

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

Meeting notes from Monfort Elementary School

Board of Education members at this meeting: Judy Kron, Mark Hinze

District leadership staff at this meeting: Dana Selzer, Meggan Sponsler, Jeremy West, Colleen O'Neil

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:**

- Take low impact ELL schools and teachers and stop the pull-out. Take teachers and replace with coach for teachers and keep librarians/specials (half-time ELL is not as impacting enough)
- Middle school interventions classes – need to go (can be cut). Elementary programs are working. Still be a part of electives.
- Reducing number of meetings for administrators from schools
- Early retirement for those teachers that are close? Incentive? Pay their health insurance? One retired-age teacher=two new teachers.
- Cut central office staff/budgets to save staff at building levels with direct instruction for kids.
- Cut district professional development – save on PD teaching salaries and then on horizontal movement plus \$25 per hour.
- Protect at all costs: Specials and electives – We need to educate the whole child (especially librarians); keep class size as small as possible – impact last. K-1-2 needs to stay lower than 3-4-5 (30 max.), which should also be smaller than middle school/high school.
- Reducing costs
  - Utilities – lights on late at night
  - Start cuts at the top – largest salaries over-staffed
  - School administration – superintendent salary too high

- Fees – more equitable – verify fees are waived only for those who should be waived
- Don't consolidate Jefferson and Cameron – busing costs
- SPED – not getting help needed now, how will adding more kids?
- Already don't have materials needed.
- GT program going downhill
- PERA – employees contribution
- Elementary APs – Parents don't see value – maybe based on enrollment – go back to lead teacher. Split AP and resource teacher – dual purpose.
- Cut transportation
- No PBS (maybe a grant)
- No color ink copies
- Hard to know what to cut without knowing the budget
- Some cuts were made already in the mill levy
- Transportation – move out boundaries of pick-up
- Textbooks – expensive, out of date quickly; use technology instead (like the idea)
  - Concerned for those without computers
- Sports – cut in half the number of buses taken to a game
- It would be OK to raise sports fees
- Cut everyday custodial services
- Teachers/teacher aides – no way around cuts there
- Furlough days will be needed
- Four-day school week could work
- Programs – some could be staffed differently or re-evaluated and self-monitored (such as PBS)
- Protect: Things that affect students directly; IB program/AP programs; Technology – it is the future, must keep up with it.
- Look at charter schools: We lose a lot of students at the middle level to other districts and charters.
- Community will have to adjust their expectations of what the district provides.
- More partnerships with local governments, i.e. transportation.
- Concerned about combining alternative sites – it's a small atmosphere that is attractive – but this would become a larger school.
- Look at unintended consequences.
- Stop transportation to Chappelow
- All employees, including administration, superintendent, principals should start contributing to benefits
- Teachers must be protected first, for the sake of the students
- F-1 students need to pay their way. Add I-20s back into district.
- Get rid of assistant principals in elementary schools
- Stop sending administration to Ashlock training out of state – waste of money

- Redo boundaries to save on transportation – make schools so more of a feeder system
- Look at what central administration and how much money is wasted on unnecessary staff. Why do we need principals over principals when they don't monitor them?
- Increase sports fees
- Reduce superintendent's benefits and spending allowance
- Cons of cutting – students are the ones who suffer when class sizes increase.
- Concerns about class size at Maplewood, as well as other schools.
- Protecting specials at all levels (art, music, PE) etc.
- Worried about effect on children if specials are cut
- Could we consider a four-day workweek?
- Could we do away with PD for awhile?
- Prefer to hold on to quality technology
- What is the cost effectiveness of transportation of the students if we consolidate?
- Make cuts as far away from kids as possible!
- Worried about Jefferson's neighborhood!
- If the school day is lengthened by 1.5 hours per day and a four-day school week is implemented, schools could close on Fridays, saving utilities, etc. for 36 days (salaries won't need to be cut, and teacher-student contact time will remain the same).
- A textbook fee may help students get necessary resources
- Making Maplewood a K-8 school will still be hard, but will save money and will make transition easier. Maybe sixth grade can go to Franklin so it's K-5/7-8 – the next year K-5/8 and last K-5. Our students need stability.
- Protect IB/AP – are these grant funded? Don't let class sizes get too big.
- Protect new math and reading programs –they're good.
- Closing two elementary schools after opening three doesn't make sense.
- Academic, sports, math, magnet – protect because of fitness and choice offerings
- If class sizes become too big because of consolidation, we are wasting our time. Discipline will be too time consuming.
- Protect the arts and music
- Four-day week – no school use on Saturday, Sunday or Monday. No early release, no sports
- Should think about a centralized K-8 for Cameron and Maplewood
- Move alternative schools into the high schools
- Sell Cameron to the church for \$6 million
- Make more cuts farther away from the students, i.e., district office, facilities, transportation, nutrition. Reduce salary perks for upper administration.
- Examine possible grants for staffing expenses

- Examine how much assistant principals are really needed at the elementary level.
- Cons of consolidating schools:
  - Transportation: seems like more and farther
  - Refitting facilities/equipment – construction=money
  - Upsets a lot of families and students
  - Gangs: Franklin and Maplewood; also alternative high schools: Need more security
  - Just put \$1 million gym at Maplewood
  - Larger schools make for less connections at middle school
- Pros of consolidating schools (same group as previous bullet point):
  - None
- What should be protected: Class sizes, breakfast in the morning at school
- We are in survival mode.
- Parent/staff member/former board member had problem with letting good teachers go because of the effect on academics and discipline because of a possible probationary salary reduction.
- If you cut, too much quality goes. Have to get back to basics.
- Appears the only way to make it is to raise class size and or reduce staff.
- It is a good idea to combine the alternative schools and elementary schools
- Reduce transportation.

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

- Can we get rid of busing (or have reduced busing)?
- What about restrooms at Franklin – not as many hallway restrooms. Lost of money the last 15 years to upgrade.
- How about doing Maplewood as an alternative school? Then more suited to older kids. Then leave Jefferson (which is already primary) and add Cameron kids there. Maplewood is more central.
- Is it a good idea to put all alternative programs into one large setting?
- What could we use Cameron for? Sell it? Preschool school?
- Furlough days? Would be will if not to lose teachers/ staff. Everyone loses a little instead of losing jobs (from staff member).
- Instructional coaches – can we cut down?
- What about CPKP money?
- Four-day week? Cut busing/food/custodial/heat/increased attendance
- Should we start to try and change the three percent of district money held in reserve by board mandate? We know we can't change the three percent state mandate (\$137 million x .03= \$4 million). Even if only do half of that = \$2 million.
- Can we use stimulus money for counselors instead of instructional coaches?
- How much did transportation fee bring in?

- Look at neighboring districts – why are they drawing students away (Windsor)?
- Look at federal requirements – What do we HAVE to provide?
- Could there be some cultural issues with combining schools?
- Are there any cost savings going with K-8s versus K-5 and 6-8?
- Has Cameron purchase (from church across the street) been offered?  
Rumor.
- Will a consolidation of the alternative high schools cause students to feel like they are back in a “traditional” program? How many kids per school?
- How are D6 feed in line with other districts?
- Could we cut sports, activities to save money? Could we charge a fee for sports/activities?
- Will there be overcrowding at the consolidated school?
- Cut the benefits packages for teachers?
- Can parents share the fee load? Look at scholarships for free/reduced kids
- What about administrator cuts? Cut benefit package for administrators
- Are there still Teachers on Special Assignment? Can there be cuts there?
- If the schools are combined, will programs at the schools, e.g., Title I, still be offered?
- What impact will furloughs have?
- Corporate sponsors? Would this help?
- Can we or have we looked at four-day week? Others commented that this could affect day care for some and classified staff members.
- Unreserved or reserved funds: Can we cut there?
- Did we purchase the admin building? Are we leasing it? Can Cameron be the new admin building?
- Concern: What will consolidation do to the neighborhoods?
- Concern: 6,7,8 grade wing: How will they facilitate science classes? Is the consolidated school built to accommodate the new middle school?
- Free & reduced – grants – is there abuse?
- CSAP breakfast: Is this a district responsibility? Can we save money here?
- Can we look at regrouping special programs (audiology, vision, hearing, BAC)?
- Is the BAC program going to be with the alternative programs?
- How would electives be added at the middle school with fewer teachers and less room?
- Wouldn't it be expensive to add science labs and other facilities?
- How does this affect the feeder system?
- Can Title I money be used for other things, such as textbooks?
- Is there a cap on the number of students per teacher?
- What will be the transportation situation when schools are combined?
- Would changes in boundaries help?
- Can everyone take a 10 percent cut to save jobs?
- Can the district provide more online courses?

## Graduation requirements

### Major themes of participant discussion/comments:

- Like that kids can take college classes through the high school.
- Deciding career pathway in ninth grade too early
- Orientation at high school too rushed – parents don't have good understanding of what their kids need to be doing.
- Free college credits a huge benefit
- Social promotion still happening.
- Like the classification by credits earned
- Not as applicable to this group because they have younger kids
- Concerned about losing teachers for areas with no requirement
- Leave 0.5 fine arts and reduce electives by 0.5
  - Need exposure to fine arts
  - This would be a statement that we see value in the arts
  - More well-rounded students with the arts
- Not sure this model will raise student engagement. It's a great idea but we need to get teachers and staff to raise engagement
- This has the potential to affect quality of academics and college prep if properly administered
- Must have flexibility in this plan
- Worry about the tendency to "track" kids – making assumptions about what their career path should be
- District needs to be clear on the cost savings/additions of this plan
- Establishing grade by credits (freshman/sophomore) – seems to be logistically challenging; junior/senior prom becomes "22-credit prom."
- Don't like losing fine arts credit
- Would like to make it clear what is required for college entrance
- Like going to career paths/what are the paths? Who will define? Do we have the classes? Equipment? Like the idea
- Need for more counselors to work with kids on plans
- Student already cannot bring books home to do homework – with our already low test scores, can we afford this? (protect resources (textbooks) and building personnel)
- What do we do if we open-enrolled? Will we be able to choose our son's school?
- Sources say we need to cut 10 percent of our budget – and there is actually some money to work with in reserves – what "sacrifices" are being made at the upper levels? We can't afford to lose principals in the buildings (or support staff).
- Parent: I get cutting grad requirements – but by an entire semester?
- How much of the 87 percent goes to upper level administration?
- How many consultants were hired this year?

- Can materials (i.e. social studies) that were purchased and no longer needed be sold?
- How much is spent on Galileo testing?
- How much money has been spent on lawyers?
- How much money has been spent on remodeling?
- Students need a World History/Geography required class in our global economy
- Social studies should stay a 7 (3.5 Carnegie) credits
- Greeley has a different demographic that Poudre, Cherry Creek and JeffCo.
- Need assurance that courses will be available for students
- Counselors MUST be better utilized for students – increasing cost
- Students should also get help with scholarship applications
- Communication with parents is vital
- Concern: Early or trade career choice. Some are ready and others are not (early in school)
- Downsides: Staff cuts – career choice readiness – will there be enough electives, or will choices be cut?
- Like: More choices for students –they can pick; Dislike: Lower standards?
- Ensure that the foundation is in place before students choose a path
- Practical proposal for the district at this time
- Gives students structure and choices/paths
- Seems it would be a wash from a money standpoint; and later a return on investment
- Should retain/graduate students
- Parent would recommend not providing diplomas for J-1 visas but let them walk in a graduation ceremony if they are listed at seniors.

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

- Will each program be available at each of the high schools? A ninth grader may change their mind by 11<sup>th</sup> grade on their interest. Eighth grader should not be held to a career decision path in high school.
- Extra credit – earned by donation to food bank???
- Concern about offering new classes in “career pathway” – who will be teaching them? What if they are not qualified? Additional costs incurred to hire qualified staff?
- Who counsels students into their career path? Some students will just choose what their parents do as a career and sell themselves short – will need counselors
- Could Aims/UNC classes be held on D6 property?
- Wondering how marching band = PE credit – needs more definition
- Why are we comparing selves to Cherry Creek and Poudre when our demographics are different?
- Does social studies have to do with it not being tested?

- Are kids really going to Aims/UNC or taught by high school teacher with credentials?
- How often will plans be adjusted? Checked? Online?
- What is the projected rise in graduation rate with these new requirements? Have you studied what happened in other places when they adjusted their requirements?
- Can we cut requirements to 47 or 48? 44 is too much
- Why are we changing to Carnegie credits?
- Is it a good idea to have 10<sup>th</sup> graders with only six classes?
- Retention in college is about 50 percent – will this be worse if students are going to college at younger ages?
- If students change their mind after taking courses for one “career track,” will he/she be penalized for changing their mind?
- What electives are we talking about at the new, consolidated middle school?
- Will there be enough career or trade guidance? Need mentoring
- How will reductions affect career guidance?
- Community college: How does reimbursement work?
- How does this affect zero hour? Pre/post day
- Will this lead to earlier graduations?
- How would this affect student achievement? Expectation: May make them more interested, but might reduce the number of students with four-year college goals
- How would this affect quality academics and preparation for college/careers? Would there be enough counselors?
- Is this compatible with “Race to the Top?” i.e., fine arts, etc?
- Where does the money come from for students to take courses at Aims, etc.?
- Is this being done to artificially inflate the numbers of graduates? Need more information
- Why cut social studies? What are the choices now and after the change?
- What does the pathway program do to current magnet programs?
- Will each school offer pathways?