

Minutes of the Elmbrook Enrollment
Balancing Task Force Meeting

Present: Bill Aslin, Mark Hansen, Kori Hartman, Erik Kass, Jean Lambert, Bridget Mangan, Lisa Mellone, Paul Neumeier, Heather Paradis, Sarah Sagert, Thomas Schaefer (arrives later), John Schnabl, Jeanne Siegenthaler, Danny Thomas, and Daniel Westfahl

Absent: Andrew Farley, David Frank, Franklin Onwubuariri, Silvia Paquini, Lisa Rettler, Stephen Taipala, Scott Wheeler, Karen Wolff, Jeff Wurster, and Liz Zmuzinski

Also: Deborah Nustad, Jennifer Roskopf, Mike Thompson, and Kathryn Wilson

The meeting began in the Board Room of the Central Administrative Offices at 6:04 p.m. Mike Thompson welcomed everyone and advised that Mark Hansen would be reviewing the Task Force time line and purpose. Dr. Hansen explained that very comprehensive data analyses have been occurring. A draft recommendation is expected to be released to the community in August, with feedback received from the public in September. He further went over some of the issues that have been driving the data analysis and cautioned that the District might experience a small drop in enrollment next year before the big increases arrive (large senior class graduating). Results from meetings with the City of Brookfield, the Village of Elm Grove, and realtors concerning single and multi-family home permits, existing home sales, and the number of teardowns were shared.

Talking Points

Members of the Task Force were asked to develop talking points to address potential community questions and concerns about the rebalancing efforts. The results included:

- Rebalancing needs to occur to relieve population pressures at Swanson and Brookfield Elementary to maintain a consistent quality of education experience for all.
- Capacity exists at Dixon, Burleigh and, to a lesser extent, Tonawanda. To be fiscally responsible, the solution is to rebalance enrollment.
- Enrollment projections demonstrate a need to rebalance enrollment now, proactively, to prepare for the anticipated overall enrollment growth over the next several years.
- Need to address Hillside questions/concerns.
- There are currently more school-age children on the west side of the District.
- Actual births are at a 25-year high.
- There is new residential housing now, with more on the way.
- Need to prepare for the impact of a huge increase in single and multi-family housing.
- Housing turnover is on the rise (Milwaukee workers do not need to live there due to a recent court decision).
- Brexit has resulted in a decrease in interest rates (“time to buy homes”).
- Increased growth in births and real estate activity due to recovering economy.
- Important to balance capacity so all students/families enjoy the same quality education.
- There is a large attendance imbalance between the East and Central sides of the District. Currently, the impact is at the elementary level; but middle and high schools will be impacted in the near future.
- Current boundaries are mismatched with present population trends and neighborhood school capacities.

Scenario Presentation and Evaluation

Jennifer Roskopf spoke about recent and projected MLS sales and their effect on elementary school enrollment. Some housing developments appear to need to be pushed out for a year due to required approvals. New housing is a consideration but appears to account for only a 4-percent incremental increase in enrollment and may push capacity needs by one year.

Five potential scenarios for addressing the rebalancing needs were presented as examples. None of them were expected to fully address all of the concerns but were offered to start the process of determining which ones should be looked at in greater depth or with adjustments or fine tuning. Some of the options considered in preparing the examples were to shift or split tracts, to shift feeder schools, or to add capacity. Moving the preschool program from Dixon to Burleigh (early childhood program already there) might help by offering more space at the centrally located Dixon (estimated at a 2-percent change benefit). Adding capacity was considered at each of the elementary schools except Tonawanda because the extra space at Tonawanda would require added gym/cafeteria space and thereby increase the cost. Each of the examples was tested to see how the data would or would not meet the critical success factors and was weighted according to the rankings done by the Task Force earlier.

Questions included which tracts were impacted when Hillside closed, why some non-resident numbers on the spreadsheet were listed as zeroes, if grandfathering would include busing (possibly), why the variations at Pilgrim Park and Wisconsin Hills were so narrow (class sizes are larger than at elementary or high schools), if Burleigh could be larger than six sections (not ideal), if longevity data would be available, if adding on to Tonawanda should still be considered, and if the impacts on high schools would be included. The possibility of using portable classrooms at the middle schools was mentioned (students already move between classes). Adding capacity at Pilgrim Park might put pressure on gymnasium space, while doing so at Wisconsin Hills would be challenging for cafeteria space. A caution was made that the tract projections do not include some small single or double exceptions.

Following an explanation of the scenario figures, members broke out into teams to review and/or alter the scenarios. Scenario C was generally not supported without a reduction to involve only two tracts. A number of suggested changes to the other scenarios were offered and will be further developed and presented at the next Task Force meeting. Other scenario suggestions are still welcome.

Members discussed the need to try to treat similar situations equitably (density, proximity, etc.) and to possibly address mid-year enrollments. They agreed with the movement of the preschool program to Burleigh and to take the east/west shift off the table.

Mike Thompson closed the meeting with the suggestion that, as the process continues, the message and rationale for all decisions be kept in mind.

Next Meeting

The next Task Force meeting will be on Monday, July 11, in the Board Room of the Central Administrative Offices, at 6:00 p.m.

The meeting ended at 9:06 p.m.