTPRINT for the new school. Acquiring land to the north of the current Glen Oak School would be more expensive than acquiring the same amount of land either south or east. Acquiring land to the south of the school would have the added benefit of calming traffic around the new school because the city would be asked to vacate a block (or more) section of Frye Ave, which I believe the city would be willing to consider.
- 3) District 150 should RE-EVALUATE HOW MUCH MONEY IS AVAILABLE FOR LAND ACQUISITION. Currently the district has budgeted one million dollars for land acquisition. To this amount should be added the money received from resale of the Prospect properties—which were previously purchased with money ear-marked to acquire land to build a new school in the East Bluff (\$877,500.00 minus the depreciation of the properties). Also added to this amount should be the sale of White School (since White is one of the schools that the New East Bluff School would be replacing). As an added benefit, if OSF bought White School, a School of Nursing might be added to the desirable amenities located near to the Glen Oak Primary School site.

**CONCLUSION:** The Glen Oak Primary School site is the best possible place to build a New East Bluff School because it is centrally-located, enjoys over-whelming public support and could spark urban renewal in an area of the city that has been neglected for far too long. Please, build a school in the heart of the East Bluff and the community and civic leaders will do their best to turn this neighborhood around.