



**Strategic Facilities Committee Meeting #5**  
**Teleconference 301-914-1341/ Board Room at Central Office**  
**Garrett County Board of Education**  
**40 S Second Street**  
**Oakland, MD 21550**

**Minutes of June 6, 2019**

Facilitator: David Lever

Committee Members Present: Jim Browning  
Tracie Miller  
Kevin Null  
Jennifer Paugh  
Carissa Rodeheaver  
Bill Swift  
Richard Wesolowski  
Duane Yoder

Joel Gallihue AICP, consultant to the Facilitator for student enrollments, was also in attendance at the meeting. Some of the committee members joined the meeting in the Board Room while some of the members joined via teleconference. Dr. Lever called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

**I. Introductions**

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

**II. Approval of the Minutes for Meeting No. 4, May 23, 2019**

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Carissa Rodeheaver made a motion to approve the minutes and Jim Browning seconded the motion. The committee unanimously approved the minutes with a yea vote from Jim Browning, Tracie Miller, Kevin Null, Jennifer Paugh, Carissa Rodeheaver, Bill Swift, Richard Wesolowski, and Duane Yoder.

**III. Research Subcommittees: Status Updates**

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Each of the subcommittees provided an update on the status of their research.

The grade configuration subcommittee stated that they are still in the information gathering stage. They will start with preliminary information from Garrett County Public Schools, then look at other school systems that are similar in size as time permits.

Members of the subcommittee for alternative education visited Broad Ford Elementary School's STARS program. They witnessed a student that placed himself in the self-containment room. They are concerned that discipline is not being administered as stated in the pupil handbook. They will inquire if there are afterschool programs for discipline and/or suspension. They will also inquire if there are any possibilities for afterschool suspension, with transportation for those students similar to the activity buses that are used to provide transportation to students for afterschool sports and evening activities. Their initial findings are already showing that Garrett County would not be a good fit for alternative schools/separate facilities for students with discipline issues. The subcommittee will justify their decision with their research. Committee members mentioned that Antietam Academy in Washington County, which provides alternative educational opportunities for students with behavioral and emotional issues, would be a good resource to include in their research. They also discussed concerns regarding students that don't have the social skills to completely integrate back into the public schools. The committee will consider MSDE guidelines on suspensions and discipline with their findings and recommendations.

The alternative education subcommittee has requested a report of all suspended students for the year, by school and by grade. Committee members would like to know what caused the suspensions and what types of interventions were provided afterwards. They are also going to send a survey to teachers regarding discipline, to be completed before school year concludes for the summer. They will include an open-ended question at the bottom of the survey for teachers to provide possible suggestions or solutions for discipline issues. The committee members will discuss how this information can be tied back to the facilities. Example, is additional room needed in schools for discipline?

The single high school subcommittee is also in the information gathering stage. They have spoken with Mr. Edwards, Director of Secondary Education, and gathered information that was already researched last year for the RISE Strategic Plan. Part of that research looked at high schools in the state and what happened when high schools were consolidated. Mr. Edwards also has information that was gathered prior to the RISE Plan that looked at comparable high schools in Maryland and looked at their staffing, buildings, and the programs they offer.

The community schools' subcommittee has not met yet due to their busy schedules; however, the members have already started researching the benefits of the community schools. They are also working on defining the meaning of community schools. This committee is also in the information gathering stage looking at similar school systems and other resources. Duane Yoder indicated that he has been in touch with rural and national school groups.

Dr. Lever reminded the members that July 15<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for the preliminary report and asked them to let him know if additional time is needed. After queries from the committee regarding report format, Dr. Lever stated he will send a template for the members to use.

#### **IV. Preliminary Planning Objectives: Weighting of Impacts**

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Dr. Lever provided an updated Preliminary Planning Objectives document which lists the objectives grouped under four topics, and shows corresponding concerns as well as the areas of impacts. Dr. Lever also shared a Planning Objectives and Impacts spreadsheet which lists the topics and concerns and the corresponding areas of impacts that need to be checked and then weighted. He provided a completed objectives matrix on a separate spreadsheet as an example for the committee to use as a guide, showing how the matrix could be filled in. He requested the members to complete their personal inputs into a Planning Objectives matrix. These topics will be discussed at the Planning Objectives workshop on June 18.

## **V. Planning Options: Broad Categories**

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Dr. Lever stressed the difficulty of the task before the committee: Garrett County Public Schools faces a very broad spectrum of facility issues, including educational deficiencies, aging building systems and components, imbalances in utilization, and some schools in need of major projects. Almost every school in the system has needs, many of them extensive, while financial resources are concurrently highly constrained. No single, straightforward and compelling approach is indicated from the evidence; consequently, the recommendations of the committee will be based on the values that are expressed through the planning objectives and the weights assigned to them.

A committee member expressed his concern, noting that they all may have different values and opinions regarding the needs of the school system and facilities. Dr. Lever stated that as they continue to move through the process, the priorities will become clearer. While consensus among the SFC members would be desirable, it's also possible that there will be disagreement, which will be expressed in the final report to the Board. The workshop of June 18 will provide an extended opportunity for the committee to develop its collective statement of planning objectives and what it hopes to accomplish through the Strategic Facilities Plan.

For each school, four major areas of action are possible: closure/consolidation, redistricting, grade band reconfiguration, and capital improvements. Under capital improvements, a range of options exist, from minor improvements to major projects. The most significant decision that faces the committee is whether to accept the existing configuration of school facilities, or to consider changes to this configuration. Extensive discussion is needed around this central issue, which will not only affect the effort of the committee, but will also potentially be controversial and could have implications for the economic development of the county. Given the seriousness of the issue, it will be given ample time at the workshops on June 18 and 20.

## **VI. Reports**

*Dr. Lever*

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No additional reports were shared or presented at this meeting.

## **VII. Discussion**

*All*

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Dr. Lever stated that at the next meeting on June 18<sup>th</sup> the committee should be prepared with weightings for the areas of impact. They should also understand that their opinions may change as more information is provided. The members were asked to identify the 3 most important planning objectives.

Dr. Lever reminded the committee that the Board initially made a declaration in response to the RISE strategic plan recommendations that they would not be closing schools and would 'table' the single high school. He stated that while this should not influence their final decisions they should consider this information in their research and as they develop their recommendations.

A committee member stated that in considering economic development for the county, most activity will occur on the northern end. Another committee member discussed possible redistricting as an option for the school system rather than school closure. Dr. Lever referenced the FEA Study which was completed for GCPS in 2013. He recommended that the committee members reference the report for valuable information, not only about possible school closures, but also about the redistricting recommendations. In response to a question from Carissa Rodeheaver, Rich Wesolowski indicated that

his office has the capacity to examine the impact of moving attendance area lines. The redistricting topic will be added to the June 18<sup>th</sup> agenda for further discussion.

Dr. Lever stated he will complete an SFC update report for the Board and share with the committee members prior to the June 11<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting.

#### **VIII. Adjournment**

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

The meeting adjourned at 1:54 p.m.