



Attendance Areas PreK-12 Standing Committee

Jan. 5, 2017

3 - 5 p.m.

Welcome / Introductions and Committee Charge - Dr. Baker

Co-Chair Rob McElroy (Executive Director) welcomed the group and introduced Superintendent Dr. Greg Baker, who asked everyone to introduce themselves and share why they are interested and applied to participate in this committee. Dr. Baker then gave some background regarding why this committee was formed, including growth on the north side and housing patterns that impact enrollment. Other factors to be taken into consideration are future growth. Dr. Baker also referenced some committee members' interests and challenged everyone to contribute to the committee discussions with those interests in mind, but to also be able to step back and consider other interests that impact our students, families, staff and city. Dr. Baker thanked the group for their commitment to the project, and turned the meeting over to Co-Chairs Rob McElroy and Steve Clarke.

History and Content Leading up to Where we are Today with Attendance Areas and Facilities – Simone Sangster and Ron Cowan

- Recent History of Attendance Area Adjustments
- 2013: Facility Bond (*Handout*)

Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations Simone Sangster gave an overview of past attendance area committee work. Executive Director of Capital Projects and School Facilities Ron Cowan reviewed a handout that outlines bond projects that have occurred since 2013.

Short-Term and Long-Term Attendance Recommendations and Timelines – Steve Clarke
Co-Chair Steve Clarke (Assistant Superintendent, Department of Teaching and Learning) reviewed the history of the Cordata attendance area, including some of the recent and future growth that is now impacting Cordata's enrollment. He also talked about the difference in the enrollment size of both Bellingham High School and Squalicum High School. He noted that, although the difference in enrollment at the high schools may not seem large, the decline in enrollment at Bellingham High School has impacted the courses that can be offered at Bellingham High. Steve shared that he hopes that this team can come up with some scenarios that can then lead to a recommendation to Dr. Baker.

How to Approach our Work – Rob McElroy

- Team Norms/Agreements (*Handout*)
- Policy: Student Attendance Areas (*Handout*)
- Understand and Utilize the Considerations Factors Based on Policy 3130 (*Handout*)

Rob referred to a set of group norms that he and others have developed while serving on past committees. He then asked everyone to turn to a neighbor and discuss whether they have any suggested changes to those norms. Some of the feedback for changes included:

- A caution that humor can sometimes be alienating. It was suggested that humor be used judiciously.
- Add “and expect to compromise” to the “Work towards consensus” norm.
- Consider adding quotation marks to “parking lot” so that it is not mistaken for an actual lot where cars are parked.
- Add “student-centered” to “Seek creative ideas and solutions that address shared interests.”
- Acknowledge diversity and social-economic awareness, knowing that this group is a small subset of our larger city.
- The ability to intentionally think big and small about the issues.
- How we communicate/operate outside of this room?

Rob referred the group to Policy 3130 Student Attendance Areas. He gave examples of reasons for voluntary as well as involuntary transfers that occur, as well as different ways that boundary adjustments are made (a large-group process such as this, as well as working with small groups – principals and central office leadership for smaller adjustments).

There was time spent in small groups discussing the 8 criteria contained in Policy 3130, followed by a large group shareout of the smaller discussions. A poll was then taken to indicate which of the criteria are in each individual’s “top 3” considerations. The top three criteria were:

1. Provide a reasonably balanced socio-economic relationship in all schools.
2. Provide overall balance of student enrollment related to facility size, taking into account future growth patterns.
3. Keep siblings in the same elementary, middle or high school, whenever possible.

Preview of Next Meeting – Rob McElroy, Steve Clarke

Rob shared that at the January 12, 2017 meeting, Chris Behee from the City of Bellingham Planning Department will give a demonstration of current and further growth within the school district, utilizing “tiles” within our neighborhoods.

Meeting was adjourned at 5 p.m.

Inquiry Questions:

1. Number of high school students coming from Sudden Valley to BHS – what are the demographics, poverty rates, ethnicity.

2. Number of high school students within Birchwood and Alderwood attendance areas who attend Squalicum? What is the poverty rate and ethnicity?
3. If all schools were at or near the city-wide poverty level, then no schools would receive Title funds – an issue to consider. Looking at economic levels in neighborhoods, should some schools want to maintain Title status?
4. City of Bellingham: Should we consider annexation phasing plan?
5. City of Bellingham: Potential changes to Ferndale/BPS?
6. Are there any data or studies that support the outcomes we hope for in terms of a balanced socio-economic relationship of schools/students vs. balancing financing in an equitable way?
7. Does middle school attendance not dictate high school attendance?
8. What do the families we think we are helping with equity think about our future recommendation?