

**Central and East Lawrence Elementary School Consolidation Working Group
December 5, 2011, Meeting Minutes**

Hillcrest Proposal Presentation: Dennis Hill, Leslie Newman and Edith Paredes presented the Hillcrest proposal (Addendum 1).

Questions/Discussion:

- Hillcrest representatives explained that there is a distinction in their proposal between international students who come from countries outside of the United States and English Language Learners who are native to the U.S.
- The Hillcrest proposal addresses accommodating an additional 100 students, but they said that number could be refined to more/less than 100.
- They said that operational savings would be gained by becoming an efficient three-section school.
- The Hillcrest group said that its ESL cluster program has been developed over 20 years and is a model that works.
- While they are willing to look at the best outcome for the most schools, a priority of the Hillcrest proposal is keeping their school community intact.
- In reference to the feasibility of moving ESL services, Working Group members discussed the district's opening of a second ESL cluster site at Cordley five years ago when Hillcrest's ELL population grew too large to provide a balanced enrollment. Cordley representatives shared steps that were necessary to build the new ESL cluster program, such as an investment of time, professional development and resources in order to build relationships and a solid program that benefits both ELLs and native English-speakers.

Kennedy Proposal Presentation: Dawn Shew presented the Kennedy proposal (Addendum 2).

Questions/Discussion:

- The Kennedy group wants to keep the early childhood program and thinks it needs to find a permanent home since it has been moved multiple times.
- They considered using the existing Kennedy site, but proposed the 15th and Haskell site because it is more centrally located and could promote walkability. If a bond issue would fail, they said that Kennedy's facility could be renovated, including necessary roof replacement.
- The Kennedy group said that since consolidation seemed likely, they would like to see their children benefit from a new facility, state-of-the-art technology, new playgrounds,

etc. They are excited about the 15th and Haskell site, near the East Lawrence Recreation Center, the Burroughs Trail and city park land, because it would afford them lots of opportunities to “dream” a new school.

- They considered a consolidation with Cordley, but couldn’t find a workable site.
- They too value keeping their school community intact.
- They proposed consolidating Hillcrest with Sunset Hill, because less than half of Hillcrest students reside in the Hillcrest attendance area. They said that, in some cases, students could attend a school closer to where they live.
- In terms of mitigating concerns with combining two large low SES populations, Kennedy representatives said that a lot of the programs and resources, such as additional title, resource and support staff, are already in place in both schools, and would need to follow the students.
- They added that a good faith effort from the district would be needed to support students with the greatest needs. If money isn’t available for full-time support staff, a 500-student school would be a grave concern.
- Working Group members discussed available capacity at nearby Prairie Park, anticipated growth in the Prairie Park area, the size of the early childhood program being too large to shift to Prairie Park, and some philosophical concerns with busing low SES students from Kennedy to Prairie Park.
- Members discussed that Kennedy has lots of buildable lots around it and that the trend now is for people to move into older areas. They said that those two factors, and the potential for additional families moving into two mobile home parks in the Kennedy area, could create too large of a school population there.
- Members referenced an article in the Lawrence Journal-World that included comments by a homeowner from the area near 15th and Haskell who said that he was not interested in selling his property or moving. Kennedy representatives said that negotiating with landowners is not the job of the Working Group members. They think the current East Heights school site is too small to accommodate a Kennedy/New York consolidation.
- They shared a map (Addendum 3) to illustrate proposed changes to boundary areas.

Sunset Hill Proposal Presentation: Daisy Wakefield, Kissan Joseph and Don Barnett presented Sunset Hill’s proposal (Addendum 4).

Questions/Discussion:

- Sunset Hill proposes shifting ELLs from Hillcrest to Broken Arrow, because Broken Arrow had the next highest number of ELLs living in its attendance area. Working Group

members expressed concerns that Broken Arrow would have capacity concerns with adding an ESL program.

- The Sunset Hill group said that a straight merger with Hillcrest would create a school that is too large, so they proposed bringing Pinckney students to Hillcrest. They would be open to other possibilities.
- Members shared concerns with how the district would provide relief for Deerfield's growth without Pinckney. Others said that as population shifts occur, that concern could apply to a number of schools.
- Sunset Hill representatives shared a map (Addendum 5) to illustrate the proposed expansion of their school.

Pinckney Proposal Presentation: Stacey White, David Unekis, Andrea Albright and Karla Hughes presented Pinckney's proposal (Addendum 6).

Questions/Discussion:

- Working Group members shared concerns about capacity issues at Prairie Park and Schwegler under the Pinckney proposal, and whether Prairie Park teachers would have the necessary ESL-certification if that program were moved there.
- Members advocated using the district's criteria when recommending new ESL program sites. Pinckney representatives said that they proposed adding ELLs to existing ESL schools, Cordley and Schwegler, except in the case of Prairie Park, which was chosen due to available capacity. Pinckney viewed Hillcrest as unsustainable as the smallest natural school population in the district.
- Pinckney representatives said that they found no research supporting the ESL cluster site model. They say it is cost-efficient in terms of staffing, but that transportation costs are inherent to the cluster site model. The Pinckney group thinks students would benefit from expanding the neighborhood ESL delivery model.
- Pinckney echoes the other school groups in valuing keeping neighborhoods intact.
- Members shared concerns about moving ESL and early childhood programs, because of the trauma to those students, and moving away from existing programs that work.
- Members shared concerns about equity in terms of proposing a multi-story school be built on a small lot, East Heights, when other schools in the district have 8-12 acres. They added that it would not be desirable to start the process of building a new school by compromising on the size of the lot. The Pinckney group said they like their two-story school, which has city park land to the north for expansion and is more energy efficient than single-story schools.

- The Pinckney group reiterated that its proposal elements stem from the criteria and process it used to assess the six schools under consideration.

Data Requests:

- Kennedy Principal Cris Anderson was asked to send a written report about the early childhood program to the co-facilitators by Sunday, December 11, for sharing with the full group. Anderson also agreed to be available for questions on December 19.
- Enrollment growth projections from RSP and Associates.
- A map showing the total number (#) of students residing in catchment areas.
- Ask RSP to change the symbol “!” to “+” on the existing reside maps. The current symbols are difficult to read/count and the street names cover them up.
- A legal opinion regarding the Kansas Open Meetings Act and whether the group may establish an open, online forum.
- Feedback from the district about whether adding meetings to the schedule and extending the timeline would require board approval.

Agenda Development:

- Time to review meeting minutes. Members may send changes to the minutes to Julie Boyle.
- Cordley and New York groups will present proposals. They will send written proposals to the co-facilitators by Sunday, December 11.
- Ten minutes of question-and-answer time, if needed, about the early childhood report.
- Questions, if necessary, about RSP data on enrollment growth and catchment numbers.
- Develop a discussion process for moving forward.
- Determine if any proposals are ready to submit to RSP for analysis and to district administration for program review.

Meeting Schedule: December 19; January 2, 16 and 30.