

LONG-RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
February 7, 2006

The meeting was called to order by the Long-Range Planning Committee co-chair, Ms. Bryce Cooper at 6:35 p.m.

Ms. Daphne Dorsey, coordinator of public relations for the District, addressed the committee on how the District will fulfill keeping the community updated on the Long-Range Planning Committee's (LRPC) meetings and findings. District publication's (Inside, Connections) and school communication (FP Horizon's) have each included information on the LRPC, as well as the Citizen Journal running an article. Also, the District has a link on it's Web site that will be updated on a regular basis.

Next, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, Ms. Joylynn Wilson, made a presentation on organizational structures for delivering of a world-class educational program. This entailed information on K-6, traditional K-8, 7-8 middle school configurations. While discussing each configuration, additional information was given on considerations regarding program delivery models, ancillary program structures, staff training and placement, and parental involvement, along with implementation points (visiting schools with similar configurations, develop articulation and transition activities).

Following the presentation, the committee was divided into six groups to conduct a group activity and answered the following questions/comments:

1. In hearing the presentation tonight and considering the charge to the committee, discuss with your group tonight's topic and develop any additional pro's or con's that your group feel are important to the issue.
2. What additional information or materials do you think you will need in order to make informed recommendations regarding the organizational configuration of schools?

GROUP RESPONSES:

Question #1: In hearing the presentation tonight and considering the charge to the committee, discuss with your group tonight's topic and develop any additional pro's or con's that your group feel are important to the issue.

Group #1:

1. K-6 versus K-8: does not affect student performance ; K-8 is a trend like middle school is a trend.
2. Can we make room for two more grades in each building?
3. Do we have space in gyms and lunchrooms?

4. Will walls have to be moved?

Question 1 continued

5. Concern about having 8th graders moved in with K-2 graders
6. Loss of band and foreign language programs. Extracurricular programs are reason for some students to come to school.
7. Which configuration encourages parental involvement?
8. How has 6th graders attendance changed since elementary schools are now K-6?
9. If education does not improve by going K-8, don't change if it's not broken - don't fix.

Group #2:

1. K-6 - pros: Segregation of ages during physical play; ability to specialize curriculum.
2. K-6 - cons: Disparity of class size; student-teacher ratio.
3. K-8 - pros: None.
4. K-8 - cons: External turmoil; social conflict between ages; expose younger children to middle school issues; excessive amount of changes required.

Group #3:

1. Pros: Increasing minutes on Reading is CORE in K-8 (big pro); staying in same environment K-8.
2. Cons: No information provided on anything besides K-6 and K-8.

Group #4:

1. What is the trend in urban districts? Has it been working?
2. What does the research say?
3. What do administration in different configurations say?
4. Why aren't other St. Louis area District's going K-8?

Group #5:

1. Why does there happen to be so few K-8 schools?
2. Are there reasons for school districts to have K-8? Need more information.
3. K-8 advantage: instructional consistency; nurturing environment.
4. K-6 advantage: separate older from younger.
5. Current K-6 really has two philosophies - Middle school and then K-5
6. Recommendation is to make sure teachers are more like homeroom or multi-disciplined teachers.
7. Make sure rooms are built for 6th graders (lockers, etc.) - remember these are elementary schools.
8. Delmar-Harvard has a unique design allowing two buildings to house younger from

- older. Other schools struggled with older kids (more narrow hallways).
9. Podding versus department of classes really calls into question how building design is laid out before we move forward.
 10. There are some great ways to schedule to keep kids separated, but still difficult (Flynn Park).
 11. Magnet schools focus on one curriculum. For example, math and science. Is this worth failing some of our gifted children and grooming them in one/few disciplines.
 12. Should we consider each elementary school have a focus? Transportation costs?

Question 1 continued

Group #6:

1. Grades 7-8 pros: many student advantages due to myriad of courses available; sports/coaches/organizations more potential and focus.
2. K-8 pros: low enrollment school has better chance of staying open
3. K-8 cons: K-6 configuration has been a stretch - K-8 even more so; affects climate and dynamics; specialization limits of teacher certification; student autonomy for older students an issue; limitations of current facilities.

Question #2: What additional information or materials do you need in order to make an informed recommendation regarding the organizational configurations of schools?

Group #1:

1. What are the finances of K-6 versus K-8 for U. City.
2. What are trends in population at U. City Schools?
3. What is attendance of 6th graders - up or down since transition to elementary level?
4. How is 6th grade functioning now?
5. Compare test scores of 6th now versus old 6th grade.

Group #2:

1. Playground configurations.
2. Staggered recesses (if K-8)?
3. Academic and social implications.
4. Rezoning impact.

Group #3:

1. Want additional information on what other districts are doing: 7-9, 10-12 or 7-8, 9-12, and pro's and con's of these.
2. Where do other districts include Pre-K in their configuration?
3. Information on magnet school as after-school programs.
4. If possible, some costs on busing involved in the different configurations.

Group #4:

1. Need to clarify/re-evaluate homelessness and definition - precarious variable.
2. Discussed idea of adding a magnet school to attract new student population.
3. All schools - year round.

Group #5:

1. How many elementary schools have AB or ABC schedules and what grades do they transition (with regards to U. City Schools)?
2. Each elementary school has different allocated ancillary staff, so this may relate to scheduling.

Question 2 continued

3. When was the last time we redistricted?
4. What has the lowest costs: K-5, K-6 or K-8?
5. What are we doing for Pre-K? How about prequalifying through Julia Goldstein ECEC? Possibly as Pre-K Academy.

Group #6:

1. What have other Districts done facing declining enrollment in regards to sharing space?
2. Can we have a comparison of like districts to ours - demographically, etc. - to measure K-6, K-8, etc.?
3. Can we look at same sex configurations in public schools?

The above reports were given by each group's chosen spokesperson.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

The next Long-Range Planning Committee will be held on March 7, 2006, at 6:30 p.m., in the McNair Administration Building. The topic of discussion will be demographic information.