

Ashland School District No. 5, Jackson County, Oregon - The Board of Directors met in a work session on January 26, 2004, at 7:00 p.m. in the Middle School Library. Present were:

Amy Amrhein) Chair

Chuck Keil)
Terry Littleton)
Heidi Parker) Board Members
Ellie Thivierge)

Juli Di Chiro, Superintendent
Loren Luman, Business Manager
Jeanne Peterson, Executive Secretary

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chair Amrhein.

II. Roll Check

A roll of the board was taken and all members were present.

III. Informational Overview

Juli Di Chiro reviewed enrollment projections, revenue outlook, capacity and occupancy at elementary schools, the budget development calendar, savings/income at Briscoe, and potential savings at Lincoln Elementary School.

Ms. Di Chiro reviewed informational handouts which included budget reductions; declining enrollment and revenue; elementary school capacities; cost savings if Lincoln School closed; average savings from reducing one teacher, one educational assistant, one administrator; savings resulting from cutting one day from the school year, and a summary of the school closure report.

A representative of the "For Quality Schools" group presented a statement to the Board acknowledging its work and proposing that the Board postpone the decision on Lincoln School closure to allow public forums to offer a broader based decision for closing schools.

IV. Small Break Out Groups

Below is public input that was gathered from small group discussions.

1. What is your opinion about maintaining four elementary schools and what is your rationale?

Performance levels – higher in smaller schools
Stronger academic foundation with smaller schools
Long history of success with smaller schools
Non-classroom space needed to maintain quality
enrollment is not low enough yet to close
we would be stretched if numbers go up
maintain space, smaller community orientated population
not enough data yet – need 4 schools for at least next 2/3 years
opportunity for vision
need to assess stress at Helman & Walker resulting from Briscoe closure
need time to research national trends
if financially possible
clinging to hope that children that have already been moved do not get moved again.
like ability to walk my child to school – less traffic
How do we allocate resources/building in district to meet need of children?
Closing Lincoln not the pressing issue.
Tipping point Ch 2: 150 = best size for a group. Most people can carry 12 emotional relationships. Be aware of number of relationships asking teachers to maintain.
Dance at Lincoln – 20 children good size. Be aware of parents leaving if class sizes increase. Psychically not good to “sardine” kids. Right now Lincoln has room to breathe. Room for volunteers.
Look seriously at not filling all rooms with classrooms. It’s important to leave room for extra things/rooms.
Increase in children’s anxiety/acting out behaviors across the valley. Relief in extra rooms.
Extra rooms increase options. Need breakout rooms if want to co-teach or do something creatively.
Increase class/school size then more parents may home school. Don’t lose community.
Lincoln is historic symbol of community. Only school south of Blvd.
Consider this – it’s important facility and location.
Pick up Lincoln and take whole community to AMS.
Long range 4 schools
Size of Lincoln – is 200 enough
250 ideal school size; 2 classes/grade; 5 grades; maybe some blends
Small size at Lincoln is “delightful”
Teacher says: more possibility to know all the kids; small nurturing community; build relationship/community
Walking kids to school is so important for community building
Walker Street getting so crowded
Share school building with some facility that brings in income

Learning facility – spanning the ages; learning center as a neighborhood resource
SOU pre school works
Each of the schools blocking off some space to - in a sense – paying in part of itself
Lincoln as a K-8
Crowding and how it affects children’s psyche
Maintain 4 schools (neighborhood schools)
Smaller class sizes
Walker at optimum size now
Important to maintain quality at beginning of education (smaller class sizes – good foundation)
Cultural fabric of neighborhood schools
Small class size more important than how many schools (18-24)
If Lincoln stays open commit to 5 years? (emotional issue of closure)
If it stays open – equalize size of 4 schools
Inevitable with population reductions that Lincoln will eventually close
Wait a year or two to close to keep stability in families that have moved already
Can we psychologically survive another closure 1 year later?
School size more important than class size
250-300 small school
Do we have appeal to new families if 3 schools are packed?
Importance of neighborhood communities
School consolidation sends a poor message to prospective families

What do you mean by “small elementary schools?”

that children can walk to; less traffic
has room for ALL activities
approximately 250-280 students
room for overflow

How do you see this decision affecting the middle and high school?

elementary feels larger impact – experience more cuts
cut programs at AHS & AMS
cutting a program is not forever – closing a school is not “either/or”
with vision, may not “sacrifice”
re-vision entire K-12
primary grades foundation important
any scenario will affect middle/high

**2. What suggestions do you have for new program offerings at our schools?
What suggestions do you have to increase revenue to the district?**

four day week/longer hours
increase participation/opportunities for home schoolers (Willow Wind)
provide more programs to attract home school families
explore additional local tax
increase donations from supporters
lease admin offices/move to AMS
grant opportunities
K-8
alternative “magnet” programs
work with property owners/developers to be pro family
affordable housing initiative
pay for extra ½ day of kindergarten
private pay extended day care
renting available space to private entities – AMS, Lincoln or Briscoe
summer programs – private pay
encourage landlords to rent to families
private pay extended day for activities: dance, music, art, creative offerings
magnet schools – creative curriculum
charge for elective offerings
Short Term Suggestions: Quality teachers
Long Term Suggestions: K-8 school; arts school; environmental school
Offer something to draw people back from Willow wind and private
schools/alternative schools.
Dance, kids’ lab, music, recess, lunch
Holistic education – exercise, ecology et al
Music, dance + arts
Look at research re: successful innovative programs/schools
Fiscally responsible: 4 elementary schools/AMS/AHS and work on funding
base....1987 Ashland Schools....reintroduce what we had....magnet
schools
Attract people to Ashland with wonderful school environments
Lincoln as teaching lab school with SOU
Waldorf School share space with Lincoln
Lease space to day care
Short Term Suggestions:
Immediately implemented: K-8? K-6?
Renting space in each school
Full day kindergarten
Make willow Wind style school at Lincoln
Combination of certified and non-certified teachers
All-day program for WW type
Community collaboration
Children’s activity levy – after school activities; (tutoring? After school
childcare?); rewriting

Long Term Suggestions

- Affordable housing
- Year round school
- Renting space in each school
- Marketing our community to families
- Willow Wind land/Middle school land for affordable housing
- Refinancing at lower rate?

Short Term Suggestions:

- Dual immersion programs
- Elementary charter school
- Home school participation in regular school classrooms
- Move DO to Lincoln/rent out DO
- All day kindergarten
- Magnet schools
- Fundraising (various)
- Major community fundraiser (like Mt. Ashland purchase)
- Corporate sponsorships
- Grants
- Lease surplus space (to schools also)

Long Term Suggestions:

- Dual immersion programs
- Additional taxing/fees – real estate

3. If Lincoln does not close next year, the Board will have to use other strategies to reduce our budget. Prioritize the following strategies that we may have to utilize:

- a. Reduce the number of elementary classroom teachers, which will result in larger class size.**
- b. Reduce the elective offerings at the middle school which will result in reduction of staff, fewer choices for students and higher class size.**
- c. Reduce the course offerings or programs at the high school which will result in reduction in staff, fewer choices for students and higher class size.**
- d. Reduce the number of school days which will result in salary reductions for all staff (Note: would need approval from the state and from employee groups).**
- e. Reduce classified staff (educational assistants, clerical staff, custodial and maintenance staff, etc.) resulting in less service to students and schools. (Note: Certain health and safety standards must be maintained).**

None of the small groups prioritized the above strategies.

Do you have any other budget reduction suggestions?

Larger class size with expectation of increased parent participation opportunities.
building level decisions
little bit from everywhere
Potpourri – bits of all of them
Fallacy – asking us to engage in paradox
Education program at Lincoln + rent space + study quality schools
Cost savings now + use summer for visioning/planning time
Find the 20% that gets the 80% results
All elements to solve our problems exist out there
We see what we believe...look from another standpoint
If close Lincoln and have to re-enter, have to retrofit it
using SOU for some AP classes
contracting out custodial or other services
reduction of admin
teacher groupings
find ways for schools to be more site-based decisions
sustainability – ASF
Require and or request parents to work – hours in schools (community service or assist in class)

What other suggestions or questions do you have that have not been discussed?

If close Lincoln, keep school + staff together – move as a unit.
Key factor in learning is relationship...How do we develop shared vision + dialogue and then make decisions? Vision is for all of Ashland
“chicken/egg” Want to walk to school? Etc.
**Take time – talk to kids, teachers + parents to figure out how to deal with bottom line
Rather see school at Lincoln's location rather than on outskirts of town.
Reassess which school to close.
Local sales tax?
Stand for Children Model in Multnomah County
Honda, Gates Grant...Bold idea could bring other funds. See who presents themselves. Turn around taxpayer revolt.
ASD + City of Ashland partnership to bring people to Ashland School District
have non-certified teachers for electives as savings

IV. Share-Out From Small Groups

Each group reviewed their findings.

IV. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:52 p.m.

Jeanne Peterson, Executive Secretary

Chair

Clerk