

APRIL 18, 2017

## COMMITTEE #2 COMMENTS

### Activity #1: What have you learned or heard? Ah-ha moments from last meeting or since?

- Tried to visualize which schools can expand, taking into account parking, green space.
- Are neighborhood schools a thing of a past? No, some want that. Some kids walk.
- Talked a lot about the innovative school. Wonder how that idea would be supported?
- How much money will we spend on realistic ideas vs. others?
- Which schools have good bones? BPS said yes. Are there efficiencies?
- How much time should a child spend on a bus to get to a non-neighborhood school?
- Though people want smaller elementary schools, maybe it is more important to be bigger and more efficient.
- Only 3 schools N. of interstate and that area is growing, getting big.
- Talked about infrastructure; Fargo schools are built on main arteries so we do not need as much infrastructure as the piece of land BPS owns north of town.
- 4 of 6 schools projected to be over capacity are NW and NE.
- Only 5 elementary schools have a capacity of over 500; should we add to others?
- Talked about shared lunchroom and gym at Solheim.
- What are we going to do with smaller schools?
- Combine Roosevelt, Highland & Will-Moore and make Hughes a large ES.
- Get lunchroom at Solheim; elevators at W-Moore and P. Rose.
- Make W-Moore green space & parking for BHS; cannot use capital grounds anymore. Would also be safer with cars off 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> streets.
- Lot of us grew up here; last year the group liked smaller elementary schools but now there seems to be support for them being larger like new ones: Lincoln & Liberty (625).
- How many students attend Grimsrud that live along the River Road section of the Grimsrud area? Answer: 97

### Activity 2/Concept 1: add to some schools, renovate Northridge, Hughes as innovative school

- Grimsrud: concerned about busing from NW Bismarck and NE Bismarck driving past a couple schools to get to Grimsrud; but like idea of Grimsrud expanding as have room!
- Big concern: micro-boundary changes by Northridge; there is a school right across the street plus it changes feeder.
- Concern about P. Point and crowding Centennial, or is PP running out of land to build?
- Concur about Grimsrud.
- Look at 2017-18 capacity and all under 600 with room to grow.
- When would some of these projects be done in order to hold necessary # of kids?
- Overall, like the Grimsrud change—makes sense for busing.
- Sunrise—may be resistance moving some kids to Miller.
- Talked about area between Solheim & Moses; could also see resistance with that proposed micro-boundary change, but not many alternatives.
- Would Sunrise feel downgraded going to Miller since it is a bit older.
- We talked about adding on to old schools and busing to old schools, not a good use of BPS money.
- Also talked about buying land.

- Talked about Highland Acres expansion—a gym was not added. Need that like Solheim needs a separate gym and lunch room.
- How would innovative school work at Hughes—pulling kids districtwide.
- Building schools on outskirts of the city is not a good choice.
- Overall, more questions than answers: 416 million sounds like a band aide.
- What would Hughes look like as an innovative school?
- How do we get equity for small schools when it costs so much?
- Miller is under capacity.
- Concept 1 does not have a separate lunch room & gym.
- How about moving some Solheim kids to Prairie Rose vs. Moses?
- Some good changes--moving Apple Creek to Myhre if they decide to come in.
- If close inner city schools, you lose green space for residents that use it.

### **COSTS explained:**

Darin has \$16 million to work with; how can we use it most effectively?

A new school of 625 capacity is around \$16-17 million, without land.

He said he just opened 3 bids, so he feels comfortable with the square foot cost he used.

Grimsrud: would create a 28-classroom school—would be similar to other 28-section schools.

### **Activity 2/Concept 2: lot of kids N. of 84 going SOUTH to where the schools currently are.**

- Which schools/families would have to change feeders?
- How would the community feel about closing 2 more elementary schools (with supposedly good bones) and repurposing 2 more for BECEP & innovative school?
- Ask Linnett what she said
- Not sure if Will-Moore should be the innovative school; prefer Hughes and opt in.
- Like some things on concept 1 and some on Concept 2; like a combo.
- Liked the new school taking those students so they have more of a neighborhood school.
- Proposed truck route going east and west by 66<sup>th</sup>; go right past new proposed school.
- Growth up north would be exasperated even more; pressure on Sunrise, Liberty & Centennial.
- Already moved kids and had micro-boundary changes.
- Is it unrealistic? If build a new school no money for other things. Would you bond?
- What would happen with closed schools?
- Can green space at Hughes be used for something else; a new school?
- What is the priority? Can you build a new school and close some to merge?
- Like merging Roosevelt and HA. Is one school more efficient than the other?
- We like the contiguous boundaries but cost is prohibitive in short term; it is more long term. Building a new ES before development is there does not make sense to us.
- Feeder system: breaks up ES school feeders but not MS or HS.
- What will St. Mary's do to traffic and growth NW?
- Can we really close schools right now? This is not a micro-boundary change; it is major.
- We like #2 best. Can leverage closed schools or exchange property with developers.
- Growth is going to happen around St. Mary's regardless, so should start about where to put a new elementary now vs. waiting until costs go up.
- BECEP & innovative schools make sense for existing facilities; good use of that asset.
- Need to look at long range now because land will only double/triple and district & BPS is land poor.
- How can we get land from developers so school district does not have to keep bonding for that?
- Busing could be an issue; longer rides for some kids?
- Immediate future we need school in NW but in future need in NE.
- Concept 2 is a radical change; closes 2 schools. Why close schools if have good bones?
- Need to be sensitive to this issue of closing/repurposing schools & building new North.
- New school N. is some day, not today.
- We like both maps; like #2 and expanding Myhre area. Maybe a hybrid of both?
- Questions about busing.

- Do not like the cost of building a new school.
- #2 looks like a \$30 million project; like the layout but it's more ambitious and harder sell for Bismarck, which does not like closing schools! How would kids move during this time? Who has to move and when?
- Good long term plan
- Current district owned land too far from existing city limits
- Existing site would be on the planned Truck Bypass that has a new interchange at 66th Street, comes north on 66th Street than west on 71st Avenue
- Choose a new north elementary site west of 83Hwy closer to city limits
- Has short term shortcomings to come up with the needed funds
- Closing Northridge, Pioneer, and Roosevelt might be difficult for the community to support
- Instead of having Will Moore with a small attendance area that goes to the innovative school, have them in a regular attendance area and all spots at the innovative school from all of the district
- Factor in bussing costs and time students on the bus
- Grade configuration changes where a school could be a Prek to Kdg center with a paired school that does 1-5
- Cost estimates for closing a small school versus a large school
- Use Hughes green space for a new elementary
- Have a complete ES to MS and MS to HS feeder – no splits
- Highland Acres addition should include having separate gym and lunchroom
- Challenges trying to sell an elementary school/site (example Saxvik)
- Move district administration to a small elementary to use Hughes for an elementary or innovative programming (Admin go to Roosevelt or Highland Acres)
- Would like a better Free/Reduced Lunch balance where no school is greater than 50%
- A better FRL feeder balance could be put into place with this plan
- Could plan for new elementary in 2022
- With a plan like this need to be transparent and yet communicate the ideas to the community
- Size of school not the main challenge, keep class size the same regardless of the school capacity
- Creates solid neighborhood schools

Rob: is the problem where the land in N Bismarck is located? Yes, majority raised hands. If there is a better piece of land, would that help? Only a few hands went up.

Rob: efficiency: 600 is most efficient because all specialists stay at the school vs. traveling.

Effectiveness: last time, we spent a lot of time on the focus on academics. But this time we are trying to balance out enrollment and look at equity in older buildings.

Rob: the bottom line is if we are going to do small additions and micro boundary changes or think long term or maybe a combination of both.

Jason's idea: pull kindergarten out of elementary schools to create space in each, and link kindergarten with an early childhood center (BECEP)? Use Hughes as that facility and put administrative offices at Saxvik.

### **Activity 3: Clicker Questions:**

#### **Q. 1: do you support 1 or 2?**

Answer: close!

#### **Q. 2: Do you believe additions & micro-boundary solve short-term issues (5 years)?**

Answer: Mostly was top answer, then absolutely.

**Q. 3: I believe micro-boundary changes & additions will be most supported by the community?**

Answer: Mostly then somewhat.

**Q. 4: I believe the best solution looks more long term, beyond 5 years.**

Answer: Absolutely then somewhat.

**Q. 5: I believe the best solution that will be supported by community looks long term.**

Answer: somewhat, mostly, then absolutely.

**Q. 6: I would like administration to provide more info on innovative school where parents could choose no matter where they live in BPS. #2 has 100 kids from W-M going there.**

Answer: Absolutely need more info!

**NEXT Task:** committee drew what they liked from both concepts & wrote comments. Rob will use this information to structure the May 2 meeting, 7-9 pm at Hughes.

**Comments from cards turned in at the end of the meeting:**

- What does the busing cost for NW students into Grimsrud?
- What are the projections of students in different areas? Example: how many kids N. of 57<sup>th</sup>, W. of Hwy. 83 to the river, N. of 57<sup>th</sup>, and E. of Hwy. 83 to boundary?
- Need to purchase land in the N. for future growth; build a school soon NW; and purchase/plan for a NE school in the future.
- When all the infrastructure and city service costs are considered, the land costs of a new school are “peanuts”. New schools should be driven by development, not the other way around. Concept #2 looks good long term, however it is much too expensive in the short term, especially if all taxpayer costs are considered. The new elementary school should not be built in the short term.