

**MINUTES OF THE ELEMENTARY ENROLLMENT / ATTENDANCE
AREAS COMMITTEE
November 18, 2024**



Call to Order: 5:03 p.m.

Committee Members Present:

Jake Dixon – Zone 1 Parent
Eryn Kelsey – Zone 3 Parent
Lauren Dalton – Zone 3 Parent
Jennifer Lloyd – Zone 5 Parent
Cody Perry – Teacher
Angela Stevens – Administrator
AJ Watson – Director

Holli Haws – Zone 2 Parent
Jennifer Warner – Zone 3 Parent
Emily Astin – Zone 4 Parent (absent)
Tara Dayley – Teacher
Nick Muckerman – Administrator
Troy Johnson – Administrator
Jackie Reader – ArcGIS Specialist

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 the committee and stated they would be looking at updated information.

Committee 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

Updated Information and Data

- Updated Enrollment Areas Maps
- Updated Elementary Counts (Current/Proposed)
- Middle School/Elementary Discussion

Mr. Watson said last week after getting the committee’s feedback, talking with the middle school group and transportation they worked on updating the enrollment area maps. He stated they tweaked most of the lines the committee looked at little bit to account for the numbers and there was also one bussing concern with the Johnny Creek area. He said he wanted to make it clear that as we move forward this is a preliminary recommendation to the school board and they will give us feedback to share this information and get community input but we want them to be informed and make sure they do not need more information from us. He said this could change significantly by the time they decide to take action, but this is preliminary. He said anyone is welcome to join the Board Meeting tomorrow at 5:30 and Ms. Dayley and Ms. Dalton will be the committee representatives that will attend.

Enrollment Areas Collaboration and Committee Work

- Committee Discussion, Collaboration and Input- ArcGIS (Geographic Information System)

Mr. Watson said included in the packet was a map that showed all elementary schools with the changes that were made. He asked the committee if they want to go through school by school or just an overview and see if they have questions? He said when he met with the three principals and Ms. Reader a few of the changes included freeing up some space in Greenacers Elementary, tweaking a few numbers for class sizes and also moved area by Johnny Creek for transportation. Mr. Muckerman said the changes that were made were pretty

minimal from our last meeting as a committee. Ms. Stevens said one of the bigger changes was the area by Gate City Elementary that the committee had originally moved to Syringa Elementary, it was decided it would be better to move that area back into Gate City Elementary to give them a few more enrollment numbers. Mr. Watson said they moved a street or two from Syringa Elementary and shifted them into Edahow Elementary to give them a few more learners as well. Mr. Stevens said they gave a little section of Lewis & Clark Elementary to Syringa Elementary as well just to equalize enrollment/capacity numbers. Ms. Stevens said they also made some changes that will impact Tyhee Elementary School as well. Mr. Watson said they did make a change that won't impact Tyhee Elementary right now but there is future growth, he said there is a section that goes all the way to the freeway with only seven learners in Harvest Springs that will shift into Tyhee Elementary from Ellis Elementary. Mr. Watson said transportation was concerned about the Johnny Creek area being split into two different schools and it did not work for them so they ended moving it all into Jefferson Elementary. Mr. Muckerman said there was a minor change on the northeastern boundary of Jefferson Elementary as well to help balance out numbers. Mr. Watson said that transportation department asked if the committee to look at running boundary lines through backyards as opposed to main roads. They stated they have to take multiple busses when we split roads on one side or the other road. Mr. Watson said we will look and see if we need to get more detailed.

Mr. Watson said included in the packet was a spreadsheet that has current enrollment numbers, current and proposed building capacity. He said it shows whether it increases or decreases in capacity based on the proposed number as well as free and reduced numbers as well. He said the current learners out means the current learners in that boundary that will be moved out of that boundary and the new learners in means learners not currently in that boundary moving into that boundary. Mr. Watson said the overall impact is 1,271 learners.

Mr. Watson said there is another spreadsheet that shows capacity in more detail. He said the committee talked about having information of staffing and average class sizes. He said he split up the classes that the bubble grades are in because he wouldn't be able to work that out staffing wise. He said at Indian Hills Elementary, for example, they are making it work with 21 teachers and it wouldn't make sense for them to go up to 24 teachers with the proposed enrollment. Ms. Dayley asked about Indian Hills Elementary and Wilcox Elementary being able to take on that many teachers. Mr. Watson said he called Ms. Campos and they would have to combine the special education classrooms and at Indian Hills Elementary they could use their modular building. Ms. Dayley said what happens when you combine special education classrooms and do groups, that it would be a lot of kids for one group? Mr. Watson said there will be those incidents from time to time. Mr. Watson said the spreadsheet reflects an average class size, he said we don't have actual numbers right now but that it is looked at grade by grade later in the year and that is when they redistribute teachers and staff based on what is coming for the next school year. Mr. Watson said when you look at class size a couple things to take note on is one, Tyhee Elementary because a number of the Montessori students (half or more) are in those actual boundaries and they are being accounted for in the Montessori Program and are not included in the 21 teachers. He said Greenacres Elementary is also high because we had them originally at 350 learners but decided 300 learners was a more reasonable number. He said right now they have 13 teachers and it functions very well. He said we would also need to make sure we can place the GATE Program which is two classrooms at a school next year if Washington Elementary ends up closing. Ms. Lloyd asked if that needs to be a centralized location and she said she felt that Lewis & Clark Elementary would work. Mr. Watson said transportation would help us make the decision of where it is located as we do provide transportation for this program.

Mr. Watson said included in the packet was the middle school boundaries map overlaid on the elementary map. He said the map is not quite accurate as the middle school committee moved a few more areas from Franklin Middle School to Alameda Middle School. He said they also extended Siphon Road so that those learners will go to Hawthorne Middle School as opposed to Irving Middle School. He said there is an undeveloped area as well that will go to Alameda Middle School as opposed to Franklin Middle School with potential growth. Mr. Watson said there were not a lot of questions when they met with the middle school group, but they also needed to know what the elementary committee was doing. Ms. Dayley said there is a spot on the map that looks like should be in Franklin Middle School as opposed to Irving Middle School and Mr. Watson and Ms. Reader will ask Ms. Pettit

about it. Ms. Stevens said she is worried about so many people being affected by these changes. Mr. Watson said as you look at the changes it shows with taking out a school on the south of town all the boundaries shifted south. He said it shows it was redistribution throughout the entire district not just three or four schools.

Mr. Watson said there will be some concern with these boundary lines that are fairly close to schools they attend. He said there might be some push back from the community. Mr. Watson said the Johnny Creek area was transportation's biggest concern but they also said if they had to they could make it work but it might change school start times.

Mr. Watson said included in the packet was the preliminary recommendation for the committee to read through. Ms. Lloyd asked if we should include why we chose Washington Elementary over Tendoy Elementary. Mr. Watson said he felt that would probably be asked tomorrow by the board and it would be more of a discussion. Ms. Haws said the safety of the children needs to also be talked about to the community. Ms. Dayley said she thinks it would be good to talk about efficiency for enrollment as well. Ms. Lloyd asked if we could use Tendoy Elementary as the school to just house all the special programs such as Montessori, GATE, and ERR? Ms. Dayley said that Mr. Watson said most of the Montessori students live in Tyhee boundaries and if we move those programs parents would not choose to send their children to those. Mr. Muckerman said he felt it was important that we share the committee was forward thinking with development areas and trying to get as much done now so we don't have to do this again in the future. Mr. Watson said for the first three weeks we did look at all the growth areas through Pocatello and Chubbuck. Mr. Watson said the board will have the maps, the capacity numbers spreadsheet as well as the recommendation. Ms. Lloyd asked if this was going to come as a shock to the school board with the recommendation of closing Washington Elementary. Mr. Watson said this has been discussed with the board since they discussed different options with the Highland High School fire. He said he does not feel it will be a big shock to them. He said the board asked at the work session what the recommendation was and he told them we would be recommending closing a school but that he wanted to bring it back to the committee before giving them information to make sure the committee was okay with what is shared. Mr. Watson said they know we had a committee and they decided not to have a board member on it but they will want to know about the process of how the committee came to this decision. Ms. Warner said her decision was based on the safety and building structure of Washington Elementary and the amount of money it would take to fix it. Ms. Lloyd asked how much the district will save by not running an extra school? Mr. Watson said it will help offset costs but not completely, he said maybe hundreds of thousands but definitely not millions. Ms. Dayley asked if anyone is losing their job and Mr. Watson said he can't say for sure but the goal is to re-distribute everyone through retirement, or part-time to full time or people leaving their jobs. Ms. Dayley asked about paraprofessionals and Mr. Watson said the district is always looking for paraprofessionals so we will be able to find them a spot in the district. Ms. Stevens said one of the questions she keeps getting from her staff is if they decide to close the building because it is not safe and then re-open it and use it for other purposes? Mr. Watson said it would be a board decision what they decide to do with the building but the reason does go back to the decline in the enrollment.

Discussion/Questions/Resources

- School Board Meeting – Preliminary Recommendation
- Next Meeting ?

Mr. Watson said the School Board Meeting is Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. He said the high school committee will have to start their process right now and they are planning to meet three times after Thanksgiving break and see how far they get. Mr. Watson said the plan is to seek community input early in January but he was not quite sure what that would look like until there is direction from the board. He said if something comes up between now and then we could meet in December if the board wants us to look at other things. He said otherwise we won't meet until January, and it will be after we get community input.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:01 p.m.