

South Lyon Community Schools
Elementary Closing & Redistricting Committee
February 9, 2010 - Minutes
6:30 p.m. Centennial Middle School

Committee Members Present:

Bartlett Elementary Parents – Amy Chait, Amy Schams
Brummer Elementary Parents – Annemarie Holthus, Robin Riha
Dolsen Elementary Parent – Marilyn Jarrett
Hardy Elementary Parents – Kim Plohetski, Karen Reeds
Kent Lake Elementary Parent – Linda Hannah
Salem Elementary Parents – David Ascher, Tamara Fulkerson
Sayre Elementary Parents – Lesley Butler, Mona Pearson
Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services – Melissa Baker
Director of Operations – Mike Casey
Bartlett Elementary Principal – Stacy Cooper
Sayre Elementary Principal – Jennifer Murphy

Committee Members Absent:

Dolsen Elementary Parent – Donna Condra
Kent Lake Elementary Parent – Russ Averill

Note Taker:

Karen Wiater – Data Processor/Operations Department

Welcome

Melissa Baker and Mike Casey will be facilitating the committee together and appreciate everyone's participation in this committee. In the past redistricting was challenging, but at least it was growth and the opening of a new school. Now we have the challenge of recommending a temporary school closure and that will also cause redistricting.

Introduction of the Committee Members

Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services Comments

Melissa Baker discussed the challenge of re-districting and noted that it has been six years since the last redistricting. Based on Hardy's current numbers it would have probably been necessary to adjust boundaries again in the 2013-14 school year, regardless of the decision to temporarily close Dolsen Elementary School or Salem Elementary School. She presented the following charge, guiding principles, process, and timeline to the committee:

1. Charge to the Committee

To recommend changes in elementary boundaries for the Fall of 2010 with the recommended temporary closing of either Dolsen Elementary School or Salem Elementary School

2. Guiding Principles

- Providing for socio-economic equity
- Making as few boundary changes as possible
- Maintaining transportation cost-effectiveness
- Preserving room for growth at each school

3. Our Process

- Convening a committee of two parents from each elementary school
- Reviewing demographic and enrollment data
- Reviewing the current boundaries
- Receiving recommendations from the transportation department for changes to those boundaries
- Drafting boundary recommendations to present to the Board of Education

4. Our Timeline

- Draft the committee's recommendation to the Board of Education by April 1, 2010
- Our goal will be to adjourn each evening by 8:30 p.m. If we are in the middle of a topic, we will continue; however, not later than 9:00 p.m.
- Future meeting dates are listed below. We need to be sure about schedule conflicts for March 23rd or 30th as those may be final decision making meetings.

Public Comments

Melissa Baker explained the following:

This is an opportunity for public comments. Please remember that this committee is only addressing the charge as established by the Board of Education.

Public comments should be limited to three minutes in length, and we ask that individuals honor that, so that our committee can do the work that we need to do.

We will listen to all public comments; however, committee members are not expected to enter into a dialogue. Once public comments are over, the communication is between committee members only and we will not be responding to the audience or interacting with the audience.

Lynn Hensley – A teacher at the high school who lives in the community. She has a 4 ½ year old daughter and would like to be able to tell her daughter which school she will be going to in the fall. Ms. Hensley presented a proposal for closing Salem.

Review Binder Contents

Melissa Baker reviewed the information provided to each committee member.

Determine Decision-Making Process

The committee agreed to use the Fist to Five method of decision-making.

For a major decision 75% of the committee must be present; one parent from each school must be present and the final vote must pass by 75% of those present.

Overview of District History Regarding Elementary Redistricting

After redistricting for Hardy, we believed we would open a new elementary in 2008.

Obviously with the economy, that did not occur and therefore, it has been 6 years since a redistricting.

This means that although neighborhoods and families may experience another redistricting, an individual student has not been redistricted previously.

With Hardy's current capacity (One extra room), the District would have probably experienced a redistricting in 2013-2014 regardless of a recommended temporary school closure.

Review Demographic Information

Mike Casey reviewed the Demographic Information provided to each committee member. It was explained that two systems are used to gather information: Skyward and VersaTrans. Under assumptions, we will plan on 500 kindergarten students each year.

1. How current are the student numbers provided?
The information was current as of last week; however, the numbers are ever changing due to student adds and drops.
2. Are the School of Choice (SOC) numbers included?
Yes. The SOC students are counted within each elementary school total.

Committee Dialogue

When approached by someone from the outside with an idea, how should we respond?

Ask them to send an e-mail, write a letter to the committee, or attend a meeting and present their idea during public comments.

What if one parent representing a school is absent?

For major decisions, as long as one parent representing a school is present, the committee can move forward.

Dr. Pearson said the subdivisions on the outer boundaries may be moved, is that typical?

There is a large difference this time; a whole school will be closed. The further you get away from the school building the potential of being impacted grows. It would not be cost effective to transport the areas closest to the school building to another school building.

Discussions occurred regarding School of Choice.

It was shared that there are three types of School of Choice- In district and Out of District (105 and 105C)

School of choice is a Board decision and not with-in the charge.

There are implications of sending school of choice students back to their home schools and this includes larger class sizes at those buildings.

105 and 105 C School of Choice are for grades K-9 only. Hardy and South Lyon High School are not available options. Once a 105 or 105C student is accepted, the student is allowed by law to remain in the district through grade 12.

Will all-day Kindergarten be considered?

All day Kindergarten will not come into this at all. It would not be financially beneficial and the legislation has put this on hold for now.

What is the recommendation for Magnet?

There will be more discussion with Dr. Schmeichel and parent representatives from the Magnet program. There are approximately 41 Magnet students in the entire program. If they return these students to their home schools, the numbers will not significantly increase class size.

With the redistricting and school closure will class size get larger? There are 35 students in some classes now.

There are no elementary classes with 35 students. A formula of 2,605 total students divided by 100 teachers leaves an average class size of 26.1. We will ensure there is room for growth with an 80% capacity.

Can we have the number of classrooms, 1-5 being utilized this year?

We will get you that information.

Can we have classes open for extra-curricular activities?

We have allowed for that. Principals determine what rooms are used.

Is the goal to balance the classroom in regard to boys and girls?

Those things are considered in placement by the principals.

What will happen to specific programs housed at specific buildings?

The Cognitive Impaired program will remain at Hardy. In regard to the EI program at Dolsen that program will be reassigned if Dolsen is closed.

Can we have starting points and create “mock” models as if we were closing each school?

Yes. That was provided to previous committees for discussion.

Do we know how many kids are on the bus routes, and how many kids are in subdivisions?

In VersaTrans, we can draw boundaries around specific subdivisions and give exact counts of students.

Will we lose any Title I dollars by closing a school? If a school is closed and the students are shifted, will the requirement still be fulfilled? Does the money go with the student? We want to see the percent of free and reduced lunches at each school and how those numbers will be impacted.

We will have to look at free and reduced lunch percentages at each school. We will talk to Linda Welch, Title I Coordinator, to see how the funds are allocated in the buildings.

It was stated at the Board Meeting that there would be a \$600,000 savings by closing a school. Where did that number come from?

Mr. Graham stated in the presentation to the Board that in addition to building costs, staffing reductions (principal, principal secretary, clerk, custodians, etc...) were also included in that number.

Is there a significant difference between the costs of the two schools?

We can bring that information for you.

Can we put together a subcommittee to help parents and students make the transition into their new schools?

Although not a part of the charge, we can discuss this. We had various strategies for transition in the past. We can also discuss this with elementary principals at a principals' meeting and bring that information to you.

Will there be any adjustment to the staffing cuts due to attrition or retirement?

It is very possible that there will be staff retiring and resigning. Staffing will work out and we believe teacher layoffs will be minimal.

Can information that comes up in future Board meetings that may help us be brought back to our committee, such as the Magnet decision?

Yes.

When we make a decision and present it to the Board on April 1st, will it be a done deal? Will we know at that time where our students will be attending school?

The first regular scheduled Board Meeting where the committee presents is on April 19th. As soon as the Board decision is made, the notification process will begin.

Will we still have Kindergarten registration in March?

Yes, we need to know those numbers for staffing purposes.

What will happen to the building that closes?

We already have a plan in place. For example, we will have a security system in place and will continue to monitor the heat and ventilation system to ensure protection of the building, such as the pipes not freezing in the winter.

How long will the school be closed and how long have they remained closed in the past?

It will depend on the economy and growth in the District. We have never had to close a school before.

Next Steps

The committee will look at the maps and current boundaries. Melissa Baker and Mike Casey will provide requested information at the next meeting. The committee will work with a mock model with regard to the least students impacted, and leaving rooms available for growth. The committee will also be able to look at VersaTrans to see specific boundary information. The committee will start with a mock model of Dolsen and will work with VersaTrans to see specific number information. The committee will then at the March 2 meeting work with a mock model for closing Salem. Mike Casey will also analyze the proposal provided during public comments and bring his information to a future meeting.

Future Meeting Dates

- Tuesday, February 23, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. – Centennial Middle School Team Room/ Cafeteria
- Tuesday, March 2, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. – Centennial Middle School Team Room/ Cafeteria
- Tuesday, March 9, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. – Millennium Middle School Team Room/ Cafeteria
- Tuesday, March 16, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. – Centennial Middle School Team Room/ Cafeteria
- Tuesday, March 23, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. – Centennial Middle School Team Room/ Cafeteria
- Tuesday, March 30, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. – Centennial Middle School Team Room/ Cafeteria

All meetings are open to the public and there will be a time for public comments at the beginning of each meeting.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.