

The Lawrence Elementary School Facility Vision Task Force met on Monday, **September 20, 2010**, at 7 p.m., at the Lawrence Public Schools' Educational Support and Distribution Center at 110 McDonald Drive.

1. The meeting convened at 7 p.m.
2. Reports were made by the following subcommittees:

Building Conditions

This committee is early in the discovery of information stage. Two schools have been toured and a schedule for the other 13 has been finalized. John Wilkins of Gould Evans Associates is coordinating the tours and preparing schematics of each school that will contain essential information. Gould Evans' architects will conduct the in-depth evaluation of the schools.

Schools have been grouped into four categories: pre1920 models, 1950 models, 1970 models and the most recent models. Classroom size (square footage), facilities for specials, gym and cafeteria will be key components to the analysis of each school.

The capacity of each school is greatly determined by the number of students placed in each classroom (class size). Best practices (how to best teach students) also impacts how much space is needed.

Utility costs will be analyzed. The committee will gather information from administrators, teachers, parents and custodial/maintenance personnel.

Operating Costs/Financial Efficiency

This committee is in the discovery of information stage. It has received the data on cost per pupil that was presented to the board during the budget discussion last winter. These figures represent both actual costs and average costs per school. Average cost is a more fair way to compare schools. This data will be updated after the September 20 enrollment date is finalized and the data will project the movement of sixth-graders to the middle schools next year.

Class size and school size have an impact on operating costs. Salaries comprise the biggest piece of any school's operating budget. Efficiency issues are also influenced by best practices. Utilities do not significantly impact the budget.

Some personnel expenditures like ESL and special education are tied to the students wherever they attend. These costs are not used in efficiency comparisons. Transportation, capital outlay and bond/interest are not used in comparisons either.

This subcommittee will investigate optimal and practical efficiencies.

Research

This subcommittee is researching the impact of class size and school size in the context of best practices related to student achievement. Its study will also include the relative 'weight' of class size and school size when compared to other educational interventions. In other words, most educational interventions/programs are important, but what is the most important?

The history of each school from a demographic standpoint is also being researched. Attention will be paid to cluster schools for ESL and special education.

This subcommittee has requested information related to the passage of major federal mandates on program requirements and how these requirements affect facilities. District experts have been requested to provide information on best practices to this committee at the next meeting.

Neighborhood Schools/Urban Planning

This subcommittee is using the information provided by Gould Evans Associates showing population growth and shifts to investigate school boundaries. This information is also being used to define 'neighborhood' schools. Early discussion has focused on the difference between 'neighborhood' and 'community' schools.

This subcommittee will investigate walkability and the impact of schools on urban growth. The need to coordinate the task force efforts with city planners is emphasized as land use decisions are very important to the growth of the city and placement of schools.

Transfer options and interest-based schools will also be investigated by this subcommittee.

3. Frank Harwood, chief operations officer, presented information on the basics of school budgets (Budget 101). This presentation will be posted on the district website.
4. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.