

**Douglas County School District
Lake Schools Study Group
Fall 2014**

Background

The Board heard comments from concerned parents and community members during spring meetings regarding reductions to staffing at Whittell. In late May, the superintendent held a short input session with about 25 parents to learn more about their concerns and requests. A summary of that meeting is provided in the table below:

Suggestions/Requests	Concerns/Challenges
<p>Parents would like additional courses to be offered even if some are on a rotation cycle of 2-3 years.</p> <p><u>Examples Given:</u> World Languages Spanish II, III, IV Auto Shop Wood Shop Choir Band Drama Speech & Debate Additional Advanced English Additional Advanced Math More AP Courses Technology Coding & Programming Graphic Arts (CAD) Intro to Engineering</p>	<p>Some courses are offered but they are singletons and can create conflicts in scheduling. The issue of the "Pathway."</p> <p><u>Example:</u> A student may have to choose between Spanish and an AP course that are both desired but only offered once in the schedule and at the same time.</p> <p>Many students are taking classes online so that they can get a class they want or need at school.</p> <p>Some have concerns that middle school students are separated from 9-12 as 7th and 8th graders and other parents have concerns that middle schoolers <i>were</i> separated before and need to be again. Some dislike that electives have students all mixed together across the 7-12 grade span. (Middle School issues need more discussion.)</p> <p>Teachers need to be full-time. Partial contracts lead to teachers leaving WHS when they find a full-time job somewhere else.</p> <p>All teachers need to be high quality. Concerns about marginal employees having a bigger impact in a small school than they do in a large school.</p> <p>Parents feel WHS needs a full-time vice-principal and a Dean because of many evening events and needs of the middle school students.</p>

At the July 2014 Board Meeting, the superintendent provided an outline for a Study Group to be formed and work on formal recommendations to bring back to the Board.

Study Group Committee Membership

K-12 Teachers	K-12 Parents	Community Rep
Mrs. Konnie Susich	Mr. Brian Rippet	Mr. Greg Felton
Mrs. Cathy Johnson	Mrs. Stacy Noyes	
Mr. Phil Sorensen	Mrs. Kathy Kixmiller	

Facilitator:

Dr. Nancy McMillan

Staff Support:

WHS Principal Crespin Esquivel
 ZCES Principal Nancy Cauley
 Ed Services Director for Area 3, Rommy Cronin

Board Support:

Ross Chichester (Tom Moore back-up)
 Cindy Trigg (Teri Jamin back-up)

An application was made available to parents, teachers and community members who showed interest in serving on the committee.

Because there were more applications than seats to fill, final names were selected by lottery for each category on Thursday, September 18th.

Meetings will be posted and open to the public so any interested parties may attend. Public comment will be included on each agenda.

Meeting Dates and Times

Mtg.	Day/Date	Time
1	Tuesday, September 23 rd	4:30pm-6:30pm
2	Tuesday, October 7 th	4:30pm-6:30pm
3	Tuesday, October 21 st	4:30pm-6:30pm
4	Tuesday, November 4 th	4:30pm-6:30pm
5	Tuesday, December 2 nd	4:30pm-6:30pm
6	Thursday, December 11 th	4:30pm-6:30pm

Work of the Study Group

Include Pros and Cons for each Recommendation in the final report

#1 What should/could the format and course offerings look like if Whittell stays approximately the same size? (approximately 200 students for 7-12)
#2 What should/could the format and course offerings look like if Whittell grows in enrollment? (What is the maximum enrollment for WHS campus without remodels?)
#3 What should/could the Lake Schools' format and course offerings look like if Whittell/ZCES decline in enrollment? (350 projection for K-12 or lower)

Possible Ideas to Research and Consider:

- *Review of Section from Facilities Master Plan for Lake Schools
- *What are the configuration options and pros-cons for each?
- *What ideas and strategies should be considered? (Blended classrooms, distance learning, others)
- *What other 7-12 schools in our region have similar size and great results for visits/interviews?
- *What should the Whittell 7th-8th graders have for their format and structure?
- *Should 6th grade be added to Whittell if Valley middle schools are going to be 6-7-8?
- *What is the appropriate and/or reasonable size for typical classes?
- *Should DCSD pursue an MOU with LTUSD (South Lake) for Variances?
- *What is the requirement in Nevada code or statute for DCSD regarding minimums in small schools? (NDE research of question in progress)
- *What are the capital projects components that align to these recommendations?
(i.e., technology infrastructure remodels or space needs, playground, restrooms or code implications.)

Comments/Parameters from the Board- July Meeting

- *Determine givens for the beginning of the process.
- *Need orderly decision-making
- *Review any constraints at the beginning to avoid frustrations later. Be careful not to give the impression that the *sky is the limit*.
- *Decision points/recommendations must be produced. (For example, "*If the school reaches size "x," this will be the plan that is put in place.*")
- *Don't avoid a careful review of what Distance Learning or Online options are out there.
- *If offering things, they should be college prep.
- *Be aware of everything that is a possibility. Look at different scenarios. Make recommendations for what we would add if the enrollment goes up and what does it look like at a certain number if it goes down.
- *Need to have recommendations for different scenarios of various school sizes.

Reminder on Parallel Project and Timing for WHS

The timing and scope of the Study Group's work needs to be coordinated with another significant project that will take place at Whittell in 2014-15. WHS will be going through an extensive accreditation renewal application next year. This will require significant time from staff and school leadership to complete the process by the end of the year. The work of the Study Group would be of the most help to the accreditation team if their input were delivered by November.