



Boundary Adjustment Committee Meeting Minutes

June 16, 2020

START TIME:

6:15 p.m., Tuesday, June 16, 2020

FACILITATORS:

Mark Anderson

Phil Crocker

Harium Martin-Morris

Craig Numata

ATTENDING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

The meeting was attended by nearly 30 committee members, including School Board Director Kevin Morrison and SPS staff, via Zoom.

WELCOME AND SCENE-SETTING:

Dr. Mark Anderson welcomed everyone and began by reminding the committee of its purpose and guidelines. He thanked the committee for the conversation at last week's meeting – out of which came three new scenarios (85, 86, 87) for the committee to review in this meeting. Phil Crocker added that neither of the scenarios from the previous meeting (76, 77) were without flaws, and these new scenarios seek to address some of the issues and recommendations raised by committee. Craig Numata raised the question from the previous meeting about enrollment versus capacity at each building, and said that the committee will look at this in the fall as they make some draft recommendations for potential adjustments to elementary school boundaries.

The committee was then divided into small groups for discussion on scenarios 78 and 79, which carried over from the previous meeting, as well as scenarios 85, 86 and 87. Phil asked the committee to focus the majority of their time and attention on the latter three.

DISCUSSION OF SCENARIOS 78, 79, 85, 86 AND 87

After the breakout groups, the committee came back together to discuss each group's conversation around the five scenarios. Similar to the previous week, each group reported back having focused on



different areas and data points. However, a common theme was again the tension between creating diversity – particularly socio-economic diversity – and keeping students in their neighborhoods for school. The data on free and reduced lunch (FRL) rates was a point of focus for many groups, along with school size. Highlights of the small group reports and committee discussion include:

- Many groups reported they preferred scenarios 85, 86 and 87 over 78 and 79 and the two scenarios from the previous meeting (76 and 77). The new scenarios seemed to balance the demographic data better, particularly around FRL rates.
- A few groups mentioned their concern about schools with higher FRL rates also having higher enrollment. Previously, the committee had discussed trying to achieve lower enrollment at schools with higher FRL rates.
- Multiple groups expressed concern over the FRL rate at North Central growing to over 70%.
- Many groups noted that the south region, particularly the new south middle school, was challenging to achieve socio-economic diversity while also keeping commute times reasonable and elementaries together as they feed to middle schools. There was some concern over families living close to one middle school but being in the boundary of another.
- Some groups noted that, in one or two of the scenarios, the geographic boundary between North Central and Shadle Park High Schools was greatly improved from the current boundary line – a more clean and clear division.
- Groups that mentioned the West Hills/Riverrun area were split in preferring the scenarios where that area moved north and the scenarios where that area stayed south. It was noted that the demographic data did not shift much as that area moved from one region to another, but it is a significant number of students. There were still questions of how students in that area might move through school all on the north side or all on the south side or if they would move possibly benefit from going north from elementary and middle school and south for high school.
- One group raised the issue of needing to consider special programs, to which many other committee members agreed. They asked the questions: where are special programs, where do they draw from, and how can we spread them out more evenly across the district? Phil responded that the facilitators will bring data points about special programs to the committee and that these programs can be positive levers to shift and make better quality schools. Mark noted that the District has the option to move these programs and can explore that further – the goal being to keep students and families close to the services they need.
- One group raised a question about transporting students who do not have a middle school in their neighborhood to other schools in an effort to achieve greater diversity across the system. Phil suggested the School Board weigh in on such an approach. Harium Martin-



Morris noted there are concerns with this kind of practice as it can disproportionately affect low-income families forced to commute outside of their neighborhood.

Phil closed the conversation by polling the committee on two items. First asking, “is there a preferred high school model?” No one voted for scenarios 78 or 79; scenario 85 received 30%, scenario 86 received 26%, and scenario 87 received 43% of the vote. The second poll asked, “is there a preferred middle school model?” No one voted for scenario 78; scenario 79 received 10%, scenario 85 received 17%, scenario 86 received 27%, and scenario 87 received 47% of the vote.

CLOSING AND NEXT STEPS

Phil commended the committee on how far they have come this spring and thanked everyone for their participation. He also was grateful for committee members’ discretion in not sharing maps, but encouraged all members to have conversations about the boundary work with their communities. Board Director Kevin Morrison appreciated everyone’s honesty, noting that all of the committee members are focused on the students first and doing what is best for them. He also asked the committee members to please help guide the Board next year and lend their voice to the discussion, particularly around the many considerations going into the committee’s recommendations. Mark echoed Phil and Kevin’s appreciation for everyone and is looking forward to connecting again in the fall.

This was the final committee meeting of the spring, and the group will reconvene in the fall.

The date of the first meeting in the fall is to be announced, and meetings will again be held on Thursday evenings. In the meantime, the facilitators and staff will work to refine the scenarios and data views for the committee. Criag noted he will be working all summer and welcomes additional ideas and feedback. All maps and demographical data will continue to be available on Basecamp.