



*A Community of Learners*

## **Enrollment Balancing Project Update**

To: District 36 School Board  
Trisha Kocanda, *Superintendent*

From: Greg Kurr, Chief Financial Officer  
Maureen Hager, Enrollment Balancing Project Coordinator

Re: Enrollment Balancing Project Update

October 18, 2016

This memo summarizes progress on the District's Enrollment Balancing Project since the September 20, 2016, update to the Board. This work continues on schedule to provide the anticipated enrollment recommendation for consideration at the January 24, 2017, meeting of the Board. The memo addresses three areas of the project:

Part One: Update on Progress Since September 20, 2016 and Approval of Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes (Consent Agenda)  
Part Two: Demographic Report and Capacity Study Updates  
Part Three: Community and Staff Survey Results and Recommended Board Action on Guiding Principles

### **Background**

The Enrollment Balancing Project (EBP) is addressing the enrollment imbalance currently being experienced at the elementary school level. The first phase of this project is intended to address capacity issues at Crow Island and to assist in the implementation of the extended kindergarten day program.

## **Part One: Update on Progress Since September**

Since the September regular meeting of the Board, the first of seven scheduled EBP Advisory Committee meetings was held on September 26, 2016. A total of 16 committee members attended the meeting facilitated by CFO Greg Kurr and Project Facilitator Maureen Hager.

**Action:** As with other Board Committee meeting minutes, **the Board is requested to approve the minutes of this meeting as an item on the October 18 meeting consent agenda.**

Progress since the September update to the Board includes the following:

- ❑ 18 community and staff members were invited and agreed to participate as members of the Advisory Committee
- ❑ the initial Advisory Committee meeting was held on September 26, 2016; at this meeting:
  - ❑ Committee members were advised of public body responsibilities in relation to the Open Meetings Act and the Freedom of Information Act
  - ❑ the Advisory Committee developed a set of operational guidelines to assist with their work
  - ❑ further questions for discussion at its October 25, 2016 meeting were identified
  - ❑ the opportunity for Advisory Committee community members to tour the buildings with students and staff in attendance was requested; a tour has been arranged
- ❑ the community and staff were surveyed regarding a set of proposed values against which possible options will be evaluated; an analysis of survey results is provided for the Board's review and the Board is requested to approve these values at its October meeting
- ❑ an updated Enrollment Forecast has been developed based on the October 1, 2016, District enrollment data
- ❑ an invitation for all community members to comment on the EBP process or to post questions they would like considered in the process has been added to the EBP webpage; this invitation will continue throughout the process and these comments and questions will be shared with the Advisory Committee

## **Part 2: Demographic Report and Capacity Study Updates**

After their initial visit to the community and individual site visits by consultants from Cropper GIS and McKibben Demographics, the District was provided with two preliminary reports, a Demographic Forecast and a Capacity Study. Using the October 1 enrollment data, the Demographic Forecast (Addendum I) and

Capacity Study (Addendum II) have been reviewed for any necessary revisions and these updates are included with this memo. Matt Cropper and Dr. Jerrold McKibben will be commenting on these updates during the Board meeting via remote access.

### **Part 3: Part Three: Community and Staff Survey Results and Recommended Board Action on Guiding Principles**

#### **Background**

Community and staff were invited to assist with identifying values and priorities regarding enrollment. Via survey, respondents were invited to identify their top three priorities from a list of nine values, as well as were invited to comment and/or add other priorities they would like included in the list. These values will inform the Enrollment Balancing Advisory Committee as it develops a recommendation to address the current enrollment imbalance that exists in the District. By comparing options to these prioritized values, the Committee will better understand how an option would match community and staff preferences.,

The surveys were developed and open for responses in September.

- ❑ a total of 252 community members and 123 staff members completed the online survey for a total of 375 responses (67% of total responses from community; 33% from staff)
- ❑ the survey included nine options for consideration; the list was not meant to be comprehensive and exclusionary of other options, but rather presented and sought feedback on potential values to assist the Advisory Committee in analyzing enrollment options and developing their final recommendation
- ❑ although the comment summary provides some useful information, no additional priorities received a sufficient number of mentions to expand the list of values; however, some individual comments focused on an option that the individual respondent wished to have deleted from consideration which was not the purpose of this survey
- ❑ in addition to providing three priority responses, 104 community and 15 staff provided comments that have also been analyzed for themes; these themes are included in a comment summary attached to this memo

#### **Survey Outcomes -**

Based on the survey responses, the following represents the ranking of the

values. The top five values are recommended for adoption as at least 10% of the respondents indicated the value was worthy of consideration (respondent groups were either total respondents, community respondents, or staff respondents). Detail as to the degree of support for each value is included in the attached data summary (Addendum III) and a summary of comments is also provided (Addendum IV). Values receiving the greatest level of support and the recommended guiding principles for the Advisory Committee work include:

1. Whenever possible, maintain current class size guidelines for the varying grade levels/programs rather than increasing class size guidelines at the elementary or middle school levels
2. When possible, avoid moving students from their current school assignments (current students stay in their schools; new students are assigned to school(s) with available space)
3. If school attendance boundaries are redrawn, younger siblings should be assigned to the same schools as their older sibling(s)
4. Ensure that the elementary schools have equitable enrollments and building utilization for the next five years
5. Adhere to optimal space use recommendations (which are defined by school facility studies as 70-80% of maximum capacity) to support current educational programs

### **Next Steps**

**Action: The Board is requested to adopt these recommended priorities thereby endorsing their use as guiding principles for the Enrollment Balancing Committee.**

Once established, the approved guiding principles will be provide a standard as to the degree to which each enrollment balancing option matches the identified school community values. Additionally, a cost-benefit analysis will be used to determine the degree to which each option adheres to these values. This process will allow for the honing of options before they are brought before the public for comment and reaction. These presentation opportunities are tentatively scheduled for the December and early January timeframe.

### **Future Committee Meetings**

The next in a series of seven Advisory Committee meetings will be held on October 25, 2016. Meetings are scheduled up to January 24, 2017, in preparation

for developing a recommendation. These meetings will be continue to be public and will be held in the Washburne Resource Center on the following dates:

- Tuesday, October 25, 6:00-9:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, November 1, 6:00-9:00 p.m.
- Monday, November 14, 6:00-9:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, November 29, 6:00-9:00 p.m.
- Thursday January 12, 6:00-9:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, January 17, 6:00-9:00 p.m.

The Committee will use all data and information available to help inform its recommendation(s), and the Board will be requested to take action regarding enrollment at the February 21st or March 21, 2017, meeting for implementation for the 2017-18 school year.

### **Recommendation**

The Board is requested to adopt the recommended values and priorities as guiding principles for use in the deliberations by the Enrollment Balancing Project Advisory Committee.

### **Attachments**

- Addendum I: Demographic Forecast October 1, 2016
- Addendum II: Capacity Study October 1, 2016
- Addendum III: Enrollment Balancing Project September 2016  
Community and Staff Survey Response Data
- Addendum IV: Enrollment Balancing Project September 2016  
Community and Staff Survey Summary of Comments
- Addendum V: Community and Staff Survey Results PowerPoint  
October 18, 2016