

**Central and East Lawrence Elementary School Consolidation Working Group  
February 6, 2012, Meeting Minutes**

**Discussion about Liaison Subcommittee Meeting with Superintendent Rick Doll:** Members of the liaison group discussed the possibility of the group recommending the closure of one school if it is unable to meet the school board's charge of consolidating two or three schools. Rick said that he believes the group needs to give some direction to the board and that a recommendation short of the charge would be better than no recommendation at all. The district has paid RSP to analyze five proposals; RSP has analyzed three. Rick asked the group to consider whether further RSP analysis of proposals would help the members reach consensus. He said it's worthwhile to spend additional money on consultant fees if it moves the group toward a recommendation.

**Question about Corrected RSP Data on the Website:** In response to a member's question, Rick clarified that when RSP moved English Language Learners, they had included the total in the low SES column on the original maps, so corrections were made to the RSP charts posted on the district's website.

**Discussion of RSP Analysis:** Members discussed the severity of the boundary changes shown in RSP's analysis of 1A, 1B and 2. Members said that the maps were more dramatic than they needed to be, because a lot of the boundary changes shown were not part of the group's original proposals. RSP may have been trying to solve other existing issues, such as moving students to Prairie Park to relieve crowding at Broken Arrow, but those issues were not part of the group's proposals. The group, however, did ask RSP to show the implications of the proposals on all of the other schools using five-year projections.

**Site Analysis Presentation by Gould Evans:** John Wilkins with Gould Evans Associates shared a site analysis of the six schools, examining the capacity of the school sites in relationship to the building footprint, parking, pick-up/drop-off areas and playground space. The planning capacities were based on district data available on 10/13/11 and the Working Group's parameters of school sizes between 350-450 students. Other assumptions include replacement of portable

classrooms and expansion of full-day kindergarten. (Addendum 1: Gould Evans' updated PowerPoint is posted on the district's website ( <http://www.usd497.org/Consolidation/> ).

John said that the take-away from the site analysis is that any of the six schools can accommodate 350 students, but only the Hillcrest, Sunset Hill and Kennedy sites could accommodate 450 students. John also took a look at the East Heights site. Gould Evans did not consider traffic impacts.

(Mike Myers provided the following information about traffic data: This is a link to the City of Lawrence Interactive Mapping Service ( <http://gis.ci.lawrence.ks.us/viewer/index.html> ). The simplest way to get traffic counts is to zoom into the general area in question and turn on the aerial photo layer and the traffic count layer. There are also many other tools which allow measuring distance and area, looking at ground contours, zoning, etc. It is fairly intuitive and easy.)

**Question about Cost Estimates:** John advised that the group could use \$150-\$160/square foot as a cost estimate for additions. A new 500-student elementary school is estimated to cost \$15-\$18 million.

**Discussion of Proposals/RSP Data:** Members discussed the need for the group to speak openly and honestly about proposals that may not have enough support to warrant analysis by RSP. The New York group would like to see the implications of a Cordley/New York consolidation. A concern was expressed that if the rest of the proposals were taken off the table, then an unwarranted bias may be shown for proposals 1A, 1B and 2.

Members said they felt slighted that the Pinckney proposal, in its original form, was not analyzed. They are interested in seeing an analysis that includes the closure of two facilities. RSP also didn't divide the ESL population shifts as stated in the Pinckney proposal. Members said that the RSP maps were stripped down elements of the proposals, rather than the full proposals.

Members said that “1B: Close New York” and “2: Close Hillcrest” were not proposals forwarded by the group. The group has not seen an analysis of closing Pinckney or Cordley, so they may want to have RSP analyze those. The group also hasn’t seen a true analysis of the school groups’ proposals closing Kennedy or Sunset Hill. Members shared concerns that the three proposals analyzed by RSP were “muddy” and didn’t help the group move forward. A member suggested that maybe they should ask RSP to re-do the original three proposals. It was shared that the group has the data and can make changes to 1A, 1B and 2, which was the reason RSP asked for discussion of “Opportunities” for each proposal. Rick Doll clarified that RSP typically facilitates this process over a longer period of time, during which there would be a lot of back-and-forth with proposals, reactions and revisions.

Kissan Joseph suggested that there are three roads before the Working Group: 1) make no recommendation, 2) made a decision based on broad themes or 3) request more data to aid in helping the group make a recommendation. Chuck Epp said that this group is at the same place now that the original Facilities Task Force left off – moving kids. He said that unless moving “real kids” is addressed, the process is incomplete.

Members suggested that if the group’s decision is to forward all seven proposals to the board, they should vote on them in order to indicate strengths of recommendations. Or instead of just considering the proposals from each school’s group, the whole group could work together on a proposal. There’s also a concern that the early childhood program needs a home in the proposals.

**Polling:** The co-facilitators polled the members on the following issues:

- Make no recommendation – 1 vote in favor.
- Gather more data – 19 votes in favor.
- Consider making a recommendation that closes less than two schools – 12 votes in favor.
- Gather data for closing 2 or more schools – 15 votes in favor.

The co-facilitators asked members to vote on their “Top Two” proposals to send to RSP for analysis:

- 3A: Consolidation of Pinckney/Hillcrest at Hillcrest – 21 votes.

- 3B: Consolidation of Pinckney/Hillcrest at Pinckney – 1 vote.
- 4A: Consolidation of Cordley/New York at Cordley – No votes.
- 4B: Consolidation of Cordley/New York at New York – 3 votes.
- Pinckney’s original proposal (Consolidate New York/Kennedy at Kennedy or new site and Consolidate Hillcrest/Sunset Hill at Sunset Hill, add additional ESL neighborhood sites and expand Pinckney) – 24 votes.

**Additional Data Requests:** Members requested the following additional information:

- Cost estimates associated with the Pinckney proposal in terms of land acquisition, site development, a new facility and additions to existing facilities.
- Walkability information from RSP.
- RSP should use Gould Evans’ data for site capacities (<350 for New York, Cordley and Pinckney and <450 for Hillcrest, Sunset Hill and Kennedy).

**Next Meeting**

February 13

Note: The school board also meets on 2/13, so the superintendent will not be available for the Working Group’s meeting. District staff will divide time between meetings in case there are questions for staff.