

The Lawrence Elementary School Facility Vision Task Force met on Monday, June 21, 2010, from 7 to 8:30 p.m., at the ESDC at 110 McDonald Drive in Lawrence.

Co-chairs Rich Minder and Scott Morgan welcomed the members and presented some background on the reasons for the creation of the task force. A description of the role of the co-chairs was given which includes planning the meetings, helping to keep the meetings on task, summarizing the accomplishments during and after the meetings and checking in with subgroups between meetings. This will be done in conjunction with the superintendent and the facilitators.

Facilitators Mike Neal and John Wilkins introduced themselves and spoke about their roles.

Task force members introduced themselves.

Rich and Scott led a reading of the "charge" of the task force.

Task force members participated in a "get acquainted" activity by pairing up with someone they did not know. In addition to getting to know each other, the pair generated a question about the role of the task force and/or the process that will be used to reach consensus.

Mike Neal spoke briefly about the basic operational procedure for the task force. It will operate with a consensus model and small groups will be used to facilitate the problem solving process. The staff of USD 497 will be utilized to provide information. The task force will meet regularly from August 16, 2010 (next meeting date) through January of 2011. Meeting dates will fall on either the first and/or third Monday of each month at 7 p.m., and meetings will be scheduled for 1.5 hours. The task force will report to the Board of Education in February of 2011.

The following questions were asked during the "get acquainted" activity:

1. Will the task force visit schools and talk to principals?

*The task force can visit schools and talk to principals. Leadership has discussed rotating meetings at the different elementary schools. Staff members, other than principals, can also be made available to the task force.*

2. What part of the work that the district might do to remodel schools is dictated by the state?

*All architectural plans must be approved by the state architect and many rules apply. Gould Evans will be the facilitator to help with these issues.*

3. Has the district already identified facilities that need upgrading? Is there a set amount of money for these upgrades?

*The district has an ongoing capital outlay plan. Remodeling projects can be funded through the capital outlay fund. Major remodels, additions or new construction would be funded through a bond issue.*

4. How seriously will cultural diversity be considered in our neighborhood schools?

*The district is actively involved in “courageous conversations” about race and diversity issues. Achievement gap issues are a high priority for the district and these issues are important for the task force to consider.*

5. What are the educational models that work best with students and do our facilities match these models? Are we going to look at facilities and how programming is delivered?

*The district has been very proactive in the past year identifying those educational models that are best practices. In some instances the elementary school facilities do not match these best practices.*

6. Does the movement of 6th graders to the middle schools affect the discussion of the task force?

*The immediate and obvious impact of moving the 6th graders to the newly created middle schools is that there will be fewer students in all of the elementary schools. The movement of 6th graders relieves some pressure in some schools and provides space for expansion of programs.*

7. Will meetings be open and will the process be open?

*The meetings will be governed by the open meetings law. All information shared with the task force will be posted to the district website for public reading. The leadership has discussed ways to engage in community conversations.*

8. What type of facility information is available to the task force now?

*All of the information that was presented to the Board of Education in the spring is still on the website. Staff will be updating this over the summer and will send it to the task force when complete. The task force can request additional information.*

9. Will the task force visit other schools districts?

*The task force can decide to visit other school districts.*

10. How do we handle media requests?

*This is a decision for each task force member. In building a strong team approach to the consensus building process it will be important to respect the opinions and comments of all task force members. Direct communication between members is imperative.*