

MINUTES

Special Meeting of the

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
EQUITY COMMITTEE**
Corvallis School District 509J
1555 SW 35th Street
Corvallis, OR 97339

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Cathi Alden
Rae DeLay
Cyrel Gable, Board Chair
Sara Gelser, Board Member
Heather Jager
Deb Kadas
Lynn Lahey
Nell O'Malley, Board Member
Laverne Pitts
Blake Rodman
Marc Rosegold
Anne Schuster
James Wickman

OTHERS PRESENT

Kathy Rodeman, Business Manager
Jeanne Holmes, Assistant to Superintendent
Kim Patten, Recorder

I. INTRODUCTION & FOLLOW-UPS FROM LAST MEETING

Jeanne Holmes welcomed the committee, reviewed the agenda, and asked the committee members to independently review the charge before the meeting proceeded.

Kathy Rodeman updated the committee on the boundary sub-group. The first meeting is scheduled for January 9th. They will begin by looking at criteria for boundary changes. The committee brainstormed criteria for the boundary sub-group to consider (See Attachment A). Kathy requested that any additional criteria or input be emailed to her directly.

The committee reviewed some areas within our district that the sub-group will evaluate to determine whether or not changes are needed. The committee asked that the sub-group consider housing developments that have been built since the last boundary change and any that are projected in the near future.

II. OPEN ENROLLMENT

The committee reviewed the criteria that were brainstormed at the last meeting (See Attachment B). The following discussion occurred:

- I am uncomfortable with the term “equal opportunity to access.”
- I think we should look at the definition in a reverse scenario: Do we create an impediment that keeps any student from getting a rigorous high standard of learning and a quality education at a public school?
- I want to clarify that we are not adopting an NCLB definition of equity; we are adopting a definition that will give access to all students.
- All schools should meet the criteria without open enrollment.
- We are here serving on this committee because we believe that our schools are not equal.
- We are here because some people think that the open enrollment policy has created financial inequities that lead to an inability for some schools to provide quality programs.
- Perceptions are that schools are inequitable.
- Eliminating choice is not an option. We should only consider adding more choice.
- The first criteria listed are vague in the term “help.” What do we mean by “help?”
- Should one of our criteria be to maintain choice?
- Criteria should help us decide if choice is okay.
- Can we define cost effective? Yes, cost effective should save money, be cost neutral, or have a minimal cost.
- Our open enrollment policy was developed to be cost effective to the district by keeping students from withdrawing for private or home schooling.
- Home schooling seems to increase each year making it a more feasible option for more families.
- Home school numbers are increasing faster than private school numbers.
- There continues to be more support for home-schooled students through private businesses.

The committee agreed to accept the criteria listed at last weeks meeting with the understanding that it would remain fluid and negotiable.

The committee then reviewed the possible recommendations listed at our last meeting. Additional recommendations were added (See Attachment C). The committee then began an analysis of each recommendation. (See Attachment D)

III. TIMELINE FOR DECISIONS

Concerns were expressed about the length of time it took the committee to analyze one possible recommendation. The committee explored different possibilities including breaking up into groups to complete the remaining analyses but all agreed that the whole-committee conversations were very helpful to hear everyone’s point of view. After much discussion, the committee decided to extend the committee timeline to allow needed time on each recommendation.

IV. NEXT STEPS

Staff will email the possible recommendations to the committee for homework. The committee should be prepared to continue with the recommendations analysis at our next meeting on January 22, 2004.

***Attachments continued on next page**

Attachment A

Possible Criteria to be Considered by Boundary Sub-group

- Student attend school within reasonable proximity of home
- Least amount of disruption
- Even number of students as possible at each school
- Natural progression through all levels
- Safety issues – crossing highways and busy streets

Attachment B

Proposed Criteria

1. Helps assure that every student has equal access to a rigorous, high standard of learning and quality public schools.
2. Alignment to district plan:
 - Learning for all
 - Collaborative, creative culture
 - Aligned systems
3. Community support
4. Cost effective (save, cost neutral, minimal cost impact)

Notes:

- Is there a child that does not have ability to get a high quality education?
- Do we create an impediment?
- Keep in mind the impact on K-8 schools
- Not adopting “NCLB” definition
- Minimize stratifications
- Child / student driven – not budget driven

Attachment C

Possible Recommendations

1. Narrow enrollment window
2. Equalizing kindergarten and middle school offerings – half day choice at every school, same electives
3. Room for people to move in
4. Explore transportation
5. Keep siblings together – gather data in conflict
6. A lot of info to parents
7. Central kindergarten enrollment
8. Work toward voluntary diversification of choice
9. Re-examine reasonable capacities
10. Enrollment floors
11. Other options for funding models
12. Enforce policy – schools with high transfer rates must remain within district averages
13. Have acceptable reasons for transfers

Attachment D

Recommendation Analysis

Recommendation: Narrow window for open enrollment “guarantee”

Does it meet criteria? 12 members said yes, 2 members said the recommendation was “neutral” when held up against the criteria, and 1 was undecided

Possible Variations:

- New families moving to town would still have choice
- Open houses would have to occur earlier.
- Flexibility for K-1?

Unintended Consequences:

- If exceptions were made, how would we ensure that kids are not discriminated against? For example, could schools turn away high need kids?

Additional information needed:

- Call other districts back to find out what the unexpected consequences were for narrowing their open enrollment window.
- Get input from principals on possible timelines. Would a different deadline for kindergarten make sense?

Pros: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better control of budget and staff• Ability to plan programs and electives• Staffing• Teachers would have better sense of how many kids to plan for• Narrowing the window sends a message to staff that we have a firm time frame to deal with marketing, once the deadline passes, staff can focus their energy elsewhere• Supports staffing decisions that work best for kids• Time and energy principals spend on budgets / staffing takes away from kids• People get used to deadlines over time	Cons: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Doesn't address mobility that naturally occurs – there will still be budget / staffing issues• Narrowing window is less user friendly for families• If someone moves to town will they still have a choice?• Would discriminate against people on waiting list• Would further restrict access to families who are unable to make decisions within the deadline due to other issues• Schools scrambling for enrollment will want to take as many kids as possible
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Possible Timelines:

- January through March 1st / 3 committee members supported this option
- January through April 15th / 6 committee members supported this option
- January through June 1st / 3 committee members supported this option