

MEETING MINUTES
Facilities Enrollment Advisory Committee Meeting
November 10, 2015

Committee Members Present:

Mary Newby, Co-Chairperson/North Hagerstown Area Representative
Taylor Oliver, Co-Chairperson/Williamsport Area Representative
Anne Dunham, Williamsport Area Representative

Staff Members Present:

Chad Criswell, Senior Project and Planning Supervisor
Rob Rollins, Director Facilities Planning and Development

Summary of the Discussion of the Facilities Enrollment Advisory Committee:

Introduction and Review of Agenda:

The meeting of the Facilities Enrollment Advisory Committee (FEAC) convened at 6:30 p.m., in the Board Auditorium of the Center for Education Services.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

The May 26, 2015 Facilities Enrollment Advisory Committee meeting minutes were not approved due to lack of a quorum. Attending FEAC members stated that they had no recommended changes for the Draft Minutes. Staff noted that the Draft minutes would be placed on the website.

Review/Update of the Attendance Zone Realignment Process:

Mr. Criswell shared that he had a memo ready to mail to the committee this summer to update them on outcome of the two (2) appeals to the Attendance Zone realignment process. Since the final appeal was not withdrawn/dismissed until late October, he decided to wait until the November meeting to update the committee. He stated that the first appeal was from a family appealing Recommendation # 4, sending approximately 23 K-5 students from Maugansville Elementary to Jonathan Hager Elementary. This appeal was considered by the Board of Education, and the original decision was not overturned. The second appeal, a request not to redistrict students from Williamsport Elementary to Fountain Rock Elementary, Recommendation #12, was considered by the Board of Education, and again the original decision was not overturned. In accordance with State law, the family chose to appeal to the State. Mr. Criswell explained that after a preliminary meeting that both he and Mr. Trotta, Chief Legal Counsel, attended, the family making the appeal choose to withdraw it. He stated that at this point in time, Recommendations #1-#20 from the FEAC, Recommendation #22 as proposed by the Superintendent were all approved, and will be implemented starting next school year. A committee member questioned if there was a chance that FEAC would be asked by the BOE to revisit Recommendation #21, splitting the Ruth Ann Monroe Primary and Eastern Elementary attendance zone. Mr. Criswell replied that as of today, he had not heard anything. He noted that during the spring meetings, the Board's discussion indicated they would like to observe and

monitor the Pre-K-2 / Grade 3-5 model for a longer duration. He noted that if it was the consensus of the FEAC, the committee could make an additional recommendation to the Board in the future. Mr. Criswell said that it might be worth monitoring during future FEAC meetings, but noted that the FEAC could more formally review this concept again if/when the committee looks at redistricting for the new Sharpsburg or “South County” Elementary School in a few years.

Review of the Official September 2015 Enrollment and Official Free and Reduced Meal Report:

Mr. Criswell reviewed a PowerPoint with the committee, pointing out that Washington County Public Schools (WCPS) enrollment is down approximately 54 K-12 students from 2014. When incorporating Pre-K students into the total, based on the additional Pre-K programs that were added for the 2015-2016 school year, WCPS enrollment decreased by approximately 28 total Pre-K – 12 students. Mr. Criswell stated that this data was still under review from the state, and that final “official approved” numbers could vary slightly, but it would most likely be in the single digit student range. He noted it could go up if the state approved additional students not registered on September 30th, or it could go down if the state ruled students were technically enrolled at another LEA, even if they were here on the 30th. Mr. Criswell indicated that when looking at the graph of historical enrollments for the past 20 years, a slight decline is present for the past two school years preceded by 13 consecutive years of growth. Mr. Criswell went on to briefly discuss the following individual schools:

- Bester Elementary enrollment is up a little higher than last year. This year’s kindergarten class is smaller than last year’s Kindergarten class, but it is larger than the exiting 5th grade from the prior year. He noted that this may be an early indication of Public Pathways Inc. (WCPS consultant) predication that after the 2nd year of operation, a new school in an established area typically experiences a decrease in the bubble of enrollment that occurs when opening a new school. It was noted that Bester is proposed to receive students from the closing Winter Street Elementary next year, and send some students to Emma K. Doub Elementary. Mr. Criswell shared that he has been communicating with Mr. Semler, Director of Elementary Education, and both are monitoring Bester’s enrollment just in case this reduction does not occur. A committee member noted that the Funkstown Elementary recommendation from the FEAC, which establishes a regional Pre-K center, was made for this type of situation if it would come to be.
- Boonsboro Elementary enrollment is down approximately 23 students, and is now below its state-rated capacity (SRC). Mr. Criswell noted that it is at its lowest recorded enrollment since 2002, adding the school was at its highest enrollment of 622 students just six years ago in 2009.
- Eastern Elementary enrollment is up by approximately 25 students; Mr. Criswell indicated that a small exiting 5th grade class, and a large incoming 3rd grade class helped contribute to this increase. He stated that on the next slide, the committee would see that the large incoming 3rd grade class at Eastern Elementary had the opposite net result on Ruth Ann Monroe Primary, where it was the exiting 2nd grade class.
- Fountaindale Elementary saw an increase in enrollment of approximately 39 students. He noted this was due to a sizable number of out of district 2nd grade magnet students, and small enrollment increases in all grade levels.
- Fountain Rock Elementary enrollment experienced a decrease of approximately 22 students and is operating at 61% of SRC. Mr. Criswell noted that the redistricting moves from Lincolnshire and Williamsport elementary schools students next year should have a positive impact on increasing the utilization of this facility.
- Greenbrier Elementary enrollment increased by approximately 25 students. Mr. Criswell

explained that a large kindergarten class as well as a number of special permissions were the reasons for the increase.

- Hickory Elementary School's enrollment appears to have stabilized, and remained flat this year.
- Maugansville Elementary enrollment declined by approximately 15 students. Mr. Criswell stated that staff was still closely monitoring the Collegiate Acres Apartments as discussed by the FEAC previously.
- Old Forge and Pangborn elementary schools both stayed relatively flat with their enrollment.
- Ruth Ann Monroe Elementary enrollment is down by approximately 104 students compared to last September. Mr. Criswell noted a small incoming Kindergarten class, and a large exiting 2nd grade class (aforementioned incoming 3rd grade class at Eastern Elementary) combined with a decrease in enrollment before the end of last school year (June 2015), all influence this enrollment drop. He noted that since Sept. 30th, the enrollment has gone up and fluctuated between 15 to 20 students higher than shown on this sheet. He noted that staff would continue to watch what is occurring.
- Salem Avenue Elementary School's enrollment increased by 60 students. Mr. Criswell noted that a large portion of this increase appears to have occurred in the areas being redistricted to the new Jonathan Hager Elementary. However, he noted that there were some increases in areas of Winter Street being reassigned to Salem Avenue Elementary. He noted that staff is monitoring the attendance of this school, adding that WCPS has the option to relocate special program classes (summit) to other facilities (i.e. Jonathan Hager, Rockland Woods, etc.).

Mr. Criswell shared that the total middle school enrollment was up approximately 29 students. He noted that Northern Middle had a decrease of 68 students due in part to a large exiting 8th grade, and a small incoming 6th grade class. Overall high school enrollment showed a decrease of approximately 69 students.

Mr. Criswell stated that staff will continue to monitor the enrollment, and has already started looking at the redistricting impact. He noted that enrollment changes daily at each WCPS facility, and as the committee saw last year, there can be large enrollment changes (up/down) during the course of the school year. He stated that the December/March enrollment will be a more realistic baseline to use to determine a realistic anticipated impact of the redistricting effort. Mr. Criswell shared that Emma K. Doub Elementary school is very excited about having their kindergarten students back next year; adding that will help Eastern Elementary and Ruth Ann Monroe as well. Potomac Heights' enrollment was a little higher than last year; however, staff is hoping that the number of students will trend-down during the school year.

Mr. Criswell reported that Washington County Free and Reduced Meals (FARM) has gone down two-tenths percent this year; adding that this is the first time the FARM rate has dropped since 2005. A committee member questioned the impact on the County's FARM percentage when all students are receiving breakfast and lunch at certain schools receiving grants. With all students participating, there are no applications being completed by parents, so how does that work. A staff member shared that they thought that last year's percentages were used for those specific schools. Mr. Criswell suggested inviting Mr. Proulx to a future FEAC meeting to better explain the process.

Mr. Criswell briefly reviewed the 2015-2016 enrollment and the enrollment history for each of the approved recommendation areas from the FEAC. He noted that this data was preliminary and subject to change, but wanted to show the committee that the recommendation areas and associated counts of

students all remained relatively consistent. Mr. Criswell shared that he is currently seeking interested applicants to potentially fill vacancies on the FEAC committee. He noted that if any current members know anyone that might be interested in applying for a Board Committee, to have them do so.

Discussion of Future FEAC Meeting Dates and Schedule: The next meeting will not be until April 12, 2016 to review Enrollment Projections and draft version of Chapter 5 of the Educational Facilities Master Plan (EFMP).

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.