

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

ARAPAHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER SIX

Littleton, Colorado BOARD OF EDUCATION Minutes of Regular Meeting November 13, 2008

Call to Order

President Bob Colwell called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Boardroom of the Education Services Center, 5776 South Crocker Street.

Present

Bob Colwell, President
Sue Chandler, Secretary
Renée Howell, Vice President
Lucie Stanish, Treasurer
Mary Nichols, Assistant Secretary

Others in Attendance

Connie Bouwman, Assistant Superintendent of Learning Services
Lucinda Hundley, Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services
Kirk Madsen, Assistant Superintendent of Operations
Scott Murphy, Superintendent
Mike Owens, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Colwell asked if there were any corrections to the minutes of the October 23, 2008, regular Board meeting. There were none. MOTION: Ms. Chandler moved that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the October 23, 2008, regular Board meeting as presented. SECOND: Ms. Howell. AYE: Chandler, Colwell, Howell, Nichols, Stanish. MOTION CARRIED: 5-0.

Superintendent's Report

Mr. Murphy commented that schools held Veteran's Day activities on Tuesday with children's performances and an opportunity to honor local veterans.

Mr. Murphy said American Education Week is November 16–22. He noted outstanding academic achievement in LPS schools, high Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) results, and caring staff members. The theme this year is "Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility." Mr. Murphy commented that Littleton Public Schools is a wonderful place for kids. Mr. Colwell read and signed the American Education Week proclamation.

Ms. Howell thanked teachers for all they do to inspire and educate students. Mr. Colwell commented that a quality school goes beyond the schools and includes the community, business leaders, and parents.

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Board Reports/Requests

Ms. Nichols attended the Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB) fall conference and the CASB delegate assembly. She said a resolution submitted by the LPS Board of Education was adopted at the delegate assembly for inclusion in the CASB legislative priorities. Ms. Nichols observed Littleton Academy students interviewing residents at the Life Care Center. She attended the Redirection Center open house, the Colorado School Finance Project meeting, the Gifted and Talented Advisory Council meeting, and Veteran's Day events.

Ms. Chandler attended various Veterans' Day activities, noting this is an opportunity for students to learn about veterans.

Ms. Howell attended the Halloween parade at Lenski and several Veterans' Day activities. She attended a Colorado Math, Science, and Technology Education conference, the CASB fall conference, and a standards-based education workshop sponsored by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). Ms. Howell also attended an Educational Technology Advisory Committee (ETAC) meeting, which was held at Peabody Elementary School.

Ms. Stanish attended the CASB fall conference. She attended the LPS Foundation meeting and commented that attendance at the Littleton Stride held on November 2 was down slightly, but overall it was a good event. Ms. Stanish announced that the Spirit of Littleton dinner will be held on April 17. Both the Stride and Spirit dinner are fund raising activities for the LPS Foundation. Ms. Stanish also attended the Education Services Center (ESC) Halloween luncheon and the student play, "Arsenic and Old Lace" at Littleton High School.

Mr. Colwell participated in the Littleton Stride event. He attended the ESC Halloween luncheon, a PTO Presidents Council (PPC) meeting, and the Veteran's Day program at East Elementary School.

Action

Consent Agenda

MOTION: Ms. Howell moved that the Board of Education approve the recommended consent agenda numbered 1.1 concerning Personnel Recommendations with the additions made this evening. SECOND: Ms. Nichols. AYE: Chandler, Colwell, Howell, Nichols, Stanish. MOTION CARRIED: 5-0.

Auditors Report – Acceptance of CAFR

Mr. Scott Myers, chief financial officer, presented the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2008. He introduced Wendy Swanhorst, of the auditing firm, Swanhorst & Company. Ms. Swanhorst stated that the financial report was prepared by the Littleton Public Schools business services department in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. She explained that an audit is conducted to obtain reasonable assurance that the district's financial statements are free of material misstatements. Ms. Swanhorst then stated that the financial statements audited presented fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the district's various funds. She noted that district processes are good and auditors encountered no difficulties in performing the audit.

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Ms. Chandler asked if there were any issues concerning the transfer from the previous auditor. Ms. Swanhorst responded that auditors follow the auditing standards and processes are similar, so the change raised no issues. Ms. Howell asked how LPS rates compared to other school districts. Ms. Swanhorst said Littleton Public Schools always completes its financial statements early and has a high quality staff. Mr. Colwell inquired about the district's intentional spending down of reserves to offset the 2008–2009 budget deficit. Ms. Swanhorst commented that district's financial condition is within the range of most other school districts across the state, and future deficits are not an area considered by auditors, although if a trend of deficit spending were to continue, it would be of concern to the auditor. Mr. Colwell commented that other districts are experiencing similar budget deficits and are using reserves to cover some expenses.

Ms. Howell thanked the business services staff for their work on the financial statement. Mr. Myers thanked Mr. Bob Bell, staff accountant, for his work in preparing the CAFR. Mr. Colwell noted that the district has once again earned a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.

MOTION: Ms. Nichols moved that the Board of Education accept the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2008 and acknowledge receipt of the audit per statutory guidelines. SECOND: Ms. Stanish. AYE: Chandler, Colwell, Howell, Nichols, Stanish. MOTION CARRIED: 5-0.

Facility Use Task Force Recommendations

Mr. Colwell explained that the Board would begin this evening's discussion of Facility Use Task Force Recommendations by hearing from citizens who had signed up to speak.

The following citizens addressed the Board.

Peg LaPlante encouraged the Board to make this difficult decision and keep the educational needs of all students in the forefront. She commented about the closure of a school in Englewood Public Schools where she serves as chief financial officer, and stated that significant dollars can be saved when a school is closed. As a member of the LPS Financial Advisory Committee (FAC), she stated that budget cuts in 2009–2010 will reduce staff.

Pam Cirbo said the important factor in the decision is whether it is good for student learning, and this factor has not been part of the discussions thus far. She said the Board should consider using student achievement as a measure in determining what school to close and closing Ames and Whitman is the wrong decision.

Mary Stephens said she represented LPS classified employees and asked the Board to consider the contributions of classified staff in decision making.

Lynn Adams cited 2008 CSAP gains as a reason to avoid closing Whitman.

Jeff Cazzanigi said that he did not see a recommendation to close two elementary schools in the Facility Use Task Force report and the Board has failed to listen to the task force.

Gina Cazzanigi asked if studies have been done concerning the effect on property values if a school is closed. She opposes closing Ames.

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Grace Hunter has a student in the PACE program at Whitman. She said it is difficult for special needs students to readily adjust to changes and asked the district to do everything possible to lessen the impact on these students.

JoEllen Nickkle expressed concern about moving the special education programs and the effect on these students. She does not want to be faced with a similar problem at middle level if the Board should consider a middle school closure in a few years.

Amy Anthony said that teachers at Ames were shocked to hear the announcement last Friday morning that Ames would be closing and asked why this was announced before the Board's decision.

Keith Snyder said that closing a school that is academically excellent sends the message that LPS does not value academic achievement. He asked what the repurposing plan is for Ames.

Carol Crane, an LPS classified employee, asked what will happen to classified employees in affected schools. She said the task force criteria need further consideration.

Esther Resler asked the Board to reconsider closing Ames because it is a large school with adequate room for three sections as well as rooms for specials. She asked if there is a classroom large enough for the deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) program in another school. She said Ames has a large playground and is close to South Suburban Parks and Recreation playing fields.

Lee Freedman said that the Board has received a letter from the attorney hired by a parent group at Ames requesting that the Board delay its decision for 90 days to give this group time to come up with some creative solutions. He cited the ballot language of the 2004 mill levy question and said the Board is legally bound by this language to retain small class size.

Soraya Freedman said that closing Ames is not cost effective and there are other things that can be done such as moving kids who are currently in portable classrooms to Ames. She asked the district to consider using Ames as a magnet school.

Betty Neely, a speech/language pathologist at Ames was surprised to learn that Ames would be closed because Mr. Murphy praised the staff in September for their outstanding work and others were looking to Ames as a model. She asked why the Board is closing a school where the staff is working so hard.

Matt Shankle asked the Board to delay its decision for 90 days. He said the Board has not followed the task force's recommendations and has chosen politics over logic. He stated the district has helped to improve Ames and now the Board is voting to destroy the success that has been created at Ames.

Darren Delimont said he understands this is a big decision. He said the Board needs to look at the middle school issue as well, consider costs associated with an increased number of students being bussed, and the possibility that enrollment will decline more sharply as families look at options outside the district.

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Carla Shankle expressed disappointment that Board members did not attend recent activities at Ames. She thanked the Ames staff for their contribution to LPS, and asked for 90 days to develop a positive plan for Ames.

Katherine McBride stated that Ames saw a 12 percent increase in enrollment in the last year and with full-day kindergarten and improved academic achievement, she believes enrollment will continue to increase. She asked the Board to put off its decision for 90 days so parents can develop a marketing plan.

Doug McBride said his family chose Ames from many schools. He suggested eliminating portable classrooms and redrawing boundaries to increase enrollment at Ames. He asked whether all other possibilities to avoid closing a school had been explored and asked for 90 days to create a magnet school.

Karyn Knoblauch asked for a delay of the Board's vote and for the Board to consider the value of a neighborhood school. The district should take a long-term view and find a way to increase enrollment rather than close a school.

Jim Knoblauch suggested the district change boundaries so the Highlands 460 area attends Ames. He asked the Board to re-evaluate its decision.

Tracie Rainey, co-chair of the Facility Use Task Force stated that she was speaking on behalf of the task force. She said the task force had representation from all areas of the district. She said 108 school districts in Colorado are declining, and LPS has lost 1,000 students during the past four years. She said the task force took a district perspective to make recommendations that are good for all district students and are fiscally responsible.

Matt Canetto said the process used to close Ames is deeply flawed and lacked coordination with recommendations from the Financial Advisory Committee. He said that closing a school is a very drastic step and should be a last resort because it is the beginning of an end to a good school district. He asked for more creative solutions.

Debbie O'Hara, first grade teacher at Ames, said she is very disappointed with the Board's decision to close Ames and Whitman. She said it appears the Board has made the decision without regard to public opinion, task force recommendations, financial data, or consideration of academic achievement.

Kyle Mosher, a former Ames student, asked the Board to delay its decision. He said Ames is a veteran school and should not be cast aside.

Diane Beals suggested using Ames as a magnet school for gifted and talented education.

Dana Quick said the entire neighborhood around Ames is impacted by this decision. She said it is a poor business decision and property values will be affected. She said thousands of people have a voice and a vote.

Karen Perdew said Ames is a true neighborhood school and many moved to the neighborhood because they value a neighborhood school.

Lisa Wilson asked how a decision can be made without recommendations from the Financial Advisory Committee.

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Janet Haysley asked where the Ames staff will go, noting that students will now attend two different schools. She said the plan does not make sense and a neighborhood school is very important. She believes people will think differently about LPS after this decision.

Steve Stolfus said he has lived in the community for 35 years and recently became aware of the discussion about closing schools. He expressed concern about rising transportation costs following this decision and stated there must be a better way to address the problem than closing a school.

Christine Allen said she is proud to be part of Ames and suggested that losses of out-of-district enrollment will create a bigger budget deficit problem.

Christine Oury said she has many questions, and the Board has not responded to her written request for information. She suggested eliminating portable classrooms at Lenski and moving students from schools with excess capacity to Ames. She believes there are other solutions besides school closure.

Stephanie Ostrand said Whitman has the programs her children need and she will leave the district if Whitman is closed. She noted both Ames and Whitman have good programs for students with disabilities.

Jennifer Jones said other district schools do not have full-day kindergarten and asked why the Board wants to dismantle an exemplary model for full-day kindergarten currently at Ames. She asked the Board to reconsider its decision.

Carolyn Wieber asked why the Board didn't select another option so the Ames neighborhood could stay together. She said transportation costs will be an issue and closing Ames leaves a void in the district. She expressed appreciation to Board members for their time on behalf of LPS.

Shawn Daniel said she does not believe either school should be closed and she will enroll her children in a Cherry Creek school that is close to her neighborhood.

Michael Stanley, a former Ames student who moved back to the neighborhood, said he understands this is a tough decision. He said parents don't understand the decision and asked the Board to look at academic achievement as a factor in decision making. He asked the Board to consider other options instead of closing Ames.

Mary McGlone, a former Board member, stated she represented other former Board members who have 50 years of combined experience. She expressed thanks to the task force and to the Board. She said the district has struggled with the issue of declining enrollment and has tried a variety of strategies to increase district enrollment, but nothing has helped enough to offset the ongoing decline. The demographics of the community are changing and the district needs to make some changes.

Ryan Thornton stated that the enrollment at Ames is not declining and said he did not understand the need to make a hasty decision. He asked why the Board would close a high performing school.

Russell Wagers asked the Board to allow the Ames community to help solve the problem by delaying a decision for 90 days.

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Suzanne Frisch said enrollment at Ames may be low because of previous problems at the school, and it takes time to build back a good reputation. She believes Ames is on the cusp of a new group of students that will positively impact enrollment. She said additional busing has a negative impact on the environment and should be considered in the decision.

Holly Barrows said that a change appears to be needed and the Board has a very difficult decision to make. She asked the Board not to make a decision based on who will be the least angry about the decision. She suggested reorganizing current boundaries because the current boundaries do not make sense and Ames is handicapped by the current boundaries. She noted all current Ames students will need to be bussed to other schools and asked how transportation costs will affect the budget deficit.

Christy Fritz asked how closing a school will save money if the school continues to be maintained. She expressed concern about specials without dedicated classrooms. She asked the Board to rethink their decision and represent all citizens.

Rachelle Milligan said there has been a lack of adequate communication about the potential school closures and it appears the decision has already been made. She feels that Whitman is being “picked on” because of its size. She asked the Board to guarantee priority open enrollment privileges to families from closed schools. She asked for a clear, honest reason for the closure.

Renee Ashcraft said she appreciated the telephone calls from Board members this week. She said Ames enrollment is increasing and it does not make sense to close the school. She commented that portable classrooms at Lenski should be sold and boundaries changed. She believes Ames will continue to grow.

Ed Ochoa said school closure is not a new issue and he addressed the Board in the 1990s regarding school closure. He said he is an advocate of neighborhood schools and change is not easy. He said the Board and administration are using the best information available to make this decision.

Bryan Kramer said that Ames is an amazing school and asked the Board not to close this good school.

Barbara Holder said she open enrolled at Ames over schools in Cherry Creek, but may not return to LPS if Ames closes. She said Ames delivers a quality education with caring staff.

Greg Fritz said the Board has a difficult job. He said portable classrooms are not safe and hopes the Board will take the time to seek help with declining enrollment. He believes people are ready to help solve the problem.

Jim Stephens said he had heard the community say there needs to be better communication and they are disappointed that the discussion to close a school is occurring. He commented that a significant portion of the \$4 million budget shortfall the district anticipates next year will have to come from reductions in teaching staff, and a small school will not be able to offer a full complement of programs.

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Kay Geitner said she does not understand why Ames is being closed. She asked why students are bused past Ames to attend other schools. She said boundaries should be changed to reduce transportation costs.

Laura Thorp said she does not understand the declining enrollment issue at Ames. She said information on the district web site is not accurate and does not indicate Ames is a prime target for closure. She said closing Ames is not the right solution.

Betsey Johnson said she optionally enrolled her son at Ames and his test scores have improved. She agrees changes are needed and suggests changing boundaries.

Kristi Daniel said LPS is a wonderful district and thanked the staff at Ames. She said the task force did not address the needs of kids, and the programs at Ames cannot be duplicated. She asked how moving the Ames kids and overcrowding other schools will help solve the problem.

Merilee Ashton said she lives in Southbridge, and the school boundaries do not make sense. She asked the Board to change boundaries. She said she needs more information about what will happen if schools are closed, and the information she needs is not on the web site.

Courtnee Fann said the Board should not keep poor performing schools open and the Board has made a personal decision to take another school off the list and keep Ames on the list of schools to close.

Teresa Bailey said she appreciates all the parents who are willing to fight for their school. She was a member of the 21st Century Task Force, and this group talked about school closures. She urged parents to continue to stay and continue to work for LPS schools because declining enrollment is widespread. She thanked the Board for their efforts and noted that the declining enrollment issue has not improved in spite of many efforts. She is sorry the district must face this painful decision.

Kerry Lego said she does not know what the right choice is, but closing Ames is the wrong choice. She asked why the Board would close a successful school and there is no good reason to do so.

Amanda Camred said she optionally enrolled from Douglas County. She asked why new teachers were hired if the school has declining enrollment. She asked why the district would close a school and send students to a lower-ranking school instead of moving students into Ames from other schools. She said she will leave LPS if Ames closes and asked the Board to delay its decision for 90 days so parents could prepare a plan to increase enrollment.

Bryan Evege stated that people here tonight are saying this decision does not make sense, and all of them cannot be wrong. He asked for common sense answers to the questions that have been asked.

Corinne Evege said that change is scary and the decision needs to make sense. She asked the Board to delay its decision for 90 days so parents could come up with a plan and be allowed to help make positive changes.

Kevin Edwards asked the Board to keep Ames open and develop a marketing plan.

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Lawrence Depenbusch said Ames is ideally located and closing a school will not solve the district's budget problem. There are still costs involved in maintaining a closed building. He suggested changing boundaries and moving students out of portable classrooms to fix the problem without closing schools. He asked the Board not to ignore the public.

Sophie Derksen asked the Board to ensure this is an objective decision and explain the facts to the public. She asked the Board to consider declining enrollment at middle schools now.

Robin Vidimos said she has been an LPS volunteer for many years and this decision has been coming for at least 10 years. Declining enrollment is a district-wide problem. She said the small schools have received a subsidy as a way to put off this inevitable decision. She said change is difficult and painful and asked the Board not to let go of its core values.

John Brackney said there is lots of pain and pride being demonstrated tonight. He urged the Board to avoid closing any neighborhood school unless there is no other choice, noting the district's financial pressures are real. He said it is important to market the community.

Mr. Colwell thanked the speakers and all who were in attendance.

Ms. Howell asked about portable classrooms in use in the district. Mr. Madsen said there are seven portables, and two or three have plumbing, which makes them more expensive. He said the last portables were purchased for Wilder Elementary School about four or five years ago. Mr. Madsen commented that the task force recommended phasing out portable classrooms over time.

Ms. Howell asked what the ramifications would be if the Board delayed its decision for 90 days. She said that a great plan could be formulated but there might not be time or opportunity to implement a plan and many ideas to increase enrollment have already been tried. Ms. Stanish commented that she is concerned about a delay because it could negatively affect parents' opportunity to open enroll, as the deadline is January 31. She also mentioned it will be harder on staff to wait for another 90 days. Ms. Chandler said the 90-day period is past both the open enrollment deadline and the kindergarten registration dates in February. It also impacts staffing timelines, some of which are negotiated or statutory. A delay will result in the decision being put off another year, and the district may not have the option to wait. Mr. Murphy commented that past innovative plans, such as charter schools and International Baccalaureate program proposals, have taken from three to nine months to develop prior to Board approval.

Mr. Colwell said a 60-day delay would provide time in January to work with the parent group, but he expressed concern about any delay, noting that he does not see the likelihood of increasing enrollment at Ames. Ms. Howell expressed similar concerns about finding students to increase enrollment, noting that several Cherry Creek elementary schools that border Ames are also facing declining enrollment.

Ms. Chandler said she is very concerned about budget cuts next year and the effect they will have on Ames and Whitman. She said the Board must consider the ramifications of a delayed decision. Ms. Stanish said she is also worried about

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budget cuts and finding enough students to make Ames a viable school of 300–350 students.

Mr. Murphy commented that in difficult times such as those the nation and the world are now facing, schools often become a community's safe haven, so it hurts people deeply when they are faced with a school closure. He noted LPS has strong schools and both Ames and Whitman have made great improvements. Mr. Murphy further acknowledged that LPS boundaries don't make much sense, but with choice, parents can choose the school their child attends no matter what attendance area boundaries look like. With regard to the impact of anticipated budget reductions, Mr. Murphy stated that they will impact programs at Ames and Whitman, along with other low-enrollment schools that currently receive a subsidy from the general fund to support programs. He said this subsidy will likely be eliminated and could result in a 10–30 percent reduction in staff at these schools.

Ms. Chandler asked how the five-year averaging of pupil count for districts with declining enrollment works, and Mr. Murphy explained that it is a "rolling" five years, so the averaging does not end at a particular time. However, the district will ultimately have lower average funded pupil counts as the averaging decreases due to declining enrollment.

Ms. Howell asked for information about the small school subsidy. Mr. Murphy responded that prior to 1997, there wasn't a subsidy. He said schools are staffed at approximately six staff members per 100 students, with a class size average of 24.5 students per teacher ratio. The small school subsidy gives schools with fewer than 300 students five additional teachers. Larger schools have fewer staff per 100 students, so this becomes an equity issue. Mr. Murphy said with budget reductions likely to affect the small school subsidy, programs and academic achievement will be endangered at schools with fewer than 300 students. Ms. Howell commented that it is unfair to the other schools to maintain the small school subsidy.

Ms. Howell said that school funding in Colorado is about \$1,000 less per student than the national average. She said Colorado citizens want lower taxes, but neither the state nor the federal government provides the funding to support small class size.

Ms. Chandler stated that it does not seem likely that the Board would have enough additional information within 60 days that would make a difference or resolve the problem. Ms. Stanish said it could be helpful to the community to see the recommendations from the FAC and create a scenario showing how budget reductions will impact small schools. Ms. Howell remarked that during the 17 years she has been a volunteer in LPS, she has seen the district market its schools and try other methods to improve and stabilize enrollment. She said the Board needs to use the collective wisdom already gathered to make its decision.

Ms. Nichols stated that the FAC recommendations are important, but will not negate the facts reported by the Facility Use Task Force, specifically the 1,900 empty seats at the elementary level. Ms. Nichols said that the task force examined maintaining the status quo, noting, however, that 2009–2010 budget reductions would have an impact and staffing levels would likely be reduced. She said it is important to keep in mind the district values expressed by the task force, which include equity and a rich curriculum, a choice of at least two classes per grade level, and high quality

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personnel. She further emphasized the need to consider the criteria established by the task force of elementary schools with 350 students and at 75 percent building capacity. Ms. Nichols said this process is hard for the entire community and all feel the impact. She expressed that as she considers all the facts and the needs of the district as a whole, the best decision is to close schools.

Mr. Murphy reported that the Board will receive the recommendations from the FAC at its December 11 meeting. Ms. Howell suggested that waiting for these recommendations may not make a difference in the decision to close schools because the \$4 million budget deficit will require an increase in class size and fewer teachers per school.

Board members expressed concerns about delaying a decision because of the discomfort uncertainty brings, and noted that families may choose to leave LPS due to uncertainty. Mr. Colwell said delaying the decision will not make it any easier. He commented that moving students from one school to another is not a viable solution to the district-wide problem of declining enrollment, and that optional enrollment allows parents to choose schools outside their attendance area.

Ms. Howell stated that the Board must make a decision based on facts, which include fewer adults in schools next year. She said Ames would need 100 new students to be a viable school, and the district cannot afford to wait longer to see if it is possible to find an additional 100 new students. Mr. Colwell remarked that LPS parents in general think the school their children attend is a great school, and the Board believes all LPS schools are great, but the 1,900 empty seats at the elementary level must be addressed. He said the district must be considered as a whole and closing two schools will increase enrollment at five other schools. Mr. Colwell stated that schools identified to receive Ames and Whitman students have spaces for students and for programs.

Ms. Howell clarified that changes in transportation are cost neutral. She asked about special education programs currently housed at Ames and Whitman. Ms. Lucinda Hundley, assistant superintendent for student support services, responded that all schools have a resource program. In addition, Whitman has a PACE (Progression for Adaptive and Cognitive Education) program and a SCIL (Self-Contained Individualized Learning) program. Ames houses the district's deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) program. Ms. Hundley said special education staff is considering options and these programs can be moved to other buildings. Ms. Hundley emphasized that administration is waiting for the Board's decision before finalizing any transition plans.

Ms. Howell asked for further information regarding transition plans. Ms. Connie Bouwman, assistant superintendent for learning services, stated that an administrative team has been meeting and has developed an initial transition plan. She also emphasized that it is important for administration to wait for the Board's decision before finalizing and publicizing plans. Ms. Howell asked about preschool and School-Age Child Care (SACC) programs. Ms. Bouwman responded that all elementary schools have SACC programs and The Village Preschool Program, which includes both preschool and extended day care programs, is open to district residents and those choosing to open enroll at The Village.

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Ms. Howell commented that repurposing plans for the buildings is an important factor and the district needs to explore options and utilize buildings as quickly as possible. Ms. Chandler said repurposing ideas need further study, but agrees that planning should move forward. Ms. Nichols said the task force generated some good ideas for repurposing these schools, and the community should be involved in these decisions.

Ms. Stanish stated that even if the decision is delayed, it will still be the same decision. Ames and Whitman elementary schools are too small to be viable with inevitable budget reductions next year. She said she believes the community will understand the scope of the district's budget problems.

MOTION: Ms. Howell moved that:

WHEREAS, the Board of Education strategic plan has a focus area to “*Optimize the use of district resources and facilities to meet student learning needs while operating the District most efficiently*”, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education established the Facility Use Task Force to make recommendations on how best to address underutilized facilities within the school district; and

WHEREAS, the Facility Use Task Force met for nine months to review data, deliberate, and develop recommendations for the Board's consideration; and

WHEREAS, the Facility Use Task force established values of equity and rich curriculum, choice, and maintaining high quality personnel to guide its work; and

WHEREAS, the Facility Use Task Force recommended that any elementary school that meets or is trending towards the following criteria should be reviewed and evaluated:

- Enrollment less than 350
- Building utilization less than 75 percent
- Trend analysis of enrollment, academic achievement, and choice in/choice out
- Financial considerations
- Geographic considerations; and

WHEREAS, the Facility Use Task Force recommended that four elementary schools be evaluated in further detail; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education has reviewed the data, Facility Use Task Force report, and held deliberations; and

WHEREAS, THE Board of Education selected two elementary schools for consideration of repurposing; and

WHEREAS, Ames Elementary School has the lowest enrollment (226) and building utilization percentage (49) of all elementary schools; and

WHEREAS, Ames Elementary School has been below an enrollment of 350 for eight (8) years and below 300 for six (6) consecutive years; and

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WHEREAS, Ames Elementary School enrollment trend has been down for 23 years; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, Ames Elementary School had 161 students opting out and 27 opting in for a net loss of 134 students; and

WHEREAS, Whitman Elementary School has the second lowest enrollment (264) and building utilization percentage (64) of all elementary schools; and

WHEREAS, Whitman Elementary School has been below an enrollment of 350 for seven (7) years and below 300 for six (6) consecutive years; and

WHEREAS, Whitman Elementary School enrollment trend has been down for 14 years; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, Whitman Elementary School had 92 students opting out and 52 opting in for a net loss of 40 students; and

WHEREAS, it would be difficult for low enrollment schools to provide equity and rich curriculum, choice, and retain high quality personnel; and

WHEREAS, the District faces a projected \$4 million budget shortfall for 2009-2010; and

WHEREAS, the Board finds it difficult to continue the supplemental funding needed to sustain a quality program in low enrollment schools; and

WHEREAS, the district could potentially realize significant savings through repurposing Ames and Whitman elementary schools; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education believes it is in the best interest of students and the district to relocate the Ames and Whitman elementary schools population to other elementary schools to ensure equity, choice, and opportunity access.

THEREFORE, I move that the general education student population of Ames Elementary School be relocated to Peabody and Franklin elementary schools, and the general education student population of Whitman Elementary School be relocated to Runyon, Moody, and Highland elementary schools beginning with the 2009-2010 school year. Programs for students with disabilities will be relocated to these same combinations of schools and any others as needed. Furthermore, I move that the district administration will develop repurposing plans for Board of Education consideration, and until such implementation, that buildings and grounds will be maintained at the same level as if occupied.

SECOND: Ms. Stanish. AYE: Chandler, Colwell, Howell, Stanish. ABSTAIN: Nichols
MOTION CARRIED: 4-0.

Mr. Colwell stated that this is the most difficult decision any Board has to make, but it is necessary to move forward as a district. He said the children will follow the lead of their parents, and while he understands parents' unhappiness, he hopes parents will help the students to move forward after taking some time to accept this decision.

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Ms. Chandler encouraged parents to stay involved and bring their ideas forward. She said the district needs the passion and commitment parents have for their schools. She acknowledged that this decision does not meet the needs of the entire community, but asked for the support of the community as the district moves forward.

Adjournment

MOTION: Ms. Howell moved that the Board of Education meeting adjourn.
SECOND: Ms. Stanish. AYE: Chandler, Colwell, Howell, Nichols, Stanish.
MOTION CARRIED: 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 12:24 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Colwell
President

Sue Chandler
Secretary

ks (1/7/09)