

Tomball ISD Facility Study Steering Committee Minutes

Wednesday, April 7, 2021

Dr. Martha Salazar Zamora, Superintendent of Schools, opened the meeting at 5:30 pm. This meeting was held at the TISD Staff Development Center. Dr. Salazar-Zamora thanked everyone for attending and supporting the district with their participation on this committee. She asked each member of the Executive Leadership Team to stand and introduce themselves and their area of responsibility.

Dr. Salazar-Zamora then discussed the formation and charge of the committee. Please see the guiding document [2021 Facility Study Steering Committee](#) for the formation, charge and working parameters. Dr. Salazar-Zamora referred to the success of the 2017 bond, which was due in large part to the strong work of the committee facilitator and committee in outlining the needs of the district at that time.

Dr. Salazar-Zamora introduced Dr. Eddie Coulson as the facilitator for this committee. Dr. Coulson was formerly Superintendent of College Station ISD and is a consultant with N2 Learning.

Dr. Coulson encouraged a sense of camaraderie among the team and emphasized the need to get to know one another in order to build that camaraderie. He asked for each committee member to introduce themselves and to share their hopes and dreams for the students of Tomball. Dr. Coulson asked everyone to stand and move around the room to meet someone they don't already know, to better acquaint them with the other team members.

Dr. Salazar-Zamora introduced Mr. Matt Schiel, Board President for TISD, Mr. Schiel spoke about the goals of the district, to continue providing the best facilities, academics and extracurricular activities to all students of TISD. It is a priority to continue improving all aspects of the education experience for students in Tomball. Mr. Schiel encouraged committee members to not only think about the immediate needs but also think big picture into the needs of the district over the next 20-50 years as well.

Dr. Coulson described the context of the process of construction within Tomball ISD as new builds and renovations to existing facilities. He also discussed the consideration of bus transportation and technology infrastructure and devices. Demographic information presented at this meeting will be very important to the consideration of these needs.

Dr. Coulson introduced Mr. Rocky Gardiner with Zonda Education/Templeton Demographics. Templeton Demographics has served TISD for many years, providing demographic information for planning purposes.

Mr. Gardiner discussed state enrollment trends over the past five years. Tomball ISD had growth over the past year even though the pandemic affected many districts' enrollment negatively. He continued presenting information about housing construction and home prices, including new home starts and closings, inventory, vacant developed lots and parcels of land available for future growth.

Mr. Gardiner stated that the Tomball area has a very strong housing market, most closings occurring within ten developments. He presented information on new housing activity by campus attendance zone. To describe the process of determining enrollment projections, he stated that this is where "art meets science." He further discussed how student geocoding, birthrates and charter school enrollment impact future yields for enrollment.

He indicated that Tomball ISD can have confidence in the Zonda enrollment projections and showed comparisons of the last five years of projections versus actual enrollment. His company is projecting an enrollment bounce back from the past pandemic year. The forecast for student enrollment growth in the next year is 1,099 students.

Capacity challenges will exist in the coming years at Tomball Intermediate School and Tomball Memorial High School as housing developments continue to grow. There will also be impacts to elementary campuses, particularly in the northeast and southwest areas of the district. Dr. Steven Gutierrez, Chief Operating Officer, offered additional information regarding the connection between growth in the Rosehill area with capacity at TIS and TMHS.

Mr. Gardiner stated that there are many unknowns due to the pandemic. However, one of the main reasons that the Tomball area continues to experience business and residential growth is the quick access to major roads connecting the area to Houston. There is also a trend of working from home begun this past year that may well continue in future years, allowing families to live in preferred areas instead of close to work. Zonda predicts a strong housing market for the planning horizon of 7 years that we are considering in this committee; however, there is always the possibility of a housing market slowdown.

The full presentation is available here [FSSC Meeting #1](#).

Questions from the committee members followed Mr. Gardiner's presentation.

Dr. Coulson confirmed that the district currently owns one parcel of land in the southwest corner of the district, and not in all areas of potential need for campuses. Land can only be purchased when available for sale.

As to a question of how virtual learning will affect the growth projections, Dr. Amy Schindewolf, Chief Academic Officer, stated that virtual learning will only be continued if funded by the state. At this time, it is not clear but not likely that virtual learning will continue next year.

Dr. Coulson mentioned that a 10-year projection planning period is not a long time period when considering the length of time needed to build schools. It is important to look carefully at areas of growth in making recommendations for facilities and renovations. Dr. Coulson asked the small groups to discuss and process the information presented and then pose a question beneficial to the whole group for consideration.

After discussion time, each table group shared their questions with the whole group. These questions included:

Are we projecting enough growth? Can growth occur faster than projected?

Do we need to change our projections as a result of the pandemic, since there are more people working from home?

Are some campuses under-utilized?

Are there options for new facilities in the northeast corner of the district given the fast growth occurring?

Could the Tomball Star Academy campus be relocated to another facility to allow room for growth at THS?

Since the campuses have virtual learners at this time, what is the true representation of the actual feeling on campuses?

The housing market may not drop off. Can renovations at existing facilities be considered to provide equity to all students?

Dr. Coulson presented the following statements as a summary of the questions presented by the small groups.

A housing slide in the Tomball area does not appear to be likely. There is an expectation of equity of buildings across the district. Have we projected enough

growth? Elementary, intermediate and high school needs should be considered. Is one additional high school the solution or should we consider building two? No one is saying, "These projections are too high." Why are we projecting an intermediate school in the west and not the east area? How do we maintain fiscal responsibility and do all the things we feel we need? The number of students at campuses is important to consider.

Dr. Gutierrez reminded the committee of the upcoming meeting schedule and location and thanked everyone for their participation. Dr. Salazar-Zamora closed the meeting at 7:30 pm.