



**Strategic Facilities Committee Meeting #4  
Teleconference 301-914-1341/ Board Room at Central Office  
Garrett County Board of Education  
40 S Second Street  
Oakland, MD 21550**

**Minutes of May 23, 2019**

Facilitator: David Lever

Committee Members Present: Crystal Boal  
Jim Browning  
Karen DeVore  
Tracie Miller  
Kevin Null  
Nathan Sorber  
Bill Swift  
Richard Wesolowski  
Duane Yoder

Dr. Lever called the meeting to order at 1:00 a.m. Some of the committee members joined the meeting in the Board Room while some of the members joined via teleconference.

**I. Introductions**

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Dr. David Lever, Facilitator, welcomed the committee members and made certain committee members had received the meeting documents.

**II. Approval of the Minutes for Meeting No. 3, May 7, 2019**

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Kevin Null made a motion to approve the minutes and Karen DeVore seconded the motion. The committee unanimously approved the minutes with a yea vote from Crystal Boal, Jim Browning, Karen DeVore, Tracie Miller, Kevin Null, Nathan Sorber, Bill Swift, Richard Wesolowski, and Duane Yoder.

**III. Community Listening Sessions: Takeaways**

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Committee members discussed the May 7 – 9, Community Listening Sessions. Committee takeaways from the sessions included:

- Value of community schools
- Preference for smaller classrooms
- Importance of quality education
- Importance for committee to be aware of the academics in buildings
- Teacher feedback is essential

- Public wants committee to be creative in their recommendations
- Passion of parents and teachers
- Keep schools open
- Fix teacher to student ratio
- Behavior issues and disruptions

There were 74 attendees at the Community Listening Sessions. 30 people spoke and 19 comment cards were completed. Dr. Lever stated that the turnout was very good based on his experiences with other Maryland school systems. Based on the public feedback, Dr. Lever developed a chart to assist in summarizing the feedback. He created categories for the comments which included:

- Closure/Consolidation
- North-South Divide
- Inequities
- Education Programs
- Policies
- Capital Projects

23 people opposed consolidation in some form. 5 people supported consolidation in some form (including investigating possibilities for a single high school).

Dr. Lever asked the committee members to review the chart and advise if anything is missing. He reminded the members that a RISE Plan folder was added to the Strategic Facilities Committee drive and this includes a lot of information, including community feedback received prior to the SFC committee work and listening sessions. He stated this information would be valuable to look at as well.

He stated that there are summaries of each of the May SFC Community Listening Sessions on the share drive and asked the committee if they wanted to approve each of these as they do the meeting minutes. The committee decided that this was not necessary.

#### **IV. Research Subcommittees: Status update**

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Dr. Lever shared the proposed research topics and the composition of the subcommittees who will be researching each of these topics.

<b>Research Topics</b>	<b>Subcommittee Members</b>
Grade Configurations	Karen DeVore Carissa Rodeheaver
Alternative Education (Disruptive Behavior)	Crystal Boal Tracie Miller Jennifer Paugh William Swift
Single High School / CTE High School	Patrick Damon Kevin Null Richard Wesolowski
Community Schools	James Browning, Steven Kauffman, Nathan Sorber, Duane Yoder

The subcommittees will provide updates at each SFC meeting and will provide their research findings by July 15, 2019. This target date will allow enough time for the SFC to assimilate the results and look into further issues before the draft recommendations are taken to the Board of Education in August. The July 15 findings do not need to be in final report format. Dr. Lever asked the subcommittee members to think about how their findings will impact the strategic planning for the school system.

Dr. Lever asked the members to look at all options in their research. For example, the Alternative Education subcommittee should look at both alternative placement options as well as alternative programs within the school. Subcommittee members should look for best practices and information from other similar school systems, and should also consider the facility implications. Their research may include visits to the schools and speaking with staff members. They should contact the principal in advance for the best time based on testing, programs, field trips, etc. Mrs. DeVore will contact the principals to let them know the committee members may be reaching out to them soon for assistance (before the end of the school year).

Dr. Lever reminded the members that their research must be based on evidence. They should only use credible resources from universities, academic journals, government publications, etc. He stated they should use news articles, editorials or blogs with caution, since they may not be based on factual information but rather on opinions or ideas. Also Wikipedia is not considered a reliable source, although it can be a good starting point for further research. Members should identify sources as they move forward with their research. The final reports should summarize the research and findings and could be presented as appendices to the final report with the source information.

For the subcommittee meetings, the members should work with each other to establish the best method for communications and meetings. These meetings are not subject to the Open Meetings Act. Mrs. DeVore provided an example of how she was already working with her committee members. She also set up a folder on the share drive so that her committee members can upload or review their research documents.

#### **V. Preliminary Planning Objectives: Discussion of document**

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Dr. Lever discussed the preliminary planning objectives topics and corresponding concerns, as well as areas of impact. The topic areas included Education, Community, Operations, and Policies, with various sub topics and the corresponding concerns taken from the community listening sessions, committee members, and observations. The areas of impact in the document included educational excellence, equity, efficiency, community, and facility conditions.

Upon further discussion regarding the planning objective topics, it was requested that 'quality of education' be added under the Education topic. Committee members also wanted confirmation that financial impact is included in the objectives and is clearly defined. Dr. Lever stated that could be another area of impact. He stated that economic impact could also be added if the committee wanted to add this as well. Both topics were added to the list of impacts.

Dr. Lever stated the committee will want to define the planning objectives that will be achieved by all of the facilities planning options. There are likely to be a number of planning options, which the committee will prioritize based on how well they achieve the planning objectives. The committee will need to be able to defend the choices they make and to resolve possible conflicts among the objectives (for example, if a planning option addresses class size but also requires an increase of transportation costs, this will present a potential conflict between an educational and an

efficiency objective). The options the committee brings forward must be supported by evidence. The strategic plan will identify what the plan wants to accomplish and how the committee justifies their choices.

Dr. Lever asked the committee members to consider the list of planning objectives and the potential weightings they would give to the impacts. These topics will be discussed at the next meeting.

## **VI. Reports**

*Dr. Lever*

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Dr. Lever shared additional reports with the committee members:

### **a. Facility Analysis as of 10/22/2018**

Dr. Lever shared a facility analysis as of 10/22/2018. Mr. Bill Swift explained that the report provided the following information for each of the facilities: utility expenditures for FY2018, 5 year deferred maintenance as of 7/1/2018, State debt outstanding at 6/30/2023, current State Rated Capacity, 9/30/18 enrollment and current school utilization.

### **b. Excess Cost due to Underutilization as of 11/12/18**

Mr. Swift also explained a facility report which included gross square footage, revenue generated by facility, excess cost due to low capacity and net cost (excess less revenue). The committee members discussed concerns with SRC and how schools would not want to operate at 100% due to the makeup of the facility and possible classroom configurations and restrictions. Further information will be provided on the method for calculating the excess cost due to low capacity figures.

### **c. Talbot County Facility Needs Analysis**

Dr. Lever shared information from his work with Talbot County Public Schools. The document is a chapter of the draft TCPS 2019 Educational Facilities Master Plan (EFMP) and provides an explanation of school capacity and utilization. It includes the importance of existing and projected facility utilization, State Rated Capacity (SRC), facility utilization based on State Rated Capacity (State of Maryland has established uniform measures to compare the utilization of schools across the state), issues with underutilization and over-utilization, and the limitations of determining utilization based on the State Rated Capacity. Dr. Lever felt this information would be a helpful reference for the committee to include in their research findings.

## **VII. Discussion**

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Dr. Lever stated that at the next meeting, the committee should be prepared to put weights on the areas of impact. Examples include: Is Educational excellence more important than building efficiencies? Looking at various factors, the members should be able to assign weights to the areas of impact, and this will assist them in prioritizing the objectives. For planning options, we will need to know what objectives are affected? Does a planning option have a positive or a negative impact on a planning objective? He stated this process will be much clearer as the committee goes through the process and reminded the committee that the planning objectives are around facilities concerns.

A committee member requested a good definition of community schools, so Dr. Lever requested that the Community Schools research subcommittee include this in their research.

## **VIII. Adjournment**

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Kevin Null made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Jim Browning seconded the motion. The committee unanimously approved the adjournment of the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 2:06 p.m.