

Central and East Lawrence Elementary School Consolidation Working Group September 7, 2011, Meeting Minutes

1. Superintendent Rick Doll reviewed the school board's charge for the Working Group.
2. Kathleen Ames-Oliver and Marilu Goodyear explained the role of the facilitators with emphasis placed on guiding the process and their neutrality regarding the group's charge.
3. Working Group members established ground rules:
 - Start and end meetings on time.
 - Let people finish, don't interrupt.
 - No side-bar conversations.
 - Avoid evaluation of ideas when brainstorming.
 - Remain open to the process, leave agendas at the door.
 - Clearly state status of the proceedings at the end of each meeting.
 - Create an agenda for the next meeting at the end of each meeting.
 - No planning meetings will be held between meetings by facilitators, chair or staff, without consulting the Working Group.
 - Ask, rather than assume.
 - Don't talk over others.
 - Everyone is equal in the room, respect one another.
 - Working Group members are encouraged to challenge facilitators, chairman and superintendent if they appear to be steering the group and veering away from neutrality.
 - Members of the public may pull up a chair and listen to small group discussions, but will not be allowed to participate in the discussions.
 - Be present, no texting or phone calls.
4. The concept of a "parking lot" list was introduced for items suggested for future consideration that don't fit the current discussion. This list could provide items for future agendas. The current "parking lot" list includes:
 - Discussion of reporting to and receiving feedback from the school board. Is a subcommittee needed?
 - What is consensus?
 - Groupings for future meetings, large/small, mixed.
 - Discussion of an electronic forum for sharing of information among working group members and receiving public input.
 - Developing a clear understanding of expectations with neighborhoods.
 - Equality is not the same as equity.
 - Discussion of questions for/information needed from city staff.

- Impact of school size on student achievement.
- Traffic and facilities.
- Ideal elementary school.
- Polling community about support for a future bond issue.
- Updated capital outlay plan.
- Student outcomes compared to class size.
- Demographics of neighborhoods.

5. Small groups discussed: “Having reviewed the Lawrence Elementary School Facility Vision Task Force reports, what additional information do you need to move forward with your charge?”

- Implications of facility changes on ESL cluster sites, low SES students, early childhood program, educational needs of vulnerable student populations
- Budget information. Contingency fund balance.
- Potential savings if schools are closed/consolidated.
- Any plans for buildings/sites if schools are closed.
- Enrollment report for all elementary schools (free and reduced-price lunch data).
- Enrollment projections for all elementary schools.
- Update capacities of each school after Sept. 20 enrollment count, particularly the result of closing Wakarusa Valley on Schwegler, Sunflower and Broken Arrow.
- Cost estimates to remodel schools and/or increase facilities to three-section schools, matrix/spreadsheet needed to compare schools. Facility needs of each school.
- Cost comparison of remodeling vs. building new facilities.
- Implications of changes on traffic patterns, parking, etc. (Consult with city staff.)
- Impact of proposed changes on transportation of students.
- Elementary transfers, in and out.
- Census of neighborhoods, elderly, potential development, etc.
- Location of students in each boundary area. (GIS maps.)
- Actual savings from closing Wakarusa Valley and East Heights.
- Information about why these six schools were identified for consolidation planning. Task Force member report?
- Boundary change suggestions associated with the scenarios reviewed by the Task Force.
- Site plans for each elementary school, acreage, etc.
- Governmental requirements for certain programs (early childhood).

6. Meeting Evaluation

Positives

- Working group trusts the facilitators to be neutral.
- Diversity of opinions among the group.

- Members appreciated mixed small groupings.

Concerns

- Need clarity of how the “parking lot” list will be used.
- Need time for member introductions. (Suggested 6:45 p.m. pre-meeting “mingling” time)
- Meeting room configuration didn’t allow members to see the faces of all members.
- Notes taken on chart paper are difficult to read/located too far away to read. (Suggestion to explore using technology to display notes during future meetings.)
- Realistic timelines for delivery of requested information. (Architects in attendance at future meetings.)

7. Agenda items for next meeting:

- Discuss remaining questions in existing small groups, allocating 15 minutes per question.
 - What are the most important values to consider when making our decisions?
 - What would your ideal elementary school be like? (Qualities)
- Discuss process for reporting to/receiving feedback from the school board. Is a subcommittee needed as a liaison group?
- Define consensus process.
- Receive available data from staff.
- Discuss legal issues with regard to member communication outside of scheduled open meetings.

Next Meeting: 7-9 p.m., September 19, District Office Multi-Purpose Room, 110 McDonald Drive. (Meeting room available at 6:45 p.m.)