

Task Force on the Future of Education in the City of Lynchburg: PreK-12 and Beyond

Operations, Facilities and Consolidation (Facilities) Subcommittee

January 24, 2020

Meeting Location: Room 206, School Administration Building,  
915 Court Street, Lynchburg, VA 24504

MINUTES

Subcommittee Chair Kimball Payne called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. All subcommittee members were present. Deputy Superintendent Ben Copeland also attended the meeting. The minutes of the December 18, 2019 meeting were approved by unanimous consent.

1. Debrief Elementary Schools Tours – Subcommittee members shared their impressions of the tours of the elementary schools conducted on January 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. Overall, they were impressed by the professionalism and dedication exhibited by the staff, with the cleanliness of the buildings, and with the good behavior of the students encountered in the halls. Other impressions, themes or conclusions offered during the discussion included:
  - Sandusky ES needs to be replaced; followed by work on Linkhorne ES, Paul Munro ES, and Dearington ES. Major mechanical systems work needs to be done in other schools. The subcommittee agreed that LCS staff perceptions about building needs are sound and have been appropriately documented in past capital improvement planning.
  - There are space needs at every school, often created by mandates or programs. For example, alternative education programs, district-wide or at the individual school, and mandates such as movement requirements affect capacity. Special ed and Pre-K programs also impact space. As a result, school capacities can't be calculated by simple numeric formulae.
  - Modular units are not a desirable solution to address space needs.
  - A list of alternative and/or division-wide programs housed in the elementary schools, their location, numbers, and trends was requested. A discussion arose about the proper location for such programs. There was an understanding that there is a goal of mainstreaming students in these programs into the general population as much as possible.
  - There is an issue around how food services are provided in elementary schools. Some have full kitchens where meals are cooked; at others kitchen space has been converted to other purposes and meals are delivered from other school kitchens.
  - New school buildings should be designed to have dignity and character, reflective of the importance of education to the community. At the same time, however, the school of the future is going to need to have space that is flexible and adaptable to evolving education delivery paradigms and programs.
  - Any capital plan to address elementary schools' needs will have a significant cost. For example, a new Sandusky ES could cost \$30-35 million.

2. Review of Elementary Schools Attendance Zones
  - a. Facilities' capacities and locations – there was a discussion about growth in the Heritage ES and Sheffield HS attendance zones and whether or not a new Sandusky ES, with a capacity of as many as 700 students, could provide some relief. The committee concluded that Heritage HS is in a challenging location, on a landlocked site and, therefore, not able to accommodate increased enrollment. Perhaps it should be converted to another use. The potential for expanding Sheffield ES was also discussed.
  - b. Impacts of demographic trends – the subcommittee is interested in seeing trends and projections for elementary school enrollment growth, particularly in the Heritage ES, Sheffield ES, and Sandusky ES attendance zones.
  - c. Mandates, flexibility and values – questions were raised about the impact of the 1971 U.S. District Court order on any realignment of attendance zones. Although there may be some flexibility provided within its provisions, are there other Federal or state statutes or regulations that would affect realignment decisions? Furthermore, what community values would inform the discussion? For example, how should a desire for neighborhood schools be balanced with values of diversity and equity?
  
3. Discussion on Fulfilling the Subcommittee's Responsibilities
  - a. What additional information is desired? – the subcommittee is particularly interested in considering information about demographic trends and enrollment projections and about future programming in the schools.
  - b. What might be the interrelationship, overlap, or integration with the other subcommittees? – the Facilities Subcommittee is very aware that the conclusions and recommendations of the other subcommittees will impact its work.
  - c. What are some initial ideas for the content (topics or issues) of the subcommittee's report in April? – due to time limitations and a desire to see what comes from the next Task Force meeting on January 30<sup>th</sup>, this item was deferred to a later date.
  - d. Are there any principles and/or values that we should be true to as we develop our conclusions and recommendations? – several potentially competing principles or values were identified, including:
    - Neighborhood schools and values of diversity, inclusivity and equity
    - Mainstreaming of special education students as opposed to providing segregated programs
    - Designing buildings with dignity and character and the flexibility to be responsive to changing approaches to the delivery of education
    - The reality of limited resources and desires for efficiency and environmental stewardship
  
4. What should we tell the Task Force at its meeting on January 30<sup>th</sup>? – a general overview of the subcommittee's work to date and future plans will be provided.
  
5. Consideration of Future Tours: Buildings Housing Alternative Education Programs; Dunbar Middle School – the subcommittee will tour Dunbar Middle School, the Fort Hill School, and the bus maintenance facilities on Friday, February 7<sup>th</sup>.
  
6. Next Steps and Action Item Assignments:

