

Minutes of the Elmbrook Enrollment
Balancing Task Force Meeting

- Present: David Frank, Mark Hansen (leaves earlier), Kori Hartman, Erik Kass, Paul Neumeier, Franklin Onwubuariri, Heather Paradis, Silvia Paquini, Lisa Rettler, Sarah Sagert, Thomas Schaefer, John Schnabl, Jeanne Siegenthaler, Stephen Taipala, Danny Thomas (arrives later), Daniel Westfahl, and Karen Wolff
- Absent: Bill Aslin, Andrew Farley, Jean Lambert, Bridget Mangan, Lisa Mellone, Scott Wheeler, 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 6:34 p.m. Mark Hansen explained that the items for this meeting would center on revisiting the idea parking lot, reviewing possible scenarios and how they might connect, and a new Task Force time line. He informed the group that Erik Kass will be leaving the District for the private sector at the end of June (Danny Thomas arrives). Dr. Hansen will be the senior leader bridge for the next four to six weeks. Kathryn Wilson was the night's Board of Education representative in the absence of Jean Lambert and Scott Wheeler.

Scenario Review

Erik Kass reviewed the six previously identified scenarios and asked about the group's feelings concerning the two placed in the "parking lot" at the last meeting. Members discussed using Dixon as a Kindergarten hub and using restructured grade models. For both ideas, capacity needs would require analysis and operation costs would need to be determined. The questions and comments included:

- additional sections possible/preferred;
- parent pickup logistics;
- parents with children at more buildings (transportation, involvement, events);
- how grades would be split among five elementary schools;
- would there be a significant effect on enrollment balancing;
- would it be good academically;
- professional development could have smaller focus;
- would older-grade role models be lost;
- would teachers be able to switch to the grades they would like to teach;
- would there be greater disconnect;
- busing concerns (more buses, more routes, timing);
- would it require more redistricting/rebalancing;
- huge impact on families;
- would a K-8 model help with the adjustment of middle school start time;
- would busing require one school to be "early" and another "late";
- would Kindergartners be riding buses with eighth graders;
- would schools have the proper-size equipment, restrooms, etc.;
- would sense of community be adversely affected;
- how fifth graders in middle schools would affect elementary and middle school capacity;
- if fifth graders would have their own "houses";
- if middle schools would have enough cafeteria and electives spaces;
- if adding classroom space would necessitate more need for cafeteria/gym/other spaces;
- Kindergarten hub would result in multiple changes for small children; and
- how moving Kindergartners would affect elementary enrollments.

Dixon as a swing school was questioned and members (in groups) re-ranked the six scenarios.

Scenario Evaluation

The results of the re-ranking showed the east/west shift at 1.3, Dixon as a swing school at 2.6, add capacity to existing elementary schools at 2.8, restructuring of grade models at 4.7, re-open Hillside at 4.8, and Dixon as a Kindergarten hub at 4.9.

Re-Open Hillside - Community needs to know why Hillside is not being considered (does not address east-west shift need, adds operational costs without fixing the distribution problem, adds capacity where it is not needed, and has upcoming capital costs).

Restructure Grade Models - Need to know if there is an academic reason to shift fifth graders to middle schools. Would this just be moving bodies? Would this be part of an east/west shift and/or adding capacity to existing elementary schools? How many Kindergarten through fourth grade students would need to move?

Add Capacity to Existing Elementary Schools - Will this be a five- to ten-year solution? Are modulars needed temporarily until the trend data is more reliable? Do we plan for added capacity if the models prove to be true? Use modulars temporarily during grandfathering? Use Dixon as a swing school and add capacity as companions to the east/west shift?

East/West Shift - Will the east side experience a housing flip next? Smaller schools cannot absorb enrollment spikes as well as larger ones. Is the east/west shift the solution foundation with the other ideas being tools to help? Community must be shown the need to do an east/west shift and needs to know that grandfathering is being considered.

Future Information Needs

A capacity chart (without Hillside's 400 students) was presented showing when capacity is expected to be reached with/without new housing. Capacity may be needed but where? Do we need a progressive solution? Realtors are being asked where high turnover levels may occur. Need to know/have (1) where additions are possible and how large they could be (capital needs, restrooms, hallways, maintenance issues, etc.); (2) more tract data including neighborhoods that are reasonable shift areas; (3) how many students will need to move; (4) which schools can accept more students; (5) bus timing and/or added routes (Mark Hansen leaves). Is there real-time tract-change ability (spreadsheet)? Can tracts be split and how will lines be drawn? Could Swanson be a swing school and/or do we need to redefine how swing schools would work? Could a cost/time analysis for Hillside be developed?

Community Forum Ideas

Need to inform: why we are doing this work, what was considered, why not all ideas were recommended, and what the east/west shift means. Consider an e-mail survey of parents, contact summer school families, offer at least two sessions at different locations, solicit questions and comments ahead of time, distribute the strategy used to date and the three main solutions before the end of school, give advance notice of open forum opportunities coming, and attach a short PowerPoint presentation.

Next Meetings

Wednesday, June 29, Monday, July 11, Tuesday, August 2 and, possibly, Tuesday, August 9, were selected as the next Task Force meetings, each scheduled in the Board Room of the Central Administrative Offices, at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting ended at 9:17 p.m.