

Howard R. Driggs Elementary  
Community Council Meeting Minutes  
March 15, 2017

Call to order: 7:45 AM

Attendees:

Curtis Goddard  
Veronica M Fire  
Alecia Baldwin  
Trevor Black  
Michael Douglas  
Melanie Bradley  
Chris Thomas

Visitors:

Ginger Vilchinsky, PTA President  
Tina West,

Teachers: Ms. Valene Ottosen, Ms. Alison Jueschke, Ms. Linda Sansom, Ms. Katie Ricks,  
Ms. Lisa Bouwhuis, Ms. Elizabeth Bradford, Ms. Michelle Hart, Ms. Heather Martin,  
Ms. Marsha Hurzeler, Ms. Ashley Mears, Ms. Heidi Baer, Ms. Connie Woolsey, and Ms. Lisa Zekas.

Agenda:

1. Welcome by Chris Thomas, Vice-president.
2. Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the February 22, 2017 meeting were approved.
3. Review and Approval for the 2017-2018 Staffing Plan by Mr. Douglas.

Comments from Mr. Douglas, Teachers, and Community Council Members:

**Background:**

The district allocates teachers based on a ratio of 27.25:1. In other words, for every 27.25 students, 1 teacher or FTE is allocated to Howard Driggs.

During this 2016-2017 school-year, the upper levels had the most students per classroom. There were 35 and 36 students in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade and this is not an ideal classroom size for either the students or the teachers.

Based on experience from prior years, there has been an increase of families with older children moving in the area. Thus, there's a potential that 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades will be the biggest classrooms in the school during the scholar year for 2017-2018. The school is projecting an enrollment of 628 students.

In order to allocate the 23 full time teachers, the Principal comes up with some scenarios and the teachers come up with their own and then they narrow down a list. The staff discussed the options over multiple leadership meetings. Five staffing plans were created and a survey was sent to the teachers. The goal of this survey was to find out what option the staff was leaning for.

These are the five staffing plans the teachers had to choose from:

**Optional Staffing Plans for 2017/2018 School Year  
Driggs Elementary**

**23  
FTE**

		A		B		C		D		E	
	Student Count	# of Classes	Class Size	# of Classes	Class Size	# of Classes	Class Size	# of Classes	Class Size	# of Classes	Class Size
k	86	4 sessions	21.5	4 sessions	21.5	4 sessions	21.5	4 sessions	21.5	4 sessions	21.5
1	72	3	24	3	24	3	24	3	23.5	3	24
2	80	3	26.5	3	26.5	3	26.5	3	26	3	26.5
3	99	4	24	3.5	28.5 split	4	25	4	24	3	33
4	100	3	33	3.5	28.5 split	3.5	28 split	4	25	4	25
5	95	4	24	4	24	3.5	24 split	3.5	27 split	4	24
6	96	4	24	4	24	4	24	3.5	27 split	4	24

**Totals 628**

**23 FTE**

**Plan D** was the most favored by 17 of 23 teachers, which would have resulted in three 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, three 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, and one split.

Mr. Douglas felt that there was a disparity in the number of teachers in the lower grades compared to the upper grades and that the upper grade teachers didn't hold enough seats in the senate to have their voice heard. Seeing this, Mr. Douglas eliminated Plans D and E from the ballot. He felt that this decision would help the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students and teachers who had been outvoted several years in a row.

An email was sent to the teachers on Monday March 13 around noon to take a vote considering only 3 scenarios: A, B, and C. Most of the teachers were upset and concerned because Plan D, which had most of the favor in the poll, was not on the ballot.

### Discussion points during the meeting:

- It is challenging for teachers to teach more than one curriculum. Therefore, the most advanced students are chosen to be in split classrooms because they can better maintain focus and work more independently. This, however, causes a major problem for the other teachers because they are the ones who will have all the students who are struggling academically speaking, have behavioral issues and will need extra attention.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> grade tends to be a pivotal grade because students are transitioning. Studies have shown that if a student is not a good reader by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, they will struggle through the remainder of their educational experience. Current 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers expressed that there are a lot of students struggling. **Plan B** will have the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade- teachers deal with the split groups.
- It appears that 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades can handle splits better than the lower grades because they have better developed coping skills. Teachers in the higher grades handle the splits better because of the ages of the students. However, a 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher was concerned that there will be a new science curriculum for the next year and a split at that this grade could complicate teaching.
- A council member suggested that **Plan A** was a better plan because there were no split groups, 3<sup>rd</sup> grades would have about 25 students per classroom and the two AID-teachers that are currently helping the 5<sup>th</sup> grades could help the 4<sup>th</sup> grades in the next year. This would help the 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher who will have about 33 students each.
- In **Plan E**, 3<sup>rd</sup> grades will have about 33 students with 3 teachers. Some members of the council suggested that the AID –teachers could help with these classrooms as they are helping the 5<sup>th</sup> graders this year. The concern with bigger size classes in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade is the difficulty of the level and the foundation this year represents for future grades.
- **Plan C** was suggested as a better option to **Plan B** because the splits would be among the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Kids at these grades are more independent and it would eliminate the concern of the 3<sup>rd</sup> graders having to deal with the challenge of the split groups. As it had been explained, 3<sup>rd</sup> grades have a difficult curriculum and it's a pivotal grade.
- To qualify for another teacher, the school would need to have 641 students. The current projection is 628 students (13 short).
- Eliminating **Plan D** hurt and disappointed a lot of the teachers. They felt that their voices were silenced and their votes didn't matter.
- It seemed that all the suggestions and concerns that were brought up during the meeting amounted to nothing. **Plan B** was the plan that Mr. Douglas had chosen and it was the only plan the Council Members had to vote in favor or against.

Mr. Douglas made the motion to adopt **Plan B**, Trevor Black second it.

In favor: Michael Douglas, Curtis Goddard, Trevor Black, Chris Thomas, and Melanie Bradley.

Against: Veronica M Fire and Alecia Baldwin.

**Plan B** passed by the majority.

Agenda Item 4.

There was no time to discuss the 2017-2018 Trust Land Plan. Since this plan was due Mr. Douglas made the motion to approve the plan as it is. Chris Thomas second it. All council members voted in favor of the motion.

Meeting was adjourned at about 8:35 AM