Resolution

Board of Education Decision on District Recommendation

Regional Opportunities for Thriving Schools Phase II

WHEREAS, in its adopted Ends statements, the Board of Education of Jefferson County School District R-1 ("Jeffco Public Schools") set forth the belief that Jeffco students need and deserve robust academic, enrichment, and social-emotional programs that challenge them to grow and that prepare them for college, for careers, and for community life. The board prioritizes thriving educational experiences for students as its primary focus. The board achieves this commitment through system-wide accountability to make budget and policy decisions that are aligned with the Board's ends; and[1]

WHEREAS, according to Colorado's State Demography Office, the population of people under the age of 18 in the United States declined by over 1 million in the past decade; and in Colorado, Jefferson County's school-age population peaked in 2001 and has and will see among the highest declines in this population in the state between 2020 and 2030; and

WHEREAS, on April 7, 2022, after the emergency spring closure of two elementary schools in two consecutive years, the Jeffco Board of Education voted unanimously to direct the Superintendent to prepare a multi-phase consolidation plan to ensure thriving schools and extraordinary student experiences across the district; and

WHEREAS, the District created the Regional Opportunities for Thriving Schools (ROFTS) initiative in the Spring of 2022 to respond to the Board's request for a comprehensive plan to ensure thriving schools with enrollment to support extraordinary student experiences across our district, PK-12; and

WHEREAS, on November 10, 2022 the Board of Education voted to close 16 elementary schools in 12 articulation areas as part of ROFTS, all of which met the following criteria: An enrollment of less than 220 K-2, K-5, K-6 students OR utilizing 45% or less of the capacity of its facility AND there is an elementary school or schools less than 3.5 miles away that can serve the students from the closing school in the current articulation area; and

WHEREAS, the District committed that its next steps following the November 10, 2022 vote of the Board would include property disposition, a study of school boundaries and district articulation areas, and a recommendation to consolidate secondary schools including K-8 in Fall 2023; and

WHEREAS, K-8 and secondary schools are now, or will in the future, be impacted by permanently shifting demographics nationally, statewide, and locally in Jeffco related to declining birthrates and subsequently fewer school-age children; and

WHEREAS, the Jeffco Board of Education recognizes the need to continue to monitor enrollment patterns and trends to ensure robustly and equitably resourced school programs, alignment with the organizational values of Focus on Students and Equity; and

WHEREAS, the Jeffco Board of Education values the perspectives and lived experiences of community members and families and listens to those community priorities to inform Board decision making.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF JEFFERSON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT R-1 THAT:

The Jeffco Board of Education directs the Superintendent to move forward with Phase II of ROFTS (for the time period of May 2023 – June 2024) with the following priorities:

1. A moratorium on the consideration of high school consolidations or closures as the District focuses on its High School Reimagined initiative and applies innovative thinking, in partnership with internal and external partners, to use of excess space including for the purposes of career-connecting learning opportunities for students and/or talent-pipeline building for Jeffco-area industries;

2. Consolidation recommendations for K-8 and middle schools that are necessary due to urgently unsustainable enrollment, that are initiated by school communities, and/or driven by the Colorado Department of Education Accountability Clock.

3. Purposeful engagement and planning with municipalities and our shared communities guided by the following:
   A. Annual meetings of the school Board and municipal councils and county commissioners;
   B. Recommendations for 3-4 prioritized geographic areas provided to the Board by district staff in August 2023 that includes the following:
      - Demographic shifts and subsequent impacts on enrollment in an articulation area;
      - Opportunities to work with school staff, families, and communities to support articulation area cohesion, improve capture rates of students who live in an articulation area, and create robust opportunities for PK-12 pathways for students;

4. A landscape analysis of District Alternative Education Campuses (AEC) and resulting recommendations to ensure Jeffco has adequate AEC offerings and that those offerings are geographically accessible to the students who need and benefit from the programming;

5. Completion of a boundary study for the purposes of understanding the

following for future decision making purposes:

A. Why Jeffco families make the choices they do when it comes to school enrollment (programming analysis included)
B. Recommended articulation-area adjustments aligned with current and projected enrollment, choice patterns and trends, and transportation efficiency and reliability
C. Recommended school boundary adjustments aligned with current and projected enrollment, choice patterns and trends, and transportation efficiency and reliability
D. Whether the District's current school buildings (as is or expanded) can adequately serve its anticipated student population
E. Whether the current balance of the population of Board member districts is aligned with Colorado state law

6. Engagement with the community on the results of the boundary study and any resulting staff recommendations.

ADOPTED this 11th day of May, 2023.

JEFFERSON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT R-1

Stephanie Schooley
President, Board of
Education

Attest:

Paula Reed
Secretary, Board of Education