

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS DECLINING ENROLLMENT COMMITTEE

Update 4.28.23

The Elementary Declining Enrollment Committee met once again on April 25th. As a reminder, the committee has been tasked with responding to the issue of declining enrollment at the elementary school level in our district. While the committee is in the beginning stages of this process, we are working hard to formulate a plan of action.

Our first step during the meeting was to refocus on our purpose, scope of work, and timeline while reviewing the group's norms and working agreements. We were reminded that our work is grounded in the D51 Graduate Profile and Strategic Plan while we turn our focus toward the current enrollment and fiscal challenges facing the district. Additionally, we talked about our vision of "Equipped and Empowered" elementary schools, which aligns with our Strategic Plan vision to engage, equip, and empower each and every student, each and every day. We considered the positive impact of a well-equipped and empowered elementary school and a fully supported & resourced learning system.

The committee started off divided into three subgroups and was allotted time to formulate a problem statement based on the current state of the student enrollment in the district and its desired future. The subgroups then deliberated on the ramifications of their problem statement and established a preferred outcome in resolving the issue.

The subgroups then conducted a "gallery walk" and provided feedback on each other's problem statement, impacts, and desired outcomes. The subgroups then came back together to revise their problem statements, impacts, and outcomes. The entire committee then voted on the best of the three problem statements, working to build consensus.

Ultimately, the committee chose the following problem statement: "Current declining student enrollment negatively impacts D51 resources and infrastructure. The impact limits D51's ability to assemble the critical resources and infrastructure to adequately support & implement the strategic plan. We desire to reallocate resources to create safe, successful classrooms for students and staff." Please keep in mind that this statement is a preliminary version and will undergo changes as new information is gathered and analyzed. After coming to a consensus on our problem statement, the committee continued to review research on school closure/consolidation. The group was tasked with taking a deep dive into the "After Action Report" from Jeffco School Consolidations, utilizing the information learned from that process as we review the school consolidation/closure process for our district.

The committee then broke into four subgroups that addressed the following areas of the Jeffco School Consolidation Process:

- Jeffco consolidation criteria
- Consolidation goals and process,
- Strengths/what went well and why,
- Challenges/adjustments and solutions

During this phase, the subgroups provided valuable insight, feedback, and ideas in regard to these areas. After review, they were then tasked with affinity mapping, the process of categorizing similar insights together.

The next meeting will be held on May 9th, and the committee will continue to work through a process of reviewing research/models, creating criteria, and producing a conclusive recommendation to the D51 Board of Education. Summaries of the committee meetings will continue to be shared with D51 staff, families, and the community following each meeting. Moreover, we will give the Board of Education an update on the committee and our work thus far at our next Board of Education Work Session on May 2nd.

We would like to convey our appreciation to the committee members for their diligent efforts and commitment to the process in our meetings. We recognize the difficulties that come with the responsibilities assigned to us, and the committee work has already produced invaluable insight. Although our tasks are complex, we are grateful for the progress being made and would like to emphasize the importance of the ideas and conversations being exchanged during this process. We are dedicated to addressing the issue of declining enrollment in the district and will continue to explore solutions and communicate the significance of this undertaking to our community.

Mesa County Valley School District 51

More Information :

📞 970-254-5872

✉️ D51sustain@d51schools.org

🌐 bit.ly/creatingasustainable51@d51schools.org