

Meeting Recap: Elementary Planning Task Force Meeting #4

October 9, 2024

Lakewood City Schools

Facilitators: Superintendent Maggie Niedzwiecki, Phil Herman (The Impact Group)

Key Discussion Points

Welcome and Review

The meeting commenced with Maggie Niedzwiecki welcoming attendees, followed by Phil Herman's review of previous meetings. Key takeaways included:

- A review of the topics discussed in Meetings 1-3.
- Understanding the purpose and scope of the task force.
- Defining the next steps in the process. The next two months will focus on community engagement to gather insights necessary for Phase 2 of the task force's work.
- Clarifying that the Board of Education will be the final decision maker using the feedback from the task force and community, along with a recommendation from the superintendent, to guide its decision.

Role of the Task Force

The Elementary Planning Task Force aims to provide informed guidance and strategic recommendations to the superintendent on optimizing district facilities, especially where there is excess capacity. The Task Force will:

- Analyze scenarios for utilizing Lakewood's elementary schools.
- Evaluate the financial, educational, and logistical impacts of potential changes.
- Develop opportunities to engage and involve the community in discussions.
- Explore ways to enhance early childhood education through expanded Pre-K programs.
- Identify opportunities to use available spaces for broader community purposes.
- Ensure that district facilities meet the evolving needs of students and the wider community

Frequently Asked Questions Session

Superintendent Niedzwiecki addressed FAQs from the Task Force emphasizing the dual drivers of educational impact and financial responsibility. A 2026 levy is anticipated where the millage may be impacted by this decision. Clarity on capacity calculations was provided. Discussion highlighted the cost-prohibitive nature of retrofitting certain facilities for special education and a question was answered clarifying that the preschool program is not a revenue generator. The superintendent also discussed that staffing decisions are based on actual enrollment, not projections or the enrollment study.

Community Conversation Presentation

Superintendent Niedzwiecki presented the draft Community Conversation Presentation for feedback. The task force contributed insights on essential community information through table discussions. They were asked to focus on two questions:

1. What is essential for the community to know? (20 minutes)
2. What do we (the Task Force) want to know from the community?

Themes included:

Question 1: What is essential for the community to know?

- Finances and Levies
Capacity, Utilization, and Enrollment
- Schools under Consideration and Future Uses
- Timeline and Change Management
- Motivation, Equity, and Core Values
- Walking Distance and Community Impact
- Transparency and Teacher Advocacy

Question 2: What do we want to know from the community?

- Pre-K Demand
- Community Priorities
- Class Size
- Walking Distance
- Financial Considerations
- Impact on Families

Conclusion and Next Steps

The meeting concluded with plans to revise the Community Conversations presentation based on task force feedback. Board member Coleen Clark-Sutton encouraged task force members to actively participate in community conversations and promote them to their networks.