



City of New Albany, Indiana
DOUGLAS B. ENGLAND
Mayor

March 10, 2010

Mr. Roger Whaley, President, Board of Directors
Dr. Bruce Hibbard, Superintendent
Board Members
New Albany Floyd County Consolidated School Corporation
2801 Grant Line Road
New Albany, Indiana 47150

Re: New Albany Floyd County Schools Restructuring Plan

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am writing to express my official position regarding the proposed Budget Reduction Information/Plan for which the NAFCCSC Board will be asked to approve this coming Thursday, March 11, 2010, to-wit:

I would like to thank Dr. Hibbard for meeting with me on Wednesday, March 3, 2010 to explain the contents of the plan and his pending recommendation. While I do not envy the fiscal predicament that the NAFCCSC finds itself, I understand the difficult choices you must make to manage your fiscal affairs. You have my unqualified empathy, and I encourage you to make decisions that will benefit our community in the long-run.

There are four aspects of the Plan that cause me pause:

1. Being the husband of a retired teacher with 42 years of experience and service, I am concerned about the proposal to move 5th graders to the middle schools. I will not belabor the specific reasons why, as they were well articulated at your public hearing on Monday, March 8, 2010.
2. The NAFCCSC is a diverse socio-economic community. Like many metropolitan communities, it contains many races and ethnicities. It would be a tragedy to abandon the resources currently allocated by the NAFCCSC to its diversity staff.
3. From the information provided, it is difficult for me or citizens to understand what savings, reserves and rainy day funds would be used to shore up the recommended option. Without this information, it is difficult to understand why no other restructuring alternatives exist—ones that could save a central city school or perhaps two.

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4. I am also concerned that the recommended option will close three elementary schools within the City of New Albany. In particular, the Children's Academy and Silver Street are essential facilities to the vitality of the neighborhoods that surround them. I am fearful that their closure will have detrimental impact on the children, families and property values. The fact is many households have made significant investment choices to reside in these "walkable" neighborhoods because of the proximity of the schools that are slated for closure.

With respect to Silver Street School and the Children's Academy, I would be remiss if I did not point out that the City of New Albany is currently in the process of developing a new five-year plan for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. While the City cannot utilize the CDBG Program to fund the operating costs of a neighborhood school, the City could make a financial contribution to implement accessibility improvements (elevator, ADA improvements, et cetera) to Silver Street School and/or similar improvements to the Children's Academy to avoid closure.

Finally, a common refrain heard at the Public Hearing was the rather short period of time allowed for the public to understand and comment on the recommended option or other alternatives. If the Board of Directors is interested in the City's participation through the CDBG Program, I would suggest a discussion with the City Staff before making a final decision.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Douglas B. England

Mayor

cc. *The Tribune and Evening News*
The Courier Journal