

**Minutes of a Special Committee of the Whole Meeting of the Board of Education of  
Community Consolidated School District 15  
Palatine, Cook County, Illinois  
Held on Wednesday, April 21, 2021, 6:30 p.m.  
Walter R. Sundling Junior High School  
1100 N. Smith Street, Palatine, Illinois 60067**

A Special Committee of the Whole Meeting of the Board of Education of Community Consolidated School District 15, Palatine, Cook County, Illinois, was held on April 21, 2021, at Walter R. Sundling Junior High School, 1100 N. Smith Street, Palatine, Illinois. Board members assembled in person, following physical distancing and other safety guidelines. Board members were notified by bulletin sent electronically on April 15, 2021.

**Roll Call**

President Szczupaj called the special meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. She expressed her excitement at hearing tonight's Beyond Just Boundaries presentation and acknowledged the level of work and analytics that has been put in by many people to be able to present it tonight.

Board members physically present:

Samantha Bray Ader, Wenda Hunt, Zubair Khan, Lisa Beth Szczupaj, Anthony Wang

Board members physically absent: Frank J. Annerino, Michael Smolka

Also present were Laurie Heinz, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools, Claire Kowalczyk, Ed.D., Deputy Superintendent, Tom Edgar, Assistant Superintendent for District Improvement and Data, Rebecca Latham, Chief Communications Officer, Diana McCluskey, Chief School Business Official, Lisa Nuss, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, Meg Schnoor, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Ann Scully, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, Renee Urbanski, Assistant Superintendent for Multilingual Programs, members of the administrative staff, members of the press and others.

**Mission Statement**

Mrs. Szczupaj recited the District's Mission Statement.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public Comments**

No public citizens addressed the Board at this meeting.

Board member Frank J. Annerino entered the Committee of the Whole Meeting at 6:34 p.m.

**Topics of Discussion**

- Capacity and Facility Improvement Planning to Enhance our Teaching and Learning Environments
- Honoring our Commitments: Modernizing our Facilities and Instructional Practices to Meet the Needs of All Learners

Dr. Laurie Heinz addressed the Board by giving an introduction to what was going to be discussed tonight and on the work that has been done to prepare for this massive endeavor.

She began by remarking on the collaborative efforts of this nearly 2-year project to address capacity issues, outdated school boundary lines and the overall health of district facilities. The recommendations made tonight address the community values identified in 2017-18 through the work of the volunteer Boundary Task Force and more recently from engagement and data gathered by Cor Strategies, an outside consultant. Dr. Heinz stressed these are only *recommendations* and possibilities which the Board is seeing for the first time, and implementation would be for the 2023-24 school year at the earliest.

A 5-minute video presentation provided an overview of the project's initiatives and opportunities. Challenges include current kindergarten and middle school arrangements, attending neighborhood or near-neighborhood schools, and current and future enrollment and providing equitable access for all students to services and specialized programs.

A cornerstone of the project emanated from the decades old 'split pathway' feeder pattern through 15 elementary schools into 4 junior highs onto the 3 high schools across the district. Only some D15 schools now have a predictable consistent feeder pattern. A notable example is Paddock Elementary which feeds into 3 junior highs and splits again between 2 high schools. Boundary lines must be redrawn to solve this situation. The communities' top two priorities from a fall 2018 survey were having students attend neighborhood schools and solving the feeder pattern predicament.

Other notable goals are to place student services and other programs into more defined permanent locations and to redistribute programs across the district to ensure equitable access for gifted, special education and multilingual students.

Andrew Phelps and Jennifer Costanzo from STR Architects, reviewed their findings and recommendations, focusing primarily on capacity constraints of existing facilities. A goal was to propose school population adjustments to keep each at approximately 80-90% capacity.

They worked closely with Jim Kaplanes, D15 Director of Facilities & Operations, who also conducted an internal facility assessment. Further expertise on demographics, enrollment projections and boundary analysis was provided by school planning consultants RSP & Associates Rob Schwarz of RSP, recapped their findings and summarized the statistical forecast modelling techniques and 4 core elements of their study. The complete feeder concept of each elementary school feeding into one middle school and in turn feeding into a single high school is paramount. Another component is factoring space allocations for specific programs cognizant of the functional capacity at each school. Full day kindergarten at each elementary school is a critical community priority, as is removing the bilingual overlay so students are not bused to schools outside their neighborhoods based on their native language.

Collin Corbett of Cor Strategies, a data collection and community outreach consultant, presented community engagement research conducted with nearly 1,200 data points collected. The research measured overall favorability and satisfaction with the school district (a relatively very high 64% favorable per the phone survey) in addition to the previously reviewed 9 recommended high value priorities identified over the past 3 years as key to the district's success, which also all came back as favorable. Virtual and in person sessions were held across the community (377 participants), with community leaders and separately with D15 staff. Additionally a scientifically weighted phone survey (i.e., matching demographics and subsets of the community) was conducted with over 530 responses. Research revealed the top 3 priorities are ensuring students have access to near-neighborhood schools with a cohesive K-12 pathway, full day kindergarten with a middle school model (6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grades), and equitable access to programs and services.

Beyond Just Boundaries includes input from many district departments including Multilingual Programs, Student Services, Transportation Services and District Improvement & Data. These teams provided video presentations, and highlighted strengths, shortcomings, inconsistencies and the impact of some current arrangements. Renee Urbanski, Assistant Superintendent for Multilingual Programs, stressed the neighborhood cohesiveness and family stability which could result from dismantling the current bilingual overlay program. Ann Scully, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, noted the more equitable distribution of special education programs recommended in the project. Board member Wenda Hunt asked about special education staffing requirements under the proposed recommendations. Staffing needs are based on student needs and programs needs and should not change very much. Tom Edgar, Assistant Superintendent for District Improvement and Data, explained the proposal to centralize the Advanced Learners program of approximately 300 students currently across 5 schools into one facility. This academy model promotes teacher collaboration and consistent class sizes and allows these peer groups to learn together at one central location.

Full-day kindergarten has many student benefits such as increased hours of core learning and social emotional learning. Staffing and scheduling will need to be addressed with school principals and the funding and fiscal aspect will be discussed at future meetings. Space required for full day kindergarten necessitates placing 6<sup>th</sup> grade into junior high facilities. A middle school model study group, led by Meg Schnoor, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning, will include CTC union leaders, junior high principals, staff and other facilitators to look further into the proposal.

The project worked within existing high school boundaries which D15 has no authority to change; Fremd and Palatine High Schools have the railroad tracks as a divider and the Rolling Meadows High School zone lies east of Route 53.

Highlights of the Palatine HS zone include underutilization of Winston Campus with declining enrollment at the elementary school, the question of adding a 21<sup>st</sup> school and redistributing across the densely populated and highly concentrated bilingual Northeast Quadrant of Palatine. Proposed solutions are to have Walter R. Sundling as 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grades with Gray M. Sanborn and Lincoln as its exclusive elementary feeders. Winston Campus Middle School becomes 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grades (solving its underutilization), with its feeders being Virginia Lake, Lake Louise and Jane Addams serving grades K – 4<sup>th</sup>. A 21<sup>st</sup> school is not needed. Enrollment becomes balanced across the 5 elementary schools and students would attend neighborhood/near-neighborhood facilities. Special Education and Multilingual programs are more equitably placed with resources at each school.

Construction renovations required at Winston are still being reviewed as those are dependent upon whether the existing 9-period junior high class schedule is maintained, or if a team-focused teaching approach is used within a middle school model. Its 3 elementary feeder schools overall would only require minor renovations. WRS would require additional classrooms and renovations and could include building on an addition. Additional classrooms would also be needed at its two feeder schools to accommodate new student populations and reconfigured student services. A detailed street map showing recommended elementary school boundaries and impacted neighborhoods was reviewed by RSP.

Rolling Meadows High School zone recommendation solves current underutilization of facilities within it. The predominant change is reassigning Central Road School entirely into the Fremd zone. No students living east of Route 53 would attend Central Road School. Rolling Meadow residents currently at Central Road would attend Willow Bend. Two K – 5<sup>th</sup> grade elementary schools, Kimball Hill and Willow Bend, would feed into Carl Sandburg Junior High and in turn feed RMHS. Hoffman Estate children currently at Carl Sandburg would attend Thomas Jefferson as it transitions from an elementary school to a middle

school. An important benefit will be eliminating the bilingual overlay program and repositions Willow Bend to fully become a neighborhood school for all its nearby residents while also providing the language support they may need. Carl Sandburg and Kimball Hill would require minor renovation, however, Willow Bend would have to add 8 classrooms and expand the cafeteria to accommodate additional students and the expanded services.

The Fremd HS zone currently has one junior high, Plum Grove, with capacity constraints. The proposal includes converting Thomas Jefferson Elementary into a 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> middle school to be fed from Marion Jordan and Frank C. Whitley schools exclusively. Current Thomas Jefferson Elementary boundaries would be redrawn primarily within Marion Jordan's zone and a portion allocated to Frank C. Whitley School. Plum Grove Junior High transitions to 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grades to be fed by Pleasant Hill, Hunting Ridge, Central Road and the underutilized Paddock Elementary (as a portion of its current students are proposed to attend Sanborn within the Palatine HS district). Special education, Bilingual/Dual Language classrooms and ESL programs are more equitably distributed.

Construction would be most significant at Thomas Jefferson as it converts to a middle school requiring a larger gym, locker rooms, expanded cafeterias, science classrooms, etc. Marion Jordan would also require meaningful construction primarily to add classrooms for the students formerly at Thomas Jefferson elementary. Whitley school would only require minor renovations to accommodate full day kindergarten. Plum Grove Junior High would require between 16 – 18 new classrooms under the various scenarios.

Dr. Heinz summarized how the proposed recommendations fulfill all 9 of the high priority values set out by the Board, Administration and original Boundary Task Force. Possible funding and revenue sources to implement the recommendations will be explored in-depth at upcoming Board meetings but Diana McCluskey, D15 Chief School Business Official, provided an overview with assistance from Elizabeth Hennessy of Raymond James, outlining funding methods ranging from bond issuance, ongoing fund balances, Life Safety bonds and lastly a potential referendum. Next steps and potential agenda items for May and June meetings were also discussed. Dr. Heinz expressed her excitement over the recommendations district administrators and outside partners have put together and reiterated the target timeline is 2023-24.

Mrs. Ader asked about the flexibility of choosing specific proposals while potentially rejecting others in light of the interdependencies and variables involved in facilities and the recommended boundary maps. Dr. Heinz acknowledged the board has some flexibility and noted how certain decisions are interconnected and that tradeoffs would need to be examined and discussed.

President Szczupaj stressed the importance of gathering more community feedback and encouraged the public to provide feedback now that the proposal is in place and to appreciate that other stakeholders have differing perspectives. Mr. Khan agreed.

A public comment was made by an unidentified individual at the meeting who said she would email the board her concerns and asked if meeting materials would be posted to the website for public access. Mrs. Szczupaj acknowledged that materials would be available.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before this meeting, Mrs. Hunt made a motion, seconded by Mr. Khan, for adjournment of the meeting.

The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

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Lisa Beth Szczupaj, President  
Board of Education

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Samantha Bray Ader, Secretary  
Board of Education