

Facilities Usage Committee - Combined Community Forum Comments

Following are the community comments from the four forums held in September. **Comments in red are staff responses and clarifications.** Personal contact information has been blocked out.

There were a number of comments or questions that did not related to the recommended Facility Usage Committee evaluation criteria or the Committee's work to date. Those comments are highlighted **green** and have been provided to the responsible District personnel to respond back to the community member directly.

Manning Option School - Saturday, 12 September 2009

1. Communications about the meetings could be helped with a District Facebook page. Set up a group page function on Facebook versus having everyone make Jeffco a friend. **JeffCo does have a Facebook page.**
2. Does Jeffco allow film makers to use the buildings during down times? Can Jeffco be put on the Colorado film society's website.
3. **Glad to see that academic achievement is listed first. Thinks it should be the most important regardless. Would like to see mandatory foreign language and not just Spanish, needs to start in the elementary level. Doesn't think language should be part of cuts. Need to concentrate more on Math and Science. Very disappointed with the district or schools not showing the president's speech. Anybody who is communicating about staying and succeeding is important.**
4. Enrollment Trends – Feels that in this economy that people will be moving more towards the older neighborhoods and they won't be moving towards new neighborhoods. This would behoove a movement towards working with the existing facilities. Lost Manning years ago and haven't gotten it back.
5. What is the timeline on any possible school closures, 2010/11? Don't know what are any of the options are currently.
6. What is the policy for reorganizing classrooms for better use? **Mentioned that grade span reorganization is a possibility.**
7. Get more volunteerism from the community on manual labor projects, such as painting. This could save cost. Could also look to donations for some of the materials.
8. **Transportation might be an issue, feels that the transportation could be streamlined. Feels commercial transportation might be more efficient than public school busing. Might be better technology to help with efficiency. Saved a half million dollars this year by consolidation of routes. Constantly looking for efficiencies. What about comment about saving jobs? Two focuses of stimulus dollars, save jobs and school reform. Didn't save any transportation jobs, saved classroom and paraprofessional jobs.**
9. Can schools be volunteered to be energy efficiency sites? **District looking at the overall costs of green energy, working with companies who want to donate.**
10. Deer Creek middle school seems to have lots of space but seems to have low enrollment, Stony Creek Elementary has 12 temps across the street. Would like to see all temps go away, could move 6th up to middle. Don't necessarily have to do it district wide.
 - a. Not going to make every parent happy no matter what decision is made. Community will have to "learn to share." Recommendations need to be for all, not for some.
 - b. Believes the 2008 bond failed and low participation at the meetings are not user friendly, the communications are not user friendly. Use little words, say what need money for. Be very specific about needs.
11. What is the definition of "community" in Jefferson County means everyone in the county. Doesn't feel that the communications for these meetings are aimed at the overall community.

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- Didn't hear about the May meetings until well after. Feels that a summary of each meeting before the next meeting would be helpful. Feels some might get lost with too much summary. Would like speakers to be able to refine their own comments on the website later on.
12. Choice and Capacity Utilization needs to be looked at to see if it helps get students what they need. Would like to see the district look at alternatives ways to educate children and use facilities in a different way. Something like senior projects.
 13. When community member went to school they had combination grades? **Classroom organization has several factors – Use a staffing formula for all schools with target class sizes – with early grades at 22 to 1. Strive for single grade level in the schools, helps teachers teach to the standards set by state and federal law. Still some multi-age classrooms.**
 14. Some of the announcements didn't refer to the interim report and that would help. Make it easier to find.
 15. Feel people accuse the community of apathy but often because community doesn't know about things in time. Thanked the district for allowing participation. **Who looks at the research from around the country on what is working? Feels that community hasn't dealt well with accelerated/varied learners. The division of instruction does this work under the leadership of Deborah Backus, the Chief Academic Officer, staff stays very current on research. Have guaranteed viable curriculum while allowing for teachers to lead their classroom. Also using RtI to get extra attention to the 20%. Key variable is the teacher in the classroom. What kind of ongoing learning are our teachers doing. Best practice, continuous improvement, what are other districts doing as it applies to our local circumstances.**
 16. What is the district's policy on knowing the overall demographics of the district. **Jeffco is an aging county, 35% of households have kids. Never assume that those without aren't interested in public schools. Leslie was the head of 2008 3A and 3B initiatives and offered to get others involved, Lesley@schoolhousecom.com** Concerned about school closure last year, know about solid education throughout. Don't feel people are disengaged from the importance of public education. Feel that energy can be used throughout the community. All" citizens have a commitment to high quality education and will engage in support when afforded a genuine role and information.
 17. **The criteria are in alphabetical order, henceforth, Academic Achievement is first due to that reason only.**
 18. Use a Google maps tool with the data for each school to be able to show once recommendations are made.
 19. Feel that education has gotten worse over time.
 20. More information needs to be available concerning district i.e. "exactly what is happening"
 21. Web access – demographic data trends i.e. Choice (net), etc.
 22. Academic achievement a broad title – District needs to break down exactly what "Academic Achievement" is and how it will be used.

Comments from cards

23. Would like to see a better summary at the Interim Report provided at the beginning of these Facilities Usage Forum Meetings.
24. **Work on teacher ability and performance as teachers, not tenure. I know that will wage war with the teacher's union, but there have been so many first and second year teachers who were incredible and let go because of being "the new guy". It seems in this day and time it's getting harder and harder to get college students to major in, much less choose, to teach. This would be incentive to them and a gift to the communities.**
25. Get community more involved:

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- Seek out people who can help in classrooms
- Ask for volunteers for help with building and grounds maintenance
- Look to local businesses to donate materials and equipment
- Get the information to the community on specific needs of our schools
- Set up phone #, email to receive information, comments and suggestions from the community
- Try to keep everyone involved, not just parents of students in our schools

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Jefferson HS - Monday, 14 September 2009

1. Nancy L. - Capacity utilization should consider special programs for families of Jeffco students that are outside of the school.
2. Denise M. - Opportunity should be included. There are schools that do not have enough books/materials so that should be considered.
3. Joan C. - Curious as to why academic achievement is being used? Where are special programs included? Particularly space used for Title I programs? Was reconfiguration considered, meaning moving grades?
4. Two questions: should clarify fixed vs. variable costs. What is the district doing to increase revenue? Should bring budget realities to community.
5. Rob - Questioning choice? There are a lot of reasons why they stay and go; just looking at choice doesn't look at the whole picture.
6. Jean - Would like to see criteria address socioeconomic needs of communities that these schools serve. These schools may have higher costs or more choice out. Education quality is not just numbers.
7. Kay L. - Wondering how much academic achievement, how much did you look at schools that have already been closed, what the effect was on the community and those students.
8. Celeste - Concern with academic achievement. When we're looking at enrollment is that October count, or later? Population constantly in flux. See what's actually going on in the school day to day, not just through criteria.
9. Ron - Building condition, when we consider future construction and upgrades- should consider alternative energy sources when doing replacements. As an economy as a whole we are moving to this so schools should be on cutting edge. There should be solar panels at every new school. District would see those savings. Achievement, students that need the most help are often in the most neglected buildings or struggling to have enough money- consider how to equal the playing field between richer and poorer areas.
10. Chrissy - Choice, don't feel that choice is advocated for equitably. Some schools have more ability to attract students. Issue of choice more than the numbers coming in and out, needs to be on changing perception.
11. Kim- Need to visit each school individually. Her school is very close knit; students thrive in the small environment. Lots of students choice in from word of mouth.
12. David P. - Thinking about new graduation requirements, if they were considered and the cost implications. If a different type of diploma system would help cut costs. Not have to offer as many classes for students that are not taking those classes. Has community college involvement been considered to generate revenue? Should look at Voc Tech, could this be an area to attract revenue from local industry. Were special programs like clinics considered? Is community college involvement considered a special program or...?
13. Wanted to second that once report is out that you need to let community know that this is what happens without additional community funding support.

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Comments from Cards

14. Need to consider the number of students who falsify addresses to attend schools of choice.
15. Nancy Heck [REDACTED], Re: Operating costs: Do choice schools such as Dennison and D'Evelyn still have free bus service all across the district?
16. Barbara Barry – Please review and correct (or explain) the numbers shown by school for enrollment in special programs. Something seems very wrong.
17. If middle school or high school students are bussed somewhere because their school is closed, could the savings be used to have an activity bus later in the afternoon?
18. Sue Gilmore – Stevens ES - Stevens Elementary has gone from 40% to 80% free and reduced lunch in the past 8 years. This shift in demographics affects our academic achievement. I'm not sure academic achievement is a vital criterion.
19. Dennis Jones [REDACTED] – Jeffco Substitute. 1) Choice – Subs choose to accept assignments based on which school needs a sub. The “nicer” schools get subs easily – this also works for potential transfers “in” and “out”. 2) Beautiful new high schools built – Bear Creek, Golden, etc. Are those facilities too nice – has the district gone overboard? Compare these new schools to the new D'Evelyn Jr/Sr High School – it's a lot more “basic”. District should focus on school basics when building, standardize the design somewhat, eliminate the architectural fees, DON'T spread the physical plant out so that it takes 7 minute passing periods for kids to change classes. 3) Why Jeffco Stadium and Trailblazer when all high schools have tracks, bleachers? Games could be home & home series.
20. Special programs = Community based clinic – move to Red Rocks @JHS – if we move to a more voc-tech model, would we be able to get more revenue from industry?
21. Dpurcell @ Jeffco – Could offering 2 different kinds of diplomas save costs? Some students would get a college bound diploma with high requirements. Then some students could get a work/community college bound diploma with less requirements.

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Chatfield Senior HS -Wednesday, 16 September 2009

1. Julie S - Recommends that we get the community more involved by having courses be offered by community colleges at Jeffco school sites to get older community members without students currently in school involved in the education system to get them invested and gain their approval during the next bond election. This could also increase building capacity utilization.
2. Christy - Need to look at website for capacity numbers? For example, can existing high schools accommodate students? Is there a way to move students around? Believes that there is overcrowding in certain areas, leads to open campus which can have issues.
3. Thinks criteria for the most part are encompassing. Are certain criteria weighted over others or on even plane? Some seem to be in conflict, or running parallel.
4. Clay G - Communications is critical, could not find July or August meeting minutes, or the interim report online. Need to have data presented in advance so that they do not come in blind. Need to make materials easier to find.
5. Amber S - Capacity utilization, outside programs pay to use space, use during the day. Important to consider how outside programs are also using buildings.
6. Dave H - Impact of schedule should be considered. Schedule negatively impacted by overcrowding.

Comments from Cards

7. Consider parking lot safety, especially elementary level; don't hit elementary schools so hard on enrollment, meaning 1 family moves who has kids in K, 2, 4, & 6 - that's 4 kids less because 1 family moved out of state; Older neighborhoods = good chance for older population/older kids, i.e. parents moved in and raised kids. Don't move. Lived there 30 years. Don't want HOAs. Like small communities and don't want rich, fancy housing.
8. Smaller schools better for kids; more alternative (non-traditional, vocational) schools needed.
9. Tim Carlson - Why don't we (Jeffco) have our own property manager - to evaluate properties ongoing with prioritized needs assessment? We have all of those people at the Ed Center, but Jeffco keeps hiring consultants!
10. Condition of temporary buildings is poor. Gaps under doors and windows are stuck shut. I'm in 7th grade and have had first hand experience. In Columbine area. And ceiling tiles are in poor shape.
11. "Utilities Savings" – Operating Costs, what would be the cost savings if HVAC units in all buildings were turned off or used at a minimum? Would there be a considerable savings if schools started in September rather than in August? I would like to see how much Jeffco school district is paying for utilities on a month-to-month basis. Kristi Sagrillo [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
12. August is one of the 2 hottest months of the year. If we removed the need to cool the last 2 to 3 weeks of August, we could save thousands and thousands, and spend it on teachers/classrooms/facilities. There is no proof showing academic benefit for starting school earlier – we are just hurting/using our facilities more, costing taxpayers more for cooling charges and usage fees and hurting the economy by starting earlier. It is a no brainer to do what teachers, administration, parents and students want....start school later – eliminate all the 1, 2 days off here and there and use the facilities less. A typical 2 week savings for cooling costs (remember only 2

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weeks!) are \$500,000! That's a lot of \$ to be saved to start school later! Easy to do, community supported, teachers and administration supported, business supported – the only hiccup – the school board. I hope the board truly wants to hear and do best for our kids. Not just for themselves.

13. These cost saving measures should be considered first: suspend pay increases/cost of living increases for all employees; salaried staff should take pay cuts; air conditioning costs could be greatly reduced by starting school in late August/early September; reduce administrative staff (not at the school level); stop spending \$ on new programs (i.e. math); stop spending \$ on catered food, nonessential services district wide, but especially at the administrative offices; commit to a traditional school calendar September start date, no late starts, early releases, mini breaks. Many parents view the increased class sizes and reduction in teachers as the district “punishing” parents for a failed Mill Levy/Bond. This creates huge resentment towards the school district and will backfire when another Bond/Mill Levy is presented.

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Arvada West HS - Monday, 21 September 2009

1. Margaret S- Thinks criteria make sense, however thinks that meeting the needs of the community is not as reflected in the criteria as it should be. Need to consider how the facility is being used by the community outside of schools hours or for other purposes, for example a nurse's clinic.
2. Julie- Would like to suggest that in middle school Special Education programs, that a tight program should be implemented for autism- consolidating the program to save funds.
3. Jean S- Should be looking at operating costs, current enrollment and building conditions if you are considering closing schools. The other criteria would be better if considering repurposing schools. Academic achievement should not be considered for closing schools if they are performing poorly, when it is based on socioeconomic status. Could be discriminating. Arvada Middle has a larger facility because it used to be a high school, thought that capacity figures include square footage being used by other programs, such as adult education.
4. Carmella D-R- Adult ESL program at Arvada Middle- program continuing to grow, have Early Learning center for children of adult learners. Serves diverse group of adults. Appreciate having classrooms provided by Arvada Middle. Program has thrived there, would like to continue. Would be detrimental to close this school. Should be equitable when considering closing schools and consider the needs of students and families at the schools.
5. Rob S- Echo sentiments about schools that serve at-risk students. Academic performance should look at growth within that school and not compare the school to schools with more affluent students. More options for students in affluent areas if their schools are closed vs. lower income families. Thinks that having reasonable performance expectations is important. Should give more weight to the impact of closure in lower income areas. Would like clarification around equitable opportunities and how this criterion was considered/ consolidated? Think it would be better to close one high school vs. multiple elementary schools, more easily absorbed/ handled by community.
6. Want to echo that if you want to look academic achievement, instead of looking at absolute performance to identify schools that are not performing well for possible closure, you should instead consider providing more resources to improve the academic achievement at those lower performing schools. Instead of closing them, look at how to shift resources, move students to improve those schools.
7. Wondering about academic achievement, are they looking at schools that are low or high performing? Want it to be taken into account what schools are performing well and have successful programs. Would not want to see libraries or librarian staffing cut; thinks it's important to give students access to a library when they may not be able to go to a public library.
8. Jessica- Concern/ question- What are you looking at when considering schools that are too full are you looking at restructuring, or considering moving a grade from Elementary to Middle? Students at this age may not be ready to be at a Middle School. Nothing is off the table yet.
9. Joshua E- Comment on building conditions - seems like some facilities have had more opportunities for expansion or remodeling, thinks that this should be taken into account that there may be some inequity in opportunity to improve that has put some schools behind in terms of building condition.
10. Equity in schools, all schools should have the same opportunities, need to consider the impact on parents of low income students if you close a school in that area and move their students.

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Comments on Cards

11. Closing schools in high poverty areas would be detrimental to those students and families: no transportation to other schools; larger class sizes; less opportunity and support for struggling students in larger schools. Please look at re-evaluating boundaries so schools don't have to be closed.
12. Cost saving: create a K-8 at the Wheat Ridge Middle and Stevens campuses.
13. Sammie Neal [REDACTED] How will you balance the budget in addition to closing schools?
Note: This lady would like a call back.
14. How can Academic Achievement be a reasonable area of measurement in determining effective usage of facilities? If a school is underperforming, does that make it a candidate for closure? Our schools are not equitably populated – some schools are affluent and high performing – others are low income, underperforming. How can we judge ALL schools following the same Academic Achievement criteria?
15. Wayla Murrow [REDACTED] When thinking about possible re-purposing of schools, I would like to caution against center based programs for students with disabilities that are not in their own neighborhoods. I believe a student should be able to attend their neighborhood school with the appropriate supports being provided in that school. This is also required by law (IDEA). Research shows that all students perform better when students are included in their neighborhood schools. One parent mentioned that there should be more center based schools for students, particularly with autism. I disagree. I believe the supports should be provided in every neighborhood school and that all teachers should have the appropriate training for any student that would be a member of their classroom. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or further info from me.
16. Question: why not break up the huge Jeffco Public School District into smaller separate school districts? Dave Shoenberger [REDACTED]
17. Doesn't looking at some of these schools in specific areas work against our "EQUITABLE" Jefferson County schools? These schools serve specific community needs in socio economic areas that are low. How does this help to work with the school and serve all students? Doesn't this cause more economic pain?
18. If you are looking at academic achievement for these schools, how does growth (even if the school is not at the state level) play into this decision?
19. Academic achievement and its accessibility and viability for all students should be the overriding goal/cause, NOT selection/decision criteria.
20. **Why have so many assistant principals at the high schools? We had 2,000 students, 1 principal and 1 assistant principal.** Temps are no problem to me. A teacher makes the space happen for the positive. Sometimes water is important for some subjects, i.e. art, science, and this could be a problem in temps. Thank you for the opportunity for input. Sue Arndt - [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
21. If you close schools on the border of another district, you will lose students for Jeffco. Example – Martensen would lose 50% to another district (DPS). Have you considered taking away tenure and evaluating all staff for performance – eliminate unsatisfactory principals, teachers, etc.