



## **Meeting Minutes of the DLS Board of Directors**

**Oct. 26, 2014**

**2:10 - 3:00 pm**

**Location: Conference call**

### **In Attendance:**

Dan Baack

Jason Welp

Ryan Hunter

Kristy Fantz

Kenneth Ho

Camilla Modesitt

Janine Erickson

Beverly Haddon

Administration in attendance:

Kathy Benzel, Principal

### **Call to Order:**

Board Chair Dan Baack called the meeting to order at 2:10 pm. He thanked Kristy, Camilla, Kenneth, Ryan, Kathy, Irene, and Anne etc. for their hard work on the Facilities Committee

### **Facilities Update/Discussion:**

Issues and challenges around both Whiteman and CT are viable. Still with basic questions today's discussion will be strategic for best short term and long term solutions.

Beverly's one major concern is economic and getting the word out that people want to come in. Academic accomplishment for students is very important as is raising the money. Cash flow is better for the split campus, which allows us to have a reserve. She is leaning toward K-2 at Cavalry and 3-8 at Whiteman.

Janine shared her concerns: She visited Calvary Temple with Jacob on October 17<sup>th</sup> with Anne Davis and Irene Keeley. She said she thought the facility would work but not all classrooms are "classroom ready" and would require some creative ways of making things work to fit our

students' needs. Which jobs are being considered for job sharing? Dean? ELL? GT? SPED? Social Worker? School Psychologist? Literacy Specialist? Office Manager? What about custodial and clerical services ...can we do a good job at either facility? These staff members will have to travel between the two schools every day. Doesn't it lead to a break down in cohesiveness among the staff? Will they be able to split resources? Will additional hiring take place for custodial, clerical, and food staff and nutrition services?

The in-classroom personality conflicts at DLS currently between students appear to be a concern. Can these issues be resolved?

If transportation between campuses requires a longer school day, will there be an impact to staff salaries and have those costs been reflected accurately? She stated that the bottom line of our decision must reflect what is best for kids.

Janine and Bev have presented some pros and cons.

Kenneth shared that we would begin negotiations with CT for a 5-year lease so that we actually have a plan in place for dealing with the expansion of the school rather than the shrinking of the school referencing the document he sent us that morning. He added that a 2K model is not as good as crowding impacts student satisfaction and performance. Going with a temporary CT solution provides us more time to evaluate some of the concerns. We cannot answer these questions in the next week and a half. He thinks it would be disadvantageous to wait and that we should go ahead and make an agreement with Cavalry. CT is a viable model and if something operationally or academically should happen we at least would have two years. He would not want us to lose this opportunity. He advocates for the proposal as outlined in the recommendation and financials as outlined.

Ryan also supports the CT option. After 3 years of deliberating this issue he feels the team has been as thorough as possible. Key elements of problems with CT last year have been solved. He is confident Kathy has proposed a workable plan and will be able to operate the school successfully. He feels this allows us a more flexible opportunity and addresses a lot of issues with attrition. We may have to fund raise to beef up our middle school offerings to lower the attrition in middle school. He also believes it is a viable solution to the concerns about the problems with only having 2K's this year. We have strong support from DPS and from Mayfair community to go to CT. We won't have any gaps by next school year. DPS said they would be strong partners for us with transportation. It's only 4 miles. If there is any attrition to this, it will reduce attrition for kindergarten now.

Kenneth spoke with David Suppes (Liz' Mendez boss). If we choose to buy a bus DPS could help us with operating the commute. He reiterated support for CT for us. He welcomed us taking control of our situation and supported CT as a temporary solution and that it could expand our FRL population.

Camilla said she is not opposed to CT. She just thinks we need more time, as there is more work to be done. She doesn't agree we should vote today. If we can build on Whiteman and build some classrooms out that would be a solution. We will have an issue with Mayfair community.

But we owe it to the school community to hear us out. Keeping a K-8 in one building is the best solution. She applauded Kathy's efforts to place this year's classes in DLS. She feels splitting our classes defeats all the work Kathy has done and it would be compromising the integrity of the school. She feels we can still get on the bond in 2016. She feels fundraising is easier on one campus.

Kristy first addressed budget concerns. She is not comfortable with the 2-campus option. Right now the Calvary Temple 2 campus option is running a 100K deficit. Further, the budget is assuming all support staff can be shared between campuses. Is this even possible and how does this affect our ability to adequately serve our students? Many of critical details have not been planned or worked out. Not to mention more transportation and overhead costs and the possibility of greater attrition with this option further hurting the budget which could lead to staffing cuts and cuts in specialty programs and TA's. The Whiteman 2K budget does work (we dip slightly into reserve next year because we are paying for facility improvements that will provide long term benefits to our school next year). In all future years, it is also viable. If we raise capital or possible receive bond money, the 3K and 4K Whiteman budget options are also viable and we investing into a long term solution for our school.

Second, Kristy does not think this decision is fair to the existing community. Students should not be treated like numbers. We are putting new students needs ahead of our serving our existing students.

She believes it will hurt our chances for the 2016 bond. If we stay in Whiteman we can build a solid case and have higher priority based on physical need. If we move to Calvary, it will be very hard to demonstrate a need, and hurts our chances for a long-term solution.

Kristy believes we inherit more problems than we are trying to resolve by taking on 2 campuses. Running 2 campuses is major undertaking. The admin team will spend the remainder of the year focused on launching the second campus instead of focusing on taking care of our students and being in the classroom. The arguments presented for the downsides of only having 1 class per grade have just not materialized for her 6th grader. She thinks the current 6<sup>th</sup> grade is benefiting from a small middle school both socially and academically. And, the small concern (with only have 2 grades) on how to handle 2 kids in a class who cannot get along, does not justify the time, energy and expense of taking on a second campus.

Kristy honestly believes we can make Whiteman work with the benefit of keeping our community intact. Going to a temporary location without a long-term plan is unfair and could cause our community to become unhinged and fall apart. She feels we should be focusing our efforts on a long-term solution instead of spending critical resources on a temporary one.

Jacob spoke about his and Janine's visit to Calvary Temple on October 17<sup>th</sup>. He said he and Janine were impressed with the facility. DSST did a lot of heavy lifting and Pastor Hood said they improved the facility. He feels it enables us to usher in those lottery kids. It completes the mission of a K-8 model, not perfect; splitting the culture and the commute are concerns.

Dan commented that we are all in a difficult position. All members of the board want what is best for the school. Nobody is being selfish. We don't have a perfect solution. If it's not perfect, people get anxious about different outcomes. We could still sign a letter of intent and spend some time investigating some of the issues and get more input from DPS. His opinion is that we need to act soon so we don't lose this opportunity. We have some disconnect and may not be able to vote yet.

Camilla asked about what the parent community said. Dan has spoken with parent community including key opinion makers and they expressed same concerns that the board has expressed. He and Ryan are working on a survey of the community before we communicate and move forward. Camilla feels strongly that before we take any action with CT we need to roll it out to the school community. We must do this before we sign anything or "we will lose the big war".

Bev thinks it is extremely important to reach out to key parents? Are they middle school parents? Or are they parents whose kids would be affected by the split? She thinks we could do things simultaneously and begin to talk to parents right away and involved their opinions.

Kathy has been putting together a list of parents who will be split. Most are middle school parents. This makes Whiteman a better facility for middle schoolers.

Camilla feels the board needs to talk to the entire school community, not just key players. It should be a forum.

Bev agrees and disagrees. We don't get many parents at town hall meetings.

Dan will compose a letter from Dan as chair of the board to all DLS parents. Our job on the board is to look at this long term. We are seeking input but not approval.

Camilla expressed the need to make our lives easier for Kathy.

Kristy suggested we get their (DLS parents) opinion.

Kenneth stated that we know we can fill a K-2.

Kristy asked how do we know this?

Kenneth explained: An apples to apples model is far from it as you take out capital costs without taking into consideration the whole facility. You are making assumptions on DPS approval. If we have more students in a wider base, then we have a greater chance of success. We need to make a decision in short term because we need to start working now on the changes and improvements. What we are trying to do is to give ourselves 2-3 years to find a solution. The Whiteman K-8 model is not viable.

Dan: One of the advantages of the CT model is that it gives us time to look at the Whiteman model.

Bev asked Kathy to share her feelings:

Kathy feels that the biggest concern is not to have enough advanced planning time. She sees both advantages and disadvantages. We need to decide what we are going to do. There are risks with either model. She thinks the biggest challenge with CT is transportation. We need to create a committee and find a solution around that.

She did a check on student lists and an approximate count of families that will be split (without the incoming kindergarten students). She thinks it's doable. She thinks it would help to know now so she can get started working on the plan. Anything we decide is going to be a huge challenge.

Dan asked for a number for the split. There are 32 Spanish and 36 Mandarin families that would be affected. She feels transportation is the biggest challenge but feels we can work through that.

Dan feels the majority of the board agrees to pursue CT

Camilla insists that we consult the community... we cannot compromise Kathy, as she would have to answer to the community.

Dan says we tell them that we are pursuing this option and we need parent input before we proceed.

Camilla said that if she were a parent she would interpret this as..."we are pursuing this means it's a done deal".

Ryan says...that is what we ARE saying...our only viable option. He says we need to engage the parents for their input on how to resolve some of the problems. It's not a vote from them...we need to market the decision and answer their questions as reasonably as possible.

Camilla doesn't think it is the only option.

Kristy...concerned that parents will pull their kids.

Ryan asked: what is the most effective thing we can do to prevent attrition? We need to present it in a positive light and present the factors that we have control over.

Bev: I obviously think we are trying to do the same thing. It matters how we outline it and present it to the community.

Bev made the motion that we authorize the facilities committee to begin negotiations with Calvary, once a letter has been sent out to the parent community so they get the news first, that they are able to hear it first and learn that they will be able to provide input to a survey and/or a town meeting.

Ryan seconded the motion.

Kristy amended the motion that we give the survey to staff first and thus we seek staff input first.

The motion passed as amended to give the survey to staff first, with 5 votes For and 3 votes Against.

Dan commented that he thinks it is important to be cohesive as possible as it is going to be difficult moving forward. He trusts that board members will do a good job of communicating in all conversations.

Bev: Beverly, Ryan, and Kathy are meeting with Alyssa Whitehead Bust from DPS on Tuesday and she suggested they cancel.

Kenneth moved to adjourn the meeting. Ryan seconded the motion.  
Meeting adjourned at 3:09 PM.