

MINUTES

Special Meeting of the

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

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

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

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Nell O'Malley, Board Member

OTHERS PRESENT

Jeanne Holmes, Assistant to Superintendent  
Kim Patten, Recorder

I. INTRODUCTION

Jeanne Holmes welcomed the committee, reviewed the agenda, and reviewed the progress that the committee made at their last meeting.

II. OPEN ENROLLMENT

The committee reviewed the problem statement prepared by Jeanne Holmes. (See Attachment A) Cyrel Gable provided written feedback for the committee's review. Cyrel pointed out that there are two kinds of equities – 1) inequity between schools and 2) socio-economic inequities. She urged the committee to consider the impact of open enrollment on students, not schools.

The committee agrees that declining enrollment and socio-economic stratification cause a problem, but continue to struggle with whether or not this is caused by or exacerbated by open enrollment. They identified that the problem develops when schools do not receive adequate funding to provide quality programs for their population because their enrollment is low. After reviewing the data, the committee was unable to agree if open enrollment was the cause of declining enrollment at some schools or if declining enrollment is exacerbated by open enrollment at some schools.

A committee member pointed out that the average enrollment at our elementary schools is 315. The committee briefly discussed whether or not we could adequately fund all of our elementary schools when enrollment is continuing to decrease and it is already low enough to cause problems at some schools. There were discussions that if we closed a school, the enrollment at the other schools would increase, thus limiting the amount of transferring that could occur if enrollment capacities were set and enforced.

The committee then did a pros and cons analysis of the following two possible recommendations (see Attachment B):

- Provide more centralized information about all schools for parents.
- Set realistic building capacities that are enforced and take into account special programs and kids moving into the neighborhood.

After completing the analysis, the committee unanimously agreed to keep both of these items on their list of possible recommendations to send to Superintendent Ford.

### III. UPDATE FROM BOUNDARY COMMITTEE

Kathy Rodeman was unable to attend but she sent information for the committee to review. (See Attachment C.) Jeanne Holmes reminded the committee that any recommendations for changes to school boundaries would not be implanted until school year 2005/06.

### IV. NEXT STEPS

Jeanne Holmes will work on making the committee recommended changes to the Problem Statement and send it out via e-mail before our next meeting.

Our next meeting will be on March 4, 2004 in the district office boardroom at 2:00 PM. The committee will continue with the Recommendation Analysis for the remaining items on the list of possible recommendations at that meeting.

Attachment A

**PROBLEM STATEMENT: Open Enrollment Policies and Practices**

Prepared by Jeanne Holmes for the Committee's Input

School choice is a national trend. It takes different forms in other communities and states—more charter schools, more schools without boundaries like Franklin, and even options to choose between districts. In our community, school choice takes the form of open enrollment between district schools.

National research points to lack of transportation and lack of information about choice options as two critical areas to address so that all families have equal access to school choice. As in other communities across the country, all families in Corvallis currently do not have equal access to choice because of the same lack of information and lack of transportation options.

In addition, the Corvallis School District, data indicates an increase in socio-economic stratification in some schools over the past ten years. This stratification appears to be caused not just by open enrollment, but by multiple other factors--increasing poverty in our community, declining enrollment, ESL magnet programs, and school closures and consolidations.

Another area of concern that is not related to socio-economic stratification is declining enrollment in some schools. Other factors besides open enrollment may be causing this, including low enrollment in the school boundary area and parent dissatisfaction.

The crux of the issue is determining if schools with socio-economic stratification and/or declining enrollment schools are negatively impacted by these trends.

Most committee members agree that our lower socio-economic schools serve students who come to school with more behavior issues and lacking the background experiences of our typical middle class students, creating a different and more difficult teaching challenge than higher SES schools. Most also would argue that the quality of instruction is none-the-less held to the same high standard as other schools. Additional resources are channeled to these schools through Title I, the district funding formula and, in some cases, other federal and state grants available to lower income schools in recognition of the increased challenges. These resources provide additional support to meet the unique needs of students and families in our lower SES schools.

Some believe that schools with declining enrollment, regardless of the socio-economic factor, are negatively impacted because of the loss of resources that follows lower enrollment. Others strongly disagree, stating that while schools may provide different offerings, all provide a high quality of education for their student populations.

Committee members could not conclusively agree that socio-economic stratification and/or declining enrollment have a negative impact on schools.

Attachment B

## Recommendation Analysis

### Recommendation: More Centralized Objective Information

Does it meet criteria?

Possible Variations:

- Advertising in the Gazette Times
- Broadcasting on our cable television station
- Limit additional marketing
- We need to determine how much is enough information

Unintended Consequences:

- More information to parents about all of the schools may increase the number of transfers between buildings.

Additional information needed:

- 

<p><b>Pros:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More people would know about our open enrollment policy.</li><li>• More complete and impartial information would be accessible to parents.</li><li>• Better access to information during the summer for new families.</li><li>• More convenient for parents.</li><li>• We could consolidate information from all schools and make sure it is equally informative about all schools.</li><li>• It could reduce pressure on schools to market.</li></ul>	<p><b>Cons:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It could be too impartial – it should give the schools more of an opportunity to “sell” themselves.</li><li>• Families may not know where to access the centralized information.</li><li>• Increased cost for the district. (This expense is currently hidden within school budgets, for example principals spend time on marketing that could be better spent with students or staff.)</li><li>• Does not address internal cultural issues.</li><li>• Does not address the issue of PTO’s spending money on marketing.</li></ul>
--	---

Attachment B - continued

### **Recommendation Analysis**

**Recommendation: Set realistic building capacities that are enforced, taking into account special programs at the building and kids moving into the neighborhood.**

Does it meet criteria?

- 

Possible Variations:

- Set capacities based on physical capacity
- Consider setting a classroom capacity by grade level
- Do not want to add modular classrooms to increase building capacity

Unintended Consequences:

- 

Additional information needed:

- 

<p><b>Pros:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prevents overcrowding at schools</li><li>• Based on physical capacity – more psychologically acceptable to community</li><li>• Could limit marketing efforts when schools reach their capacity</li><li>• It would stop schools from over-filling to pull in more funding</li></ul>	<p><b>Cons:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Restricts open enrollment to some degree.</li><li>• Setting a building capacity will also set a funding cap for each school.</li><li>• Could create disgruntled parents when their student isn't allowed to attend the school of their choice due to it being full.</li></ul>
--	---

Attachment C

## Boundary Update

### Where are the problems?

Jefferson – Only 218 kids in the boundary area – 69 are on transfers to other schools.

Wilson – Only 346 kids in the boundary area – 151 are on transfer to other schools.

Inavale – Only 57 kids in the boundary area – 15 are on transfer to other schools.

### Which schools have too many kids?

Garfield  
Adams  
Mountain View

### Possibilities for moving students:

<b>Current School</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Area / Program</b>	<b>Possible New School</b>
Garfield	28	Developmentally Disabled	Jefferson or Wilson
Garfield	23	Old Harding Boundary	Jefferson
Garfield	19	Peoria Road	Jefferson
Mt. View	21	Jack London	Wilson or Garfield *
Mt. View	7	Conifer	Wilson or Garfield *
Mt. View	1	Lancaster	Wilson or Garfield*
Adams	?	Oak Creek	Jefferson?

\*If moved to Garfield, then we would propose moving the inner city chunk of kids to Jefferson.