

Board of Education  
January 25, 2010  
Community Engagement Meetings  
7–8:15 p.m.

**Meeting notes from Dos Rios Elementary School**

Board of Education members at this meeting: Linda Trimmerger, Doug Kershaw

District leadership staff at this meeting: Ranelle Lang, Paul Urioste, Mandy Hydock, Kathi Van Soest

Audience: 75 people (a mix of parents, community members, teachers, support staff and principals)

Topic of presentation and conversation:

- District 6 budget outlook for 2010-11 and impact of state reductions for K-12 education
- School consolidation study and proposal
- Proposal to change the district's graduation requirements

### **Budget & Consolidation**

**Major themes of participant discussion/comments:**

- Parent suggested the public lobby Gov. Ritter to suspend CSAP for one or two years. Another commented that maybe there could be a compromise suspending CSAP for a semester; maybe test every three semesters instead of two.

**Frequent/common questions:**

- Is the redistribution of schools long-term enough to account for population increases?
- What about making the school days longer? Maybe by 30 minutes? Could that cut a lot?
- What about after-school programs – 21<sup>st</sup> Century – transportation
  - How much is reimbursed from state?
  - Suggested there be transportation cuts to all schools
- Question about enrollment numbers at Maplewood/Franklin
- Why do we have so many alternative high schools? Why do we bow down to alternative students' needs?
- Can Christ Community Church rent Cameron?
- What do you have to pay for alt ed?
- Is financial aid provided for alternative education?
- Funding for athletics? Cut that – but then would they cut arts and music?

- Couldn't we have elementary kids' school day start earlier? And then it wouldn't matter if the school day was longer.
- How will Cameron be taken care of when it is mothballed?
- Parent said the district should consolidate bus routes, and not cut them
- Regarding Chappelow transportation, parent said don't cut until the following are done:
  - Traffic feasibility studies
  - City of Evans discussion – of feasibility
  - Discussion w/ traffic engineer of Evans
- Transportation costs – other students aren't impacted, but Chappelow students are, parent said, adding that there is a concern of Chappelow becoming an elitist school because it might become a school with only students whose parents that can transport them to school.
- Community member suggested the district cut off charitable donations to:
  - Hospital contributions 3 months \$11,200
  - \$30K Aims
  - IntaJuice - \$2K/month
  - GEA president's salary
  - Non-essential travel
  - Consultants out of GF – many talented staff internally; why do we pay for so much consultation?
- Parent suggests cuts at the central administration office – too many people
- Chappelow employee says paper fees need to be incorporated so parents realize how bad the issue is, and until this fee is imposed, realization will not exist.
- Suggestion: Fees for band & other extracurricular activities
- Parent says more public comment groups: Generate a more organized forum that all issues could be heard by all; all people to speak should have three minutes in open forum.
- Parent asked for firm number of intervention students – “this information can never be provided when asked? Shouldn't it be when we are so 'data driven?'” This parent noted there is data collection for graduation requirements.
- Parent noted concern of a curriculum-oriented environment
- Parent said the district needs to implement head-start programs, communication to parents when levels of excellence diminish, accountability all of the way up and all of the way down.
- Parent concerned that there are more questions than answers.
- Parent says, increased class size not the way.
- Parent suggests the district make school day longer and cut to four days a week.
- Furlough days? Not implemented yet. What about required number of days?
- Parent wants breakdown of:

- Money for teachers
  - Money for administrators
  - Money for principals
- Parent against combining Cameron and Jefferson – Heard there will be no busing for Cameron to Maplewood.
  - Busing will change and may cause more problems later.
  - If you cut athletics, everyone will get mad and then may pass mill levy override.
  - Heard it called “soft bigotry” to close those two schools. Isn’t Jackson smaller than Cameron and Jefferson?
  - Suggestion: We should seek donations from large corporations.
  - Shut down schools in the summer to save money

## Graduation requirements

### **Major themes of participant discussion/comments:**

- Parent/staff member said she supports the graduation reduction. But said she is concerned about how the cuts will affect the students with special needs and/or students who have special medical needs. Our elementary and middle schools need to have full-time, trained staff who focus on specific medical needs. Example: health clerk
- Parent said “It seems to me that the plan for school consolidation unfairly places a large portion of the burden for the current budget crisis on the poorer/more disadvantaged children in this district. Cameron Elementary, in particular, has been working very hard over the past few years to increase its proficiency percentage (nearly 10 percent between 2006 and 2008 – more improvement than any other school in the district other than Billie Martinez). The message you are sending those kids is that it doesn’t matter how hard they work – you are telling them they do not matter. It seems to me that cuts should be felt across the board, evenly, in each school and community. If they were (no matter how deep they need to be) I think you would find people sitting up and paying attention. Maybe they would be more willing to support a mill levy override the next time one comes up. Cut athletics across the board. Cut busing across the board. Cut whatever you need to cut but do it for everyone. Otherwise you will keep hearing this problem every year until it finally affects people who have a little more power. You will have to keep chipping away at the edges until there isn’t anything left to protect the white/middle-class center who don’t think they want to fund education by paying higher taxes.”
- Heard that if you graduate from District 6, can’t get into CSU.

### **Frequent/common questions:**

- Does our website have info on “Race to the Top” for federal funds? What is the website for all the career paths handouts (careerclusters.org)?

- Parent asked what happens to kids who, when they reach high school, have not had any social studies or science classes and now are required to obtain three credits of science and three credits of social studies in order to graduate? She said there is no science and social studies due to special ed reading classes, and these students may not succeed without a background in science and social studies.
- Why are we decreasing graduation requirements when grad rates are increasing?
- Are D's a passing grade?
- Why are fine arts not as important as literacy?
- Student asked about community service credit – “can we get credits for working? Work credit?”
- Can students change career paths in new plan?
- Are standards being lowered?
- Are students held to expectations?
- No Child Left Behind – where does this come into play?
- How do you expect to retain quality teachers?
- Kindergarten full-day grants – they are available – why aren't we pursuing?
- English language learning – why do we continue to make excuses for our demographics rather than stepping up to the plate and making positive changes?
- Which schools were we compared to?
- Can the kids graduate earlier with the reduction in credit?
- How will the dual credit thing work with students moving ahead? Needs more clarity on how it would work.
- When will this take effect?
- How will music be affected?
- How does Dayspring do it? Maybe no after-school programs if it's not too late.