

**MINUTES OF THE ELEMENTARY ENROLLMENT / ATTENDANCE
AREAS COMMITTEE
October 21, 2024**



Call to Order: 5:03 p.m.

Committee Members Present:

Jake Dixon – Zone 1 Parent	Holli Haws – Zone 2 Parent
Eryn Kelsey – Zone 3 Parent	Jennifer Warner – Zone 3 Parent
Lauren Dalton – Zone 3 Parent	Emily Astin – Zone 4 Parent
Jennifer Lloyd – Zone 5 Parent	Tara Dayley – Teacher
Cody Perry – Teacher	Nick Muckerman – Administrator
Angela Stevens – Administrator	Troy Johnson – Administrator
AJ Watson – Director	Jackie Reader – ArcGIS Specialist

Review Committee Purpose

- Address Decline in District-Wide Enrollment
- Maximize Use of District Resources
- Develop Recommendations/Options to Provide to School Board for Elementary Enrollment Areas

Mr. Watson welcomed everyone and introduced Jackie Reader, the ArcGIS Specialist. He stated that she will help the committee manipulate the data and see how beneficial it is. He said that she pulled projected information for kindergarten and we will look at that later in the meeting.

He said the agenda was included in the packet and the committee would review the decline in enrollment, and address how to maximize the use of district resources and then make recommendation(s) to the Board of Trustees. He said the goal was to come up with a plan by the third Tuesday in November, but could consider additional meetings if the committee needed more time.

Review Goals

- *Optimizing Capacity-* balance populations make best use of available space
- *Equitable Access-* fair access to educational programs and facilities
- *Minimize Disruptions-* for learners and families
- *Maintain Efficiency-* travel time and middle school feeders
- *Future Needs and Considerations-* planning for future changes and needs

Mr. Watson reviewed the Committee Goals. He said he received information from the city about development and growth which would be reviewed later. He said he was still waiting for information from the City of Chubbuck and Bannock County.

Elementary Information and Data

- Facility Observation Reports
- 2013-2014 Boundary Change Information
- Building Capacity Totals
- Elementary Transfer Data

Mr. Watson said included in the packet was data that was requested by the Committee at the last meeting. He said he would highlight the key elements of the data. He said the most recent elementary boundary change was in 2013 and he included the Committee guidelines for this Committee's consideration. He said in 2013 the district had to look at boundary changes to address overcrowding, but now the Committee was looking at how to address a decline in enrollment. He said some of the guidelines remained the same, like addressing the

importance of 5th graders feeding into the middle schools, and making sure students could still reasonably walk to school.

He said last year the Board asked for a firm to conduct walk-throughs for a structural review of its facilities. He said they looked at Edahow and the findings showed it was built in 1964 and there were no extreme structurally unsound issues and it was performing adequately. He stated the next building they looked at was Tendoy Elementary and there were no structural issues with this building either that needed immediate attention. He said the last building was Washington Elementary and the findings were a bit different. He said the building is over 100 years old and they noted a few structural things that needed to be addressed.

He said the next set of documents were the interior/exterior conditions of the building. He said this was required by the state as they were assessing for facilities funds and replacement schedules along with needs and costs. He said the roof needed to be replaced at Edahow Elementary. He said there was also a cost analysis associated with the upgrades that needed to take place over 20+ years. He pointed out that on Edahow Elementary the cost associated with repairs in 0-5 years was \$2.5 million and that the district did not have enough money to address all of the upgrades over the next 0-5 years. He said the district has a CIP Program where things like this (carpet, paint, bathrooms) were on a replacement or repair schedule. He said Tendoy Elementary showed that nothing needed currently replaced but a few things were marked in poor condition and would need to be upgraded in the near future. He said the routine replacement items included things like, paint, tile and carpet, but in the next 20 years, a lot of the facilities would need new plumbing and electrical. He said at Washington Elementary there were a few more things like foundation issues, the roof, openings, and air system that were marked for immediate replacement. Ms. Dalton asked what a new elementary school would cost. Mr. Watson said possibly \$30-40 million, but that was just an estimate. Ms. Haws asked if we knew the cost of Highland High School and Mr. Watson stated it was over \$40 million. Mr. Muckerman said to build a new school there still has to be a bond that is passed in our community and that would be hard to do. Mr. Watson said there has to be a super majority to pass the bond and it is not as easy to pass.

Mr. Watson said in the packet were building capacity totals and there are differences in the capacities at each building. He explained that he multiplied each classroom by 28 students to determine the student capacity. He said another thing to look at was the actual physical space of a building. He said the district could re-distribute teachers to get the building capacities to a higher rate. Mr. Watson said the handout did not include any special programs; just actual space available in the buildings. Mr. Watson said he had fixed the handout with Ellis Elementary capacity as it had an error on it last week. Ms. Stevens asked where the capacities should be for buildings to function well? Mr. Watson said capacities should be around 80% - 85%. He said this number is ideal so the district can account for special programs.

Mr. Watson stated there was a handout that showed transfer data for the 24-25 school year of how many students transferred in and out of each building and what their actual enrollment would be. He said there is also a two-year comparison of student transfers in and out of each school by grade level. Ms. Warner asked if we consider the reason that parents put in a transfer and Mr. Watson explained it is a multitude of things of why they transfer and it really comes down to space availability.

Mr. Watson said he also printed the Free and Reduced meal eligibility percentages by school for September 2024 just as a reference for the committee to see.

Mr. Watson said he will continue to get the growth and development information but when he talked to the City of Pocatello, they did state as far as looking out 5 years it was really hard to do to make determinations. He said most of the things they have right now would be permits pulled for current projects and developments.

Ms. Stevens asked how many classrooms were open at Chubbuck Elementary. Mr. Watson said there were two ERR classrooms and a special education program that were occupying those spaces, so that is why it looked like Chubbuck had more space than it actually did. He said some schools might have an extra room, but those were

usually used for other special programs, like ERR, After Schools Program, GATE, Montessori, music, etc. He said staffing vs. building capacity looks very different. He said last year we reduced teachers based on the number of learners at each grade level and he said those are the decisions made each year and the numbers can increase/decrease significantly. He said there are a lot of factors that play into the numbers and if the committee needs to look at specific things he will go out to the buildings and start looking at how much space is actually available. Ms. Dayley said the ERR classrooms definitely have to have a room and it does make a difference for the capacity. Mr. Watson said at Washington Elementary we have the GATE Program and they use two classrooms there and at Tyhee Elementary we have a Montessori Program which has approximately 90 students which takes up three classrooms. Ms. Dayley asked if the Gateway Building would be available once the Highland High School rebuild was done. Mr. Watson said he was not sure as that would be closer to 2027 and he was not sure about the plans for repurposing the building.

ArcGIS- Geographic Information System – Jackie Reader

- Tools and Information

Ms. Reader said one of the questions last week was asked of how many kindergarteners would be coming into our district in the next few years. She said she pulled census data and she projected 0-4 year olds (5417) in City of Chubbuck and City of Pocatello and grades 1-5 (4078) that are moving out which would be in an increase of 1300 learners. Ms. Lloyd asked if her data showed of the 1-5 graders if they are attending a charter/private school as opposed to PCSD25. Ms. Reader explained that the census data pulls it by ages of 5-9 years old and 10-14 years old. She said for a reference the living atlas is a curated database that uses census data for projections and statistics. She said she got the current enrollment data from the school district technology department and mapped out the current enrollment on the online maps. She said she can also add the capacity information and add it to the boundary information and manipulate/calculate that data. Ms. Dalton asked if there is a minimum of students to be able to operate a school. Mr. Watson said that is the next discussion point on the agenda.

Enrollment Areas Collaboration and Committee Work

Mr. Watson said we need to look at different options of moving boundaries or closing a school but there would be a point where it would not be efficient or cost effective if a school only had 100 students based on the boundaries we move. Mr. Cody asked about Title I funding and what the cut off was to still receive that and Mr. Watson said the school has to be above 35% free and reduced to qualify. He said every school except Gate City Elementary has Title 1 funding. Ms. Dalton asked if we have the demographic information for those students going to private/charter schools to see if one area over another is more heavily impacted by that. Ms. Reader said we could look at those age groups and compare it to the number of enrolled learners and base it off of that. Mr. Muckerman said there some areas are more impacted because of the proximity of those private/charter schools being close to a neighborhood because parents have to provide transportation. Mr. Watson said Connor Academy had the most elementary age children as it was one of the biggest charter schools in the area. He said the schools that were most impacted were Wilcox Elementary, Chubbuck Elementary, and Ellis Elementary. Ms. Reader will work on trying to get this information. Ms. Haws asked if we could look at the 0-4 year old census data and where they are demographically on the map to see which schools could be impacted. Ms. Reader projected that on the screen and stated the darker colors have a higher percentage of these age groups. Mr. Watson asked her to overlay the elementary boundaries and it showed Chubbuck Elementary, Ellis Elementary, Tyhee Elementary and Wilcox Elementary potentially with a higher percentage of incoming students based on the ArcGIS information. Ms. Reader stated that she was able to pull county GIS and the areas of city impact. She said Chubbuck Elementary and Ellis Elementary were putting water/sewer lines in along with neighborhoods that would impact Syringa Elementary, Wilcox Elementary, Lewis & Clark Elementary, Greenacres Elementary, Jefferson Elementary and Washington Elementary but explained these are not necessarily newer growth, just where improvements are going as well. She said most of the growth will hit Chubbuck Elementary, Ellis Elementary and Tyhee Elementary. Mr. Watson said Bannock County said most of the growth is between Reservation and Tyhee Roads.

Mr. Watson said we have a lot of data and now the committee needs to discuss what it looks like with enrollment areas and the School Board has mentioned the possibility of looking at potentially closing an elementary school. He said that does not mean the committee had to go that direction, they can also just try to balance out numbers and see where it put the capacity at each building. He said he would like the committee's input of doing it as a whole group or breaking into two groups to work on shifting boundaries and/or closing down an elementary school. Ms. Dayley said her initial thought was she doesn't see how we do not close an elementary school based on the numbers. Ms. Haws said the numbers were low and the report for Washington Elementary is not going to get any better. Ms. Dalton asked if we could talk about going to a junior high school and doing K-6, 7-9 and 10-12. Ms. Stevens said to have a 6th grader in elementary school is really hard with age levels. Ms. Dayley said 9th grade is a high school grade and they get credits towards graduation so she feels 9th grade needs to stay in a high school. Ms. Haws asked if the committee was deciding to close a school and/or re-assigning boundaries and Mr. Watson said the committee could consider both options. Ms. Warner asked about the long-term process of closing down a school. Mr. Watson said that would likely be a Board decision if they decided to go that route. He said the Board could decide to sell the building, or could utilize it for another program. Ms. Astin asked what the timeline is if the district closed a school. Mr. Watson said that would be up to the Board, but it could be as early as the start of next school year if that is what the Board decides. Ms. Dayley asked why the district decided to do elementary and middle school boundaries together. Mr. Watson said it was because the elementary decision will impact middle school. Ms. Haws said she feels Washington Elementary has more severe issues and she does not see if it gets closed down how it could ever be reopened. Ms. Dayley asked if the CIP information would help the committee make decisions. Mr. Watson said he did not feel that information would help with making these decisions as the improvements are on a rotating schedule. He said Washington Elementary does not have a parking lot and was landlocked, so there was no way to address the problem. He said at Tendoy Elementary there are parking issues as well and right now they are using the church parking lot but it was becoming harder to deal with. Ms. Dayley asked what happens to the principal if the school was closed. Mr. Watson said they will still have a job and the district will figure out how to redistribute the positions. Ms. Stevens said she has thought about it a lot because she loves Washington Elementary. She said some of the things to look at is there are only 3 busses that drop off/pick up at the school and rest of the students walked, so transportation is really going to have to be looked at. She said Tendoy Elementary is the smallest school classroom-wise as well as enrollment and there does not seem to be much growth in that area and it has a lot more feeder schools as opposed to what Washington Elementary has. She stated that Washington Elementary has had the most growth over the past few years. Ms. Dayley said we do not have very many schools to the south of town if we close Washington Elementary all those students will have to be pushed the other way as to not put Indian Hills Elementary and Jefferson Elementary over capacity. Ms. Dalton asked if the building is sold if that money would be redistributed to fix the other buildings. Mr. Watson said he is not a realtor but the value of schools is more about the property they sit on as opposed to the actual building itself and there usually is not a lot of money to be made off of these. Ms. Dalton said she does not feel Tendoy Elementary is in a great location for a school right on the corner and across from a gas station. Mr. Cody said he taught there a few years ago and felt the enrollment at Tendoy Elementary would have the least amount of families impacted by the closure. Mr. Watson said they usually have 32 to 35 students for a class which was not enough for two classes but too many for one class which poses an issue. Ms. Stevens said if Tendoy Elementary was closed then Greenacres Elementary and Washington Elementary could take on most of those students. Mr. Watson asked if the committee wants to look at closing a school and adjust boundaries or just look at boundaries and leave all schools. Ms. Kelsey stated the committee also needs to take in account the numbers and concentration areas, and currently as Greenacres Elementary and Indian Hills Elementary sit, they could absorb Washington Elementary students. She said Tendoy Elementary is in one of the growth and improvement areas that Ms. Reader showed as opposed to Washington Elementary. Mr. Cody said there were a lot of apartments that feed into Tendoy Elementary and they have a lot of change in enrollments from year to year. Ms. Astin asked if we could look at both scenarios of closing a school and just shifting boundaries. Mr. Watson said we should probably look at closing Tendoy Elementary and/or Washington Elementary. Mr. Watson said he has no idea what it will look like to balance out numbers and some of the school capacities could end up being really low. He said there were enrollment bubbles in various grade levels every year and we adjust teachers based on those numbers. Mr. Muckerman said we really have to look at keeping the model of 2 by teachers, 3 by teachers or 4 by teachers in

each school if we can and still keep at that 80% capacity. Mr. Watson said the numbers don't always work that way but it is much better to look at teacher numbers and keeping them comparable as they bump up in grade levels. Mr. Muckerman said the last 10 of 11 years Edahow Elementary has overloaded students and in that model they never had to overload the same student the following year. Mr. Dixon asked if the map showed growth and Ms. Reader said it was only showing 0-4 year old students. He asked if there was a way to get that data and Ms. Reader stated she could try and get that from the census data. Ms. Reader said she worked for the City of Chubbuck and the area of city impact had always been west of the interstate because the land east was part of the Pocatello City Impact Plan. She said it was all of the efforts to put in new sewer lines and they went to the northwest but the property owner on the east side decided he wanted to annex into the City of Chubbuck. Mr. Dixon asked if Ms. Reader could be available the next meeting.

Discussion/Questions/Resources

- Information and Needs for Next Meeting

Mr. Watson asked what the committee wanted to discuss and look at next for the next meeting. Ms. Stevens asked if Ms. Reader could show what it would look like if we closed Washington Elementary and then show if we closed Tendoy Elementary and what the distribution of those boundaries/students would be. Ms. Dayley asked if Mr. Watson could get data on how many rooms are available at each school. Mr. Watson said using Edahow Elementary as an example they have two ERR classrooms, an interventionist that uses a classroom and two special education classrooms, he explained it is not as easy as just counting available classrooms because we have specialized programs but he will work on getting that data. He said the only thing that will fluctuate will be the schools that have two special education classrooms and one transitional kindergarten classroom as well. Mr. Watson said he will work with Ms. Reader and they will have tentative things to look at but explained the committee might have to give her a bit more direction on what data they committee needed.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:33 p.m.