

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS DECLINING ENROLLMENT COMMITTEE

Update 8.8.23

During our 7th meeting held in late July, the Elementary Declining Enrollment Committee (EDEC) continued discussing the criteria that would be used if the district were to move forward with school consolidation/closure at the elementary school level. Superintendent Dr. Hill began by summarizing meeting #6's focus on the pros and cons of consolidation as a response to declining enrollment. The committee analyzed the viability of consolidation and discussed establishing decision-making criteria.

Following the conclusion of meeting #6, the EDEC Core Team administered a survey to committee members to answer two key questions: How should criteria be applied - a Tiered System or a Weighted System?, and Which criteria should be applied? A Tiered System would involve applying Tier 1 Criteria to all elementary schools, using Tier 2 criteria, if necessary, to shorten the list, and then applying Tier 3 criteria, if necessary, to shorten the list further. Alternatively, the Weighted System applies the final comprehensive set of criteria to all schools, with certain criteria given more importance than others by applying more weight to them. The committee was tasked with completing the survey, determining the best application method, and then ranking each criteria by importance.

Dr. Hill opened meeting #7 with a reminder of the expectations of the Elementary Declining Enrollment Committee, should the Board of Education consider closure/consolidation as one of the pathways to addressing declining enrollment. We then moved into a discussion of the results of the committee survey, working to finalize the list of potential closure/consolidation criteria. 100% of survey respondents were in favor of a weighted system. Dr. Hill presented the seven criteria that received majority support for inclusion from the committee and how committee members ranked them, on average. Three criteria did not receive majority support for inclusion from the voting committee members, and those criteria were discussed, as well.

Additionally, the committee revisited JeffCO's School Consolidation After Action Report to evaluate the lessons JeffCO learned from their consolidation process. The committee was presented with four groups that the district would want to keep in mind if closures/consolidations were to happen: Supporting Impacted Students, Supporting Impacted Families, Supporting Impacted Staff, and Supporting Impacted Surrounding Neighborhoods. The committee initiated this process by engaging in discussions at their respective tables. They were then tasked with capturing their thoughts and ideas on how to best support these four stakeholder groups on sticky notes and affixing them to the four posters representing each supportive element. Committee members engaged in discussions at each poster, lifting up their thoughts, sharing their ideas, and then rotating around the room to contribute to all posters.

Following this, committee members were invited to contribute additional ideas for consideration by adding sticky notes to the fifth poster labeled "Other." The content displayed on these posters will be synthesized and presented to the committee at the next meeting. Ideally these ideas will be captured in the final report presented to the Board of Education.

The EDEC is entering the final stretch of this process with meetings still scheduled for August and September. During the upcoming sessions, our focus will be directed toward finalizing the proposed closure/consolidation criteria, aiming to arrive at a consensus that best serves our objectives. A substantial portion of our remaining time together will also be dedicated to further discussions and the collection of ideas that will help shape the content for our comprehensive final recommendation report for the Board of Education. This report, intended to capture the culmination of the committee's work, will propose the various pathways that have emerged through this process for addressing declining enrollment in District 51, specifically at the elementary level.

Mesa County Valley School District 51

More Information :

📞 970-254-5872

✉️ D51sustain@d51schools.org

🌐 bit.ly/creatingasustainable51@d51schools.org