

Citizens' Advisory Council
Enrollment and Facilities Committee

School District U-46
Elgin, Illinois

Work Summary for School Year 2014-2015

April, 2015

Overview

In addition to its ongoing efforts to monitor school enrollments and provide projections for growth, the Enrollment and Facilities Committee (E&F) has been tasked to provide recommendations of modifications to current school boundaries to alleviate overcrowded schools, and potentially close a school in underutilized areas to improve operational efficiency.

Goal

E&F's goal is to provide a report with boundary modification recommendations to the CEO and Board of Education (BOE) in time for approval by the BOE in December 2015. This due date has been clearly defined by the CEO.

Definitions

Class Size: For analysis purposes, E&F uses the following class sizes:

- GenEd Half Day Kindergarten: 28 students * 2 classes/room
- GenEd Full Day Kindergarten: 20 students
- GenEd grades 1-3: 28 students
- GenEd grades 4-6: 33 students
- GenEd split grades 1-3: 25 students
- GenEd split grades 4-6: 30 students
- ELL/DL Half Day Kindergarten: 24 students * 2 classes/room
- ELL/DL Full Day Kindergarten: 20 students
- ELL/DL grades 1-3: 24 students
- ELL/DL grades 4-6: 29 students
- ELL/DL split grades 1-2: 22 students
- ELL/DL split grades 2-3: 24 students
- ELL/DL split grades 4-6: 27 students
- SpecialEd: 12 students
- Ignite: 33 students
- DL Ignite: 29 students

Capacity: E&F and the district have worked together to study each school building and determine the number of rooms in each building that are suitable for use as classrooms. While some buildings currently have mobiles, they will not be used to determine capacities. The number of classrooms is used to determine various building capacities:

- As Built (aka Architectural) Capacity:
 - E&F's method: $\frac{1}{2}$ Room Count * GenEd K-3 Class Size + $\frac{1}{2}$ Room Count * GenEd 4-6 Class Size
 - District's method: 1 room for art, 1 room for music, # kindergarten rooms * 54 (27 for each half day class), and remaining rooms * 28

- As Used Capacity: Various building capacities are calculated by modifying the As Built capacity with additional specific criteria:
 - District’s method: Used rooms are counted by the type of use that school year * the respective class size, plus unused rooms * 28
 - As Used with Art and Music: Building capacity when one room is used as an art room and one room is used as a music room (As Built Room Count – 2).
 - As Used with All Day K: Building capacity when kindergarten classes are all full day, thus doubling the number of kindergarten rooms required.
 - As Used with Programs: Building capacity when room capacities for each program at each grade level in a building are considered. ***Because this capacity is the best representation of what is actually seen at each building, E&F will concentrate on this measurement for boundary work.***
- Actual usage of rooms may also be considered. It is possible for a school to have less than 100% utilization given the above criteria but still need to have mobiles.

Utilization: Comparing the various capacities to actual enrollment gives the percent utilization.

Overcrowded School: E&F has defined an overcrowded school as a school that has a utilization of 85% or more.

Underutilized School: E&F has defined an underutilized school as a school that has a utilization of 65% or less.

Operational Efficiency: Performing all functions in a highly effective manner in the most cost-effective way possible.

History

E&F is using Attendance Boundary Guidelines (Guidelines) to provide direction to the study of boundaries. These Guidelines have been approved by the CEO and BOE. E&F also has a Boundary Timeline (Timeline) which identifies all major tasks necessary to complete the boundary study, also approved by the CEO and BOE.

E&F has been working with The Omega Group (Omega), a company providing demographic services located in San Diego, CA. The district has provided Omega with historical enrollment data, busing information, program data, etc. so they will be able to develop boundary scenarios to address overcrowded and underutilized schools. Omega has also been provided with the Guidelines to follow during their work.

To date, E&F has concentrated on working with Omega to remove any inaccuracies in data to provide a reliable baseline from which to develop boundary scenarios. We have also worked together to analyze several different methods to project future enrollment and have recently agreed on methods that provide the best historical accuracy.

In an effort to reduce overcrowding and improve operational efficiency in certain schools, the district, Omega and E&F performed and compared various feasibility studies of creating Dual Language (DL)/General Education (GenEd) paired schools. It was apparent from all of the

studies done that it would not be possible to alleviate overcrowding in all DL schools through pairing, so this will not be considered as an optional scenario.

The district, with some additional analysis by E&F, conducted a feasibility study of the ability to offer all-day kindergarten (ADK) to all kindergarten students in the district. Based on the study, only approximately half of the schools have capacity to support ADK. A high concentration of schools without capacity for ADK are concentrated in the Elgin area, so even with boundary adjustments it would not be possible to offer ADK in all schools. At this time it will not be possible for the district to offer ADK to all kindergarten students, but studies will be done in the future to see if this is feasible at that time.

On-Going Work

E&F has identified the following steps to be completed with estimated due dates:

1. The district will provide additional financial information on underutilized schools so E&F can perform a thorough analysis of the true savings if a school would be closed. (Due April 21, 2015)
2. Omega will create boundary scenarios and present them to E&F. These scenarios will primarily be guided by geographic location of students. (Due April 21, 2015)
3. E&F will evaluate the scenarios and work with Omega and the district on any necessary modifications. This will include a study of the impact to programs and placement of students in programs.
4. E&F and the district will update the Timeline. (Due May 2015)
5. The scenarios will be provided to the community and affected schools. E&F will receive feedback from the community and schools. (Due August – September 2015)
6. E&F will work with Omega and the district to make modifications to the scenarios as necessary. (Due October 2015)
7. E&F will create a report with final recommendations. (Due October 2015)

Direction

E&F needs direction from the CEO and BOE on the following:

1. Through committee discussion on March 17, 2015 E&F has decided that 85% is an appropriate maximum utilization to define an overcapacity school. E&F needs the CEO's and BOE's agreement with or request to change this measurement.
2. Through committee discussion on March 17, 2015 E&F has decided that 65% is an appropriate minimum utilization to define an underutilized school. E&F needs the CEO's and BOE's agreement with or request to change this measurement.
3. Improving operational efficiency can be accomplished by closing an underutilized school and relocation of the students to area schools with available capacity. Work is already underway to determine costs to operate underutilized schools. Once potential cost savings through closing underutilized schools has been determined, E&F needs direction from the CEO and BOE on how to use this information:
 - a. In the report, E&F can include two scenarios for any school with potential cost savings if closed. The scenarios will be closing the school, complete with

estimated cost savings, and not closing the school. This would give the CEO and BOE options at the time final boundary change decisions are made. Or,

- b. The CEO and BOE can define a minimum cost savings for E&F to consider. Cost savings above the minimum will be incorporated into E&F's recommendations and cost savings below will not.
4. Progress has fallen behind the Timeline, and many E&F committee members are concerned that there will not be sufficient time to complete the work required. Rushing through this project without giving the community sufficient time to understand the need for boundary changes and implement any necessary feedback would cause unnecessary animosity in the community and schools. E&F has two options to the current Timeline that we would like to explore with the CEO and BOE:
- a. While this is already known to be a highly unpopular choice, the deadline could be extended one year, or
 - b. Limit the scope for the December 2015 deadline to alleviating overcrowding in elementary schools. Create a new deadline of December 2016 for middle and high schools, as well as potentially closing an elementary school.

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