

# **Tomball ISD Facility Study Steering Committee Minutes**

**Wednesday, April 14, 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. Dr. Salazar-Zamora briefly covered the agenda for the meeting and encouraged everyone to think big and bold as we consider the upcoming presentations.

Dr. Eddie Coulson, the facilitator for this committee, gave a brief recap of what was discussed last week from the demographer. He stated that for elementary capacities, several schools will be over the capacity amount in 2024-5.

Dr. Coulson reviewed intermediate capacities and high school capacities with emphasis on the continued growth in the community.

There is a strong consensus of the need for community equity in school construction, whether it be new or in the form of renovations.

Dr. Coulson asked the group for questions and insights they've had over the past week.

There was discussion concerning:

- A new intermediate school but also consideration for renovation or expansion at some of the existing buildings
- Whether a strategy exists for moving high schools back to 5A to keep schools smaller - what do we want and what can we afford?
- Whether a boundary redraw buys us time and is worth the issues that it creates?

Mr. Jim Ross, Chief Financial Officer, began his presentation about the basics of school finance related to growth. Tomball ISD tax rate has been \$1.29 for the past two years and previously was \$1.36/\$100 of property valuation. He stated that the goal is to drive the control of the tax rate. In the State of Texas, as property values go up, state funding to school districts goes down.

Public school taxes are divided into M&O (Maintenance & Operations - day-to-day operations) and I&S (Interest & Sinking - new construction, debt).

Schools are built with the sale of bonds, which is similar to a mortgage. Mr. Ross explained where the money for operating costs comes from within each dollar spent.

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Dr. Coulson commented that bonds are all funded locally and no school district has ever defaulted on a bond. Voters approve a bond and pay for it with portions of their property taxes.

Dr. Coulson introduced Dianne Tidwell, TISD Director of Instructional Technology. Ms. Tidwell explained the function of the Digital Learning Department. The team of five staff members provides coaching, modeling and instructional support to teachers. This past year was challenging, and the team provided support to parents with the digital learning that became such a big part of the curriculum. Ms. Tidwell continued discussing the classroom of the future and technological needs for those goals. She compared existing classrooms (the majority of district classrooms) with new classrooms being built. She also suggested that Campus-wide technology could be upgraded for multiple digital signage displays for announcements, videos, emergency alerts, student projects, and many other uses.

Ms. Tidwell offered information on school libraries and improvements that could be made to empower learners instead of just a holding location for books. Libraries are now multi-purpose, flexible learning environments with advanced technology uses.

Ms. Tidwell answered questions about the technology needs for the district. There was a question about the worth of investing in the newest technology, especially for elementary students, and have we questioned the students and teachers about the learning experience at Grand Oaks with the new technology advances? Mrs. Niesa Glenewinkel answered that wi-fi is much stronger now than when the school opened and that earlier issues have been ironed out. Students and teachers, according to Mrs. Glenewinkel, are interacting with each other and technology very well.

A committee member who is also a high school teacher added that technology is very important for the current generation of students. The ratio of devices to students was discussed. The use of refurbished equipment was also discussed.

Dr. Coulson reminded the group that technology is not going away, and we need to consider future needs for all students.

After a short break, Dr. Coulson introduced the Director of Career and Technical Education, Ms. Karla Sandoval. Ms. Sandoval explained that CTE is a multi-year sequence of courses within a discipline, integrating core academic knowledge with technical and occupational skills. CTE provides opportunities for skills valued most by employers. She continued by discussing the number of students currently enrolled in CTE courses and how TEA measures college and military readiness.

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Industry-recognized protocols and certifications are available to students within the CTE coursework. Ms. Sandoval discussed the career clusters available to district students, which begin in the seventh grade with an interest inventory to explore options and programs of study available.

There are 24 programs of study offered in TISD for students. Ms. Sandoval discussed a sample program of study for one career cluster and how credits are earned. The CTE purpose is to prepare students for the real world with business-representative facilities and equipment.

Ms. Sandoval elaborated on the facilities currently available at both high schools. New CTE classrooms are being built at TMHS in the current expansion. Ms. Sandoval also stated that there are programming deficits in skilled trades, such as automotive technology, carpentry, cosmetology, HVAC, plumbing, diesel and heavy mechanics, and others.

There was a question about the obvious deficits at THS in the CTE area and whether there is space to develop new facilities for CTE at this campus.

Another question was related to the bond and what projects are most important for equity across the district.

Dr. Coulson stated that it is important to remember that all students do not go to college, and we need to offer opportunities for students to go into the workforce with valuable skills. He also pointed out that we need to consider what programming would be beneficial to offer at a new high school.

Hopefully, the presentations have provided context for the committee to consider for facilities and programming in the future. Next week there will be presentations about needs in transportation, safety and technology.

### [Presentation for Meeting #2](#)

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