



Bettendorf Community School District – Elementary Facility Planning Community Engagement Meeting Questions & Comments

February 24, 2015

119 participants | 20 administrators & community advisory committee members

Alumni -8 | Business Owner – 11 | Community 44 | Parents – 71 | Staff – 22

Schools: BHS-5, BMS 5, GW-10, HH-3, MT-1, NA-1, PN-4, TJ-17

Questions

- **What will take place at the meeting on June 9th? Will you still be collecting opinions or announcing the committee's recommendation?** We will be collecting opinions from the community at each of the community sessions. At the meeting on April 13, the community will get an overview of the work done since the February 24 community meeting, review revised options under consideration and work in small groups to provide feedback to the committee. At the meeting on June 9, the community will get an overview of the work done between the April 13 and June 9 community meetings, review a potential final option under consideration and work in small groups to provide feedback to the committee.
- **If all schools remain open and projected enrollment is decreasing, where will the funds come from to pay for project?** Facility improvements would be funded with sales tax and PPEL (Physical Plant & Equipment Levy) property tax dollars. PPEL is a property tax and not specifically impacted by fluctuations in enrollment. Sales tax revenues are awarded on a district resident per pupil basis. The district could also fund facilities improvements through a bond issue.
- **What benefit would there be to maintaining Jefferson as a one-section building if we add 2 sections as a district? If additional sections are added, wouldn't it make sense that at least one goes to Jefferson?** *Currently the district has a 13 section elementary program (ie. 13 – 5th grade classes). Adding two sections would make the district a 15 section elementary program. Two of the three 15-section scenarios brought to the community meeting involved adding a section at Thomas Jefferson and another school.*

School boundary enrollment is one of the considerations in adding a section. The district does make an effort to provide opportunities for students to attend their neighborhood school. If a building is at capacity, ideally students attend a neighboring elementary. Other schools do have more residents in their elementary boundary or neighboring schools than Thomas Jefferson.

A benefit to making Thomas Jefferson a multi-section school is the ability for grade level students and teachers to work together.

- **A great concern that I have for the Grant Wood school is 'traffic flow' and 'parking'. Will this be addressed along any building changes?** We will be considering revisions to playgrounds, busing, parking, and traffic needs for each of our elementary schools within the scope of the additions and renovations.
- **Is it a sound idea to add onto a school like Grant Wood that has so many students living in the flood plain? Wouldn't it be better to add onto schools in areas that do not have this issue?** Currently Grant Wood Elementary has more students living within its elementary boundary than its capacity allows. Although the flood plain will eventually decrease housing in the Grant Wood neighborhood, there is a potential of a slight increase in housing in Grant Wood's northern boundary. Grant Wood is also centrally located within the district and part of a corridor of schools that are projected to have the greatest enrollment.
- **When will information, data and research be available to people on whether a school closing affects property values positively or negatively in the surrounding neighborhood and potential commercial development?** Currently the communities' most preferred scenarios do not close any schools. If a school was closed, the next use of the property would ultimately impact the value of the surrounding neighborhood. In 1973 the district retired Washington School, now a housing area. In 1975 the district retired the old high school, now the Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency. In 1980 the district retired Lincoln School, now a city park. In 2009 the district retired the old Neil Armstrong, now the Apostolic Assembly Church.
- **If a school closes, what might be plans for that building?** The district would consider alternate use within the district for the facility, raze for green space, or attempt to sell the property.
- **If we close any neighborhood school has anyone thought about increase of child predators?** That concern will be taken under consideration. Current Iowa law requires that a sex offender not reside within two thousand feet of the real property comprising a school or a child care facility.

Comments

- A definition sheet for better understanding of terms in making a better table decision(s).
- I'm concerned about closing buildings that house PK programs. We need to increase neighborhood access to quality preschool – not decrease it. **The district's current preschool programs are placed at elementary schools based on the availability of space and highest degree of residential early childhood special education needs. These rooms are filled next with students who qualify for free/reduced lunch. If space allows, non-free/reduced students are enrolled. Funding provided by the state of Iowa in support of the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program also allows the district to support children four years of age in other local preschool programs (Kindercare, Lourdes, Ready Set Grow, Redeemer Lutheran, Rivermont Collegiate, St. John Vianney, and Skip-A-Long).**

- This type of ranking exercise does not allow for expression of strength of feeling about these choices. No one at our table wants to close T. Jefferson. We all felt very strongly that all schools should stay open!
- Please take that into consideration – the very strong feeling that all schools stay open. Also, the request that we choose the scenario offering the best “value” is a false question. You all passed out the CBR graphs – so all we had to do was to look at the graphs you gave us. Please don’t announce that “the community worked together and decided that closing Jefferson offered the most value to the community.” That would be a false statement. We simply repeated the info you gave us.