

Minutes of the Elmbrook Enrollment
Balancing Task Force Meeting

Present: Bill Aslin, Andrew Farley, David Frank, Mark Hansen, Kori Hartman, Erik Kass, Jean Lambert, Bridget Mangan, Lisa Mellone, Paul Neumeier, Franklin Onwubuariri, Heather Paradis, Silvia Paquini, Lisa Rettler, Sarah Sagert, Thomas Schaefer, John Schnabl, Stephen Taipala, Danny Thomas, Daniel Westfahl, Scott Wheeler (arrived later), and Karen Wolff

Absent: Jeanne Siegenthaler, 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. Mark Hansen thanked everyone for being present and explained that the night's efforts would center on deepening the data analysis. The group's ideas will now move toward scenarios, solutions and recommendations. A joint session with the Board of Education is planned for Tuesday, June 7, at 6:30 p.m. (later postponed).

Latest Data

Deb Nustad presented the latest enrollment accelerator data that has been analyzed to become easier to use. This data included new births, new housing (single and multi-family), housing turnover, market share, grade progression, tract-level population, and housing turnover dynamics. No macroeconomic indicators were included. A total of 76 elementary school students have been added to the District's enrollment since 2011 from multi-family residences. The birth rate is at a 25-year high and is considered an anomaly compared with the rest of Wisconsin. Projections by elementary school were shown. Middle and high school projections have not been completed. Questions included if Elm Grove has been contacted (not yet; one possible multi-family development), how likely the housing developments are with the funding they will need (initial estimates only), how the data compares to 2003-04 (needs follow-up), if averages were used in forecasting the number of students (yes), whether there is a disparity among the multi-family developments (yes, a range of rental charges and number of bedrooms), and if adopted children are included (counted with move-ins).

Scenario Evaluation

Erik Kass presented a new handout showing the group's ideas, scenarios and solutions. The ideas were separated into those adding capacity and reallocating, those using existing capacity differently, and those reallocating enrollment without adding capacity. Questions included timing needs, the number of anticipated sections, any required capital improvements, overhead costs, whether all present elementary schools could accommodate additions, and how modulars are configured for inclement weather. Due to the high number of families who would be affected by grade restructuring or a hub school, these two ideas were recommended for deferral. If changing fifth graders to the middle school would be as disruptive was questioned (Scott Wheeler arrives). Members were asked to rate the remaining six ideas in regard to their impact on families and their ability to balance enrollment. The ranking results placed adding on to existing schools first; using modular spaces second; reopening Hillside, using Dixon as a swing school and implementing an east/west shift tied next; and building a new school last. If the ideas without adding capacity would transfer enough students to reach 90 percent capacity, if cost/impact of taxpayers should be part of the critical success factors, and if a multi-pronged approach would be better were questioned. Concerns were expressed about the rating process versus what are considered the best ideas; when the capacity needs would arrive; if a referendum would pass; if funds spent on modulars (while flexible and portable) could best be spent on permanent space;

whether adding more space now would require closing a school later; if adding space now would be in the correct location going forward; whether adding classroom space would result in insufficient gyms, cafeterias, and playgrounds; how large schools should become; and if distribution should be addressed now and capacity later. Skepticism with the capacity needs was voiced together with the possible need to plan for both increases and decreases in enrollment. Other issues raised included the order of decisions, the amount of space available for additions, if added capacity would address distribution concerns, how many students would need to move for each option, how painful the transfers would be, if the expectations for an excellent Elmbrook education would be met, and how voucher expansion might affect future enrollment.

Members agreed to defer the building of a new school and the use of modular space. Deb Nustad and Jen Roskopf advised that work continues on projecting enrollment for each District tract over the next five years. It was clarified that the totals for the tracts do not exactly match the school enrollments.

Members moved into groups and discussed the remaining ideas in greater detail. Each group was asked to appoint a spokesperson to address the idea they reviewed at the joint Board of Education and Task Force work session on Tuesday, June 7 (later postponed).

Next Meetings

Tuesday, June 7, and Wednesday, June 22, will be the next Task Force meetings. They will be held in the Board Room of the Central Administrative Offices, at 6:30 p.m. on June 7 and 6:00 p.m. on June 22.

The meeting ended at 9:13 p.m.