

Public Forum Questions – September 22, 2008

1. Why are satellite populations included in new boundaries?

The satellite areas have always been a part of a schools attendance boundary.

2. Have studies been completed that forecast out potential increase in young families in the older neighborhoods?

The district undertook a full demographic study in 2006. The executive summary of this study is available on the Task Force's website.

3. Why are 2002 bond expenditures included in the evaluation criteria?

The Task Force chose to include the 2002 bond expenditures as one of the factors to be considered when looking at the various ideas. The Task Force wanted to see what has recently been spent on capital needs funded through a tax payer approved bond.

Additionally, the Task Force wanted to know what the current capital needs were for each school building.

4. The task force admittedly was not created to address financial burdens but to address declining demographics. Why then does the task force continue to use the projected budget shortfall as an excuse when there is a separate taskforce to address that issue?

The Task Force was directed by the district to examine a number of issues. During the Task Force's work district staff has updated the group with the district budget situation. The Task Force felt that it would be remiss if it did not take into account the fiscal situation. Doing work without considering this information could lead to results that are not useful to the district. The Board of Education will be receiving recommendations from the Financial Advisory Committee and the Facility Use Task Force at the end of October.

5. What conversations have taken place with the cities?

The Task Force has not met independently with representatives of the cities although LPS keeps in close contact with the cities on a number of issues.

6. Is money generated by special programs that fill some of our classrooms; eg: preschool, teacher cadet programs?

A number of programs in LPS are fee based programs that can contribute additional dollars to the schools budget such as preschool and school aged child care. Other programs are district initiatives, such as the teacher cadet program, that could be relocated.

7. With respect to the idea of open enrollment, has the district looked at the elementary level of open enrollment within the district, but outside of the home school boundaries?

Yes. The Task Force has analyzed the choice in enrollment versus the choice out enrollment for every school.

8. Why are you not redrawing boundaries?

Each of the 16 ideas does redraw the boundaries that affect a certain number of students. The Task Force has not simply gone about trying to redraw every boundary in the district.

This effort would impact nearly every building and wouldn't necessarily change where students attend school. With open enrollment school boundaries act more as transportation boundaries, since families can choose to attend schools outside of their boundaries in accordance with open enrollment Board policy. Changing the boundaries only

changes the school choice for those families without the resources to transport their students to another school site.

9. Why isn't PACE, SCIL and special education programs being considered in these decisions?
Special programs are one of the many criteria that must be examined as part of any idea. The other areas include transportation, boundaries and the staffing implications.
10. Has the value of the land of each school in the ideas been considered? Are some school sites more valuable, for resale, than others?
The Task Force has not yet looked at this issue.
11. I have concern about the middle schools being so close or over 100% with cutting out one. How will this improve our children's education?
This is just one of the ideas at this time.
12. Under any of these scenarios what would average class sizes be in elementary schools?
If the current situation is not changed than average class sizes are likely to increase in the 2009-10 school year. The current projected budget shortfall could mean a decrease in school budgets. The Task Force believes that better building utilization could help to decrease the budget shortfall and thus keep class sizes lower in the long term.
13. How would you facilitate/ramp up the development of school cultures which have taken considerable time and effort to build at various schools?
The district would need to develop an implementation plan that addresses this. These cultures will develop over time in the consolidated schools. If the community embraces the change, this will happen quicker.
14. What are some of the experimental/newer education philosophies/strategies that you might change/try at the same time? Or will it just be business as usual with larger class sizes and fledgling cultures?
The educational philosophy of individual schools will still be under the control of school administration and the school community. A number of new programs and ideas have been presented by the Task Force in its interim report. Also, the task force feels that its work is striving to help keep class sizes low in LPS. Keeping the status quo, in conjunction with the current projected budget shortfall, will likely lead to budget cuts at every school. This would likely lead to higher class sizes in many schools.
15. If a school stays open will you keep the same staff and faculty or will they be moving to different schools?
Staffing implications are one of the many criteria that must be examined as part of any idea. The other areas include transportation, boundaries and the special programs.
16. Will you be soliciting input for the boundaries of the high schools?
At this time the Task Force does not for see asking for input on high school boundaries.
17. Did the facility use task force do on-site visits to each school to see the amenities each has to offer?
The Task Force members and administration have knowledge and experience of the sites.
18. Are your capacity calculations based on increasing population in each currently available classroom?
Elementary capacity figures are based on 27.7 students per classroom. Current elementary staffing ratios are 24.5 students per classrooms. The Facility Use Task Force Interim report states all assumptions that have been made and may be found on the Task Force web site.

19. Does capacity calculations simply count rooms in the building or does it take into account the unique situations at each school, specifically dedicated specials rooms?

LPS creates capacity calculations in two ways. One examines at overall space in the school and the other looks at the special situation, dedicated rooms, in each school also called flexible space. The Task Force's interim report explains the way these two calculations into one figure that has been used by the Task Force. The capacity calculation assumed 50% of the flexible space could be used for something else.

20. Why is Twain with enrollment less than 350 and less than 75% capacity not one the "ideas" for school closures?

Elementary idea M was developed to address this.

21. What criteria are being used to ensure that students are being moved to better situations?

The Task Force has undertaken its work with students as the number one focus. The underutilization of buildings can lead to equality issues within the district. Also, the district's financial situation will likely lead to cuts, at every school if nothing is done. The Task Force is trying to make recommendations that will ensure the continued success of LPS.

22. Why would LPS choose to close a school close to Dry Creek?

It is important to remember that no decisions have been made regarding the need to close a building. The 16 ideas represent a systematic approach to identify possible consolidation ideas. In the near future the Task Force will look at the ideas and make a smaller number of recommendations to the Board.

23. When will cost/benefit analysis for each idea be seen?

As the Task Force reduces the number ideas it is focusing on it will begin to do a more detailed cost/benefit analysis of each remaining idea.

24. Are portables considered in the capacity figures for schools?

Portables are considered in the capacity figures for the 16 ideas.

25. What is the difference between student capacity and building utilization?

Student capacity is the number of students that can occupy a building where building utilization is a percentage of the gross building capacity being used.

26. Is LPS looking to sell the 18 acres it owns in the Highlands 460 area?

LPS does not own this property. This parcel of land was dedicated for the purpose of constructing a school when and if LPS needed the land. The deed for the property is not Littleton Public Schools name.

27. Has the district maximized transportation? Would like to see a full look at transportation.

Yes. The district uses the same buses to make four round trips per day: high school loop, middle school loop, early elementary school loop, late elementary school loop.

28. Why are preschool attendance figures not included in the attendance figures for schools?

The district does not receive funding for preschool as it is a self supporting enterprise.