

Minutes of the
Flexible Boundary Committee Meeting
14 January 2010
L.J. Hauser Jr. High School

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m. The following individuals were in attendance:

Committee members --

Jennifer Leimberer, Board of Education Member (Chair)
Mary T. Stimming, Board of Education Member (arrived 7:14 pm)
Jim Raffensperger, Ames representative
Karen Magee, Blythe Park representative
Greg Nessinger, Central representative
Kathy Barcal, Hauser representative
Trish Smithing, Hollywood representative (left meeting at 9:00 pm)

Participating Members of the Public --

Elizabeth Fragoso de Dvorak, Hollywood
Agnes Halmon, Hollywood
Kelly Krupske, Hollywood
Art Perry, Hollywood

Participating Members of the Board of Education--

Mary Ellen Meindl (left meeting at 9 pm)
James Schraidt

2. Public Comment/Statement

Kelly Krupske commended the Board for forming this Committee. She noted that the Flexible Boundary Policy is a key Board policy because it sets the groundwork for the relationship the District has with families. She thanked people for their work on this issue.

3. Review and Approve 10 December 2009 Minutes

The Minutes of the 10 December 2009 meeting were approved with the following amendments:

Sect. 2, Under Public Comment:

Eliminate parenthetical statement.

Sect. 5, Under Review and Discuss the Origins of the FB Policy:

Under *Reasons to Revisit*

- First line: eliminate “lively.”
Sentence now to read “There was a debate about the virtues . . . currently in place.”
- Under *Other Options Considered*
- Third line from bottom, eliminate “less dramatic.”

Sentence now to read, “Question was also asked whether other strategies were considered”

Under *Questions Raised*

- Third line: clarify questions were posted, not all discussed.
Sentence now to read “The following are written questions posted about the LRSC document (grouped loosely by topic; not all questions were verbalized during the meeting):”
- Correct number error in chart:
Number Change Column for Hollywood now to read + 8, not +13.

Under *Summary Discussion*

- 2nd bullet point was revised.
Bullet point now reads, “May only be a small percentage of students displaced (6% this year, 15% two years ago), but, at registration the potential implications of the Flexible Boundary policy affect 100% of Kindergarten students.”
- This bullet point was also moved to become the 4th bullet point.

Under *Next Meeting and Tasks*

- Date corrected from “13 January” to “14 January.”
Sentence now reads, “The next meeting of the FB Committee will be Thursday, 14 January 2010.”

4. Review Written Policy

The Flexible Boundary Committee conducted a comparative analysis of the “Long Range Plan Steering Committee Flexible Boundary Plan and Implementation Guidelines” as written in policy (7:30E) and as implemented since 2002. The table below summarizes the Committee’s findings and discussion

Points of Agreement:

Written	Implemented
“(K)eeep class sizes within the targeted guidelines”	True for Grades 4-5
“. . . maintain equity [of class sizes across the four elementary schools] . . .”	Yes, but this is achieved through displacement of some students from their neighborhood schools. Committee noted that during periods of high enrollment maintaining neighborhood school model and low class size become competing goals.
“. . . optimize the use of existing school facilities.”	Yes, but Committee noted this does not preclude further use of existing spaces; in particular multiple uses of current dedicated spaces.
“neighborhood schools”	Yes, with exception of students displaced.

	<p>Discussion ensued over definition of ‘neighborhood school’: Neighborly feel? Connected with community? Proximity to families?</p> <p>Unanimous agreement with Board member Jim Schraidt’s assessment that in District 96 “neighborhood school” means “the school my child can walk to . . . the school within closest proximity.” Also unanimous agreement with this being a model the community wants upheld.</p>
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Policy as written and implemented at odds:

Written	Implemented
“(F)lexible boundary approach . . . (as opposed to setting new, fixed boundaries”).	Boundaries are fixed; the assignment of students is flexible.
“The attendance area for Hollywood School would remain the same . . .”, i.e., Hollywood exempted from FB policy provisions.	<p>Hollywood included in FB provisions.</p> <p>Policy cites the following reasons for exempting Hollywood from its provisions: “geographic reasons (First Avenue and the Des Plaines River), safety concerns, and stable history of enrollment at the school.”</p> <p>Committee discussed meaning of “safety concerns” noting that the railroad crossing is a concern for children attending Central from south of the tracks, but this was not deemed a “safety concern.” History of policy formulation suggests it was the cumulative effect of a range of factors (First Avenue, Des Plaines River, Forest Preserve, stability of enrollment pattern) that resulted in Hollywood being excluded, in part, for “safety concerns.”</p> <p>Question was raised whether there have been any incidents involving that have endangered students crossing First Avenue?</p> <p>It was noted that crossing RR in Riverside is a significant safety concern too. Some members opined that is was combination of factors that accounted for Hollywood being</p>

	<p>omitted from original FB provisions, not just safety concerns.</p> <p>Plans to handle high enrollment at Hollywood had included multi-age classrooms, combining art/music rooms.</p> <p>Conversation shifted to consideration of whether, especially given scenario of high enrollment, Hollywood should continue to be exempt from policy. This question was deferred until the next meeting.</p>
"Class Size Targets"	<p>Class size caps.</p> <p>Board decisions have gradually raised the number of students in K-3 to 23 given high enrollment and space restrictions.</p> <p>According to Long Range Plan Steering Committee research, optimal class size is elementary grades is 17 and under. Our buildings were designed for larger classes, perhaps 27-30 students per room. Within the community, the first is not economically feasible, the latter is not acceptable.</p> <p>Since 2002, the equivalent of Central school has been added to the District with no increase in facilities.</p>

<p>“Guidelines for Implementing the FB Policy Proximity . . . Date of Registration Siblings Safety”</p>	<p>Given high enrollment, date (even time) of registration has become key determinant. True even for families with siblings already enrolled at neighborhood schools.</p> <p>Recollection that order of factors listed under “Waiting List” was intended to be order for entire document (see below).</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. siblings b. proximity to the school (distance from property border to school border, with ties broken by lottery). c. date of registration.</p>
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All members concurred that the policy as stands requires too much interpretation; it is problematic that key passages and guidelines are ambiguous.

5. Interviews with Administration

Original plan was to have one parent interview one administrator (not from home school). Then group decided for sake of consistency in interviewing and reporting would ask two members to serve in this capacity. Jim Raffensperger and Greg Nessinger selected. Jennifer Leimberer will contact Superintendent Lamberson to set up appointments.

Group preference is to interview administrators separately and without submitting questions in advance. Goals of interviews are to gather information about how FB plan is administered, what administrators think works well about it and what they need it to accomplish.

6. Next Meeting Tasks and Date

Consider the following as Recommendations:

- Strike all language pertaining to 2002-03 and associated “Notes” from the written Policy.
- Define “neighborhood school” in accordance with community understanding, i.e., school to which my child could, if desired, walk.

Resolve confusion surrounding the following:

- Order of priorities for assigning students to schools (in policy and implementation).
- Hollywood’s status vis à vis policy.
- Percentage of “empty seats” built into sections per grade planning process following March registration. And at what level--school or district.

Other tasks:

- Review administrative interview questions.

- Bring draft Recommendations to aid in FB policy text and/or implementation.

Thought exercises to consider:

- 30-year enrollment average is 1,200-1,300 students. Given current class size targets, what are space needs for the District?
- Effect of registering within district rather than at a particular school? Would this allow Administration more flexibility to meet goals of maintaining low class size, neighborhood schools and maximum facility usage?

Given the amount of time given over to review when meeting monthly, the committee agreed to meet in two weeks.

The next meeting of the FB Committee will be Wednesday, 27 January 2010 in Hauser Library.

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:14 p.m.

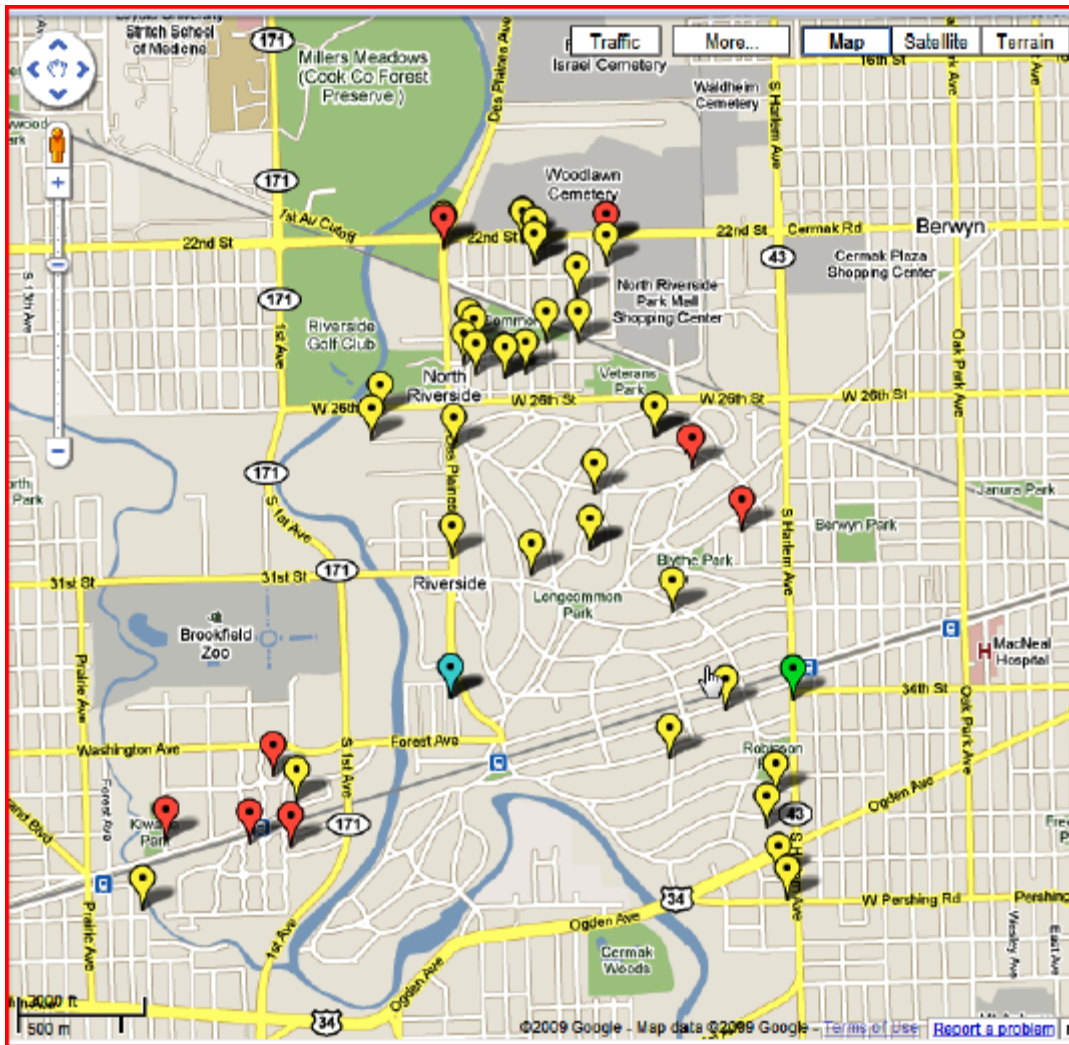
Mary T. Stimming, Recorder
Chair

Jennifer M. Leimberer, Committee

Appendix

Current Distribution of Displaced Students as of January 1 [2010, MTS]

The map is color coded by where children are displaced to.
Yellow goes to Blythe Park.
Red is Central.
Green is Hollywood.
Blue is Ames.



<http://www.district96.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/Current-Distribution-of-Displaced-Students-as-of-January-1.pdf>