

Central and East Lawrence Elementary School Consolidation Working Group September 19, 2011, Meeting Minutes

1. Introductions were made.
2. Working Group members reviewed Ground Rules and Parking Lot from September 7th.
3. Members discussed and determined that their personal email addresses would not be shared publicly, including but not limited to the district website.
4. Superintendent Rick Doll shared Lawrence Board of Education policies and reported information gathered by the district's legal services director with regard to the Kansas Open Meetings Act (KOMA). Since the Working Group is an advisory committee appointed by the school board, it is subject to KOMA. If a quorum of members discusses the charge before the group, it is considered an open meeting.

The superintendent cautioned members against serial communications (in person or via technology) and suggested that all committee business be conducted transparently in open session so as not to violate the law or the "spirit" of the law. The district's legal services director's opinion is that an electronic forum among members would be a violation of KOMA.

5. Members discussed in small groups: "What are the important characteristics or qualities (tangible and intangible) of a good elementary school?"

- Resources (technology, quality teachers/staff, financial resources)
- Environment conducive to learning
- Diverse teachers and students (racial and economic diversity)
- Cooperative learning
- Academic achievement
- High test scores
- Personal accountability for all
- A sense of community
- Vision, goals and dreams
- Creativity
- Learning includes social skills
- Extra-curricular activities
- Neighborhood environment
- "Working facility" with access to technology
- No portable classrooms
- Safety
- Staff/resources on-site and not shared among buildings
- Safe and adequate playground, drop-off, traffic flow

- Walkability
- Before- and after-school programs
- Good, caring teachers
- Parent engagement and involvement
- Supportive, empathetic principal
- School is small enough that teachers and staff know students well
- Teachers are an important part of the school's management
- The neighborhood is strengthened by the school and vice versa
- Classes small enough that teachers know and work with each student (Members mentioned class sizes of fewer than 25-27 and 18, 19, 20.)
- Aesthetically pleasing
- Innovative curriculum and programs
- Recruit and retain high quality teachers/staff
- Schools are larger than one-section at each grade level so children may be moved as needed
- Sustainable design
- Facility is easy to navigate by small children
- Air quality, natural light
- Proximity to community amenities and civic centers: "community classrooms" within walking distance (e.g. city hall, water treatment plant, fire station, etc.)
- Research-based best practices (instruction and curriculum)
- All associated with the school are invested in the success of students
- Focus on individual student needs (Children are known as individuals and are accepted and supported for their differences.)
- Collaboration and communication
- Flexibility
- Children feel (physically and emotionally) safe.

A member commented that these qualities should be used to inform the group's decisions rather than constrain them. ("Perfect shouldn't be the enemy of incredibly awesome.")

6. Members discussed in small groups: "What are the most important values to consider when making our decisions?" (Small groups shared their "Top Three" values.)

- Quality over quantity/efficiency
- Equity for all students. No marginalization of any student (understanding, respect).
- Balance, stability, flexibility
- Decisions are not made in a vacuum (Consider broader impact of decisions.)
- Value and respect others in group.
- Focus on the individual needs of students. ("The tide rises all boats.")

- Drop “sacred cows” and personal agendas to focus on what students deserve.
- Look forward and long-term
- Focus on the best interest of all students.
- Build on the current success of schools with new ideas (sustainable solutions)
- Respect differing values
- Adaptability.

7. Co-facilitator Kathleen Ames-Oliver shared information on the consensus process. Members discussed the process they would use to build consensus and make decisions. Members agreed to a show of hand signals to use when a call for consensus is made during discussions that will indicate their level of acceptance or agreement with the issue on the table. There was agreement that it would take five group members to block a recommendation made to the whole working group and those blocking would be required to give an alternative to what was proposed. Members commented on the need to be attentive to the concerns of any group blocking a recommendation and to work to address the concerns. Members also agreed to submit a dissenting opinion, if need be, along with their final recommendation to the school board.

8. In the interest of time, the group moved the discussion of a subcommittee to communicate with the school board and/or an executive committee for meeting planning to the next agenda.

9. Superintendent Rick Doll shared two spreadsheets illustrating the estimated and actual savings realized with the closure of Wakarusa Valley Elementary and the closure of the East Heights Early Childhood Family Center as part of the East Heights, New York and Kennedy consolidation. (Enclosures)

10. Further data requested by members (enrollment numbers, building capacities, early childhood modifications to Kennedy, etc.) will be shared as it becomes available. The intent is to make the information available to members prior to meetings whenever possible.

John Wilkins of Gould Evans Associates indicated that information about facility renovation/construction cost estimates will be “high level” information used consistently so as to make comparisons. Members are encouraged to ask for more specific detail as needed.

11. Members set the agenda for the next meeting, including a review of the group’s decision with regard to the consensus process to be used and discussion of:

- Equity versus equality
- The committee structure suggested in the school board’s charge (#4):
 - “From the appointed membership, form two committees. The initial focus of one shall be on the central schools of Hillcrest and Sunset Hill. The initial focus of the second shall be on the east schools of Cordley, Kennedy and New York.

Membership of each committee shall consist of the representatives of the schools being discussed with Pinckney's and Woodlawn's representatives split between the two. The Working Group may adjust the focus and membership of the committees as discussions progress. The Working Group shall continue meeting as one group with some discussions taking place as a whole and some in committees."

- Visiting the six elementary schools (Cordley, Hillcrest, Kennedy, New York, Pinckney, and Sunset Hill).
- Receive data on school capacities and preliminary cost estimates for renovation.

12. Additions to the Parking Lot

- Discussion of the bond issue.
- Costs for the addition of doors on early childhood rooms at Kennedy.
- Clarify what was voted as the consensus process.

13. Meeting Evaluation

The group ran out of time, but will do the evaluation at the next meeting.

Next Meeting: 7-9 p.m., October 3, School District Office Multi-Purpose Room, 110 McDonald Drive. (Meeting room available at 6:45 p.m.)

Savings from Closure of Wakarusa Valley Elementary			
Estimated Savings		Actual	Additional Information
Teachers	220,464	220,646	WV had 10.5 teaching FTE. 2.0 retired. The rest are in positions vacated through attrition or movement to the MS. It would be very difficult to trace these specific positions to the actual savings. The net savings is 4.2 FTE.
Certified Library Media Spclst	30,555	28194	Hillcrest Librarian retired, .5 of that position.
School Nurse	22,417	22417	Reduction as part of reorganization. Mean cost most appropriate.
Principal	54,408	10304	Stays full time at BA .1 admin contract for Counselor reduced.
Secretary	34,913	36350	Did not take other positions offered.
Custodian	15,685	14309	Will be billed to LVS.
Custodian, Head	40,739	52524	WV Head Custodian moved to CD to fill a retirement.
Library Media Assistant	5,673	5986	Reduced to just the portion of position at another school.
Health Office Assistant	5,461	5342	Position eliminated as part of reorganization.
Non-Instructional Monitor		8944	Not included in original savings but not allocated to other buildings
Elementary "Specials" (Art, Music, PE) Teachers		31180	With four fewer sections, we need 12 fewer sections of "Specials." 21 sections is full time. The mean cost is \$54,866 not included in original savings.
	430,315	436,196	There will be additional savings as final allocations of staff are made.

Transportation	1,000	1000
Utilities	39,579	39,579
Custodial Support	10,250	10,250
Maintenance	6,043	6,053
Upkeep	141	141
	57,013	57,023
	487,328	493,219

Utilities	39,579
Custodial Support	10,250 Centennial costs will be split between the Diploma Completion
Maintenance	6,043 Program, Adult Basic Education and Johnson County Community
Upkeep	141 College. They will not be increases to the general fund.

Summary of Operational Savings - Realized in 2010-2011		
Description	FTE	Amount
Principal	1.00	102,260
Secretary	0.50	11,648
Teacher - Classroom	2.70	137,399
Instructional Para's (off sets Teacher)	(1.25)	(26,162)
Teacher - Specials	0.50	19,198
Nurse	0.40	21,847
Non Instructional Paraprofessional	0.50	9,410
Custodian	1.63	49,653
HOA	0.25	5,192
Librarian	0.50	30,528
Savings Total	6.73	\$ 360,973.00
Estimated Savings		\$ 350,000.00
Actual Savings in Excess of Estimate		10,973