

Douglas County School District
Lake Schools' Study Group Board Advisory Committee
Whittell High School Tuesday,
Tuesday, September 23, 2014
4:30 p.m.

Minutes
Approved
October 21, 2014

MINUTES

Present:

Facilitator:

Dr. McMillan

Committee Members:

Greg Felton

Cathy Johnson

Kathy Kixmiller

Stacy Noyes

Brian Rippet

Phil Sorensen

Konnie Susich

Committee Support:

Ross Chichester

Cindy Trigg (Not Present)

Nancy Cauley

Rommy Cronin

Crespin Esquivel

Others Present:

Dr. Lisa Noonan

1. Call to Order

Dr. Noonan called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Noyes moved to adopt the agenda, seconded by Mr. Rippet.

Motion carried 7/0.

2. Welcome, Introductions & Overview (Discussion)

Dr. Noonan introduced the Facilitator, Committee Members, and Committee Support and gave an overview of why the Study Group had been formed. A handout was provided with the background, suggestions/requests, concerns/challenges, and the work of the Study Group to set the stage for conversation to design a report for recommendations to the Board prior to January. Dr. Noonan asked the Committee to be mindful of the fact that the timing and scope of the work needs to be coordinated with the accreditation renewal application for GWHS.

The handout contained 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.)

The handout also contained comments and parameters from the Board for the advisory study:

- 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.

To be a member of the study group, applications were made available to parents, teachers and community members who showed interest in serving on the Committee, and a lottery was held September 18, 2014, at GWHS.

The Committee meetings will be held in public with a posted Agenda and Minutes will be collected and recorded.

The meetings will be held at GWHS on the following six days:

Tuesday, September 23
Tuesday, October 7
Tuesday, October 21
Tuesday, November 4
Tuesday, December 2
Thursday, December 11

The Board would like three main study questions to be included in the Committee's report:

1. What should/could the format and course offerings look like if Whittell stays approximately the same size?
2. What should/could the format and course offerings look like if Whittell grows in enrollment?
3. What should/could the Lake Schools' format and course offerings look like if Whittell/ZCES decline in enrollment?

Discussion was held about the Committee using Norms as they interact with each other. Those Norms were listed as:

- Start and end on time
- Actively participate and engage in the meeting
- Express disagreement with the subject, not the person
- Refrain from side bar conversations
- Speak respectfully to each other
- Listen without interrupting
- Attend all meetings on time
- Keep commitments
- Speak frankly and not have comments taken as criticism
- Follow the Open Meeting Laws
- Remind Members of the Norms during the meetings if necessary

Dr. McMillan asked for a motion to accept the Norms as presented. Ms. Susich moved to approve the Norms, seconded by Ms. Kixmiller.

Motion carried 7/0.

3. Public Comment

Dr. McMillan called for public comment.

Three members of the public and one teacher offered ideas they would like the Committee to review.

Carol Chaplin, Executive Director of the Lake Tahoe Visitor's Authority, asked the Committee to look at how the schools globally fit into the economic engine. New businesses and new practices will not be attracted to the area without a school like GWHS. It is an excellent small school and needs to stand out as one to be proud of. TESLA was mentioned as entering the region with the hope of adding 50,000 jobs to the area and is an excellent opportunity to attract more companies to the area which will bring new families into the schools. In reference to the norms, she asked the Committee to think out of the box and think through all ideas and to stay positive. LTCC is fast-tracking incredible programs and suggested the Committee invite the President to speak to the Committee about how LTCC will become a 4 year school and an international school, including study programs and working with UC Davis as a satellite campus. Twenty international students are currently attending LTCC for their soccer program.

Kelly Krolicki addressed the Committee to commend the schools for doing a lot of things correctly to be the 2nd best high school in the state and would like to see it become No. 1 in Nevada. The Hard Rock Casino and Edgewood are going to be large projects that will bring new families to the area and is optimistic about increased enrollment. The public schools also benefitted from a small private school closing. Options should be looked at to make it easier for people to come to DCSD schools.

Stella Roper thanked the Committee for volunteering their time and thanked Mr. Chichester for attending because the actions of the Committee will benefit all of Douglas County as well as helping GWHS. She mentioned there should be marketing of the K-12 programs and suggested Ms. Cauley could help with the strategic plan and possibly a new mission statement to focus on statistics and mentioned the 5 star rating, stating that statistics are all some parents care about. She is opposed to joining both lake schools. She suggested looking at capital improvements and changes to the building. Students could benefit from working closely with LTCC.

Mikie Peacock addressed the Committee about offering courses that are college prep, but to not overlook the many students that do not want to go to college or may only want vocational training. LTCC could help support our students.

4. Prioritization of Study Group Work (Discussion for Possible Action)

The Committee discussed items to be researched:

- The number of students in our schools does not reflect the number of students who live in the area. All students were not captured from the closed private school. The Committee should think about how to attract more families to the our schools.
- In the past, families were called and asked why they are choosing to send their children to other schools. There needs to be better customer service to let the community know there are school choices. We need to let the community know we have the best high school in the area.
- We need to advertise and celebrate our schools.
- Once a family makes a decision to attend another school district, it is hard to make them change their minds to move. Suggest looking at SLT to see what offerings we are competing against.
- Tuition at SLT is \$5,500, if you do not live in CA. However, If one parent works in CA at least 10 hours a week, that family receives free tuition to attend SLT but the students may not play sports per NIAA.
- We need to be more proactive about our schools, to have something that makes us shine to attract more students. The SLT facilities are beautiful. They received grant money to remodel their facilities to include drama classes, band rooms and new classrooms. Suggested talking to SLT staff to ask what they have to offer.

- We need to be on the cutting edge of what is offered for students for them to be excited for the future whether they are college bound or vocationally bound. We are #2 in the state, but we need to be #1 and we need to show people that we are looking at the future for our students. We need to offer courses for all students that are more than the state standards and common core.
- The LTVA and the Chamber have a different vision for moving forward and are working on Vision 20/20. We need to make sure we are in tandem with all community efforts because of the changing environment and make sure we are speaking the same language.

Questions from the Committee before research would begin:

- What constraints are there; is the major constraint money?
- If money is provided by grants or fundraising, will that money be allocated to where the Committee decides it should go or will the money go into the general fund to be split, ie raising money to build new classrooms?

Responses from the district:

- There needs to be balance between creative, out of the box ideas and what can be done. Money is the #1 constraint and is a daily issue for the District level and the Board level. Hopefully the Committee can come up with different ideas. The board would like a list of prioritizes to review.
- Other constraints may be contracts and personnel issues. Dropping or adding courses could involve personnel issues.
- The Board looks for priorities and looks at the cost of those priorities. It is important to look at ideas that will attract more students because more services could be provided. The master plan for facility improvements needs to be reviewed to see what can be done and when. The ideas generated by the Committee need price tags associated with them and be prioritized for the Board to review.
- Grants are wonderful, but they are for a limited time. It's not fair to hire personnel for the time of the grant but not to be able to sustain the funding after the grant. For example, if funds are raised for more classrooms, but there are no funds to hire the teachers, then that is a problem for the Board.

Other comments from the Committee:

- There is no concern that DCSD students go to school and learn every day in the classroom. We need to get over the basic skills mindset that we got into with competencies that every student will graduate with basic skills. We need to excite students to make them want to go to school every day. Connect students to the environment we live in through activities like swim lessons, experience open water, winters sports, ski programs, and go to work for a week or two in the community. Let's not worry about test scores and being a 5 star school and get beyond the constraints and figure out why parents would want their students to attend our schools.
- We need to also advocate for the special education students who will not attend college. We need to get students out in the community doing other things.
- It looks like the questions are about marketing, growth of the schools, content of classes, and identifying the ideas we want/need to research.

Committee members created a list of topics to be researched and volunteered to work on the attached list of topics:

- Visit K-12 schools in SLT to discuss with District Office. Gather information on their programs (e.g. Dual immersion and environment). [Mr. Sorenson and Ms. Kixmiller]
- Research where students on the Nevada side of the lake attend school, if not DCSD. Reach out to families who do not send their children to DCSD and find out why [Mr. Felton and Ms. Kixmiller]
- Research all available information on the 4 day school week. [Mr. Felton]
- Examine the information already gathered on I.B. program. [Ms. Johnson]
- Examine possible Memorandum of Understanding between SLT and DCSD and what are the pros and cons. [Mr. Rippet and Ms. Noyes]
- Find out about LTCC programs; how are they enhancing their program? What can we do to feed their program? Explore the ways we can offer dual credit. Explore reduced tuition. [Ms. Noyes and Mr. Felton]

- What kinds of jobs are coming to the community and what CTE courses can we offer to meet this need? How does the school fit into the global economic community? [No one assigned yet]
- How do we get to be #1 on US News and WR ranking and what are the criteria? [Mr. Felton]
- Is there a staffing formula we follow? What are rural staffing formulas in other districts? What else is used to determine staffing? [No one assigned yet]
- Research other successful 7-12 schools. [Ms. Kixmiller]
- Research community based learning. [Ms Kixmiller and Mr. Rippet]

5. Meeting Schedule

Discussion was held about the next meeting being scheduled on October 7, 2014, at GWHS from 4:30 PM to 6:30 PM. Ms. Peacock said that she would volunteer to join the Committee in Ms. Susich's absence.

6. Adjournment

At 6:28 p.m., Mr. Felton moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Sorenson.

Motion carried 7/0.

Submitted by



Dr Nancy McMillan, Facilitator
Facilitator, Lake Schools' Study Group