



Long Range Planning Committee
 Wednesday, March 7, 2018
 Meeting Minutes

Voting Members

•	Caryn Becker	X	Brad Geiger	•	Kati Knisley		
•	Laura Jensen	X	Nicole Bolger	X	Bob Binder		
X	Cindy Barnard	X	Rudy Lukez	X	Kristen Hirsch		
•	Michelle Major	X	Chris Williams	X	Martin Mavis		
X	Karen Zimmerman	X	Stephanie Stanley	X	John Freeman		
X	Steven Franger						

Non-Voting Members

X	Richard Cosgrove	X	Thomas McMillen	X	Krista Holtzmann		
X	Gautam Sethi			X	Anthony Graziano		

X indicates attendance

Call to Order

Long Range Planning Committee Chair Brad Geiger called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Minutes of 2-7-18 Meeting

Motion. Seconded. Minutes were approved.

LRPC Membership

Karen Zimmerman and the interview committee had 3 interviews and have 2 more applicants to interview before break. They will move forward on applications for recommendations at that time. Applicants are still needed for the East Planning Area, Chaparral HS and Legend HS. Caryn Becker has resigned.

Capacity Subcommittee Discussion Regarding Boundaries

Nicole Bolger stated the subcommittee has definite recommendations for the BOE, but to have an in-depth boundary change discussion across the district down to the street level, and in order to see the big picture, they believe outside resources are needed.

- Information is in Infinite Campus and it's a lot of information; work with Transportation about the inefficiencies of boundaries. Transportation knows where those pockets are.
- The meeting with the northwest DC Principals was summarized, which is the west side of Highlands Ranch in the North Planning Area and includes Northridge, Sand Creek, Eldorado, Trailblazer, and Bear Canyon. There are areas in which we have identified declining enrollment and in which Principals are becoming quite concerned about enrollment. An area to consider is the Central Park area, and three upstart developments have come in and all are within the Northridge boundary, and Northridge is overutilized.
- There was discussion about how to reboundary the area differently.
- From a subcommittee perspective, they think the lowest hanging fruit at Northridge is Discovery, from there on there are other issues.
- The subcommittee is also talking about the apartments, and that some of that could get redrawn into the TRHS boundary. It makes sense for those students to go to Eldorado. Bear Canyon is also monitoring those numbers.

The is also the possibility of the Highlands Ranch Golf Course community going to Trailblazer which is numerically in more dire need than other feeder schools.

- At that meeting, in attendance were Mountain Vista feeder Principals who expressed that secondary levels could also benefit from reboundarying.
- Developments are worrying Northridge.
- Principals are hoping that there is momentum on re-drawing boundaries this year. The subcommittee indicated that it may be across the district and would need more support, and that they are looking at changes probably being the 2020 school year, not 2018-19.
- The subcommittee wants to be a part of the conversation. They were suggesting that Principal support of boundary changes is going to be key. Trying to be as forthright as possible about our analysis regarding the GT program is required. There was some definite push back by Principals, but starting the conversation was a good start.
- The plan coming out is that the subcommittee would move the discussion up to the next level. The discussion was to first discuss this with Interim Superintendent Kane. A conference call is scheduled on 3/12. There is a hope that there are some quick changes that will increase enrollment at some of our underutilized schools. We were at Northridge and when other Principals left, the discussion changed. Northridge is the unique school in that area, and all other schools are losing enrollment. To say Northridge is ready and willing to give up GT is a misstatement. There are potential winners and losers and this is a complex discussion. The other part to the southern schools in that area is that we do not know how long we are going to be moving students from Sterling Ranch to them pending a new school in Sterling Ranch, or that impact or how that works. The goal is not to reboundary every year. Northridge has too many kids and they say moving Discovery will not change the enrollment situation. Programming is not what the LRPC does. Principals feel this is a big issue and want to move forward on reboundarying. The LRPC does not want to minimize their concerns about keeping teachers and programs. Principals can't compete without the money.
- Cindy Barnard is on the subcommittee and stated we know emotions will be high and that's why we deal with just the numbers but there is something to be said that we are volunteers who do not do this for a living. We think hiring an outside consultant is needed if we have money through cash in lieu, and it adds a different level of credibility and thought to the whole picture. If we get that going, we do not know how long that takes. We don't think we would be losing any time with that additional expertise. We can ask them to do the North Planning Area first. We know Principals have to be on board. They are part of a system of DCSD. They may not like it because they want the kids but they are part of the district and what they do helps minimize over- and under-utilized schools and helps everyone. Hiring a consultant provides credibility. We shouldn't say we are experts when we're not.
- There are updated enrollment numbers from the October count. These numbers initially had a more detailed spreadsheet, actually student count over-stated, funded students is not the same as students in the seats, so there is a difference. We are overstating our student count and have more empty seats than we state. The empty seats are in the core facility. You add another 5,500 seats when you count in mobiles. The subcommittee pointed out we need to decide whether we will continue to count mobiles to count capacity in schools. Mobiles are getting old and not meant for capacity.
- DCSD has a total of 10,000 empty seats and in the North Planning Area we have 3,650 empty seats. Schools with overstated school counts are Arrowwood 188, Lone Tree 126, Cresthill 385, HRHS 453, Northridge 523, Sandcreek 130, MRMS 164, and Trailblazer 164. A lot of schools in the 60% utilization rate range. Basically the entire TRHS feeder is 80% or less with a few exceptions. We have a lot more seats and this does not include mobiles, and when you add mobiles it is worse.
- Arrowood enrollment numbers are projected at about 50%. That's where we talked about programming helping. Also, a pre-K program moving to a school like Arrowood that has access capacity is a possibility.
- Absent a change in boundaries or programming or both it becomes difficult to keep a school open in some cases.
- Our looking at Discovery going into Arrowood is that Discovery pulls from throughout the area. There is already a mobile group of students from every boundary attending Discovery, with parents already commuting. Having a Discovery program also reinvigorates open enrollment and other students being interested in attending a school like tha. This builds momentum.
- There was discussion to hire an expert and start with Northridge and begin the discussions and help Principals and community understand what's best, and the need to hire independent, unemotional third party to evaluate and to provide recommendations.
- This process has not been done in a while, and hopefully would not be done again for a while. Give the district the facts.
- The LRPC is not taking this lightly. Boundary changes are tough, change is tough, moving kids is tough. It is not that simple and we know that.

- Rich Cosgrove stated one note of caution, commonly referred to when adding a preschool at an existing school. There are only so many preschool students in an area, so in older neighborhoods there may not be the demand or support for a preschool.

There was a motion that the LRPC make a recommendation to the Board to hire an expert to address capacity issues in the district as a whole with an initial focus in the North Planning Area. Moved. Seconded. Approved unanimously.

Rich Cosgrove will submit this for the Board agenda. Nicole will present and Brad will attend. Nicole and Brad will be on the conference call and present the position of the LRPC to the Interim Superintendent.

Charter School Update

Tom McMillen provided an update to the committee. There are two charter applications anticipated, both of whom previously applied, and one was denied. The CART is looking for an LRPC member who would want to be a part of or be informed of the deliberation of CART. If interested, contact Brad and Tom. It is important to have an LRPC member on the CART. Chris Williams helped last year. Stephanie Stanley participated a few years ago and stated it was an incredibly valuable experience and informative.

Apex and Ascent

- Apex did not make the enrollment milestone late last year, but are constructing their building. Arrangements with Ascent have been made for a one-year lease. Apex is building on a dedicated school site in The Meadows, where we had hoped to release some capacity pressure in The Meadows.

Question from the LRPC to Tom McMillen, Are you seeing any change in potential use of new applications?

- Yes, nationwide trend and research shows while enrollment in charters is growing, it is at a slower pace.
- Double-digit growth is down to 5% which is still growth, but considerably less.
- In terms of new charter applications, that trend is flattening.

Ascent Classical Academy Request for Meridian Village School Site

- Rob Williams, Chairman of Ascent, and Derec Shuler presented. Principal Dr. Moore principal unable to attend.
- Ascent is a K12 charter, would be the third K12 charter in district.
- Opening set for September 4, 2018 with K10 and growing 11 and 12.
- Founding school is Goldenview Classical Academy in Golden.
- Offer an American classical education, pretty unique program that does not compete with district schools.
- How is it different than Core Knowledge, which is content-based sequence you need to know rather than the skills you need to master. Ascent takes the content-based approach and uses K-8 Core Knowledge and is a framework.
- Takes a classical approach on the history of our culture and our society as an American society. It is content rich and builds on that in high school; Socratic discussion, American history, government, philosophy and economics.
- The plan is to open with 500 students leasing the Apex campus.
- Since Ascent has moved the location from northern DC to Castle Rock, they are dealing with a bit of shuffling changing their market. Initial numbers dropped but they are building back up to their numbers. There is a targeted marketing campaign in the Castle Rock community.
- How does that affect your square footage? We don't need as much, and this is why we're asking for a small site, which is sufficient for their numbers.

Discussion

- Look at the Ridgeway East development that is a 5-8 year long development with 12,000 new residences.
- Meridian is an eventual 40 year build out.
- DCSD has a joint 90 acre MS/HS site which will be platted in a couple of years, and probably 4 sites for elementary or K8 in Ridgeway East, which is west of Meridian Village.
- This is in the HRHS feeder.
- This parcel is from Shea when they did Meridian and the 10 acre parcel was part of the plat.
- Ascent had meetings with Shea and they are in strong support of having a school, Ascent, on this site.
- Ascent talked to the metro district as well and they are interested in having this built out and a partnership with a school.
- The report from district staff about student generation numbers from Meridian International Business Center and Planned Development nearby was reviewed.
- Rich Cosgrove advised one item of note is that there will be a 15th Amendment for Meridian International Business Center which is not final yet. Meridian is going to change the density in the next amendment. They can provide DCSD more land for dedicated schools and/or cash in lieu.

- There is not a lot of land available in northern DC, and is commercial and expensive. A site in northern DC is desirable. Access to this Meridian site allows them to build the size of school they want, and this site allows them to be significantly smaller.
- This is a 10.07 acre site.
- In last year's MCP, the current DC campus footprint looks at 12 acres just for an elementary school. This is a small site compared to what DC is looking to build on. This site is no longer included in the MCP for imminent development.
- Rich Cosgrove indicated DCSD has no school in 1-5 or 6-10 years in the MCP on the Meridian site, but every April staff brings new construction forecasts to the LRPC.
- Concerning the Prairie Crossing Elementary School capacity, the 155% capacity forecast is new information and based on the latest enrollment projections, and is 150-250 more students than in Shavon's current report. Staff's role is to address and include this issue in the MCP.
- The LRPC looked at a map of schools and sites in that area.
- This is the Meridian Village school site, and north of that the Sierra Ridge school site, both of which are platted.
- Concerning the Newland Crossing school site, DCSD requested land, but they intend to provide cash in lieu. This is the same status as the Meadowlark school site.
- The LRPC reviewed schools in Prairie Crossing; Pine Grove - flat; Mammoth Heights; Gold Rush 83 empty; Cherokee Trail 77 empty.
- Concerning the East Planning Area by count, 2200 empty seats, adding another school would be an additional 750.
- Note that this is for 2019. Ascent would already be open for one year and have students.
- Before moving to Castle Rock, Ascent had a significant pull from Centennial, Littleton, and South Denver. Ascent is pulling new students into the district.
- Tom McMillen, Choice, shared a chart with Ascent showing their current intent to enroll. This is based on names and addresses as of January 31. The total is 438, 129 out of district, 164 currently attending district schools; heavy out of home-school and private schools. These are numbers before the location change was announced and could be updated.
- Ascent is looking at busing or options with parents for a one-year solution to retain them to be back in northern DC.

Traffic and Neighborhood Impact Problems

- Is there a site plan yet? The developer, Shea, has put this site here with it in mind of being a charter school.
- The main street is a 4 lane road. Meridian Village is also a 4-lane road. West Parker will be extended and built out, providing good access.
- The developer was intentional about good access to site.
- The hope is to have a partnership with the metro district, have access to some of these amenities, and they are supportive of a joint use agreement with the school and would like to see a school built there as they wrap up.
- DCSD has analysed the site for eventual inclusion in the MCP. DCSD analyzes sites coming on the bubble and met with Shea and DC. DCSD discussed if a neighborhood school can be 3-story, and the need to partner with DC, and the need to confirm if a fire station would use the adjacent site, and if not, DCSD would pursue that parcel for school facilities.
- There is currently only road access on the north side, which would be a traffic challenge.
- A 3-story school provides more on-site parking; can be less expensive, and has less foundation and roof. Shea has to confirm if a 3-story school falls within their design guidelines and height restrictions.
- For a DCSD neighborhood school, the site is workable, but it is a challenging site.
- Ascent's expectation is a 2-story building.
- Ascent stated they can come up with a parking solution for driving issues. One can look at Goldenview on a 4 acre site with the same student count.
- North Parker Road -- concern, kids crossing.
- How do they get to that site? Mostly through Ridgeway.
- We were told the fire station and park are dedicated but not built.
- Concerning the Park site, there were curious comments about how that would look because that is at a low spot, significantly lower than school site, and you would need a ADA sidewalk. There is also some drainage on that parcel.
- What is Immediately to the east? Those are unplatted residential dwelling units.
- Amendment 15 will increase the number of dwelling units and student generation, and will be finalized as the market bears.
- Is subterranean parking prohibitive? It is very expensive, as is vertical parking.
- Is being near an airport anything different for construction? The site is already zoned for a school but you would want to mitigate the noise. You would have to satisfy any height restrictions.

- Are you comfortable with construction and opening in 2019-20? It is a push. We sent our request to Rich and Tom, we asked to move the timeline quickly. We looked at the site last year. The site is located in unincorporated Douglas County, so we don't have some of the permitting hurdles, and are talking with our finance contacts about getting geared up.
- What is the proposed ownership, lease long term? To date, DCSD has retained title to all school sites and had long term leases to charter schools.
- By March of each year DCSD is required to publish underused and unused land. The publication of the MCP fulfills that requirement.
- Why would I as a parent want to bring my kids to your school rather than a neighborhood school? This is about school choice. Neighborhoods have theirs, some Montessori, and we are a core knowledge classical model, which DCSD is not currently offering. Are you providing something the neighborhood school is not? Yes.
- Who owns the building, public school, public tax dollars, should Ascent fail? The charter school is required to obtain its own financing, issue bonds, investment pool, just like neighborhood schools. The default would fall to investors. Once paid off an entity related to the school owns the building. With a ground lease and if the school failed, effectively by defaulting on lease it stays with the land.
- Technical question. Building corporation owns the building for the term of the lease. If lease ends, at the moment the lease is defaulted or ends, the building corporation technically owns lease. You could say remove the building. In effect the building just reverts back to the landowner. Is that addressed in our lease documents? Generally school districts have right of first refusal to buy; same in default of building, right of first refusal. School district has no financial exposure at any time, not guarantor. It could be leased by district to another school or used by district; taxpayers do not ever own this building unless district buys it. District will never own any of charter school buildings, except those in default sitting on district land. If we lease land then it does add level of complexity, we don't own the building, we would then engage in some sort of negotiation with bond holder or the corporation that owns.
- Rudy stated in commercial real estate this happens all the time. Put up restaurant on leased land. Only recourse lender has is to release to other party and often in failure scenario the lender ends up losing the building because they don't make good on the lease. Land owner usually ends up with the building in practice. They don't like lending like this, tough. Ground lease lending is hard financing to get.
- Do we put in our leases that if it fails there is a restriction on the land and zoning? Deed restrictions on that, not an issue. You have to allow lender to step into the lease to find another tenant.
- Ascent. To build this project we will be in second year of operational history. Risk is for charter to make case to lender that we are a good program, good numbers, they are the one putting money into the deal. Fact that we are a replication school, we have demonstrated ability and that reduces risk to district and bond holders.
- What's it going to cost? \$15-16M in bonds.
- Each situation complex. Whole independent bond market focused on this space with nothing but financing for charter schools.
- Any issues about their CMO relationship or is that resolved? Hilldale is not the CMO. CMO means Charter Management Organization.
- Ascent Classical is CMO, will provide charter management to Ascent DC, may be same services to Goldenview and others established throughout the state.
- How we were established as organization. Have a lot of parents who drive from DC to Goldenview and asked us to replicate in DC. CO law, we couldn't do it under the same. Goldenview couldn't build in DC. Had to establish a parent organization to be able to work across district boundaries and the reason we are structured to follow law. School itself, classical model is one put together under initiative of Hilldale College; they provide curriculum and assist in teacher training, no money going back and forth in that relationship. Dr. Moore is founding principal of this campus, put the Hilldale model together nationally.

Part of our duty is to make recommendation to the Board as to whether to lease to Ascent for this site.
Any public comments?

- If you reboundary, how long does it take to see the effects of that and grandfathering out kids in? Decision made by the Board if we reboundary. Board would have to address grandfathering and siblings. To what extent would choice essentially feed in the decision?
- Do you have any idea of how many people choice out of their neighborhood school into a different neighborhood school? Yes, we're going to consider putting some of that information into the MCP.

Discussion of whether to recommend to Board that Ascent be allowed to lease this site.

- This is the only site in that area that we have. One school looks like it's going to be full and more students coming in near future.

- Lease a site to charter we lose flexibility. In broader sense we have empty seats there.
- Ascent draws from across the district; not sure if that would exacerbate or not the empty seats.
- Sounds like lots of hoops for DC. Don't even know if it could go in there, so we're sitting on something, may go in but not may not, have the ability to put anything there.
- Always been a strange site. Unusual site.
- Anything can be solved with design and funds, challenges and constraints. Next month we will bring our new construction requirements if that is the tool for capacity.
- Our solution might be building a \$30M school. If we approve this lease we take one tool out.
- Intents to enroll indicate they are serving a purpose.
- My thought is that we unanimously agree that we need another company to research our needs and I don't see any reason to jump on Ascent when in the next year we may have better data to drive our decisions. Think we should hold off.
- Couple of issues. This is the only classical academy. We do have other schools that call themselves classical academies that is a question.
- In looking at the numbers we have empty seats and that is loss of programming for our schools. We've reached truly a saturation point.
- Hear that charter schools aren't able to use their waiting lists like they used to because there are empty seats. Hesitant I don't think it is the only building that can go there.
- It is a choice district, want to keep it there and neighborhood schools should be part of that choice. If we lease that land then we have lost the ability in that area, that choice of their neighborhood school.
- I understand your concerns but I think that is not the decision here tonight because Ascent has been approved and whether we lease the land or not the school exists. Based on some of your comments I thought when we instituted the thought of school district leasing when we have a need for capacity and this doesn't seem to fit that criteria. Is there other criteria?
- When we approved one, it was not brought to the committee as a whole; we felt there was a capacity need and Apex might help us; we did not have this discussion; we did not question are we going to approve use of the land; that would be different than Apex.
- Having heard from Ascent, they are building a better model, they are making economics work, maybe we can learn.
- There was a lot of discussion about whether this discussion was about the site or about neighborhood or charter schools. The issue is capacity. That is what the LRPC addresses. Are we giving up capacity for an elementary school; have MS and HS sites there in MCP. Question is now that we identify the potential need for a school in that area to serve people in that area is the LRPC foregoing the ability to build a neighborhood school that would serve the need, and potential this being outweighed by having a different charter school with demonstrated ability to serve.
- Ascent serves a different population. Whether we can serve those neighborhoods in a different way at different under-utilized school is a relevant discussion. There are different ways of approaching capacity issues, and Ascent has proven there is a demand for the curriculum in this county.
- Legally we can make our decision based on any of those issues. There was discussion about whether giving up that site and serving the kids in that area is better than bringing in kids not currently in DC schools and providing benefits from DC and putting them on this site. This is not an easy call and these are complex issues.
- If Ascent can take another 20-40 kids out of Chaparral HS and help that situation there, that is also from a DCSD capacity perspective. They could also take students from PHS.
- 80-85% want that neighborhood experience.
- We have to look at 2019. Next year 550 kids need a place to go the following year. The impact has occurred.
- There is a benefit to DCSD for capacity since this is a K12.
- Ascent wants to stay a small K12 and in northern DC. Ascent does not have a 2-year option for Apex available.
- There was much discussion about retaining school sites for the long-term, and choice provided in neighborhood schools or charter schools, district growth of at risk students, special needs, that a neighborhood may serve that a classical program might not be a good fit for.
- Is this the site that was previously requested years ago? That is correct, discussions about 2007, 2008 and was different because these planned developments were yet to come. Development is now 4/5ths built out.

Motion to approve request for Ascent Classical for lease of Meridian site.

Moved. Seconded.

Further discussion. None.

Roll call vote:

- Stephanie Stanley - Nay
- Steve Franger - Aye
- Chris Williams - Aye

- Karen Zimmerman -Nay
- Cindy Barnard - Nay
- John Freeman - Nay
- Nicole Bolger - Nay
- Bob Binder -Aye
- Rudy Lukez - Aye
- Brad Geiger - Aye
- Kristen Hirsch - Nay
- Martin Mavis - Aye

The vote is tied, 6 and 6.

The LRPC will inform the Board of a split committee.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn. Seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.