

CYPRESS SCHOOL DISTRICT
Cypress, California 90630

MASTER FACILITIES PLAN COMMITTEE

March 25, 2009

3:30 p.m.

Education Center

A meeting regarding the Master Facilities Plan Committee convened at 3:30 p.m., March 25, 2009.
Persons in attendance are listed below:

Facilitator:	Lynne Merrick, Consultant
District Administration:	Sheri Loewenstein, Superintendent Carrie Delgado, Chief Business Officer
City Representative:	June Liu, Director, Recreation & Parks, Cypress Cindy Robinson, Community Services Supervisor, La Palma
Principal Representatives:	Mark Brown Carol Erbe Jane Snyder Jeannette Lohrman Tracy Mouren-Laurens M.J. Beatty Steve Teschke Denine Kelly Donna Layne
District Employees:	Isis Ortiz, Cawthon Betty Baldwin, Cawthon Chuck Voght, Dickerson Elizabeth Dunagan, King Vickie Ohlman, King Julie Gautreau, Landell Betty Ann Platt, Landell Jennifer Olsen, Luther Kari Singer, Luther Marsha Ahn, Morris Sandy Dzurilla, Morris Tracy Cunanan, Swain Karen Washburn, Swain Donna Wittenberg, Transportation Mike Baldwin, Maintenance Joan Brister, Confidentials

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Parent Representatives:

Allison Ferrier, Cawthon Parent
Alison Mahony, King Parent
Kris Matsuda, Landell Parent
Carol Pugarad, Luther Parent
Ralph Rodriguez, Luther Parent
Joel Nelson, Morris Parent

Superintendent Loewenstein called the meeting to order and welcomed the audience. She said that this meeting will provide an overview of the process to discuss school closure. Those in attendance will be given information and answers to general questions. No decisions will be made at this time. Representatives from each school were invited, as we know there is a lot of anxiety regarding this process, and we know that no matter how thorough we are, it is still a very emotional issue. She then introduced Lynne Merrick, Schoolhaus, Inc. and facilitator for our meetings. She also introduced Darren Waters, Dolinka Group, who will aid the committee with financial and demographic information. She then introduced June Liu, Director of Recreation/Community Services with the City of Cypress and Cindy Robinson, Community Services Supervisor with La Palma.

Handouts of a PowerPoint presentation were provided for all attendees. Ms. Loewenstein reminded the group that we have a tremendous budget crisis in the State of California and throughout the nation. This school year we made \$850,000 in cuts, including custodians, part of an administrator position, and most of the music program. We also saw savings from retirements of 20 teachers, which we do not anticipate again for several years. The budget that was finally signed in February resulted in Cypress needing to cut another \$1.4 million for 2009/10. A portion of this amount will be reached based on \$400,000 in ongoing savings we will achieve from the closure of Dickerson School. The District's enrollment has declined by nearly 800 students since 2002. In 2004 Damron School was closed, and Dickerson will be closed and consolidated with Vessels effective 2009/10. She then turned the presentation over to Ms. Merrick.

Ms. Merrick told the audience we expect to continue to decline over the next 10 years. Committee discussions last year brought a consensus that our optimum school size is 550, with schools no smaller than 450 and no larger than 650. Based on this, she divided the District into two regions, with the southern portion made up of Cawthon, Morris, and Vessels averaging 539 students per school. The northern portion includes the remaining five school averaging 441 students per school. It will be these five that we will most likely look at to determine one for closure: Arnold, King, Landell, Luther, and Swain. Ms. Merrick went over the criteria the committee will consider when deciding a school to close. This criteria includes site, facility, enrollment/demographic, and program needs.

The Superintendent then asked the attendees to divide into small school groups and discuss questions/comments they might have, which would then be answered and discussed. The following issues and questions were raised:

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1. Will last years' Master Facilities Plan Committee be called back for the new closure discussion or will a new committee be formed?

Ms. Loewenstein said that a new committee would be formed, but it may or may not include some of the same people. We want to be sure we have representation from those schools that will be examined for closure.

2. How will we determine who is on the committee?

Sheri said we will get names from the principals, ACT, and CSEA.

3. Will the criteria we examine be "weighted" before the committee looks at it?

Ms. Merrick said that it is difficult to weight the criteria until it is studied. Until we narrow down the sites under discussion and analyze each, it cannot be adequately done. As we narrow the discussion of sites, it will become more apparent which criteria are more or less important to the consideration for closure.

4. During the recession of the 90s, the La Palma community saw a resurgence of young families. Do we have a contingency plan in case our communities grow again?

We have Damron that could easily be reopened and is in very good shape. We would love to gain new students, but it is unlikely this will happen in the numbers that would require us to reopen a closed school. Although prices are down in La Palma, starter homes are much lower in other areas. The District will make plans for potential growth as each school is modernized.

5. Luther School is in an area where parents have been politically involved in trying to legally change the way district boundaries work. It is a city of 2 square miles and has five different schools in different districts. Has this been taken into consideration?

The Superintendent responded that Cypress and Centralia have agreed to allow movement of La Palma students back and forth between their districts. We will continue to be sensitive to the needs of these parents and students.

6. Land use decisions will need to be made involving cities. Will there be an opportunity for that input?

Ms. Loewenstein said that not only will the Master Facilities Plan Committee meet, but we will also call a "7-11" Committee for the purpose of recommending to the Board how the surplus property should be used following closure. We will work with each city involved to make this determination.

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7. With the possibility that boundaries will have to be changed with the next school closure, how many different models will be provided?

Ms. Merrick said that many alternatives will be provided for consideration by committee members.

8. Toxins have been found in the soil in Los Angeles Unified and at Kennedy High School. Will this be a factor used in the process of considering a school for closure?

Lynne responded that there is no requirement to check the soil for toxins at existing sites. As a result, we will not randomly test for this. However, we are doing a full hazardous materials check.

9. There are different numbers indicated on the school of residence chart as opposed to the school of attendance. Will both of these numbers be taken into consideration?

Sheri said that we will consider many different scenarios, including school of residence and school of attendance.

10. Will attendance boundaries be the major issue under consideration?

We will look for the least disruptive way to change boundaries.

11. Will intra- and inter-district attendance be taken into consideration?

The Superintendent responded that, to the extent we have space, it will be considered. No student currently enrolled in a school will be asked to leave. Parents who are worried about boundary changes could request transfers, if we were to have room at another school. The committee could recommend that students at the school being closed have priority in the selection of another site.

12. What is the timeline?

The committee will identify a school to close in June 2010. Plans will be made to make notifications by February or March 2010. The intent is to make this next school closed another interim facility, like has been done with Dickerson.

13. When will we know which schools are being considered for closure?

Ms. Loewenstein said that we will determine within the next month the actual schools to be studied for possible closure. A smaller committee would then be established with representatives from each of the schools being considered, as well as other District and city representatives.

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14. Will this be the last school to close for the immediate future?

Sheri said that, if the budget gets worse and we continue to decline in enrollment, we could need to close another school. We could end up with six schools of about 600 students each if our total population were to drop to 3600.

15. Do we have a tentative date for the first committee meeting?

The Superintendent said that would probably be the end of April or early in May. The committee usually meets on Wednesday afternoons, at 3:30 p.m. The information will be provided when scheduled.

With no further questions, the Superintendent thanked everyone and adjourned the meeting at 4:40 p.m

/jb