

**Rockford Public Schools, District 205
Facilities Master Plan 2025 – 2030
Meeting Minutes**

**Steering Committee
Wednesday, October 25, 2023**

Michael Phillips, Chief Operating Officer, opened the meeting at 5:06 p.m. He welcomed the group and gave a timeline of the meetings that had been held so far. In addition to the meetings, there was a survey available on the District Website for public input. As of 10/19/23, there were close to 500 responses. That survey ended 10/23/23. Also available on the district website after the Facilities Master Plan launch, was a Let's Talk portal and we've had over 250 to 300 responses on that. We've had a lot of great feedback, and you can start seeing themes in what people feel the needs of the district are. That is really the work of this group, to start looking at those themes and start putting things together with the help of the DLR Group. I will turn the meeting over to Keri Vansant of the DLR Group.

Keri Vansant gave a brief overview of the agenda for the evening. DLR Group is the largest DLR company globally and they also worked on our last ten-year plan.

The DLR Group team introduced themselves.

Keri Vansant, AIA, Project Manager/Senior Associate

Korey White, AIA, pK-12 Planning Leader/Senior Associate

Scott Pashia, AIA, pK-12 Planning Leader/Principal

Committee Members Present:

Board:

Paul Carpenter

Tiana McCall

Principals/Teachers:

Adam Cengiz – Principal Special Programs CAPA & Gifted

John Schmelzer – Principal Ellis ES

Dawn Myelle-Watson – Science, Jefferson HS

Joshua Tatman – Science, Auburn HS

Students:

Jessica Garcia – Auburn Superintendent Student Advisory Committee

External:

Antonio Ramirez – Alignment Rockford

Trisha Tousant, COO - YMCA (filling in for Brent Pentenburg)

Ron Clewer – Gorman & Company

Internal:

Bridget French – ED College and Career Readiness

Dawn Williamson – District Ad

Heather Psaltis - ED of Schools, Southeast Quadrant

Jason Pope – Director of Recruitment

Misael Nascimento – ED Bilingual and Multicultural Department

Susan Uram – Director of Education Technology

Tessa Huftalin – Director of SPED

Committee Members Absent:

Students:

Emmanuel Edwards – Roosevelt

External:

Angela Hite-Carter – Former RPS 205 teacher, principal, administrator

Brent Pentenburg – YMCA

Jay Sandine – Rockford Park District

Administration Present:

Ehren Jarrett – Superintendent

Michael Phillips – Chief Operating Officer

Greg Brown, Ed. D – Chief Financial Officer

Scott Jenson – Director of Design and Construction

Meeting Agenda:

Introductions/Ice Breaker

Overview and Process

Roles & Responsibilities

What have we heard already?

Themes

Key Takeaways & Exit Question(s)

The DLR Group walked through a PowerPoint presentation that is posted on the Facilities Master Plan page on the district's public website covering the agenda topics.

During introductions and ice breaker, the committee members were asked to write down who they were, which partner group(s) or role(s) they best associate with, and why they are here.

Members' Shared Responses:

Ms. Uram – Director of Education Technology, representing administrators and teachers; here to support the district, family, teachers, and community for a better future.

Mr. Tatman – Teacher and parent both at Auburn; I have very strong ideas of what our schools need, with particular attention to what our students and administrators need.

Ms. Myelle-Watson – Teacher at Jefferson; I teach CTE and Science in High School and that is what I bring to the committee.

Ms. Williamson – District Athletic Director for Middle School and High Schools, a parent of a Marshall Middle Schooler and a community member; I am passionate about athletics, and we can't do it without facilities.

Mr. Cengiz – Special Programs Principal; I am new at RPS this year and as more of an outsider, I bring new perspectives with my experiences.

Ms. Garcia – Student and Senior at Auburn High School and the Vice President of the Superintendent's Advisory Council; I am here to help bring student insight for what we hope to see in the future.

Ms. McCall – Auburn HS graduate and Vice President of the School Board, Sub District C; I am here because it is my duty to be here and to make sure everything comes together as far as facilities and all the important pieces.

Ms. French – Executive Director of College and Career Readiness for the District and an Auburn graduate; I am here because I have a strong interest in the transformation of the Stenstrom Center into a college and career center for our students.

Mr. Clewer – Real estate developer and a state-wide developer through Gorman and Company and a parent; I believe our community assets should be of the best quality, including our school buildings, that is important to me. Even though our son will be aging out of school in a few years, I think that is the legacy we should bring to the community, high quality schools.

Mr. Ramirez – I am the parent of two students that go to Jefferson, and am with Alignment Rockford, and have been a very active parent for 23 years and lived in the school district for a couple of years; I'm very interested in the process.

Mr. Pope – Proud Jefferson grad and Director of Recruitment. I serve on the Equity team very closely with designing and developing teacher pathways and getting more people into the realm of education. I am a life-long Rockford resident; I am here because Mike asked me if I would like to be on this team and I can never say no and I also like working on good core projects.

Ms. Huftalin – Jefferson is my son's school, and I am the Special Ed Director at RPS, community member, resident; I want to be a part of the succession planning for providing spaces that supports growth and success of all students so they can be the best that they can be through life.

Ms. Tousant – Community member and representing the YMCA and Brent who couldn't be here tonight; at the YMCA, we serve students in over 15 RPS schools.

We are very invested in creating the best environment for the success of those students, equitable success for all students.

Mr. Schmelzer – Building Principal; very interested in the interplay of building designs and teaching and learning and being a part of that.

Ms. Psaltis – Executive Director of Schools and right now I'm over the Southeast quadrant, but over time I have been in all the builders, Auburn graduate and we are Rockford business and property owners and taxpayers; I have two adult kids and am hoping will stay in Rockford. I'm committed to making the schools better and it has been amazing to watch the transformation over the last eleven years.

Mr. Carpenter – Board member and parent; hear to listen and make sure the community voices are heard.

Mr. Nascimento – Administrator; he is here representing the 7,000 kids in this district that speak a different language and to be the voice of parents of bilingual kids in the district.

Additional Emerging Themes the Steering Committee came up with include:

Early Childhood

- Human Services
- Experiential Opps

Athletic/Physical

- AM/PM access to Community

AC & Prog Access

- Space for Arts/Music
- Theaters
- Dance + Dressing Rooms
- Consistency on CR + Flexibility – Collaboration Spaces
- Academies – Flexibility for Choice – Off Ramps – Start at E.C.

Support Services

- One Stop Shop
- Multilingual
- IEP Meeting Spaces
- Tele – Spaces

Safety & Security

- CR with Doors & Walls
- Funnel Buses and Cars

Career and Technology Education (CTE)

Ties to Industry “Pipeline”
Take Advantage of What Exists
Human Service Pipeline
Access to Programs

School Building Function

Size of Classrooms Vary
Spaces to Support Function (Science)
Site Access/Control
Traffic Flow

Takeaways from Meeting:

Emergent Themes
Walls & Doors (Facility Needs)
Student Centered/Equitable
Bilingual

The meeting ended at 6:45 p.m.

Next meeting is Monday, November 13, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. in the Administration Building, Room 208.