

Denver Public Schools

Report to the Board of Education

INFORMATION ONLY

**FUTURE OF
EBERT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Department of Research, Planning & Special Programs

February 5, 2004

This report is for information only at this time. A proposed motion will be presented for Board of Education action at the February 19, 2004, Board of Education meeting.

Executive Summary

Concerns have been raised about the viability of Ebert Elementary School because of declining enrollment and the fixed cost of continuing to operate a very small school. Specifically, Ebert enrolled only 101 kindergarten through grade five students in October 2003 of whom only 47 resided in the Ebert attendance area. Since surrounding schools have substantial available space and the number of students residing in Ebert's attendance area will not likely increase in the next few years, staff recommends that the Ebert attendance area be merged with those of Whittier, Wyman, and Gilpin Elementary Schools, effective July 1, 2004.

The Educational Outreach Program for homeless students, which is currently located at Ebert, will be continued at a level at least comparable to what is currently being provided. The program will likely be relocated to Gilpin because two of the three downtown area shelters for homeless families are located in this attendance area.

Background

Pupil Demographics

Attachment #1 provides information about the 2003-2004 membership by grade at Ebert, the resident area for kindergarten through grade five students who attend Ebert, and the school of attendance for elementary students who reside in the Ebert area. For example, Attachment #1 shows that in October 2003 Ebert had an enrollment in kindergarten through grade 5 of 101 students, 13 early childhood education students, and 8 sixth grade students. Of the 101 kindergarten through grade five students, 47 lived in the Ebert attendance area. Wyman, Gilpin, and Whittier attendance areas contributed 14, 13, and 9 students, respectively, to Ebert. Of the 87 students residing in the Ebert area, 47 students (54 percent) attended Ebert. The next most frequent school of attendance was Whittier with six attendees.

Attachment #2 shows the kindergarten through grade five membership at Ebert, Gilpin, Whittier, and Wyman for October 2003 and the four preceding years. Overall, membership in the four schools has declined by almost 35 percent, from 1,208 to 783. Among the four schools, Ebert's October membership was 65 students lower than the next smallest school, Whittier.

Attachment #2 also shows estimated capacity at Ebert and the three surrounding schools. While actual capacity will vary from estimated capacity based on the specific programs at each school, Attachment #2 shows that there is substantial capacity available at Ebert and the surrounding schools to accommodate additional students.

Attachment #3 shows the ethnic percentages and the percentage of students eligible for free/reduced-price lunch at Ebert, Gilpin, Whittier, and Wyman. For example, 40.2 percent of Ebert's membership is Black, and 96.7 percent of its population is eligible for free/reduced-price lunch. Overall, there are no appreciable differences in the percentage of free/reduced-price lunch students at the four schools. There are some differences in the percentage of Black, Hispanic, and White students at the schools.

Services for the Homeless

Currently, homeless students from this area are served by the Educational Outreach Program at Ebert Elementary. This program provides free after-school programming (nutrition, homework help, arts, and recreation), as well as tutoring during and after school, social services for students and parents, and transportation assistance. The homeless students reside in three nearby shelters (see below) as well as in motels, on the street, in automobiles, and in transitional housing facilities. Students residing in the three shelters receive transportation to Ebert. Some homeless students also attend Wyman Elementary and participate in an after-school program there.

<u>Shelter</u>	<u>Location</u>
Samaritan House	Ebert Elementary School
Sacred Heart	Gilpin Elementary School
Champa House	Gilpin Elementary School

Ebert Resource Allocations

With 101 K-5 students, Ebert would only be allocated 3.5 classroom teachers. This means that each teacher would need to instruct a multi-grade classroom, and there would be little flexibility to address grade-to-grade enrollment fluctuations. In addition, the estimated \$16,000 for instructional supplies and materials might be insufficient because of costs associated with maintaining a copier and some classroom materials, which are not necessarily reduced because enrollment is low. With a Title I budget that could be as low as \$40,000, the school could no longer afford a literacy coach.

Community Meeting

District staff met with Ebert parents, community members, and staff on January 21st to discuss a possible merging of Ebert with Gilpin, Whittier, and Wyman. Parents, teachers, and volunteers expressed concerns about the merger and reassigning students to these schools. The concerns expressed included the following:

1. Some students who reside near Ebert will now have to attend a school farther away. Parents/children may need to walk through areas they consider unsafe.
2. The low pupil-teacher ratios that are a result of Ebert's small size provide its students with greater opportunities to achieve than would be possible if students attended a larger school.
3. The Ebert faculty is committed to the students, parents, and community, which would be lost if Ebert were merged into surrounding schools.
4. Many volunteers provide tutoring and other support to Ebert students because of the school's proximity to downtown.

5. Faculty members do not believe that Ebert students would be well served by merging Ebert with the highly gifted students who currently attend Crofton.
6. School staff, parents, and community would like the district to place a new program at Ebert to attract additional students, and are willing to actively recruit more students.
7. School staff and parents would like a decision to be made as quickly as possible about whether attendance areas will be merged in order to provide teachers with the maximum amount of time possible to secure a new assignment and to allow parents to choose other schools, should they not wish for their children to attend their new neighborhood school.

Achievement

State accountability ratings for Ebert, Gilpin, Whittier, and Wyman are shown in Attachment #4. Overall achievement at Ebert is higher than at Gilpin, but lower than at Whittier or Wyman.

Criteria for Merging Attendance Areas

District staff believes that merging attendance areas and reassigning students from one neighborhood school to another should only be considered in selected instances, based on the following guidelines:

1. The school's kindergarten through grade five membership is less than 150 students;
2. Fewer than 75 students reside in the attendance area and attend the school;
3. There is little likelihood that the school will attract additional students from district schools or private schools;
4. Space is available in surrounding schools and reassignment options are reasonable.
5. There are reasonable potential opportunities for reuse of the school, once attendance areas have been merged.

Proposal

Staff recommends the following actions be taken, beginning with the 2004-2005 school year:

1. Merge the Ebert attendance area with the attendance areas of Gilpin, Whittier, and Wyman, as shown in Attachment #5.
2. Provide current Ebert students with an opportunity to transfer to schools other than the new school serving each student's residence. To the extent practicable, treat transfers as though they occurred during the January *Choice* period.

3. Provide teachers and other staff currently assigned to Ebert with an opportunity to interview for vacancies at Wyman, Whittier, or Gilpin, if the Ebert staff members are qualified for those positions.
4. Relocate the program for homeless children to Gilpin Elementary School. Provide transportation and other services for these students at a level comparable to what is currently provided. Consider opportunities for improvement in services at the new site. Ensure necessary support and training for teachers on the topic of homeless education.
5. Offer business and community groups that currently serve students at Ebert the opportunity to become involved at Gilpin, Whittier, and Wyman.
6. Meet with Ebert pupils, parents, and staff to identify transition concerns. To the extent practicable, address these concerns.

Expenditure Reductions

Closing Ebert elementary school is expected to result in expenditure reductions of about \$350,000 per year. This primarily reflects reducing the fixed expenses for operating one elementary school, including the salaries for principals, clerical staff, and supplemental teachers. For 2004-2005, savings will be somewhat less because July and August salaries would need to be paid to Ebert staff. Costs assume that some additional transportation is provided to Ebert students who have been reassigned to surrounding schools. Additional information is provided in Attachment #6.

Also there would be one time costs for moving furniture out of Ebert or relocation of the Polaris Program from Crofton to Ebert. However, Polaris Program costs would likely be more than offset by an increase in student enrollment.

Proposal Rationale

1. Gilpin, Whittier, and Wyman can meet the educational needs of students reassigned from Ebert. In fact, as larger schools, they will be able to offer services more tailored to the needs of students at each grade level.
2. There is little likelihood that Ebert's enrollment will grow significantly in the next few years.
3. Students at Ebert can be absorbed into surrounding schools with limited disruption to these schools.
4. Ebert had an enrollment of only 101 K-5 students in October 2003 of whom only 47 lived in the Ebert area.

5. Services for homeless students will be provided at a school that is as close or nearly as close to the shelters where the majority of homeless children reside.
6. The Polaris Program could be relocated from Crofton to Ebert, which would provide additional space for this program's expansion.
7. The proposed pupil assignment changes would not have a significant impact on the ethnic percentages or percentage of students eligible for free/reduced-price lunch at Whittier, Wyman, or Gilpin.
8. District expenditures would be reduced by about \$350,000 annually after the first year.

Next Steps

1. Inform the community of the proposal and provide them with opportunities to comment at a meeting on February 10th at Gilpin.
2. Make revisions to the proposal, as needed, and submit it to the Board of Education for action on February 19th.

EBERT – 2003-2004

By Grade Membership	
ECE	13
K	17
1	21
2	18
3	13
4	21
5	11
6	8
ECE-6	122
K-6	109
K-5	101

Ebert Membership (K-5)	
Resident Sch	Count
Ashley	3
Barrett	1
Bryant-Webster	2
Del Pueblo	2
Ebert	47
Gilpin	13
Greenlee	1
Hallett	1
Harrington	2
Out-of-District	2
Park Hill	3
Stedman	1
Whittier	9
Wyman	14
TOTAL	101
<i>Inflow</i>	54

Ebert Area (K-5)	
Attendance Sch	Count
Carson	1
Cheltenham	2
Crofton	2
DATA	2
Ebert	47
Edison	2
Fairview	1
Gilpin	4
Knight	2
McMeen	1
Moore	4
Park Hill	2
Samuels	1
Teller	3
Westerly Creek	1
Whittier	6
Wyatt-Edison	1
Wyman	5
TOTAL	87
<i>Outflow</i>	40

ELEMENTARY MEMBERSHIP HISTORY

		Membership					Change
		1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	
School	Capacity	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5	
Ebert	336	277	233	199	176	101	-176
Gilpin	686	467	441	421	407	336	-131
Whittier	336	224	231	212	197	166	-58
Wyman	361	240	224	232	177	180	-60
Total		1,208	1,129	1,064	957	783	-425

**MEMBERSHIP AND FREE/REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH
2003-2004**

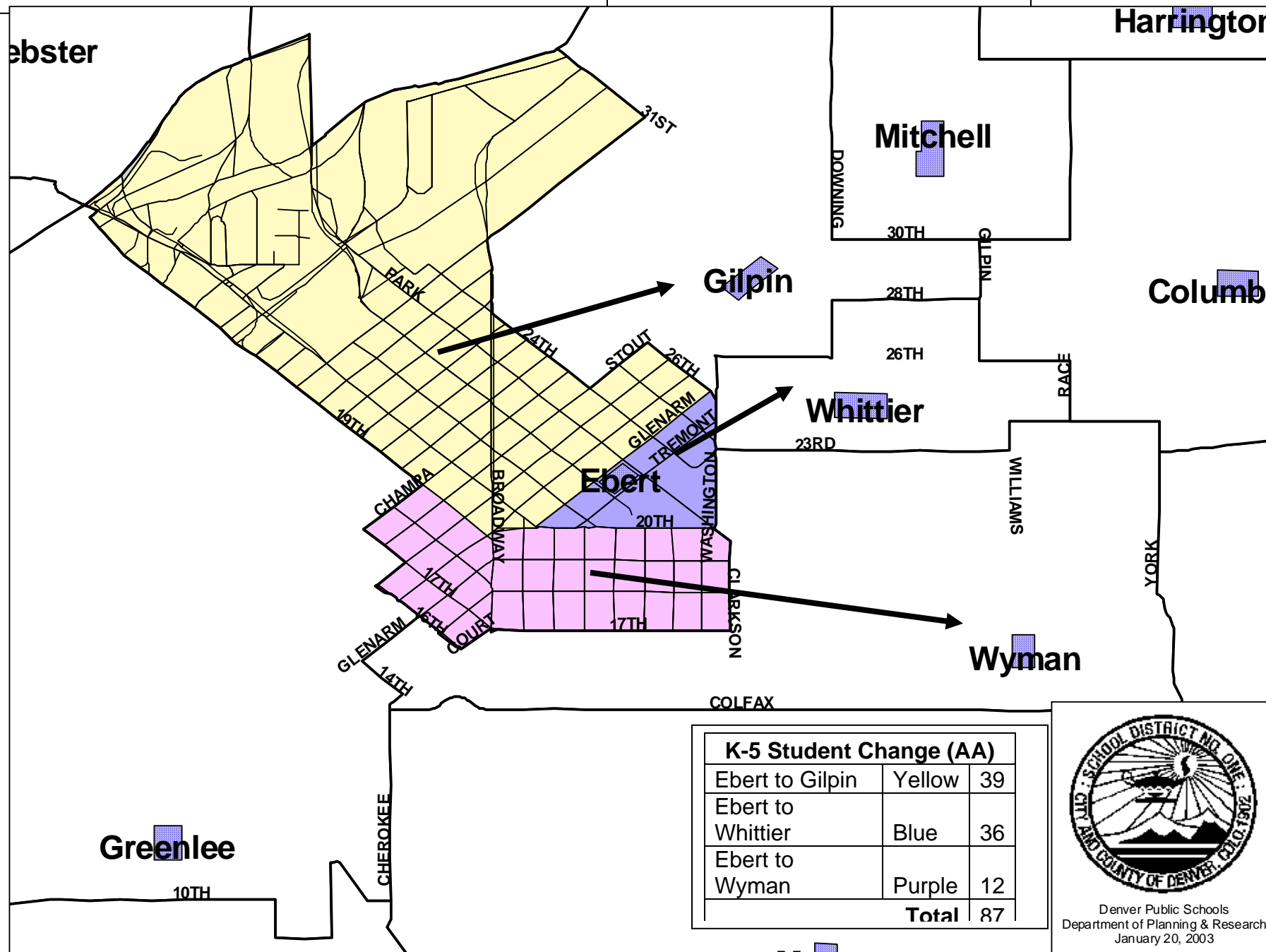
School	American Indian		Black		Asian		Hispanic		White		TOTAL	Free/Reduced Lunch %
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Ebert	6	4.9%	49	40.2%	1	0.8%	57	46.7%	9	7.4%	122	96.7%
Gilpin	4	1.1%	119	32.0%	1	0.3%	234	62.9%	14	3.8%	372	91.5%
Whittier	3	1.5%	117	57.4%	2	1.0%	77	37.7%	5	2.5%	204	96.8%
Wyman	20	9.6%	102	48.8%	7	3.3%	47	22.5%	33	15.8%	209	87.2%

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE RATINGS

SCHOOL	SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY RATING					
	2001-2002			2002-2003		
	Index	Rating	Improvement	Index	Rating	Improvement
Ebert	-2.1	Low	Significant Improvement	-1.94	Low	Stable
Gilpin	-2.32	Unsatisfactory	Improvement	-1.97	Low	Improvement
Whittier	-1.07	Low	Improvement	-0.94	Low	Stable
Wyman	-1.09	Low	Significant Improvement	-1.02	Low	Stable

EBERT ES BOUNDARY OPTION - DRAFT

Attachment 5



K-5 Student Change (AA)		
Ebert to Gilpin	Yellow	39
Ebert to Whittier	Blue	36
Ebert to Wyman	Purple	12
Total		87



Denver Public Schools
 Department of Planning & Research
 January 20, 2003

Denver Public Schools
Ebert/Crofton Moves

SUMMARY OF FISCAL IMPACT

CATEGORY	NET MINIMUM SAVINGS (COST)
.5 Librarian Salary/Benefits	\$ 21,779
1.75 Suppl Tchrs Salary/Benefits	76,228
.25 GT Teacher Salary/Benefits	8,583
Principal Salary/Benefits	77,111
2 Secretaries Salary/Benefits	49,705
Hourly Clerical	1,399
Hourly Paraprofessionals	9,595
Non-Custodial School Budgets – SUBTOTAL	\$ 244,399
Non-Custodial Budget savings beg. following Aug./Sept.	\$ 46,680
FM Salary/Benefits	\$ 39,262
Asst. Custodian Salary/Benefits	32,461
Student Sweeper	1,292
Custodial Supplies	2,286
Utilities: Electrical	8,000
Utilities: Gas	7,000
Custodial, Utility Budgets – Subtotal	\$ 90,301
Transportation (Ebert to Other)	(\$ 22,230)
Total Net Savings	\$359,150
One Time (Moving/Tech) Costs	(\$20,633)