

Minutes of the
Flexible Boundary Committee Meeting
12 November 2009
L.J. Hauser Jr. High School

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. The following individuals were in attendance:

Committee members*--

Jennifer Leimberer, Board of Education Member (Chair)
Mary T. Stimming, Board of Education Member
Jim Raffensperger, Ames representative
Karen Magee, Blythe Park representative
Greg Nessinger, Central representative
Trish Smithing, Hollywood representative

Participating Members of the Public --

Rebecca Levine, Ames
Liz Buoscio, Ames
Mary Ellen Meindl, Central (Board of Education Member)
Art Perry, Hollywood
Elizabeth Fragoso, Hollywood
Agnes Halmon, Hollywood

Observer--

Lisa Gaynor, Blythe Park

*As of this date, Hauser does not have an official representative. Members Stimming and Magee, however, are Hauser parents.

1. Introductions

Meeting participants introduced themselves and shared their reasons for volunteering to serve on the Flexible Boundary Committee (hereafter referred to as FBC) or for coming that evening as a participant: “to gain knowledge of the policy and how it works . . . to listen . . . to offer some history on the policy and its formulation . . . to offer some insights . . . concern about all the families in the district . . . concern about how rising enrollment has affected impact of this policy.”

2. Committee Expectations and Goals

Ms. Leimberer read the 20 October 2009 statement from the Board of Education establishing the FBC (Minutes, Regular Meeting). In this, the Board set forth the following 5 goals for the FBC in its review of the Flexible Boundary Policy (7:30E):

- Understand and clarify the original purpose of the Flexible Boundary Plan.
- Evaluate the Policy against its own stated priorities.
- Evaluate the success of the Policy in terms of equity of class size across buildings and efficiency of building use.
- Compare long-term numbers to program expectations.

- Recommend solutions and modifications to the Policy, if necessary.

A brief discussion of these goals ensued.

Ms. Leimberer also read the parameters the Board established for the FBC:

- Recommended solutions are neighborhood school-based (committee can recommend further investigation of a solution that is not neighborhood school-based).
- Recommended solutions do not change current neighborhood school boundaries.
- Recommended solutions do not move children to a new school.
- All meetings will be posted and open to the public.
- Committee must hold open meetings to receive feedback from parents and staff prior to making a recommendation to the board.
- Surveys or letters to parents must receive board approval prior to sending.
- Committee must receive board approval prior to violating any above parameters.

3. Working Committee Structure

The Board attempted to secure a representative from each of the 5 district schools through solicitations via the 5 PTA/Os and building E-backpacks. The 4 elementary schools have sent a representative. Hauser may elect to send one in the future.

Mrs. Magee offered the possibility that the memories of and lingering emotions surrounding the conversations and implementation of the FB Policy in 2002 may be why Hauser is encountering difficulty finding a volunteer. A communication from the Hauser PTA co-Presidents confirms this supposition. Mrs. Magee suggested, and others agreed, that what made the conversations and events of 2002 so traumatic was the mandated transfer of children within the district as dictated by the new boundary lines. In other words, sensitivities around the FB Policy on the part of those originally affected are perhaps more over its initial implementation than the policy itself.

The Board hopes for faculty participation in the FBC, however, evening meetings are difficult for them to attend. The FBC will brainstorm ways to facilitate their input, e.g., complete surveys, after-school meetings, etc.

A unique aspect of this committee is its “open working participant” policy. Interested members of the community who attend a meeting(s) will be welcomed to the table to join in the discussions.

Mrs. Magee asked how the Committee will make its decisions. Debate centered on whether it will make its final recommendations via group consensus or votes cast by the official members of the Committee. Mrs. Leimberer indicated that she envisioned the committee working by consensus. Mrs. Stimming noted that if consensus is not reached on a particular item, alternatives will be recorded for Board consideration.

4. Committee Protocol

Given the parameters of the FBC, it will operate within the bounds and provisions of Illinois' Open Meetings Act.¹ Thus, Minutes compliant with the OMA will be kept, no deliberative conversations regarding the work of the FBC may occur outside the structure of the Committee, meetings between more than 2 members of the FBC to discuss its business are prohibited, and no blog postings regarding the work of the FBC are permitted (to prevent an incidental "cybermeeting").

School representatives of the FBC are responsible for attending all meetings (or insuring that a representative is sent in his/her place).

All documents used by and generated by the FBC will be posted on the District 96 website.

Members and participants are encouraged to talk about the Flexible Boundary Policy with others in the community and solicit their thoughts, questions and insights.

5. Review the Flexible Boundary Policy

With the exception of Mrs. Gaynor, attendees completed a matrix distributed by Mrs. Leimberer designed to generate conversation about the experiences of those present of the Flexible Boundary Policy. The matrix was created using the FB Policy's stated goals and priorities.

¹ "Meeting" is defined as 'any gathering of a majority of a quorum of the members of a public body held for the purpose of discussing public business.' 5 ILCS 120/1.02. 'Public body' is defined to include 'all legislative, executive, administrative or advisory bodies of the state, counties, townships, cities, villages, incorporated towns, school districts. . . .'" Guide to the Illinois Open Meetings Act 5 ILCS 120, 8-9, see <http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/government/openmeet.pdf>

As an advisory body to the Board of Education of District 96, the Flexible Boundary Committee satisfies the definition of a "Public Body" under the OMA.

	Yes. . . .	Yes, but. . .	No, but. . .	No
Respond to changing trends in enrollment				
Maintain equity				
Maximize use of the existing facilities				
Improve the quality of each school's programs				
Lower class size throughout the district				
Achieve equity in class sizes and facility access throughout the district				
Maintain the neighborhood school concept				
Provide a workable plan for the future				
To be financially responsible.				
Proximity				
Safety				
Once assigned to a school student will remain in a school				
Assignments based on siblings.				
Assignments based on proximity.				
Assignments based on date of registration.				

6. Discuss Action Plan for Evaluating the Policy

Tasks set for next meeting (Thursday, 10 December 2009 at Hauser):

- Read A Preliminary Report from the Long Range Steering Committee on Recommendations to Achieve Desirable and Equitable Class Size Ratios and Facility Usage in District 96 Elementary Schools
- Read District 96 Policy 7:30-E Long Range Plan Steering Committee Flexible Boundary Plan and Implementation Guidelines
- Make notes of similarities, differences, points of personal interest
- Review draft survey to administrators and write out suggested revisions
- Review distributed enrollment data

The first two documents were distributed in hardcopy to all participants. They are available online:

<http://www.district96.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/01/lrp-sc-march-2002.pdf>
http://downloads.microscribepub.com/il/riverside_96/730_e.pdf

The participants generated a list of questions for which they would more information (either prior to 12/10/09 meeting or as FBC proceeds). Some initial submissions:

- When did Flexible Boundary Policy expand to include Hollywood?
- How did this occur (e.g., Board action?)
- How do the administrators implement this policy?

The participants also generated some preliminary targets areas for recommendations given the evening's conversation:

- Standardization of implementation across buildings
- Conditions for exceptions
- Procedures for applying for and granting exceptions

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:43 p.m.

Mary T. Stimming, Recorder

Jennifer Leimberer, Committee Chair