



Attendance Areas PreK-12 Standing Committee

Feb. 22, 2018
3:30 - 5:00 p.m.

Welcome

Co-Chair Rob McElroy, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, welcomed the group of returning and new members and introduced Superintendent Dr. Greg Baker.

Introductions and Review of the Committee's Charge

Dr. Baker asked everyone to introduce themselves and share why they are interested and applied to participate in this committee. He then talked about how attendance areas are a part of a school's culture, and he noted that there is an emotional component to attendance area changes. Part of this committee's charge is to keep the community from tilting with changes. Last year this committee was formed to balance the number of students between Bellingham High and Squalicum High, and to lower the number of students attending Cordata Elementary. He asked that committee members use their filters of the values and goals of our district and community when considering scenarios and making recommendations. With the passage of the bond in Feb., there will be three current elementary schools rebuilt by 2022. The order of those rebuilds will be known over the next several weeks. Dr. Baker shared two important things for this committee to keep in mind:

1. You are each on this committee because you bring a certain perspective. Please bring that to the table as the meetings progress. There will also be a time when you need to step back from your individual perspective and think about the broader "one schoolhouse" perspective.
2. You will walk out of this room with knowledge that is unknown by the community. Be diligent about change process, knowing that information will be shared when it is determined that it is the time to share. No decisions will be made without input and feedback from the communities affected.

Currently our middle school boundaries need work. Shuksan and Whatcom have higher enrollment than we would like, Fairhaven is about where it needs to be and Kulshan has lower enrollment than we would like.

One thing to keep in mind when considering how one school feeds into the next level is that it is better to have a substantial amount from each school feeding into it, rather than 99% to one school and 1% to another.

Dr. Baker asked for questions from the committee:

Q: Are we looking at changes for upcoming school year, or the 2019-20 school year?

A: The recommendations, more likely than not, will be for a year out. However, that is not to say that changes cannot be made for the 2018-19 school year.

Q: Are kids more resilient than their parents when it comes to these changes?

A: It typically is the adults who “predict the weather” with kids tending to follow their parent’s emotion. Helping families to navigate those changes is important.

Q: At one of last year’s committee meetings there was an exercise where blank maps were put on the table for the development of scenarios. Is there a time frame when poverty will be addressed?

A: People may wonder if the answer has already been decided, with the committee being merely a formality. The answer is “no”. We are not in a place, however, where we can recalibrate the entire city.

Dr. Baker closed by asking the committee members to let the co-chairs know if there is anything that the committee needs to guide discussions.

Team Norms

Rob asked that a few minutes be spent individually reviewing the Team Norms. He asked if there was feedback about any possible changes. Everyone agreed to use the norms as presented.

Review Results of Phase 1 Changes – Elementary and High School

Rob reminded the committee that they were asked last spring to take a look at the enrollment sizes at Bellingham High, Squalicum High and Cordata Elementary. As a result, recommendations were made for some changes; as a result, sixty students were moved out of Cordata with students moving to Parkview, Alderwood, Sunnyland and Northern Heights. The goal was to move 100 students from Squalicum to Bellingham, and there were approximately 60 who moved. Co-Chair Steve Clarke, Assistant Superintendent, Department of Teaching and Learning, demonstrated a [website](#) which shows segregation for race and poverty. According to that data, Bellingham has taken steps to decrease segregation among school boundaries.

City of Bellingham Growth Projections

Chris Behee of the City of Bellingham’s Planning and Community Development Department, shared the City of Bellingham housing permit activity for 2015, 2016 and 2017; recent development and student generation rates; and expected future growth across the city.

Next Steps

Steve reiterated that Whatcom and Shuksan have high enrollment, Fairhaven is a little smaller than it could be and Kulshan needs more students. There is a possibility that some students from Shuksan could move to Whatcom and some current Whatcom students could move to Kulshan. Rob talked about the future need to consider re-drawing boundaries for the three elementary schools that will be rebuilt over the next several years. This committee can help to determine what those possibilities could be and the timeline for the shifts. There are also some smaller

adjustments that should be on the committee's radar, which will be presented at a future meeting. The policies and procedures of the Bellingham Public Schools contain consideration factors for determining attendance areas, and one of those factors is feeder patterns, and another is transportation.

Rob asked that committee members consider holding the dates of May 10 and June 7 for additional meetings in case that is warranted.

The meeting was adjourned at 5 p.m.

Inquiry Questions:

1. Can KMS capture 50% of Silver Beach?
Can we see current MS #s by grade level with proposed incoming #s?
2. New special ed programs for 2018-19 and 2019-20 – locations?
New schools – build in capacity/options for additional special education students.
3. Can we get student ratios for multi-family homes by neighborhood? Rather than a city-wide average.
4. One thing that concerns me: The idea of 600 per middle school, while fitting our philosophy of MS perfectly, doesn't add up. Aren't we going to be averaging closer to 700 soon?