



# **Metea Valley High School**

## **Administrative Land Recommendation**

**January 2008**

### **Background**

In September 2007, the Brach-Brodie jury returned a verdict that was twice the value of comparable properties and significantly greater than the budget. Specifically, the jury awarded \$564,000 per acre (including damages), more than twice the price that Brach-Brodie had agreed to sell the property for had the 2005 referendum passed. Given the price, it was clear the district could not build a comparable high school and stay within budget at Brach-Brodie. Building at that location would require eliminating significant features including the pool, auditorium, stadium and/or gym.

Upon learning the jury's verdict, the district began exploring a number of potential options, ranging from eliminating significant portions of the building to identifying another parcel. In evaluating options, the district used the following criteria: 1) The district needs the third high school and seventh middle school based on current enrollment and space needs; 2) The total cost will not exceed the approved referendum, interest, and other identified project revenues of approximately \$146,240,000 for purchase of the land and construction of the school; 3) The third high school will be comparable to the existing high schools (i.e. pool, auditorium, stadium, etc.); and 4) The high school and middle school should open in August 2009.

### **Recommendation**

After a thorough evaluation of all available options, the administration is recommending the Board of Education approve the Eola Road land parcel (located on the east side of Eola Road and bordered on the north by the Illinois Prairie Path) as the location for Metea Valley High School. This location will serve the needs of the district and allow the school to be delivered on time and within budget. This recommendation values and incorporates input that the district has received from the community throughout the third high school process.

The district would purchase 86.57 acres of this previously unavailable parcel at a cost \$191,000 per acre from two owners – St. John AME Church and Midwest Generation. Approval of this site will allow construction to begin in the spring with a likely August 2009 opening.

In the end, the Eola Road location provides the students and taxpayers of District 204 with needed space to solve overcrowding at a savings of approximately \$13 million versus proceeding at Brach-Brodie.

The following frequently asked questions provide more information on this recommendation. Additional information is available on the district's website at [www.ipspd.org](http://www.ipspd.org).

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Why isn't the district proceeding at the Brach-Brodie location?**

Given the jury's verdict, delivering Metea Valley at Brach-Brodie would require eliminating significant features including the pool, auditorium, stadium and/or gym. The district also explored options to build on fewer acres, but representatives for Brach-Brodie rejected offers to purchase fewer acres. The public has been clear in its desire to complete the project within the budget approved by the voters. The district agrees with and stands behind the public's desire for it to be responsible stewards of taxpayer money.

**How was the Eola Road location selected?**

The administration reevaluated all existing land options and determined that, given today's facts, the Eola Road location is the best option for the district. Several factors changed since the referendum making the Eola Road location possible. First, when the district approached St. John AME Church in November 2004, its representatives made it clear that they had no interest in selling. Secondly, the Midwest Generation parcel was still in operation and not available for sale. Midwest Generation has since ceased use of its parcel and St. John is now in a position to sell a portion of its land. These changes presented a new opportunity for the district to negotiate a purchase with two parties who were previously not interested in selling.

**Isn't the Eola Road location too far away from the district's population center?**

Indian Prairie covers 46 square miles. If the district had a single high school, the proximity to the population center would be important. However, we currently have one high school in the south that will serve 40% of the population, one high school in the central portion of the district that will serve 30% of the population and this northern location will serve the remaining 30% of the population.

**How do busing expenses and travel times for Eola Road compare to Brach-Brodie?**

The overall average district transportation times projected for Eola Road are the same as Brach-Brodie. In addition, Laidlaw has reviewed bus service to the Eola Road location and has concluded that no additional transportation costs will be incurred. Compared with transportation for our current two high schools, having an even geographical distribution of high schools allows for efficient boundaries that will reduce the overall average travel time for students.

**Are there any safety concerns with the Eola Road location?**

The school district places student safety at the forefront of every decision. As such, the district has investigated potential safety concerns. While Midwest Generation previously operated a power station on a portion of the land, the facility has ceased operations and is being removed. In addition, an environmental engineering firm has reviewed the school's proximity to nearby power lines and has concluded that the school will be located a safe distance from the lines. This environmental report is available on the district's website at [www.ipisd.org](http://www.ipisd.org).

**What will happen to the high school boundaries?**

The boundaries drawn for the Brach-Brodie location are not applicable to the Eola Road location. The administration is reviewing new boundary options and will make a recommendation to the board in the next few weeks. The recommendation will involve kindergarten through grade 12 and begin in August 2009.

**When will the seventh middle school open and who will attend Metea Valley when it opens?**

With construction beginning this spring, Metea Valley's instructional areas will be ready for the freshman and sophomores who will open the high school in August 2009. The Waubonsie Valley freshman building will open as the seventh middle school in August 2009.

**Why wasn't the Macom property chosen?**

The Macom property carries a number of significant financial and time-oriented uncertainties. Some of the major obstacles include the parcel having multiple owners (one with lifetime estate rights) and having a road running through the land that needs to be moved. In addition, the total price for the Macom property is more expensive than Eola Road. More information on this parcel, as well as other land options considered, is online at [www.ipisd.org](http://www.ipisd.org).

**What happens next?**

Administrators will present this recommendation to the board of education on January 22 and the board will vote on the recommendation.

**More information is online at [www.ipisd.org](http://www.ipisd.org)**

**Indian Prairie School District 204**

780 Shoreline Drive  
Aurora, IL 60504