



Feedback from 9/29/2011 and 10/4/2011 Community Information Sessions

Did you find this Community Information Session valuable?

26 Yes 10 No 48 Total Feedback Forms Returned

What questions do you have that were not addressed at the Community Information Session?

NOTE: () = number of people making same comment

Class Size

- What will class sizes be in each building by grade?
- Will there be a class size upper limit for each classroom?
- How are teachers being equipped for larger class sizes? (4th grade child could potentially have a 5th grade class size of 30. Older daughter attended Milwaukee specialty school and had 30 students in grade, but had 2 teachers in the classroom.)
- If Hillside closes, how will the District manage 5 sections of grade 3 at Brookfield Elementary? (i.e. space, lack of teachers in that grade each year).
- What is typical increase in class size from kindergarten to grade 1? The current model shows a 0% increase. I don't believe this is accurate. Brookfield Elementary should not have a 25.33 average class size for grade 1 next year.
- Concerned that class sizes will continue to rise beyond the current class size guidelines with a school closure. Do not sell the closure of Hillside on lowering class size and good programming if, in one year; we will be informed that class size is increasing due to a deficit.
- It appears that grade 1 at Brookfield Elementary will grow to beyond 3 sections next year. It is already starting beyond the current recommended class size with no option for growth.
- No matter how it is presented, the goal of section smoothing is to eliminate teacher and staff support resulting in an increased student/personnel resource ratio. While not a strict mathematical increase in class size, it has many of the same effects.
- Five year old kindergarten may not increase above acceptable levels at each school. It is concerning to keep Dixon at 65% capacity and overload Brookfield Elementary to keep averages.
- Provide school capacity models with 4K included. It is disingenuous to use revenue numbers but not head count.

Redistricting

- Please provide a separate informational session for tracts 113 and 144. We have been overlooked. Give families a choice of attending Dixon or Swanson.
- Place nonresident students across all District elementary schools.
- I don't want my children attending Dixon.
- Move more Brookfield Elementary students to Dixon. All schools need to have room for home turn over.
- I live in tract 113. Why not redistrict more students from Brookfield Elementary than 2 tracts to alleviate overcrowding and for future home turn over.
- Children in tract 144 moving to Dixon would face the burden of being moved away from friends multiple times.

- Moving Hillside to Brookfield Elementary displaces children at Brookfield Elementary. Move tracts 160 and 162 to Brookfield Elementary; keep tract 113 at Brookfield Elementary; move tracts 163 and 144 to Swanson; move all nonresident Brookfield Elementary and Hillside students to Dixon. The feeder system is preserved for resident students.
- Relocate all Brookfield Elementary and Hillside nonresident students to Dixon so Brookfield residents would not be in the swing school. Look at keeping tract 113 at Brookfield Elementary and placing tract 144 at Swanson.
- Allow students in tracts 113 and 144 to choose. Exceptions should be made for students in tracts 113 and 144.
- Give students in tracts 113 and 144 a choice of going to Swanson or Dixon (the Board will make the decision but a majority prefers Swanson).
- My special education child in tract 144 and is currently attending Brookfield Elementary. The redistricting plan shows a move to Dixon. This will disrupt my child's learning. What can I do to keep my child in his current school?
- We reside in tract 144 and have been in the Brookfield Elementary attendance area for the past 10 years. We have 3 years until our child is in middle school. This must be an option to grandfather students to finish at Brookfield Elementary. After attending Dixon following by Brookfield Central I was split from many of my friends and I don't want this to happen to my son.
- Instead of placing current Brookfield Elementary nonresident students at Dixon and current Dixon nonresident students at Burleigh, consider placing current Brookfield Elementary nonresident students at Burleigh. This will have the least amount of disruption.
- Don't split up Hillside students if the school closes.
- Move Hillside and Brookfield Elementary nonresident students to Dixon.
- Children in tract 144 should not be moved to Dixon and become swing students...this is a poor option. They would face the burden of being moved away from many of their friends multiple times. This would not be fair to them.
- How will larger classes & redistricting children help Elmbrook maintain and improve current academic achievement.
- Close Tonawanda and move students to Dixon.
- Close Tonawanda and there won't be a swing school. Move students in tract 146 to Brookfield Elementary and solve all the problems.
- To preserve feeder system for resident students:
 - Move tracts 163 and 144 to Swanson
 - Move all Brookfield Elementary & Swanson nonresident students to Dixon
 - Move tracts 160 and 162 to Brookfield Elementary
 - Keep tract 113 at Brookfield Elementary

Financial

- You've not shown a compelling reason to close Hillside over another school. If this is budget/financial need driven, you've chosen the least desirable option to save \$. Why?
- What number needs to be in reserves to make you feel "safe" enough to tap into it? \$12 million feels very high to me. That swing in the past year \$1.5 million is the same as closing a school.
- What is the true cost to keep Hillside empty, i.e. security and outside landscape?
- What are the plans for a closed Hillside? Don't let it stand empty or be storage for 3-5 years.
- Can \$ be saved by having parents volunteer for lunchroom (lunch ladies)? This is done in some private schools.
- What additional facilities will be needed for classrooms? What is the cost of renovations? What are the costs to adjust remaining schools?

- Do not add 4K as there is a cost to taxpayers, there are not long term educational benefits, and people are already trying to be annexed to our District even though we don't have 4K.
- Add 4K before closing a school.
- There are several options that could have been considered several years ago prior to this drastic move to close a school.
- Why are property values in the Tonawanda attendance more important than those in the Hillside attendance area. This is a District issue not one community within the District.
- Need to educate resident students not nonresident students.
- Savings of only 6 teachers and a principal? Doesn't seem that we've been provided the real savings.
- Closing a school seems to be an "easy option" vs. working harder to find savings.
- Consider giving the task back to each school—provide each school a proportionate percentage of funds to cut/save.
- What will happen to open enrollment students? What about their siblings who were told they would most likely get in? This impacts our property values so we need real answers. Accept more open enrollment students since they bring in \$ and increase enrollment?
- I don't believe there will be any facility savings after the modifications to other schools and relocation of the administration offices.
- It is disingenuous to use revenue numbers but not head count numbers.
- I am a 63 year old resident who is willing to pay more taxes to keep neighborhood schools open. My daughter who has two pre school children moved into to the Hillside attendance area for the school. She has the question if St. John Vianney is a better alternative.
- I am a senior citizen who is willing to pay added tax to keep Hillside open. (//)
- This should be a question on a referendum.
- Maintain programs and services and class size—more important than how many elementary schools in the District. I feel more accepting of a Hillside closure after this meeting and now support the recommendation. Let's resolve this issue and move on to the other issues confronting the District.
- Closing a school should only occur in crisis. You said we aren't in crisis.
- Need to include 4K in logistics.
- Add 4K to all schools not just one school.
- Add 4K before closing Hillside. Avoid answering lots of questions.
- Budget reductions that should be considered:
 - Reduce the 2nd Asst. Superintendent (revenue less than expenditures)
 - Move CAO to a school. Use reserves for students not administration. Don't remodel North Avenue building and lose rental from Montessori.

Capacity/Logistics

- Visit Brookfield Elementary to see what 67% capacity looks like in the cafeteria and parking lot. Then consider what 85% will look like. Where will new families fit?
- Can Brookfield Elementary handle the number of students coming to the building?
- Need more information on impacts on families for: 1) parent volunteer opportunities, 2) lunchroom capacity, 3) amount of traffic on Brookfield Road for drop off and pick up, 4) specials, 5) impact on class size, 6) bus routes, and 7) wait/travel time. (///)
- Close Tonawanda and place students at Dixon, leaving all other students in the schools they currently attend. Closing of Hillside appears to disrupt many more students.
- I purchased my home in the Hillside attendance area because it is a neighborhood school. I don't want a mega school.

- Swanson's future was called the most volatile and one Board member said Swanson closing may be inevitable. The southern portion of Brookfield/Elm Grove would be better served by a smaller neighborhood school. Since it appears that closing Swanson may be inevitable, close it now since it's on a busy street and too large, thus saving neighborhood schools. Save neighborhood schools.
- If there is additional capacity, one or two schools need to close.
- It seems that only one school is being filled to capacity when another is filled to 75%. Why is it acceptable to ask one school to take this large burden when no other schools are being asked to do this?
- Why close a west side school if east side capacities are lower (resident students only)?
- If there is additional capacity, one or two schools need to close.
- School capacity models must include 4K.
- Concerned about the long-term capacity at Brookfield Elementary.
- Think it is generally good for diversity to have nonresident students spread throughout all schools.
- What will happen to the PTO donated SmartBoards at Hillside?

Defer Decision

- New superintendent should have input. (///)
- Wait one more year to make this decision.
- The Board needs to listen to what was said and take more time to make a decision.
- The Board needs to take more time to study the very valid questions brought up tonight by so many concerned citizens. We can't close a school and then figure it out.
- Think with a keener business mind before making a decision that will be devastating to our community, children & school district.
- This session was valuable but it did not satisfy all the questions that need to be answered prior to making a critical decision like closing a school. Matt Gibson said we are not in crisis. Why, then are we making a critical decision without all the questions being answered.
- The community lacks confidence that the District thoroughly thought through all logistics before the final decision is made. You may not be able to account for all, but you have not done enough.
- Need to see more detail on the five-year plan -- rationale for closing a school.
- Why should we believe declining enrollment statistics now?
- Effort needs to be put into analysis of closing Swanson. If there is a belief in the enrollment projections a large school with resale value should have been at the top of the list rather than a late summertime discussion.
- This session made me realize, despite their comments, that the Board and superintendent do in fact have an agenda.
- I felt as though the decision to close Hillside is a done deal and our comments, and more importantly suggests, are just being brushed aside with a nod, a thank you, and then forgotten/ignored. This is not good.
- This decision is penny wise/pound foolish.
- Valuable only because a lot of good information was made available by the audience. If the Board votes to close Hillside on this in two weeks there is something wrong.
- The Board is elected by the people. You are not listening to the people.
- Matt Gibson did not answer questions tonight. His answers seemed to be circular. This further perpetuates distrust. (//)
- The school closing has pitted east side vs. west side. (//)
- Thank you Board for your time.
- Please Board members, keep an open mind.
- Neighborhood schools create communities.

- Your minds are made up. It appears that the decision has already been made. (///)
- It appears that you are doing this to pacify people. How many people does there need to be?
- If given the opportunity to vote on closing a school & redistricting, I'd vote no. There's been work on enrollment numbers...my daughter is not a number.
- Do not close a school. (///)
- I believe the decision was made some time ago and the Board wants to wear us down so we'll give up.
- It is clear that the Board is not listening to what is said. My neighborhood, Carrington Heights, is primarily older residents who will be moving within 5-10 years.
- Most of the questions were not answered. When the District asks the community to participate in a question/answer session, they should be prepared to answer questions with facts and documents to convince the community that everything was done to keep schools "up to par".
- Neither the Board nor superintendent had an open mind or willingness to hear alternatives. Check your calendar and be mindful of meetings scheduled on dates such as Jewish High Holy Days. Don't close out residents.
- No one is thinking of how this really affects the children. We are in the District through open enrollment. Our child would be shuffled like a number. You are not putting children first.
- I am not satisfied with the decision to close a school. I do not support it. I do not want to be redistricted to Dixon. My child would be moved twice from friends. I have scheduled a tour of a private school and this meeting confirmed my decision.
- There are a lot of open questions and I think a decision on school closing is premature. Would favor a referendum.
- Many homes are available in the Hillside attendance area for young families.