

South Lyon Community Schools  
Elementary Closing & Redistricting Committee  
March 2, 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, Donna Condra  
Hardy Elementary Parents – Kim Plohetski, Karen Reeds  
Kent Lake Elementary Parent – Linda Hannah, Russ Averill  
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 – Marilyn Jarrett

Note Taker:

Karen Wiater – Data Processor/Operations Department

Reminders for the Committee

Melissa Baker reminded the Committee that the meeting next Tuesday, March 9th will be held at Millennium Middle school in the cafeteria at 6:30 p.m. She also reminded the Committee that the goal is to have the recommendation to the Board by April 1st. There will be a Special Board Meeting held on April 12th at 7:00 p.m. to discuss the committee's recommendation, then a regularly scheduled Board meeting on April 19th at 7:15 p.m. at Millennium Middle School where the recommendation will be an action item for the Board.

Review Board of Education Charge and Guiding Principles

Melissa Baker reviewed the ***Charge and Guiding Principles*** for the Committee.

Public Comments

Melissa Baker reviewed 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.*

Linda Hamilton – A Salem Township resident whose parents bought their first home in the Salem area feeling it was the best place to send their children to school. She in turn felt the same about sending her own children to Salem Elementary School. See attached correspondence.

Heidi Lukowski – A parent from Brummer Elementary School who lives in Nichwaugh Lake Estates who feels there should be more than one proposal related to closing Dolsen Elementary School. She feels the 41 students proposed to be moved from her subdivision to Salem Elementary should not be moved to a school that is far away when they are so close to Brummer and other Elementary schools. She also expressed concern that in the proposed model for closing Dolsen, over 500 students would be impacted and she was assured by Dr. Pearson that they would move the least amount of students as possible.

Steve Tooman – A parent who lives in Nichwaugh Lake Estates with children beyond the elementary school age. This parent feels moving those 41 students would not only impact the kids but would also lower the home values in his subdivision. He feels the homes would not be as marketable to incoming families not wanting their children to be bused nine miles away to Salem Elementary School and this would also create less tax money for South Lyon. He feels this should be about attracting families to the area and having a school close to where they live.

Rob Sweigard – A parent from Brummer Elementary School who is concerned about moving the 41 students from the Greenock/Nichwaugh area to Salem Elementary School. He feels there should be more than one option.

Kristen Bowman – A parent from Brummer Elementary School who lives in Nichwaugh Lake Estates feels transportation will be a serious issue if these 41 students are moved to Salem Elementary School. She stated that her children ride the bus less than 50% of the time and have a 40+ minute ride to Brummer Elementary. She said she never sees the same driver twice and watches drivers making wrong turns. She feels if this is happening and the school is only a mile away, what will happen when the school is nine miles away? She feels there should be other options and is also worried about the home values in her subdivision dropping.

Lise Blades – Lyon Township resident who feels there is a serious disconnect between the Board and the committee, regarding using the operational costs for decision making. She said Mrs. Baker told her the committee was to receive her email and the answers to her questions. She also said she believed Mr. Casey gave inaccurate information regarding the operational costs at Salem Elementary regarding the savings if Salem was closed. She expressed concern that if Dolsen were closed, Kent Lake would be hit too hard.

Melissa Baker shared with Ms. Blades that the committee had received her email and the answers to her questions.

Kelly Enfroy – A parent from Brummer Elementary School who lives in Nichwaugh Lake Estates feels that there should be a better alternative than sending her subdivision to Salem Elementary School which is the furthest school away.

David Trent – Salem Resident and Salem Township Clerk first commended the committee for their efforts in what will be a no-win situation and will result in a number of people being unhappy either way. He feels Salem Elementary is a vital segment of the community. Salem Elementary School is used for Flag Day, and people from the community come watch the annual fireworks there. He expressed concern that with Salem being the largest geographical area, having students bused in from Lyon Township, Northfield Township, and Green Oak Township, their bus rides would increase if they had to be bused in to other schools. He spoke of Johnson Creek where the students can enjoy educational activities. He also spoke of the collaborative effort between the school district and Salem Township in regard to the baseball field and track and the great amenities Salem school provides for their voting location. He mentioned that if Salem Elementary were to close he would still like to use the facility for voting. The history of Salem, the uniqueness including the racial harmony that has been there since the race riots of the 60's was another thing he thought should be considered.

*Melissa Baker expressed how difficult this decision would be. She said how good it was to hear about people loving their communities, their schools, their teachers and the committee needed to hold on to these thoughts while making decisions. She said that the committee had to stick to our charge and although operations costs were discussed at the Board meeting last night, there was no motion made to change the charge of the committee. The charge from the Board remains the same and we need to focus on our guiding principles. Melissa stated that as always, the minutes from the committee meetings will be posted on the website along with the models presented. She clarified that it was never stated that only one model would be allowed for each school and the decision was made by the committee to look at one model from each building first before tweaking them. She said the committee was not only looking at the two models, but was looking at redistricting the least amount of students as possible and the transportation costs.*

#### Requested Data

The committee was provided with the following:

Color print outs of maps - Dolsen Model #1, Salem Model #1, and Miscellaneous District Areas

Subdivisions and student counts

#### Temporary Closure of Salem – Model #1

In a first attempt to construct a model showing possibilities for the temporary closure of Salem, Mike Casey presented a slide show to the committee. Included were proposed boundary changes. The following questions were asked:

1. What will happen to the EI program if Dolsen is closed?

If Dolsen closes, that program will most likely move to a late start school. The CITA department will make that decision.

2. What will happen to the pre-school classes at Dolsen or Salem?

We would like to keep the same number of classes. They could be located at another building, but we can't specifically say where yet. This will be discussed with Cathy Craig.

3. If Salem is closed do you still estimate the bus time will be less than 45 minutes?

Some routes will be shorter, some could be longer, but all should be no more than the current 45 minutes.

4. Do you have the information on how many students are one mile, two miles, three miles, etc. away from Dolsen and Salem? How far is the furthest student out?

We will get that information for you.

### The "Green" Option

Mike Casey provided data for the option submitted during public comments at the first committee meeting regarding closing Salem. He explained that this option only moved students from Salem Elementary School and didn't take the pressure off of the other schools, leaving some of the schools with student numbers too high and others too low.

### Board Meeting Information

It has been discussed at the Board meeting that the schools are working with parents and the Magnet program will be recommended to continue and encompass a larger number of students. The screening process would also be reviewed. If this is approved, class size would increase to district class average. No additional classrooms will be added.

### Continued Committee Discussion

1. In making the proposed boundaries, why didn't you just extend 11 mile on out?

It is a sparsely populated area. We looked at moving the minimum amount of students. We are not looking at making "clean" boundaries, but rather effective ones. We will look at that area again and give you the numbers.

2. What is included in #6, the NW corner of 9 Mile?

That includes Hidden Creek, Princeton Condo's, Oxford and Lyon Gardens.

3. How many kids are in the Ada St. /Cambridge Ave. area?

In the N. Section there are 8 students, in the S. section there are 36 students.

4. Will the fields at the buildings be maintained and still be used for recreational purposes?

The fields and grounds will be maintained minimally. The sites will not be used for recreational purposes.

5. In the Salem Option #1, what does the number of students off the target number mean as far as the 20% allowed for growth?

It means less than one student per classroom in general. Classroom size may increase but there would be no need to add an entire classroom.

6. During public comments we have heard that some speakers want to see more than one model per school. Will you go back and do more options that may look different? Looking at everything now, have you considered a different model?

The way we did this using the VersaTrans we are now very close to our target student numbers. The committee now has all the information and maybe they will see something we should consider.

7. Can we get a list of all the subdivision electronically?

Yes, we will provide that.

8. Can we take a look at the actual routes?

It would be a major undertaking trying to map out the actual routes at this time. We don't have the staff to do this.

9. Do you know what the estimated transportation cost savings for each model would be?

It would be the cost of the drivers and the layover times. We will come up with a rough dollar amount comparison.

10. Taking into consideration the driver increase, and the layover times, do you have information on the wear and tear on the buses if you have to take the students to a different school?

You have to get the students to school regardless. We sat down with the transportation department and found that the biggest impact would be the number of drivers and layover time.

11. Will School of Choice still be allowed?

Yes, School of Choice will be continuing throughout the District.

12. We have a lot of data and thinking to do at this point. What have committees in the past done at this point as a next step?

We didn't have a technical piece such as VersaTrans to help before. We can sit right here and answer a lot of questions on the spot. As suggested, maybe at this point we need to take some time and think on our own – look at the two models and consider our guiding principles. If we are meeting them then move forward with our decision making. If we have more questions, we should revisit them. We encourage the committee to look at the maps with the models and see where we

are. We looked at the socio-economics of both models and we are comfortable and feel they both meet the socio-economic goal.

The committee discussed whether they should review their charge and guiding principles and make a decision now as to whether it will be Dolsen or Salem that is closed then work on tweaking it, or if they should first review each model to see if there can be any tweaking of each model and then make a decision. Most committee members wanted to review both models first.

Melissa Baker asked the committee if they would like to work on reviewing each model for potential tweaking as a next step.

Decision: Yes. Fist to 5 – consensus reached.

Melissa Baker suggested that if possible the committee members could e-mail their ideas or questions to Mr. Casey ([caseym@slcs.us](mailto:caseym@slcs.us)) in advance of the next meeting, so he could start working on the data and involve the transportation department if necessary to streamline the process and to make the committee's time more productive.

#### Next Steps

Each committee member will review the information provided so far and be prepared for discussion at the next meeting.

Mr. Casey will work with the ideas e-mailed from the committee and the results of his findings will be provided.

Answers to committee questions will be provided at the next meeting, if possible.

#### Future Meeting Dates

**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 8:15 p.m.

## Reasons for Keeping Salem in the Education Business

### Guiding Principles:

#### 1. Providing for socio-economic equity –

- One of the top ten taxpayers in South Lyon Community Schools is Northville Crossing Venture, in Salem Township. This community sends approximately 70 students to Salem Elementary.
- Taxpayers in Salem and Northfield Townships send over \$2.75 million to South Lyon Schools annually. There is one school facility in Salem Township. Lyon Township is home to four (4) schools, three (3) of which are elementary schools.
- Students from Salem Township will be separated from their friends with whom they socialize in activities such as scouting, sports and worship if the school is closed.
- Salem Elementary School is used as a voting precinct, closing it could adversely impact future elections.
- Eight times more students currently walk to school at Salem than at Dolsen.
- Salem Elementary is located in the Hamlet which is a mixed use district – both residential and business. There are a number of homes within walking distance of the school. Dolsen is located adjacent to New Hudson's commercial district. Residential property west of Milford Road has been purchased for conversion to a ring road, which will limit the number of homes within a walking distance of Dolsen.

#### 2. Making as few boundary changes as possible –

- Most of the students will be moved to just one other school should Dolsen be closed. Salem's students would be divided between several schools.
- If closed, Dolsen's students would attend the remaining schools in their community. Salem's students would be bussed out of their community .

#### 3. Maintaining cost effectiveness –

- If Salem remains open some of the students shifted would be from Salem Township or within a limited distance of current bus routes for Salem.
- Due the geographical size of Salem many students would have longer bus rides to another school.
- If Dolsen is closed its former students will go to other schools located within a couple of miles.
- Sending Salem students to an "early start" elementary school may result in increased transportation costs.

#### 4. Preserving room for growth at each school –

- Northville Crossing has approximately 200 vacant home sites. Once the economy improves houses can be added without delay. 200 homes could generate approximately 75 -100 additional students.

- **There is a significant amount of vacant land in the Township proper and within the Hamlet that remains to be developed. Parcels within the Hamlet may have a density of up to 4 units per acre.**
- **In spite of the current economy homes are still being built in Salem Township. The homes in the Hamlet attract young families who have or will soon have school age children.**

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2 March 2010**