

JAMESTOWN SCHOOL BOARD
Board Retreat
Minutes

The board retreat took place on June 24, 2024, at the Central Office Conference Room at Jamestown Middle School. Present were board members Heidi Larson, Dan Tweten, Jamie Bear, Jason Rohr, Gayle Nelson, Diane Hanson, Melissa Gleason, Steven Veldkamp, and Aaron Roberts. Central Office Administration was represented by Kristi Grounds, Adam Gehlhar, and Dr. Robert Lech, along with newly elected board members Owen McKenna and Jacob Meier.

The retreat began with a review of the Self-Assessment results, followed by group discussions on current successes, potential enhancements, areas for improvement, and next steps. Key suggestions included increased community outreach, quarterly newsletters, school tours for community groups, social media awareness, and hosting community events at schools. Emphasis was placed on strengthening partnerships and community engagement, which was a noted deficit in the strategic plan. Dr. Lech proposed forming a committee to review and revise self-assessment questions.

Dr. Lech presented the JPS Facility Options and Analysis, addressing issues of declining enrollment and facility needs, as well as highlighting significant enrollment decreases in the coming years. Facility needs exceed \$33 million over the next decade, with limited funding available. Four options were discussed:

1. **Do Nothing:** Unsustainable after 2029/30, with ongoing facilities issues.
2. **Reduce Elementary Sections:** Close Washington Elementary and redistribute students.
3. **Build a 2-Section School:** Close Washington and Lincoln and build a new school on Washington property.
4. **Build a 3-Section School:** Close Washington, Lincoln, and Louis L'Amour and build a new school on Washington property.

Staffing impacts would be managed through attrition. Taxpayer impact for the proposed options ranges from \$13 to \$40 annually per \$100,000 home value. The board discussed the importance of a community survey, RFQs for architectural services, a communication plan, timelines, and prioritization. It was noted that the interim fund balance should remain above 13-15% of annual expenditures, and the incorporation of preschool was also considered.

The board broke into groups to discuss the pros and cons of each option, with Option 3 preferred, but while maintaining flexibility towards Option 4. The importance of boundary and demographic studies was highlighted, with a potential new study needed. The next steps include soliciting RFQs for architectural services, developing a communication plan, engaging with stakeholders, and establishing a timeline.

The retreat concluded with plans for the next retreat in the fall to discuss board norms and continue progress on the Facilities Plan.