To: Operations and Facilities Action Team  
From: Douglas Kahl // DK  
Date: May 29, 2014  
Commission No. 9999  
Subject: Independent School District #720  
Shakopee Public Schools  
May 22, 2014 Excellence in Operations and Facilities "Action Team" Meeting Minutes – Meeting #3

**Attendants:**

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The second meeting of the Guiding Coalition and the third meeting of the Shakopee Public Schools “Excellence in Operations and Facilities Action Team” was held at Shakopee High School to discuss District Operations & Facilities.

Discussion Topics:
A. Dr. Rod Thompson, District Superintendent, opened the Guided Coalition meeting with various updates concerning the Guiding Coalition.
   1. An overview of the Action Teams and their results was presented.
   2. A rare joint meeting between the City Council and the School Board will take place on Tuesday, May 27, 2014.
      a. An evaluation of the proposed needs that both the Council and the Board present.
      b. Discussion of a possible new Ice Rink, Gymnastics Center, Community Center, Senior Center, Turf Fields, and a Tech College.
B. Dennis Cheesebrow, of Teamworks International, recapped the results of the last Guiding Coalition meeting.
   1. The Academics Action Team will present their recommendations to the Guiding Coalition tonight.
   2. Pleased with current participation and hopes to see further input from the other Action Teams.
3. Pointed out that the Guiding Coalition goals call for desired outcomes but not the prescribed how-to's.

C. Academics Action Team Presentation to the Guiding Coalition
   1. The results presented are intended to act as a working draft, evolving as more facts and ideas inform the process.
   2. The “Honeycomb” concept was presented.
      a. Design from the center and build outward; students are at the center and everything should be built/planned around them.
   3. There are current limitations to our system. Teaching methods need to be adjusted; children do not grow up today the way they did in the past.
   4. Today’s students are not competing with just their fellow classmates in school, it is students all over the world.
   5. Potential changes to teaching:
      a. Children need relevant real-world experiences.
      b. Personalized learning systems.
      c. Need for flexible learning infrastructure.
      d. Teachers need retraining to act as greater facilitators.
      e. Students need retraining to become initiators.
      f. Parents to act as greater partners in education.
      g. New evaluation system, where standardized testing is a part of the equation, but not the whole part.
   6. Academics Action Team Recommendations
      a. Key question to consider: What will make things flexible enough to continue to adjust to student needs?
      b. The 6-8 and 9-12 school models are preferred by the Academics Action Team.
      c. As an Example: 9th graders, who are required to accumulate high school credits, tend to fall behind in a 6-9 and 10-12 model because there are no students ahead of them showing them an example. If students leave 9th grade 5 or 6 credits short, they set themselves up for a tough experience once they enter high school.
      d. 9th graders are already treated as high schoolers, they should be with other high school students.
      e. A similar district (Chaska) had a 9th grade center and a 10-12 high school with their students entering 10th grade with fewer credits that suggested. This district changed to the 9-12 high school model and the credit problem lessened.
      f. Every district without the 9-12 configuration is attempting to get there; typically a lack of space.
      g. Single-grade centers are not ideal. Without another grade students can look up to and advance to, a ceiling is placed over them.
      h. 6-8 and 9-12 schools will have more electives available to their students than the single-grade centers.
      i. Students are comfortable with the stability of attending one school for 4 years.
      j. When entering high school as a 9th grader, students are pushed to advance with other fellow high schoolers, to grow up a bit more. Students will not become complacent as early.
      k. There is a cost factor, too; when taking into account travel times between various educational facilities or school sport venues, throughout the District, it may take 2 hours to provide 1 hour of education to a student.

D. The Guiding Coalition group moved with the Academics Action Team to meet further and the Facilities Action Team met on their own for the remainder of the evening.
   1. Superintendent Rod Thompson, opened the Excellence in Facilities Operations Action Team portion of the meeting with introduction of various school board members who were present.
   2. Pat Overom, of ICS, led the group discussions, by table, recording their responses on their table's whiteboards: What are your perceptions from tonight's report from the Academics Action Team?
3. Responses:
   a. Table 1
      1) Not sold on the 9-12 high school model, but would like to see supporting statistics.
      2) What does Flexible Learning look like? Pods? College campuses?
      3) How does online learning operate? Does it free up brick and mortar space?
   b. Table 2
      1) The grade configuration does not really matter, ultimately. We just need to finally decide on one configuration and stick with it.
      2) BUT, given the choice, the 9-12 high school model appears to be better.
      3) With 2 high schools, there are busing issues/concerns.
      4) Would like to review larger schools, as examples.
      5) Edina maintains the 10-12 high school model, and they’re among the best districts in the state… the 10-12 high school model can work successfully.
   c. Table 3
      1) The 9-12 high school model appears sound.
      2) Will it be difficult to maintain communications between 2 high schools?
      3) There is a concern with travel delays when commuting.
      4) What does Flexible Teaching mean?
   d. Table 4
      1) (no occupants)
   e. Table 5
      1) If we build new facilities, what do we do with the buildings they’ve replaced?
      2) The 9-12 high school model is probably the best model, moving forward.
      3) It is good for 9th graders to be with other students (10th – 12th graders) who are also concerned with their transcripts and accumulation of credits.
      4) Didn’t the “old” system of learning create our current world? Why is it so bad that we have to change so much?
      5) How do we engage other ethnic groups in this process?
   f. Table 6
      1) (no occupants)
   g. Table 7
      1) (no occupants)
   h. Table 8
      1) The Academics Action Team seems to have already made up their minds, ending the discussion.
      2) When the current high school was built, it was built as a 10-12 high school; why do we keep revisiting?
      3) If we switch to the 9-12 high school model, the 8th graders will now be the one with the ceiling over them. There will always be a ceiling.
   i. Table 9
      1) There is a concern for the maturity of the 9th graders.
      2) How does the District “mesh” money and funds?
   j. Table 10
      1) Since the current high school was designed for the 10-12 model, will it be capable of supporting a 9-12 configuration?
      2) What do we do with the existing buildings that are replaced by new facilities?
   k. Table 11
      1) The 9-12 high school model was well-liked, overall.
      2) What does Flexible Space mean?
3) What is the “sweet spot” size for a high school, whether it follows the 9-12 or 10-12 models?
4) How technology issues being addressed?

l. Table 12
1) Saw the benefits to the 9-12 high school model.
2) Would like to see more factual information or statistics on districts that have switched from the 10-12 model to the 9-12 model.
3) How many students does the District currently have in the 9th grade that they feel are not being challenged enough in the current grade configuration?

m. Table 13
1) Understand the 9-12 high school model, but want more information and statistics supporting it. How many 9th grade students, in the current model, do not achieve the recommended number of credits, before moving into the 10th grade, for instance?
2) If Pearson is turned into an elementary school, the middle schools may become overcrowded; how will school sizes be addressed?
3) How does technology help us break down walls?

n. Table 14
1) The 9-12 high school model was liked.
2) Discussed the highlights of the Honeycomb concept, described in the earlier Guiding Coalition portion of the meeting.
3) Seeking a balanced approach to authority; there still needs to be a respect for educators, as teachers should be guiding our students.
4) What does college-ready mean?
5) During the upcoming District/City meeting, should look at making District buildings more multi-use, a shared asset between the District and City.
6) If indoor sporting facilities were built, they’d likely have greater support if they could be used for more than one type of event.

o. Table 15
1) The Academic Action Team seemed a little biased.
2) There are no seeming standards for cross-current schools.
3) How will technology influence decisions?

4. Scott McQueen, of Wold, updated the Action Team on information requests made at the previous Action Team meeting.

a. The 2013/14 enrollment figures were added to the capacity diagrams/summary.

b. The added square footage of the in-progress kindergarten additions was added to the building capacities diagrams/summary.

c. A question from an Action Team member: Is there an ideal square foot per student?
1) Response: Yes, there are ranges put out by the State. Broadly, elementary schools are at about 120-130 square feet per student, middle and high schools are a bit more. We will follow-up with a more exact answer, in the coming meetings.

d. A question from an Action Team member: Does the State recommend a specific grade configuration?
1) Response: There is no real recommendation from the state. Most districts throughout the state actually have a k-12 configuration, where students are in one building, due to small district population. Grade configurations sometimes have a direct relation to city sizes.

e. A question from an Action Team member: How long have 9th graders been required to accumulate credits, as part of the high school system?
1) Response: We will get that information for you, for a future meeting.
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f. A question from an Action Team member: Most government buildings have a planned 50-year life span; do our schools have a similar life-expectancy?
   1) Response: With proper and multiple reinvestments, a school can last decades upon decades. Mechanical systems, for instance, will ultimately need replacement, but brick walls will last a very long time.

g. A question from an Action Team member: Does that state have a threshold for approving renovations?
   1) Response: The State had a previous guideline if the planned renovation costs exceed 60% of the costs of a completely new building, you had to justify the project. That guideline no longer exists.

h. A question from an Action Team member: If we go to a 9-12 high school model, what year would/could that go into effect?
   1) Response: Probably not until the space was available.

i. A question from an Action Team member: Can you roll out personalized learning initiatives without building new spaces/buildings?
   1) Response from Dr. Thompson: In part, but we have to consider if that is the actual approach that we as educators want to take. Baby steps will still be part of the transition process, though.

j. A question from an Action Team member: Can we initiate pilot programs for some of the proposed programs?
   1) Response from Dr. Thompson: Yes, and we are already doing that. The next step is to engage community business leaders.

k. A question from an Action Team member: Are the population drops, depicted in the enrollment projection graphs, correct?
   1) Response: Those projections are correct, as Dr. Hazel Reinhardt stated, due to the lower birth rates during the recession there are some potential dips. She further predicted that those dips may never occur through new residents and housing growth.

l. A question from an Action Team member: Are the capacity and enrollment numbers on the new bar graphs reflective of the spreadsheets we saw last week?
   1) Response: Yes.

m. A question from an Action Team member: Can desired student capacity change?
   1) Response: Yes, if you increase the number of students per classroom, but those are School Board funding targets reflected in the calculations.

n. A question from an Action Team member: What happens to our long range plan at Eagle Creek, since the neighboring tracts for development have been sold to the SMSC?
   1) Response from Dr. Thompson: We are putting together maps showing available properties throughout the District, and will highlight properties appropriate for all school levels. The District will eventually want the Action Team to analyze the properties and consider what could go where.

o. A question from an Action Team member: Where have you been looking for properties?
   1) Response from Dr. Thompson: The District is working with realtors to see what is available, such as family estates, underdeveloped commercial, SMSC land, etc., but no specific lands, for a specific purpose, are being sought.

p. A question from an Action Team member: Are we interested in land near the current high school?
   1) Response from Dr. Thompson: Not necessarily, as it will depend on our future needs. We are not actively pursuing the neighboring lands to the high school.

q. A question from an Action Team member: Are we looking just at land or also at existing buildings?
   1) Response: At this time, land is being considered, as it is more cost-effective.
A question from an Action Team member: Is the School Board autonomous in its land-buying capabilities? Are they able to simply approve a $1 million land purchase on their own? That feels like a lot of power for 8 people to have.
1) Response: Yes, the District funds had the necessary funds available. Making such financial decisions is what the board members have been elected to do.

A question from an Action Team member: What would an addition to the high school cost?
1) Response: That would be hard to quantify, without going through the design and planning process.

A question from an Action Team member: What would a new high school cost?
1) Response: The recent referendum called for $78 million high school; any near-future high school would be of a similar number.

A live (“fist-to-five”) survey of Action Team members revealed there was general agreement with the capacity and enrollment numbers presented and they can be used by the Action Team, moving forward. While there is still some room for discussion on some of the numbers, for some members, no one flat-out disagreed with them and all are willing to move forward with planning using both the capacities and the enrollment projections as studied by the Action Team.

Christine Wroblewski, of Teamwork International, closed the meeting by asking the Action Team for highlights they would like shared:

a. Key Messages from Facilities Action Team:
1) We are accepting of the capacity and enrollment figures; the next step is to begin discussing options.
2) Our efforts are not just a capacity, enrollment, or money issue. There are many moving parts that must be considered.
3) A second- or mega high school cannot be our only concern, all school levels need to be reviewed.
4) It is not about us, it is about the kids.
5) We need more information from the Academic team and other educators to inform our work.
6) As a group, we agree that we should be discussing ALL options.
7) We need to look beyond what we as a group will agree upon, we have to make sure the voters will agree, too.

b. Key Questions from Facilities Action Team:
1) Can we see data supporting the 9-12 high school configuration as a successful model?
   a) Can we see data from other districts that have transitioned from 10-12 to 9-12?
   b) What benefits did they enjoy or what challenges did they encounter?
   c) Does the State recommend a specific grade configuration?
   d) How long has 9th grade been included in the high school credits requirement?
2) What is meant by “flexible school?”
   a) What does our Action Team need to understand to create appropriate options?
3) How long would it take to implement a 9-12 academic program; when could such a transition take place?
4) How will future development in our community affect our Action Team options?

E. Our next meeting: The Excellence in Operations and Facilities Action Team will meet next on June 5, 2014 at 6:00p at the High School.

cc: Attendants Board of Education
    Absentees Rod Thompson, Superintendent
    Facilitators Sarah Koehn, ISD #720