

## Jeffco Facilities Usage Committee- Meeting Notes

Meeting held October 12, 2009 from 3:30 to 6:00 pm.

### Opening of Meeting/ Revisiting Norms

Justin opened the meeting. He explained that at this meeting committee members will be engaging in small group discussion; there will be two groups of community members and two groups of staff members to start with. Justin then asked if anyone had heard any rumors and several committee members responded.

- Heard through the GT Dept that Kyffin might be closed and was approached since she was on the committee.
- Stober community, where closure had been discussed and the homeowners got involved a year and a half ago, heard people saying they were concerned because it was happening all over again.
- Deviny parents were mad that they had not been warned earlier.
- Shafer was being redistricted to Mortensen.
- Martensen and a couple other elementary schools in the Arvada area have heard that they will be closed.

Justin then revisited the norms; he highlighted *“keep the interests of all students first”*. He said that committee members may feel that they were put on the committee to represent their community or a certain school. While staff members do expect them to bring that knowledge with them, they still need to focus on doing what’s best for all students, not just what is best for their particular school or community. He added that if the committee chooses to do nothing and keep schools the same, that there will be less operating dollars and resources at each school which will negatively impact all students.

### Review of Materials

In the materials for this meeting, there is a big spreadsheet with all of the options talked about previously and additional options sent in since the last meeting. For each option, the spreadsheet indicates what criteria it was linked to, as well as possible cost savings. Staff is trying to be more linear and transparent about how options were created. The estimated savings and costs are not complete and staff will continue to develop detailed estimates for both.

New materials that have not been seen before include several sheets that sort schools six ways, by: (1) capacity, (2) choice out, (3) net choice, (4) instructional operating costs, (5) enrollment trend forecast and (6) free and reduced lunch percentage. On each sheet are the top 20 elementary schools (plus ties), and the top ten middle and top ten high schools. For example, on the capacity sort this would mean the 20 elementary schools (plus any ties) with the lowest capacity utilization are shown. Schools that are bolded on each report are those schools that are a part of an option that will be discussed tonight; the majority will come into play at some point. Justin said that they should feel free to ask any questions about why some schools were not included in the options. He added that they will notice that there are no high schools that are bolded and that they can discuss this later. He apologized that none of the schools on the free and reduced lunch sort were bolded because they did not have enough time. Also, on the enrollment trend forecast sort, they will note that three schools at the top of the list were not included so that this is probably an area that they need to look at again.

Large maps were also provided to the groups. On the maps the green lines show potential growth areas; the red line shows where Fast Tracks may go; and the blue line is a proposed parkway. Each of these lines represents something that could impact development. The maps also show the location of all schools.

Committee members were also given a list of vacant land as well as any restrictions associated with each plot of land.

A committee member asked for a sort by projected enrollment growth and this was provided before small groups began to meet.

### **Small Group Discussion**

Discussion will start with district staff and community members in separate groups (four total), each with a facilitator there to take notes. Justin asked if there were any questions before they began.

A committee member asked how much they should be looking to cut (a total cost savings goal). Lorie Gillis responded that the amount of dollars that need to be cut cannot realistically come just from facilities, so they are not expected to try to make that happen. The committee should not just be looking for maximum dollar savings.

Justin said that the committee should be looking at creating varied options. There is a full spectrum of possibilities, from doing nothing which reduces operational dollars across the board to full efficiency, which would be cutting as many schools as needed to reach 100% capacity at each level.

Lorie reminded the committee that there is an expected \$15-20 million in reductions each year, over the next three years. The state cuts have hurt the district as well as the inflation change. These estimates for cuts are dependent on state projections and the inflation rate staying the same. Lorie said that these estimates are becoming less like conservative estimates and more likely to be the reality. She also added that the public

sector, state and local, tend to lag industry, so that while the economy may be improving in other sectors, it may take several years to see a positive change in the district. Justin agreed and added that the district's revenues are still based on older property values, so they may still see declines in revenue once properties that have lost value are reappraised.

A committee member then asked if capacity included temps. No it does not.

Another committee member asked what "impact on choice" meant. Cheryl explained that some options may limit choice, while some are neutral. These are subjective decisions, so committee members were asked to inform staff if they do not agree.

A committee member asked about option #26, which was about closing temps. This is a free standing option and the savings shown are for closing all temps in the district. However, there are costs associated with doing so which are shown.

Someone asked whether there was a market for temps. Cheryl said that they do not know for sure yet, but they informally know that a couple districts might be interested. Of the 380 temps that are in the district, she estimated that optimistically there might be a market for 50 of them. If sold, the other district would cover the cost of moving them. It would cost \$5,000 to demolish a temp if it is not sold.

A different committee member asked about the Title factor and whether staff has looked at Title for all options. She would like to see a list of all Title schools for reducing capacity.

A committee member added that the Alameda area is the second most impacted and that is not shown anywhere.

Justin then directed the committee to begin discussions and encouraged them to add any other options they would like to see.

### **Reporting Back to Full Committee about Small Group Discussions**

Each facilitator who was taking notes presented on what their group had discussed.

#### *Group 1*

Discussed:

1. Moving 6<sup>th</sup> up.
2. Balancing economies of scale.
3. Articulation areas, which they thought were easier to understand and look at
4. Cottages, they thought that getting rid of them is a good idea.
5. How capacity was easier to understand than some other criteria.
6. The importance of getting the actual conditions of building and knowing what schools have economic value over others.

7. How to best share these options with community.
8. Title dollars, how they can look at them as a positive and negative, and whether they should be looking just at facilities.
9. Controlling choice by eliminating temps, though they wondered about the percentage of open enrollment kids coming into district and whether they would be eliminating this revenue by controlling choice.
10. Taking enough capacity out of system as goal.
11. GT centers and whether the goal was balancing enrollment or saving money.
12. The need to understand feeder programs for high level schools so they can understand the full impact of any changes.

Overall they focused on big ticket items, which they thought was more important than considering small ticket items. They also had concerns about growth down the road and thought it might be better to repurpose buildings instead of selling just in case. They also suggested just going to the community to ask for help, by telling them that they need to close x number of schools, so could the community help them decide.

### *Group 2*

Discussed:

1. They were concerned that in the event a building could not be sold, what the costs would be to “mothball” an empty building.
2. They recommended that if you make 6-8 that all 6<sup>th</sup> graders need to be able to go to that middle for later grades; no picking and choosing.
3. They were also concerned that the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades would be too large when you combine two middle schools.
4. They also had a lot of discussion about GT, and were concerned that having all GT students together is not recommended.
5. They believe choice should be restricted until temps at school are eliminated.

### *Group 3*

Discussed:

1. Capacity at length. They started out looking at capacity at each level and then moved to range for general capacity figure. They considered 85, 90, and 95 percent and how much capacity would you need to eliminate at each level to get to these points; it might be none, or a lot of capacity that needs to be eliminated. They did not want 100% capacity so as to not limit choice.
2. The belief that 6<sup>th</sup> grade should not be moved for only one or two schools within an articulation area.
3. That they did not like the idea of a GT campus.

They then started going through individual options, but these above points are the general themes. Their primary discussion was what desired capacity should be.

#### *Group 4*

Discussed:

1. Moving all 6<sup>th</sup> for particular articulation area up.
2. Moving preschools to elementary schools where possible.
3. Not moving 9<sup>th</sup> down.
4. Creating a primary school and an intermediate grade school on two separate campuses. They were concerned that there are issues that need to be considered, such as it taking away choice.
5. What the cost to the district would be if they eliminated temps, but were unable to sell them.

They also went through most of the options and said yes, no or maybe.

#### **Closing of Meeting**

Justin said that committee members should look through the list and determine “yes, no or maybe” for them personally. They should also send any other options that they think should be included. He said that they have had lots of good feedback so far and that there has also been good constructive criticism which has been helpful.

At the next meeting the committee needs to leave with a completed options list for public comment. He said that it is fine if the committee only puts out a few options, but that will more specifically target certain schools, so a broader range of options could be better. They will probably go with the options that the majority of committee members can say yes or maybe to; they will not be looking for total consensus.

A committee member suggested that it is not worth stirring the pot for small ticket items, so they need to consider this when deciding what options to include; small ticket items should only be included when there is a compelling reason to do so.

Another committee member added that there are some of small ticket options that still have a compelling academic reason to do so; these decisions are not just money related.

The next meeting will be Monday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, from 3:30-6:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 6:10 pm.