



Little Elm ISD Long-Range Facilities Planning Committee

**Meeting #1: Monday, August 16, 2021
Walker Middle School**

MEETING NOTES

Welcome & Introductions – Daniel Gallagher

Mr. Gallagher, superintendent of schools, opened the meeting, welcomed everyone, and introduced several employees in attendance who will serve as a resource to the committee:

- Cecelia Jones, Director for Communication Services
- Ross Roberts, Deputy Superintendent
- Dr. Cynthia Mika, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Learning
- Rick Martin, Executive Director of Construction & Operations
- Alfred Gaches, Executive Director for Operational Services
- Shay Adams, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance

Icebreaker – Cecelia Jones

Ms. Jones led an icebreaker activity, asking people to respond to several questions by standing. Committee members also introduced themselves to other committee members, and shared additional things they have in common.

Committee Overview – Cecelia Jones

Ms. Jones discussed the purpose of the committee and what committee members are charged with:

- Represent the entire community in the facility planning process
- Assist the District in evaluating facility needs based on projected growth
- Assess and prioritize those needs
- Create a long-range facilities plan for the future of the district
- Provide a recommendation to the Little Elm ISD Board of Trustees on how to proceed with a long-range plan including the potential need for a future bond election

She also clarified that it's the role of the Board of Trustees to determine the actual structure and content of any potential bond election.

Ms. Jones introduced Saron Winfrey, a committee member who has served on the LRFPC in the past. Ms. Winfrey will serve as the LRFPC Community Facilitator, helping to lead portions of each meeting and ensuring the group stays on task and that everyone has a voice in the process.

Committee Process – Sarona Winfrey

Ms. Winfrey outlined the process and explained that each meeting will focus on a different area of the planning process. They would hear a demographic report and enrollment projections tonight, and in future meetings, learn more about school finance, Little Elm ISD's bonding capacity, hear the results of a community survey and explore potential projects, including new schools and additions needed for growth.

She also talked about the opportunity for friends and other residents to attend meetings, but that only committee members would engage in the process of developing a recommendation to take to the school board.

She outlined the schedule and locations for each meeting:

- Meeting 2: September 13 – Oak Point Elementary
- Meeting 3: September 27 – Chavez Elementary
- Meeting 4: October 25 – Little Elm High School
- *Meeting 5, if needed: December 6 - Zellars*
- Recommendation to Board of Trustees: December 13

Defining Consensus – Sarona Winfrey

Ms. Winfrey talked about the importance of defining and reaching consensus in this process. She mentioned that 100% consensus may be ideal but isn't realistic. She asked committee members to discuss their definition of consensus for this process.

Table Discussion Share Out:

- Majority
- Agree that we're in consensus when we leave the room

District Update – Daniel Gallagher

Mr. Gallagher gave an update on the district. He shared the following:

- Haven't changed the vision and mission in a long time. The Vision of the Little Elm ISD Community is to be "THE Destination District." The Mission of Little Elm is to ENGAGE, EQUIP, and EMPOWER each student to realize their full potential.
- The district has grown and improved tremendously.
- Everything we do is based on our strategic plan (Destination 2025).
- We've purchase land to put the district in a good position moving forward for the next 15-20 years.
- Plan to leave school tracks open for community use.

Previous Bond Elections – Daniel Gallagher

Mr, Gallagher provided an overview of the 2002 and 2017 bond elections. He showed a listing and photos of the projects that have been completed and talked about two from the 2017 bond that are still scheduled: the LMC conversion to administrative space and the indoor multi-use facility.

Campus Tour – Committee Members

Committee members toured Walker Middle School, and upon their return had a discussion about how the campus made them feel, and what physical characteristics should be considered for all LEISD schools and students.

Campus Tour Reflections:

- Collaboration areas are great
- Enjoy seeing students working together

Demographic Projections – Trent Smith, Templeton Demographics

Mr. Smith gave an overview of state enrollment trends, including:

- There were 5.49 million students in Texas before 2020
- 122,000 kids withdrew from Texas schools due to COVID.
- The state lost a total of 180,000 kids
- They're expecting a historic bounce back, up to to 5.5 million students.
- Approximately 70% was from PreK/K.
- Many parents just didn't send their kids to school (gap year/learning loss)
- Expecting surge at PreK, K, 1st grade
- Parents being able to work from anywhere is pushing suburban sprawl outward

In Region 10, there was a decline of almost 18,000 students.

Little Elm ISD has a 5 year increase of 918 students, with 43 new students last year (when many school districts experienced a loss in students).

Mr. Smith explained that the new housing market has exploded during the pandemic. Some key stats include:

- 1Q21 annual starts in LEISD was 787, ranked 16th in north Texas
- 818 annual closings
- Oak Point is highest growth area

Student enrollment projections:

- 8,108 students in 2021
- 8,537 students in 2022
- 9,132 students in 2024 (1,000 students in 3 years)
- 10,663 students by 2031
- Little Elm High School will reach its maximum capacity next year

- Oak Point Elementary School will reach its maximum capacity in 2023.
- They're projecting approximately 430 students more in 2021-2022 compared to last year.

Questions & Closing – Daniel Gallagher

Questions from the committee members included:

1. Growth along 380? Mr. Smith showed approximately where 380 was and explained the areas that fall within LEISD.
2. How do you explain growth percentage slow down? COVID, build out of some neighborhoods
3. How do we prepare for full day PreK? That's something the curriculum and instruction team is planning for.
4. What's the advantage of having one high school?
 - Land – More land is needed. The district would need well over 120 acres and it's not necessarily available.
 - Operating costs – there's a significantly higher cost to operate an additional facility... staff, utilities,
 - Curricular opportunities – smaller schools aren't able to offer the same courses and programs. Little Elm ISD has to wait until our population grows to offer new programs of study.

During open discussion, Mr. Gallagher shared that it's his goal to add building capacity to accommodate growth.

Mr. Gallagher also mentioned that the district has purchased about 100 acres in Oak Point. He also reiterated that the district's hope, plan and goal is to not raise the current tax rate. He said he'd like to see the committee come up with a solid plan that can be accommodated in the current tax rate.

The next committee meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 13 at Oak Point Elementary School.