SAZAC
Meeting Minutes
October 6, 2026

I. Call to order

Chairperson Walker Wilson called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm at the Vernon McDaniel Administration Bldg. (75 N. Pace Blvd).

Advertisement

The meeting of SAZAC was duly advertised and announced to the public in accordance with Sunshine Laws.

All members present. Rob Doss motioned to accept minutes, Samantha Strickland 2nd.

II. Process Review

Chairperson Wilson spoke to Superintendent Leonard and School Board Representative Bergosh about clearing up any confusion on his part. He said "we're all here to do the best for students, in light of school choice."

Mr Dennis began the Process Review. He said that the "work product provides recommendations to the Superintendent- that is our process. The process was created to help facilitate community involvement and help the community understand the work that we are doing. We are looking at developing attendance zones."

Mr. Dennis reviewed some of the past years of work that former SAZAC teams have completed. A chronology has been prepared and was reviewed by Mr. Dennis. Our charge is that the 2 schools will be closed, and that we are going to develop attendance zones.

Ms. Dunagan asked "did these schools have any ideas that they would be the ones?" Mr. Dennis answered that "the committee has the ability to make additional recommendations" and pointed out that the district is charged with meeting with each school and discussing with staff and parents, due to previous SAZAC meetings recommendations.

Mr. Dennis said that our process is expected to take only 2 months because it's only 2 schools, and a lot of the work for one school was done by a former SAZAC. Mr. Dennis said we can go beyond December if necessary.

Mr. Dennis reviewed the GIS data capabilities as well.

Mr.Dennis reviewed the "purpose of SAZAC" found on the 1st page of Process Summary. Our purpose has been the same, verbatim, since 2006.

III. Project Worksheet Orientation and Discussion

SAZAC Assessment Metrics and Process Basic Steps sheet handed out. 12 are metrics listed.

Commissioner Lumon May asked permission of the chair to give input on the closure of Lincoln Park. Mr. Dennis said that this group doesn't get to make these decisions, so that he would basically be addressing the public. Mr. May was allowed to speak, he said that the county has done everything that they could to support the school. He acknowledged the anxiety of the community. He requested that the decision to close Lincoln Park be sent back to the Superintendent.
Mr. Dennis recommended that Mr. May takes that message to the decision makers- the committee is working on attendance zones- we are not the ones that decide which schools are closed. Doss acknowledged that upon review of school board meetings, the SAZAC was never charged with closing schools. He acknowledged that the Board has been discussing this since July.

Mr. Bennett addressed the Chair. He wanted to know "why Lincoln Park? Where will the children go?" and expressed concern that children will be bussed across the county.

Mr. Dennis began reviewing some of the Assessment Metrics, including 7. Core capacity- lunchroom, media center, front office, and restrooms, and 9. Racial make up. He referenced the Augustus Ruling- Carol Cleaver

asked about the ruling and Mr. Dennis promised that he would get the information about that to her.

Mr. Dennis went on to explain 10. Growth and Decline- The idea is to aim for 75% capacity when you open, if you're in a growth corridor, and 12. Long Range Implications. One example would be "how old are the buildings? is it realistic to support a building that is 112 years old?"

Mr. Dennis began to review the Process Basic Steps.

Mr. Dennis passed out Attendance Zone Variables and Nomenclature & Facility Criteria sheet. The neighborhood map was projected- we will be studying individual study areas within the existing zone.

Mr. Dennis said that this is what makes ECPS special- we drill down methodically instead of moving an entire zone at a time.

Capacity is the ability to handle specific types of students. Permanent capacity, modulars (which are also permanent), relocatable (portables) capacity. It all equals up to total capacity

Utilization- Mr. Dennis asked Chris McFarland to report: Scholarship students through the Family Empowerment Scholarship: 8,020. Home Education: 2,395. School Choice in our Public Schools: 11,508
Utilization means how we are allowed to use that school. How is the mobility of the students within the school? We cannot pack it out, how many kids can fit inside of a classroom? We're aiming for 95% usually.

Student station- the desk in the room where the student resides. Even gyms have "student station"

Mr. Dennis said "we are going to attempt to look at the academic implications of these moves as well. Jim Bobbitt will be working with Paul Combes on this. Jim will try to do some predictive indexes. It's never been done before- but we're going to try and do it."

IV. Recommendation Refinement Discussion

(to be addressed at next meeting)

V. Questions and Answers

Ms. Dunagan asked "are there restrictions on moving kids from a school with a higher school grade to a school with a lower school grade" Mr. Dennis said "that's never happened before, but we are having to look at it now." Ms. Dunagan brings up the example of Lincoln Park kids being moved to C schools. Enrollment services website has a utilization and capacity portion- this district uses 95% capacity instead of the 100% because we want to give schools flexibility.

VI. Lincoln Park Elementary Closure Attendance Zone 1st Iteration Review

(to be addressed at next meeting)

VII. Next Steps

Mr. Dennis said that "our homework is to dig into the worksheet he handed out. We have the data and metrics at our disposal, even down to bus ride times.We'll talk about the Facility Criteria portion of the Attendance Zone Variables at the beginning of the next meeting."

VIII. Next meeting

October 20th, Chairperson Wilson won't be able to be here.

IX. Adjourn

Carol Cleaver makes motion to adjourn, Brad Huggins 2nd.