



Alvin ISD 2018 Citizen's Advisory Committee
MEETING 2 NOTES
Monday, March 5, 2018, 6:30 p.m.
Manvel Junior High School

1. Welcome, Housekeeping & Follow Up Items

Dr. Buck Gilcrease, Superintendent of Schools, opened the second of five meetings with welcoming everyone back and providing a brief recap of the first committee meeting. Meeting notes from the first meeting are printed and included for everyone's binder.

Questions submitted via the website or left from the first meeting have been answered and are also printed for everyone.

2. Your Questions Answered

Dr. Gilcrease spent the first part of the meeting addressing submitted questions. See [Questions from the Citizens' Advisory Committee, February 12, 2018.](#)

He discussed the efforts the district undergoes to ensure only residents enroll in Alvin ISD, noting that the district deals with very few cases of this situation.

There were multiple questions about the district's school size model, which will be discussed in more detail in this meeting.

3. Meeting 1 Reflection: Questions, Observations, Committee Needs

Dr. Gilcrease asked the committee to spend six minutes at their tables reflecting on meeting one information, discussion and Q&A.

4. Updated School Boundaries

Dr. Gilcrease presented the updated school boundary maps and corresponding demographic projections.

In 2019 the district will open Nelson Elementary and Sanchez Elementary. The newly approved maps now showing the attendance boundaries for these new schools was provided. This additional capacity adjusts the enrollment projections per campus starting in 2019-20. Sanchez is expected to open with 735 students and Nelson with 653. In the next 5 years, 9 elementary schools are projected to be at or over capacity. Additional maps demonstrate the locations for the overcapacity schools.

Q: Can you explain what is happening with Alvin Primary and Alvin Elementary?

A: When Nelson Elem. opens in fall 2019 as a Pre-K thru 5th grade elementary campus, Alvin Primary will also re-configure grade alignment to become a Pre-K thru 5th grade campus. The current large attendance zone they currently share has been divided into 2 smaller zones, as recommended by the School Boundary Advisory Committee. Alvin

ISD doesn't build new administrative facilities, rather we will look to re-purpose the original Alvin Elementary building to serve as receiving, purchasing, warehousing, and distribution for the large volume of Alvin ISD supplies and materials. Similar history of rebuilding and reconfiguring grade alignment was successfully done for the older Twain and Longfellow campuses which now have been rebuilt as the current Twain and Hasse Elem. Once again the original Twain campus was pressed into service for other necessary special student programs and Administrative services. The existing Alvin Primary, at the discretion of this committee, may need consideration for replacement.

Q: What is happening with York's attendance zone?

A: What you see is that it is over capacity but remains steady. It doesn't continue to grow much over the 2019-20 projections. In fact, it dips down a bit. This is because the York attendance zone is a mature neighborhood that won't experience new growth.

Due to discussions regarding school size, the committee skipped to the School Size Model agenda item.

5. School Size Model

Kerri Ranney, Vice President of Educational Practice with Huckabee, joined Dr. Gilcrease to discuss with the committee the various considerations for school size.

Mrs. Ranney explained that there are a lot of different ways to talk about capacity and that when a district says they are building a school of a certain size, that means they are targeting that capacity.

Classrooms, library size, parking spaces, etc. are all driven by that target. Alvin's current model is: elementary schools serve grades PK-5 with a capacity of 800; junior high schools serve grades 6-8 with a capacity of 1,000; and high schools serve grades 9-12 with a capacity of 2,500.

There are many considerations to school size that a district must consider. Mrs. Ranney expanded on the various considerations including instructional implications like student relationships, engagement and performance outcomes, as well as operational implications like staffing ratios, campus management, traffic density and site size.

School sizes of neighboring school districts and comparable school districts in Texas was provided. Some had a range of sizes with a few smaller campuses, but most elementary school sizes were between 750 and 850. The comparisons showed that there was more range in the junior high and high school sizes.

Mrs. Ranney added that research says that the actual class size is what is most important for student success, not necessarily the campus size. Alvin ISD is committed to maintaining its standard for class sizes.

Q: Do you know if Clear Creek has done research to know if there has been a difference in performance for their students at the smaller elementary schools versus the larger elementary schools?

A: We can't speak to what research Clear Creek may have – we can reach out to them.

Q: What class size does research say is best?

A: Research will tell you that the smaller the better. However, we have to merge that with what is realistic for a large Texas public school district operationally. We follow the Texas Education Agency standard of a maximum of 22 students for kindergarten–fourth grade classes.

6. CAC Group Work: School Size Discussion

Each table was instructed to engage in discussions regarding school size, weigh the information provided and report out whether they feel that the district should either stay with its current model or deviate from its current model.

Following group discussion, each table reported whether they felt the district should stay with its current model or deviate from its current model:

11 1/2 tables reported they felt that the district should stay with its current model.

3 1/2 tables reported they felt that the district should deviate from its current model.

Comments, Questions, Discussion:

Those that felt we should deviate were given the opportunity to share some of their rationale:

- There should be flexibility instead of having to build the 800-student model. A range could allow the district to build the school for the size of the area it will serve.
- We are such a large district and there are some areas where the 800 model is not working. Brand new schools are already at 1,000.
- We feel the capacity size is not as important as the class size. We agree on the option of having a range.
- Q: Is there a ratio or balance with construction where it provides some efficiencies?
A: There are some cost efficiencies. Regardless the size, you have to build a gym, cafeteria, library. Some districts build these core spaces for 1,000 and only 800 capacity in classrooms initially with the flexibility of adding additional classrooms when needed. But at certain points, the larger you get, you have to add a lot more than classrooms. You will need another administrator, counselor, specials, cafeteria serving lines, parking spaces, etc.
- We discussed building with the 800-student capacity with some flexible space.
- Q: With the current building prototypes, is there one that is more flexible than other?
A: No, not really. The campus designs are really driven by the site and they all have elements of flexibility.
- Q: Has anyone considered modular buildings? Can these be built to current code?
A: We must consider windstorm requirements, energy code requirements and the lifecycle of these investments.

- We have to realize that it's not as simple as making the school 20% bigger. You have to consider the noise in the cafeteria, the kids crowded on the playgrounds, etc. We really need to consider the optimal size for student safety and comfort.
- Our whole table has young ones at one of the larger elementary schools where we have experienced our students missing out on music and PE because of the number of students needed to rotate through those classes. My student had PE once a week. We want to avoid these types of sacrifices that larger schools can create.
- What happens when the 1,000 student schools are over capacity, are we going to build larger than that? How big is too big? A 1,000 school won't stay at 1,000.
- Q: Is there a price break per student where it becomes cheaper to go build another building?
A: Our schools are currently built with 128 square feet per students. So, if we add 100 kids we add 100x128 square feet.
- We have to consider the quality of life factor. We moved here for a better quality of life. We moved here for a neighborhood school, a smaller school, instead of living in Houston. My preference is to have smaller schools where our students can build relationships. There are so many benefits to having small, neighborhood schools.
- If you build a bigger school, you are chasing models. And your guesses better be right or you're putting your taxpayer resources at risk. I think our bigger concern is if whether we are opening the schools at the right time, not how big the school is. Should we be looking at building sooner and growing into it?
- With larger schools, fewer kids are able to participate in clubs and opportunities. You also have the risk of undergoing an economic downturn and having a half empty school. 800 seems to be the right size.
- Is this a building capacity issue or pace of construction issue?

In closing, Dr. Gilcrease asked the committee to continue to weigh this issue and be prepared to come to consensus next meeting. He emphasized that whatever solution the committee lands on, the size must be something that is appropriate for the span of our district, considers the fluctuation of neighborhood populations and be accepted by all of our community members.

7. Meeting Wrap-Up – Next Meeting: Monday, March 26 at 6:30 p.m., Manvel JH