



Attendance Areas PreK-12 Standing Committee

May 10, 2018
3:30 - 5:00 p.m.

Welcome

Co-Chair Rob McElroy, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, welcomed everyone. Rob provided an overview of today's agenda and asked that committee members review the minutes from the March 12 meeting. A motion was made by committee member Matt Whitten to approve the minutes as written. Committee member Tommy Lingbloom seconded that motion and there was a unanimous vote to approve.

Big Picture of Our Work/Process Going Forward

Rob reminded the committee members that this committee's charge to review and adjust attendance areas started over a year ago, with a focus on Squalicum and Cordata overcrowding. This year we are working to decrease the number of students at Shuksan Middle School. Any attendance area adjustments recommended and approved by the committee's work this year would likely be put into effect in the fall of 2019. We will need time to process and gather input from families who would be impacted by our recommendations during the winter and would plan to inform families of boundary changes prior to spring break 2019. Rob shared that Parkview, Alderwood and Sunnyland elementary schools will be able to accommodate up to 450 students after construction has been completed (they now have a capacity of approximately 300 students). Any changes to the elementary attendance areas would not take effect until the fall of 2020 at the earliest. Educational Specifications/Design Advisory Committees for Alderwood and Parkview have been formed and will begin meeting soon. It may be that those two schools will be built simultaneously. Rob noted that it is likely that some small work team meetings will be scheduled after the June 7 meeting to prepare for fall 2018 committee meetings.

Review Middle School Concepts

Co-chair Steve Clarke, Assistant Superintendent, Department of Teaching and Learning, reviewed the elementary schools that split their enrollment into more than one middle school. He then spent some time reviewing the various scenarios that have been brainstormed and created thus far by the committee, including the latest developed by a small work team on April 24. He asked committee members to share their thoughts:

- The goal would be to create elementary splits that are more evenly divided.
- A challenge is the fear of making a radical change in attendance areas involving hundreds of students and families. The first two or three years of adjustments will ultimately lead to good changes.
- Consider taking a closer look at how the changes will affect the elementary schools that will be rebuilt over the next few years.
- Keep in mind that some changes may make it difficult for transportation and families' access to extra-curricular events.

- An activities bus may help students to participate in after-school activities.
- We may not be able to apply for grants such as 21st Century if our poverty level is reduced. This may also be true for the Title I grant.
- We need to make sure we engage parents, and if they live far from the school and don't have transportation, the change may be difficult for them.
- It would be important to overlay the middle and high school boundaries to identify whether changes to the middle school attendance areas will create a smaller percentage of students attending one of the feeder high schools.
- How do we know what is right for parents who are not represented on this committee?
- Are we looking at the demographics of students who transfer in or out of our schools?

Rob then asked for committee members to each review all of the scenarios developed thus far and identify the three concepts that they believe are the most viable. There was then discussion regarding whether some of the proposed scenarios should be eliminated so the committee can focus on the scenarios that may be more viable.

There was discussion regarding how families living in poverty may be affected and react to some of the concepts. Moving higher poverty tiles around may not be the answer, as it can be difficult for students living in poverty to be placed into a school with a low poverty rate. Are there models in other districts that can be looked at? If so, how have these significant changes affected families? Is there research that can be looked at? It was noted that school culture is important at every school, and that is work that our principals and district leaders will always continue to work on. Perhaps a small group can look further into the leading scenarios to see how they will affect the elementary attendance areas, and it would be helpful to have more data regarding individual students/families as well as their community and support system. It also might be helpful to know how many apartment complexes have been approved to be built over the next five years. There was a suggestion to assign chapters from the "Our Kids" book to read/review. It was noted by one committee member that it would be helpful to look at the racial mix in our schools.

Nine committee members volunteered to meet with Rob, Steve and Chris Behee (GIS Analyst for the City of Bellingham Planning & Community Development Department). A date and time will be identified and communicated to those who expressed interest.

Closing

The meeting was adjourned at 5 p.m.