



Eden Valley - Watkins Public Schools Listening Sessions Notes 3/19/18

Facilitators:

Preston Euerle – RA Morton

Sam Menzel – RA Morton

Mark Messman – Superintendent EVW Schools

1. Introductions:

Mark introduced admin., board, Preston and Sam, and then asked guests to introduce self.

2. Background:

Mark provided information from 2017 Referendum, including Task Force meetings (4) and recommendations to Board, Board decisions, Dates, public meetings and tours (3), Civic presentations (11), \$12 Million amount, tax impact estimates & on-line calculator, unsuccessful on June 6 (34% to 66%), with 900 of 2500 voting.

3. Input on District & Facility Thoughts – We are looking for your input. Please share key words, phrases or ideas that will outline a framework to prioritize how we go forward with District and Facility planning. These thoughts are focused on the following general categories.

3.1. Community – What does the School mean to the communities and how are the facilities used by the communities?

- There is community pride and excitement.
- Lots of EVW community pride, very supportive toward school and activities.
- The School provides for a stable community.
- High open enrollment numbers are proof of a successful system.
- There is limited housing available for any new families coming into the district.

3.2. Educational – How do the educational programs benefit the students?

- School is considered “family” for many students, central to their lives, the traditional family and family nucleus has broken down and schools have filled the void.
- Excellent education with high open enrollment from neighboring districts, great test scores, families want to send kids to EVW, district should look into offering more tech ed., computer science, cloud security, etc... Life Skills – reinforce skill sets for taxes, fraud, and cybersecurity. Too many schools push kids into four year colleges and forget about the trades and construction. Kids that are employed locally have poor basic math skills and can’t make accurate change. Kids have sloppy handwriting and printing skills.
- Good education that provides opportunities and success for kids, parents, etc...



- There is a shortage of trades and tech ed. development.
- High open enrollment numbers are a good thing.

3.3. Physical – How are the physical facilities used to deliver the educational programs and what improvements should be considered?

- Parking can be an issue at times.
- District should consider purchasing housing in the area to provide for future expansion and parking.
- Have seen shop doors wide-open, how secure are we?
- 1927 facility is very solid, structurally sound, limited in manipulating the current structure, upgrades and improvements can be made, improve the stairwells, bathrooms, wasted & unsupervised areas should be reconfigured to provide more flexible learning places.
- Elem. Security –EV Elem has a bottleneck of traffic congestion, parents can't see child enter school after dropping off. Can the elementary be reconfigured with the computer lab and entrance?

3.4. Other – Is there any other topics to consider

- What is the right level of security? Threat assessment teams, road security/pass through gates?
- Find experts to determine best safety practices and designs.
- The athletic facility was not supported because it was too expensive.
- Offering one ballot question was a mistake, forced those in favor of infrastructure to vote No because of athletics.
- Should have had a two question vote, most in favor of infrastructure and not football field/track improvements.
- Reduce the size and scope of football field next time, not much support for track.
- Needs vs. Wants?
- Provide more information and detail on the cost of specific improvements.
- Incorporate more board engagement, letters to Editor, website, local papers, and public forums.
- Provide visuals, prints, and graphics to see what people are buying.
- Hold open house and public tours.
- Video clips, power points, etc...

4. Group Views of Current Facilities

4.1. Thoughts of previous bond referendum programs...

- There was community support for all needs, but mostly toward the 1927 building improvements, elementary upgrades and safety.

- 2/3 of past plan was well defined and explained, athletics/sports did not provide enough detail.
- Need to provide visuals of the project and share with the town and community, market the project. Provide drawings, sketches, graphics, blueprint, floorplans, etc...
- The elderly community doesn't use Social Media- example, the Knights of Columbus send out emails – only half receive it. Use coffee and meeting time, brunch and/or fish fry, sit as a school group with sign "taking questions", public functions, coffee with Supt., Mayors, etc...
- What was the School Board's role? – heard nothing good, bad, or indifferent.
- The sports side of past referendum wasn't supported or have enough details.
- No proven need to move the football field and we have access to Kimball's track. There was maybe 50/50 support on football field.
- Football field will be available when City Park is complete, parking will be an issue.
- There was track discussion around consolidation longevity with Kimball.
- Keep costs down, there was too much cost on previous athletic related facility.
- Can legislature have language to guarantee Ag/School Tax Credit for life of bond vs. revisiting every two years?

4.2. What would you like to see...?

- Have more community members involved in phone tree, calls, invitations, etc...
- Have pricing on each item to make informed decisions.
- Where would the football field go if additional space is needed?
- School board should present the plan and advocate the need.
- More students driving to school and more parking required at HS, consider purchasing neighboring properties when available.

4.2.1. What would the district voters support...?

- 1927, security improvements, maybe smaller improvements to athletic facilities, provide base pricing on football field with lights, scoreboard, move bleachers, etc... upgrades can be provided at a later date, get soil borings for football field area, bigger focus on education – not sports.
- Support security, 1927, and elementary. Question the athletic piece, price and scope was too big.

4.2.2. Keeping the public informed... How do you get information?

4.2.3. Flyers

4.2.4. Newsletters

4.2.5. District Website

4.2.6. Social Media

4.2.7. Other



- Word of mouth communication, older - aging community doesn't use social media.
- Provide informational flyers, door to door information updates.
- More volunteers needed, mail flyers and informational postcards.
- Small groups meet at local shops, restaurant, etc...

4.3. Facilities Task Force

5. Meeting Recap and Next Steps – Reconvene the Community Task Force

5.1. The Task Force will assess and define the needs of the district.

5.2. The Task Force will present a recommendation to the School Board.

5.3. A Referendum date is determined.

- March through July – Provide options and budgets
- July – Board action on plan
- August – MDE review and approval
- Sept. – Oct. Public comment/meetings, etc...
- November 6, 2018 – General Election

5.4. The plan is submitted to the state for review and comment (3-month process)

- Done in early August

Listening Session Sign-In Sheet

Community Session	EV-W Public Schools
Meeting Date:	3/19/2018

	Name	E-Mail	Phone
1	Brent Bengtson	EVMayor@Arvig.net	320-453-2478
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5	Cathy Wuertz		
6	Made Messman		
7	Phyllis Euerle		
8	Sam		
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