



## **Internal Attendance Boundary Committee June 19, 2019 Meeting Summary**

### **Call to Order**

The seventh meeting of the Internal Attendance Boundary Committee was called to order at 6:08 p.m.

Committee members present: Alejandra Adame Barcenas, Cecilie Ballard, Jenna Boyd, Carrie Brooker, Gretchen Collins, Julie Colmar-Davis, Joanna Cree, Kathleen Franzen, Julie Johnson, Elizabeth Kemp, Meghna Kuckreja, Allison La Tarte, Lisa Labissoniere, Katherine McCallum, Kathy Nieber-Lathrop, Scott Neville, Debra Pickett, Marina Probasco, Brian Shaw, Tami Shaw, Ryan Sippel, Justine Wegner, Julie Winkleman.

Committee member not present: David Goeddel, Kim Sloan.

Others present: Drew Howick, Mark Roffers, George Mavroulis, Sherri Cyra, Lori Ames, Jeff Fedler, Jessica Schwartz, Chris Dahlk, Katrina Krych, Ken Metz, Dom Ricks, Steve Soeteber, Monica Schommer, Jenny Vondrak, Katy Morgan, Perry Hibner, Bob Green.

### **Welcome and Overview**

Facilitator Drew Howick explained the meeting started late because of technical difficulties with filming. He reminded those in attendance there is only one meeting in July and one in August.

Howick reviewed the meeting agenda. He noted principals were in attendance to discuss questions previously generated by committee members. District officials will also share information from meetings with families in some neighborhoods the committee wanted to hear from, while Mark Roffers will give an update on boundaries and enrollment projections.

Howick also welcomed the approximately 10 guests in attendance. He noted no new options will be presented at the meeting, but they will be reviewed and tweaks likely start being made at the next meeting.

Assistant Superintendent Sherri Cyra noted an inclusion activity wasn't planned because there was so much to get through at the meeting. She also noted Wednesday was Juneteenth Day, which celebrates the announcement abolishing slavery. District officials were made aware of a concern that the meeting was scheduled on Juneteenth Day, but felt it was too late to reschedule or cancel the meeting. Going forward, it will be added to the list of observed holidays recognized by MCPASD.

She also reminded everyone that all of tonight's materials will be posted online by Friday or Monday.

### **Principal Panel**

Elementary school principals Chris Dahlk and Katrina Krych along with middle school principals Ken Metz, Dom Ricks and Steve Soeteber answered four questions generated by the committee.

**Question 1:** What are the obstacles/barriers to student learning and family engagement?

Krych, the principal at West Middleton, noted she had hired 70 percent of the current staff over the past four years. She said the staff want to be there and help all of the children feel welcome and succeed. She reviewed some of the engagement opportunities developed to connect with families. West Middleton provides transportation to school events and parent-teacher conferences and staff do regular home visits.

“I believe it is about the people and not the building,” she said. “Essentially, we had the opportunity to build a staff from scratch. ... We do whatever it takes to connect with our families.”

Soeteber, who is retiring at the end of the month after 11 years as the principal at Kromrey, echoed Krych’s comment about it being about the school community. Kromrey is “a great facility and it enhances the work being done but it is the work being done that matters,” he said.

Soeteber said trauma, mental health and poverty are on the rise. He said the poverty rate at Kromrey was 10 percent when he started, and is now 25 percent -- or more than 300 students. He noted resources and supports are needed because of the growth, and believes this referendum has provided more funding for that than the one that was approved in 2012.

Metz, the principal at Glacier Creek, said transportation can be a barrier to participation at his school, noting most children can’t walk to the school. Staff there have worked hard to make sure every voice is heard and are getting out into the community more. He said after school programming has more than doubled to nearly 50 options over the past two years, with participation increasing from 50 to 75 percent of all students.

Ricks, who has served as Glacier Creek’s dean of students since 2016 and will take over as Kromrey principal in July, grew up in Baton Rouge, where 90 percent of public school students are black. Still, he says it is incredibly hard for students of color to feel validated in Wisconsin schools.

He was proud of the headway made at Glacier Creek. He noted lots of children come to school in a bad place and weren’t ready to learn, but staff have worked hard to build relationships and talk with students before school to help them.

Dahlk, the principal at Sauk Trail, echoed the previous comments. She also noted four years ago the District began a process to see if Two-Way Immersion program should be implemented. The program started at Sauk Trail a couple of years ago and has had a huge impact.

**Question 2:** How might changing schools disproportionately impact students and families who have been historically marginalized?

Soeteber reviewed the programs being offered at Kromrey and believes while they can be duplicated at any school it is about the people involved in the program. He also said changing relationships can feel like abandonment so another form of trauma for marginalized students.

Metz noted a study that said 3 out of every 4 Americans don’t have meaningful relationship with anyone outside of race, ethnicity or financial status. “The point is those relationships happen in public schools and it is a perfect venue for this,” he said. “They have the opportunity to learn from each other. From that experience, they learn more about one another.”

Ricks noted when he attended UW-Madison in many classes he was the only student of color, which is a challenge. He said District schools are making sure every student has a relationship with at least one adult.

He also believes students shouldn't change schools because it is convenient and if boundaries do require changes than funds must be provided to meet the needs of any students who change schools.

Dahlk noted her most marginalized students live within walking distance of Sauk Trail, which she believes is a real benefit. She noted relationships and trust have been built with families over the years.

Krych, believes consistency and stability are very important, especially for marginalized students and families. She also said no one can walk to West Middleton. "That's why we have to work 10 times as hard to make those connections," she said.

**Question 3: Where is the balance between demographics being similar across schools and keeping families in a walkable zone?**

Metz said his staff puts a lot into making sure all children feel welcome. He also thinks the staff at Glacier Creek as diverse as any school in the District and that administration tries to be intentional about the makeup of staff and classrooms.

Dahlk said she can't think of a good reason to send children who can walk to one school to a different one. She wonders who it benefits if marginalized students are spread out across schools. She also believes there is a benefit for marginalized students to be around children who look like them.

Krych stressed that spreading students of color across the District doesn't feel right. She shared a story about high school students who come to West Middleton to mentor help her marginalized students feel better "because they get them in a way others can't," she said.

Soeteber said having a walking zone at Kromrey is very important and said 300-400 children are usually at the school by 7:30 a.m., which is 50 minutes, before classes start, because of the proximity.

Committee members wondered how important it is for schools with larger percentages of marginalized students to also have neighborhoods with means sending students there. Dahlk noted it is essential. She said if Blackhawk students who currently attend Sauk Trail are sent to Pope Farm that another neighborhood of comparable income characteristics be assigned to Sauk Trail. She noted that Blackhawk families have been important for PTO fundraising. Krych noted the District has supported Glacier Creek and West Middleton with additional staffing, while her PTO has been successful at raising additional funds.

**Question 4: Which criteria are most important when we evaluate boundary/school attendance options?**

All of the principals agreed that minimizing the impact on marginalized families and addressing barriers to student and family engagement were most important to them.

Committee members had questions about the balance between not moving students and making sure all schools have neighborhoods with resources. Principals agreed District-provided resources may need to be disproportionate if one school's population needs more help.

Members also asked principals to share what they have heard from families about the internal boundary process. Krych noted her Elver Park families have indicated they want to stay where they live so they can continue to have their children attend West Middleton.

Cyra thanked the members for asking these questions. “I can’t imagine there is a boundary committee process in the state that has asked these kinds of questions,” she said. “I really appreciate this committee was so thoughtful to make sure we hear from all students and families.”

The principals agreed it wasn’t important for the District to try and balance demographics across all schools.

### **Parent Feedback**

A summary of the feedback collected from families in neighborhoods not represented on the committee and having a larger percentage of marginalized students was provided to members.

Cyra noted staff attended ice cream socials at The Crossings in Elver Park for West Middleton and Glacier Creek families and at Don’s Mobile Manor for Sunset Ridge and Glacier Creek families. Staff also attended the Hot Dog Picnic at Sauk Trail. The District sent an e-mail and letters to families in advance and shared the current boundary map. Bilingual staff was also on hand, along with staff from those schools to help connect with adults. She said turnout was much higher at The Crossings event and Hot Dog Picnic.

Cyra noted families in The Crossings said they have other options to find more affordable housing but they want to stay in the District and really appreciate the work being done at their respective schools. Director of Business Services Lori Ames noted parents told her it wasn’t the building or how far the school was from them but rather that teachers and staff cared for their child and wanted them to succeed.

Ames and Cyra felt like families shared openly and said notes weren’t taken until conversations ended.

Members were then given 15 minutes to review and process and discuss the feedback at their tables. A representative from each table then shared out. Themes included marginalized families liking schools they attend and transportation not being a big issue, proximity less important than the people, you can’t manufacture diversity, the positive impact of West Middleton outreach, and that it felt like the criteria used to judge options now made more sense.

### **Updates on Projections & Neighborhoods**

Members received a memo with updated enrollment projections along with map and five updated dashboards before consultant Mark Roffers began reviewing the information.

Roffers reminded members a few weeks ago Dane County reached an agreement to get 160 acres of land north of Middleton to add to Pheasant Branch Conservancy that was originally projected to hold 450 new housing units. Had the single and multi-family units been built, that would have meant 40 more elementary students in 2025 and about 100 in 2030 for the District.

The land was part of Neighborhood 5, which has about 600 acres in total and is currently part of the Northside attendance area.

However, Roffers cautioned the committee not to take away that those 450 households would be lost from the District. “You are still going to have households looking for housing. They just won’t land in that area,” he said.

Roffers also reviewed some neighborhoods that would be worth subdividing. The new map shared with members splits Neighborhood 16 into No. 16W and No. 16E. It also divides Neighborhood 26 into No. 26N and No. 26, while Neighborhood 63 was split three ways and 65 two ways, using Mineral Point Road and

property lines. Roffers noted this doesn't mean those areas now need to be split between two schools but rather that it seemed to make sense based on geographical or enrollment projections.

Roffers also said got feedback from City of Madison officials who said projections for Elderberry may be low. He also stressed before the boundary process is completed a development will start earlier than expected or one not even in the planning stages will sprout up.

"You are dealing with high demand," he said. "If a development doesn't occur, another one will likely develop."

Anecdotally, Roffers noted about one-third of families who build a new house in a district already live in that district. He also said about half of the remainder will find somewhere else to live in the District now that 160 acres north of Middleton isn't available. He also said while the remaining 400-plus acres wasn't scheduled to be developed before 2030 that might happen sooner because of the need and demand.

Roffers then reviewed the new projections. He noted Northside dropped from a projected 2030 enrollment of 511 to 452. He also included the new projections with the five options that have been presented. For most of the options, Northside's projected enrollment is lower than before. He also noted the dashboard evaluation tool has been updated.

Members also received a document that was a summary of how they had previously evaluated all five option against the criteria. Howick asked members to review in advance of next meeting, but members also noted the their voting and thinking might be different now after hearing from principals and families.

Howick also asked members to use the form handed out to provide feedback about tonight's meeting.

The meeting adjourned was at 8:36 p.m.