

Jeffco Facilities Usage Committee- Meeting Notes

Meeting held June 15, 2009 from 3:30- 6:00 pm.

Opening/Review of Previous Meeting

Justin Silverstein opened the meeting asking members for any clarifications, questions and any rumors they are hearing. There were none. Justin then provided a short debriefing of the previous meeting, including a reviewing the list of all requested materials to date. All of the requested items are not completed at this time, however, staff is continuing to work on the addressing the requests.

Justin directed committee members to a page in their materials that gave the list of all past meetings and future meetings, including details (dates, times, and locations) for public forums.

A committee member asked if they were expected to attend the public meetings. Justin said that it would be great if the committee members could attend as many of these forums as they are able to because it will be their opportunity to hear feedback from the community.

Committee staff members will be at every session. He said that the most important thing that committee members can do is encourage their community to attend these forums by reaching out to their networks. There will be a lot of advertising through the district but committee members doing everything they can to get the word out is very important.

Another committee member asked what the difference is between the September forums and the November forums. Justin said that the September forums are for reviewing the interim report which includes the recommended criteria and that the November forums are for feedback on recommended options. He said it would be best if community members are able to attend the first forums (and hopefully the November forums as well) because that is when they will get a lot of the background and explanation. They will be holding a Forum on Saturday during each round so that individuals who are unable to attend on a weeknight due to other obligations can still participate. There will be a 10-20 minute presentation at the beginning of each Forum, so it would be best if attendees could be there from the beginning.

Another committee member asked whether information or materials about the public meetings will be sent home with students. Yes, there will be information sent home with students and they will also be advertising in local papers. The committee staff is trying to reach out to the community through a variety of means.

He then focused on the format of the afternoons meeting. The committee was intentionally divided into 3 smaller working groups to have similar types of representation of committee members also allowing for more discussion within each working group. He explained that the committee will be doing 3 things to help to bring focus and direction on some of the data that has been reviewed:

1. individually complete the survey
2. small working group complete the survey and then

3. discuss the results of the survey, both individual results and small group results, with the entire committee.

He added that today they will develop general criteria but not specific suggestions. He emphasized that this is the starting point to begin to define criteria based upon information given to the committee. He indicated that other items may be added to this as the committee received additional information.

Individual and Group Surveys

Carolyn Staskiewicz walked the committee members through an individual survey that asked for their opinions in a number of areas; ideal school enrollment, effective building capacity percentages, grade configuration, organizational structures, offering preschool, maximum student transportation time, use of temporary buildings, balancing enrollment among facilities, choice out concerns, and school consolidation. These questions are based on data the committee has received.

She then asked the committee to complete the survey with they believe to be best for the community and the most efficient use of tax dollars. After committee members completed the survey, they were asked to fill out a separate survey responding to the same questions as a group. The goal was to see if they had consensus on forwarding information or if there opinions changed from the individual surveys.

Group Discussion of Survey Responses

Justin reminded the group that the next meeting on July 13th will be from 1 to 5 pm. The survey information from today will be a starting point for that discussion. At that meeting they will begin to see how the criteria can be applied to actual schools.

Carolyn then presented on the consolidated results from all three groups on each question; see the spreadsheet summary for answers to each question. Additional comments on survey questions made by committee members:

Grade configuration- On this question, one group pointed out that they were all over the board in their opinions about grade configuration, so that is why the majority of their responses were “moderate.” They thought that grade configuration should be dependent on the demographic variation and needs at each school. A committee member from another group added that the committee felt that looking at configuration was still important even though they did not know what configuration was best. Another committee member added that the responses seemed to indicate that committee members favored a three year middle school configuration.

Virtual schools- One group clarified that they answered that it should be everywhere if it was not all or nothing, but instead should be a supplemental option everywhere. Another committee member added that by providing a virtual school option the district could bring in the home school students.

Tuition-paid Preschool- A committee member commented that the district needs to consider what the most cost effective way of having preschool would be.

Percent of choice out- The group that answered “35-50” said that they really meant 35, but thought that 20 was too low, so instead of picking “20-35” like the other groups they went with the higher ranger option. Another committee member added that they thought all situations should merit further study, but should not be a trigger for school closure. A different committee member said that she thought that the committee should also be looking at the choice out figures in conjunction with how many students that are choicing in (as a separate question). Someone else stressed that it was important to consider whenever a third of a school’s students are leaving, regardless of how many are coming in, because these means that their needs are not being met.

Building Age- One group commented that they thought that condition of the building was more important than age.

Carolyn said that looking at the last question about strategies that should be employed to deal with budget constraints, that it was clear that strategies would need to be prioritized later since no option could be thrown out and there was no clear consensus about options. She then asked for any additional questions or comments:

A committee member asked what the difference was between school closure and consolidation. Justin answered that consolidation might mean moving students to another school than repurposing that school building, for example turning a building into a tuition-paid preschool. The term school closure, in its purest sense, means closing a school building and not using it for anything else.

A group said that they did not want to consolidate a successful program with an unsuccessful one so they thought it was important to look at how you would consolidate programs.

Closing

Justin closed the meeting by asking for any additional questions or comments.

A committee member asked if they would be shown the results from both the individual and group surveys. Carolyn responded that they would be shown results from both.

Another committee member mentioned that she had heard a rumor that she did not share at the beginning of the meeting. She said she had heard that the five schools with the lowest household income are in Arvada. Cindy assured her that this was not true. There are schools with low household income in Arvada but the schools with the lowest household income families are in the Jefferson area.

Justin then reminded the committee that the next meeting will be held in this room (July 13th, 1-5 pm).

The meeting was adjourned at 6 pm.