

Oakland Unified School District

Board of Education
Paul Robeson Building
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Minutes (Long)

Friday, November 07, 2008

7:30 AM

**Board Room, Paul Robeson Building, 1025 2nd Avenue, Oakland, CA
94606-2212**

Special Committee on School Admissions, Attendance and Boundaries

***Kerry Hamill, Chairperson
Gary Yee, Christopher Dobbins***

A. Call to Order

Chairperson Christopher Dobbins called the meeting to order at 7:40 A.M.

B. Roll Call

Roll Call: Present: Kerry Hamill, Gary Yee and Christopher Dobbins

C. Approval of Minutes



08-2254 Minutes - Special Committee on School Admissions, Attendance and Boundaries - As Stated

Ratification by Committee of Minutes of May 30, 2008 and August 29, 2008 prepared by Secretary and staff shortly after said meeting.

Attachments: [08-2254 - SAAB Committee Minutes - May 30, 2008](#)
[08-2254 - SAAB Committee Minutes - August 29, 2008](#)

Tabled to a Date Certain

D. Unfinished Business



08-1887 Development of Policy Solutions To Problems Related To Overcrowded Schools

Discussion of issues/potential policy solutions to problems related to overcrowded schools, including but not limited to an examination of facilities issues; program issues, e.g., full-day vs. half day kindergarten; projected future enrollment, options and open enrollment issues.

Attachments: [08-1887 - Development of Policy Solutions To Problems Related To Overcrowded Schools \(8-29-2008\).ppt](#)
[08-1887 - Superintendent's Recommendations for Resolving Attendance Overcrowding In Schools - 10.3.08 \(MEETING CANDELLED\).ppt](#)
[08-1887 - Superintendent's Recommendations for Resolving Attendance Overcrowding In Schools - 11-07-08.ppt](#)
[08-1887 - Superintendent's Recommendations for Resolving Attendance Overcrowding In Schools - 11-21-08.ppt](#)

Superintendent Roberta Mayor referred to page 1 of the PowerPoint Presentation material which summarizes the options being presented to the Committee to consider. She said at the last meeting, the committee members asked staff to go back and take a look at a long-term plan again to manage the overcrowding in the north Oakland schools. Staff has two recommendations for the committee to consider:

(1) *The District recommendation is for the District to take a look at why families are not selecting Claremont as the middle school of choice and to spend resources, staff and revenue to work with Claremont and make it an optimal school of choice.*

(2) *That we expand the capacity at Montclair campus to address the overcrowding in several school areas.*

There are three scenarios from staff for the committee to consider for Hillcrest:

(A) *Maintain the status quo: Keep Hillcrest as a K-8 configuration.*

(1) *Cap Hillcrest Kindergarten at 40 for incoming students in order to accommodate students in Grades 6, 7, and 8*

(2) *Redirecting additional Kindergarten students to neighboring schools*

(3) *Conduct lottery for approximately fifty percent of Hillcrest 5th graders for entry into Grades 6, 7 and 8 because the school cannot accommodate two classes at each grade level at the middle school*

(B) *Phase Hillcrest into a K-5 configuration by 2011 which would impact this year's current third graders. Third graders would need to be notified that there would be no six to eight grade option in the year 2011. This option would allow Hillcrest to accept incoming Kindergarten students from its own neighborhood.*

(C) *Phase Hillcrest into a K-5 configuration by 2011 by shrinking the Hillcrest boundary so that no more than 40 incoming Kindergarteners would be able to be accommodated. That would require a great deal of analysis.*

Superintendent Mayor said these recommendations are for consideration by the Board for short-term and long-term. There are two definite recommendations and there are some scenarios for consideration. Kirsten Vital, Chief of Community Accountability, introduced Juwen Lam, Demographer, to continue the presentation.

Director Kerry Hamill asked the Superintendent where she got the proposed Hillcrest scenarios. Superintendent Mayor said the staff was asked to consider long-term scenarios/recommendations for addressing the overcrowding in the North Oakland schools. The scenarios for Hillcrest were considered by staff previously and when we went back to staff to think about various scenarios, we cannot come up with anything more creative than what was presented before, except for the recommendation that are actually being made to the subcommittee concerning other schools and attendance areas.

Director Hamill said we have been having an ongoing discussion about adding the Kindergarten spaces. It is not just a North Oakland overcrowding issue. It is an overcrowding issue along all the hill schools potentially in the next five years. For some schools, it is real time now. For other schools, it is yet to happen, but about to happen. There is concern all around. She was told by the Superintendent on several occasions that she is willing to add Kindergarten space at Montclair as a way of solving the problem. Her understanding is that adding a permanent wing to replace the portables at Montclair is on

our General Obligation Bond schedule and it would not require an additional appropriation. If that is a big part of our strategy, and the committee members agree that it is a good solution, why would the Superintendent not consider the alternative of leaving the school as a K-8, then redrawing the line at the top of the hill, so that future families that are most contiguous to Montclair could be directed where there will be additional space. Why was that not considered as an alternative? Superintendent Mayor said it is an alternative and it is Scenario C because changing the boundaries for Hillcrest would affect the boundaries for Montclair and other schools.

Director Yee said we have been talking about this for a year and a half. As board members, we collected many of the comments and scenarios and we waded through this. His concern is that if we go back over the exact same territory that we have, we are investing another year and a half with new people in the community with a certain predicted response. The Committee did not ask for a solution to the Hillcrest problem, but a solution to a chronic problem in the hills among several of the schools regarding overcrowding. He is assuming that we do not simply go over the past and not get to a place where we can thoughtfully make a decision within the next 50 minutes.

Director Hamill said she does not wish to listen to a staff report. She understands all of the options and we have talked about them long before the Superintendent came on board.

Director Hamill said she would like to make a motion for a new Option that Hillcrest will stay as a K-8. That option is not on staff's list. Director Hamill said her motion would include that we go forward, instead of staying in place and continuing this churning over and over to no good end. We have demonstrated in the last few months that we are really good at churning and creating controversy to no good end. She is tired of that. She would like to solve the problem.

MOTION by Director Hamill, that we move a recommendation to the school board which is a recommendation that she just described which is that we maintain the K-8 at Hillcrest which is that we move to the top of our agenda as a way of alleviating overcrowding in the hills; that we build an additional wing at Montclair; that we move that to the top of the agenda; and that we have staff bring us back within a week a redrawn line up at the top of the hill which is closest to Montclair; so that we can move forward on this.

Director Hamill said she is willing to meet again in a week to review new information. However, before we start another enrollment period, we need to give hill residents a home school.

Director Yee said he cannot second the motion because he does not want a Hillcrest solution. To him the solution to move boundaries gets us back to where we were last year. He agrees that we should increase temporary and permanent capacity for the hills. He understands that middle school overcrowding will occur in two to three years which will need to be addressed. He does not believe that moving Hillcrest boundaries will necessarily solve that. He does believe having swing space in the hills will make a difference; or improving the opportunities for schools of choice and students going to Claremont. He would prefer to narrow it down to something along that line. If Director Hamill were willing to move forward with the expansion of capacity in the hills as the motion, then he would be willing to second the motion. He can't support the motion as a

Hillcrest solution without looking at all the schools. Hillcrest is in District 1, but the schools that are impacted are in District 4.

Chairperson Dobbs said he disagreed with comments made by Director Yee and he seconded Director Hamill's motion. While it may seem we are focusing just on Hillcrest, this is a major issue. We do not want to mess up things that are working. The K-8 configuration at Hillcrest is working. The whole Board of Education will vote on the issue as well.

Juwen Lam, District Demographer, said we can take a closer look at Hillcrest boundaries. Ms. Lam showed Slide 6 of the PowerPoint, Scenario C: Phase Hillcrest into a K-5 Grade Configuration by 2011 and Shrink Boundary. She said if we are looking at reopening the possibility of looking at the Hillcrest boundary, the map, it looks like the committee wishes to take a chunk from the top of the map and the portion that would go Montclair which is above Highway 13, there are very few streets on that portion. This is the portion which would be affected to Montclair. If we are proposing drawing this boundary so that it would be shifted over to Montclair, this would affect very few families. The data from 2008-09, if you have redrawn the boundary over on this street, it would have affected no Kindergarten families. We are proposing to move the boundary piece over to Montclair would have affected and using preliminary data would have affected approximately 13 Hillcrest Kindergarteners. It would not just be a movement of this top piece to Montclair. It would have to be looking at redrawing this boundary.

Director Yee said he cannot vote for a movement of boundaries without the other intermediate intervening steps which are to increase capacity in the hills. You can move all the boundaries you want, but if you do not have capacity, all you are doing is shifting the problem to another school. This has to be a thoughtful process. He wishes to have increased capacity that allows us to have flexibility across the hills, including Redwood Heights, Joaquin Miller, Thornhill, Montera, Claremont, Chabot and Hillcrest.

Director Yee said because Montclair School has aging portables, there can be an investment in the modernization of that facility which would mitigate much of the capital expenditure on that. Once an additional set of portables is installed on a temporary basis, if the Montclair community agrees, and other communities impacted would agree, that would have a positive effect on the serious problem of the middle school or the Kindergarten across the hill boundaries. He is concerned that if we start moving the boundaries, we will get into the same kind of controversy among the schools that we experienced earlier. He is not opposed to an ultimate moving of a boundary. He does not wish to raise a neighbor to neighbor conflict where an increase in capacity would mitigate that.

Superintendent Mayor reiterated her comments that the District recommendation is to expand capacity at Montclair to address overcrowding in the North in several school areas and to work on improving conditions at Claremont so that it becomes a very viable school of choice as a middle school in the area. The scenarios for Hillcrest are for consideration for the long term. The committee need not act on any of those scenarios if it chooses not to. We did not recommend any one of the scenarios although we have a preference. She said Scenario D which is now on the table for consideration is that it would not be necessary to redraw the boundaries because the District already has an options policy that redirects

students based on school capacity. If there is no school capacity at Hillcrest if it maintains its present configuration, then students would automatically be redirected under the Options Process. Director Hamill added and the students would not have a home school. There would be a whole community in the hills that has no home school like everyone else in the District. When we started this, we were told that creating a K-5 at Hillcrest would not solve the problem. She said staff cannot make a recommendation to loop out the K-5 and then not redraw the boundary and solve the problem. It is more complicated. Director Yee asked us from the beginning that he did not wish to make a decision about shifting boundaries and she respects that. This has been going on for a long time and she wants to solve the problem. This is not an issue where we are going to find a solution and everybody is going to be happy. No matter what we end up doing, we are going to have a constituency that feels wronged. We spent a year going through a policy where we allowed children who were already at the school to stay there because we were concerned with equity.

Public Comment:

Diane Diamond, Hillcrest parent, said she supports scenario D. They have a great school at Hillcrest and it makes no sense to change it. She does not like the idea of a lottery for sixth grade.

Shannon Broome, PTA President, talked about the frustration of dealing with the animosity of some of the remarks she has heard. The sibling policy which the Board adopted prevents the negative impact that some people have alleged.

Karen Fiss, Chabot SSC, said the SSC met this week to discuss the boundary issue and she was asked by the principal to say serving a diverse community of neighborhood and transfer students is one of our primary educational missions. Celebrating diversity is the defining characteristic of our community. More than half of the school students are minorities. Their community has worked long and hard to make their school a success. The community considers the proposal to change the school boundaries at Hillcrest to be a direct threat to their community and their educational mission. They will not accept it. Converting Hillcrest to K-5 will accommodate most of its families in its area and will significantly reduce the boundary area that will be shifted to Chabot and other already overcrowded schools. School board members were invited to the school's next SSC meeting on December 2nd at 5:15 P.M.

Chris Lauderdale, Chabot parent, said if the boundaries are redrawn and Hillcrest goes to a K-5, if the kids that are going K-8 stay there and the kids that are left behind that are redirected or sent out to the other communities, that would impact the Hillcrest community, the Chabot community and it impacts the kids that have been in underperforming schools and have been sent to Chabot to try to be in a better environment. It does not seem fair that the benefits of a few are going to outweigh the benefits of all those families.

Wendy Chow, Hillcrest parent, said this is a hills problem. Regardless of what happens to the middle school at Hillcrest, the overcrowding problem cannot be solved with affecting some of the other schools in the hills. The middle school currently takes up 2.5 classrooms. In order to increase capacity to accommodate the 60 applicants for Kindergarten, there would need to be from 4 to 6 classrooms. It seems ridiculous to solve

one problem and create another problem.

Steven Spielman, Hillcrest parent, said we all value diversity. He has a problem in changing boundaries because it is disruptive to parents. If it turns out that the results are not good, the boundaries can easily be changed again. What cannot be undone is that if a middle school is shut down, it would be very difficult to start up a middle school being fed by elementary school at the same site.

Beth Siruwlle, Hillcrest parent, said it is her understanding that only two Hillcrest kids ended up at Chabot this year and they did not impact Chabot's diversity. She said diversity comes in many shapes and sizes. Hillcrest came in 32nd on the State's web site of API scores. Hillcrest is a model for other schools. She said she is opposed to a lottery which put the children and the parents in a tension that will kill a vibrant community.

Linda Sawyer, Hillcrest parent, thanked the committee for its consideration. This is a difficult issue and there is more work to be done. She strongly opposes a lottery system. She favors increasing the capacity for everybody and to expand the K-8 model.

Scott Kleinman, Hillcrest parent, said if it is not broke, don't fix it. Hillcrest is not broke. They worked diligently ten years ago to build capacity. The school worked and more people came. They have worked long and hard to make their school a success. It has been difficult to listen to Chabot community members attack the Hillcrest community. We need to find a solution that works for everybody.

Jill Berrick, Hillcrest parent, said good managers recognize excellence. There is no doubt that Hillcrest is an excellent school. Part of the success is because of the school's middle school experiences. The school has phenomenal teachers, an extraordinary principal, and dedicated parents.

Jennifer Chapman, Hillcrest parent, said there is an attitude that speaks to possibility and potential and the resources in this room and what we can do together. And there is an attitude that says Chabot is the bad guy that demonizes Hillcrest. That is not what we want to do here. We need a multiple school perspective clearly. This is much bigger than a Hillcrest problem. This is a hills problem. There are models here that work and we need to replicate them, not close them down.

Katrina Saba, Hillcrest parent, and Pediatrician in the community, spoke in support of a K-8 model because it gives the kids a sense of confidence, of community. They are role models and are respectful. The District cannot take away something that is not broken: This is a model for our community. If it comes down to her kid not attending Hillcrest versus keeping the school a K-8, she would take her kids out.

Thomas DaSilva, Hillcrest parent, said there was a Hillcrest Committee that compiled an extensive report that he would urge the Superintendent to review. The committee went door to door and the report will show that if the Hillcrest Kindergarten program is capped at 40, there would be no need for a lottery; the attrition rate will support that.

Jose Blackorby, Hillcrest parent, said they were told in 2000 about the space constraints at Hillcrest and they would have been content to enroll their children in one of the

neighboring schools. He said Hillcrest was a good when it had 300 students and when it had 320 students.

(SIDE B)

Aquacena Lopez, Hillcrest parent, said the Hillcrest families have been together for nine years and it makes a difference. They could see it in the involvement, the volunteer work, the babysitting and the tutoring. If the top part of the boundaries is redirected, it is not a natural boundary. If the kids had to attend Montclair, the kids would need to cross under the freeway. She asked the District to expand capacity at Hillcrest. She said there is potential for a satellite at Far West.

Mark Donahue, Hillcrest parent, said the process being used is not working because it is pitting one successful school against another successful school. We have citizens who are aware of diversity and will be better citizens. The District cannot take from one successful model to give to another. There needs to be a scenario that has positive results for both schools that wish to focus on diversity and having a community through the entire elementary school experience.

Kenneth Newberger, Hillcrest SSC, said the committee has its information and this is the fourth time he has went over this information.

William Sappington, Montclair parent, said his child will be redirected to another school in three years that has 1,000 middle school students. They have three Kindergarten classes and 70 students. Where are we going to put them? To make the Hillcrest problem go away, expand the Hillcrest campus. Don't shove Hillcrest problems to another community.

Sarah Weld, Hillcrest parent, said it is not a Hillcrest overcrowding problem-it is an OUSD overcrowding problem and it involves all of us. Everyone is impacted and we need to look at it all together. She encouraged Chabot and Montclair parents to stop yelling at each other. We need to work together. The schools are full and we need to keep the families in the District. Hillcrest is sending more and more students to Oakland Tech.

Lawrence Busansicy lives in the Hillcrest area. He said he does not know where his two year old children will attend school. He is looking for certainty of which school the kids will attend. Under current rules he does not know. Under proposed rules, he may not know. Changing the K-8 configuration at Hillcrest does not make sense at this point.

Sahara Alexis moved to the Hillcrest specifically to enroll her kids at the school. Based on the new boundary, her children will not be able to attend Hillcrest. If we come to the point where the Hillcrest parents are sabotaging the people at Chabot, it is saddening. People should not be divided by a school program. We all work hard and want the best for our children. No one knocked on her door to see what she wanted.

Wendy Morrison, Montclair parent, said she is surprised to hear Hillcrest does not have a problem and that it works so well. It has a huge problem. We all need to work together as a community to solve this problem. Hillcrest is excluding a number of families from their community who cannot get in. It is a big problem. We experienced significant overcrowding this year. We only have 2-3 kids from outside of our neighborhood which is rare. We need to view this as a bigger problem. Sending 5-15 kids to Montclair is going to

make a huge problem at Montclair. Building another building is a fantastic idea, however, that takes time. What is going to happen at Montclair in the interim? There needs to be more dialogue.

Cindy Wilson, Chabot parent, would love to see a K-8 program at Chabot. Chabot welcomes everyone. The school brings students from 19 other zip codes. If Chabot were a K-8, where would the kids from the other 19 zip codes go? They wish to continue the diversity. They wish to support a K-8 but they cannot do both. The money is not there. The room is not there. The classrooms are not there. They would like to find a solution that serves the most kids.

Michael Malone, Hillcrest parent, said the K-8 model clearly works and is a shining beacon of academic and community performance in the District.

Ben Stiegler, Hillcrest parent, noted there are properties in the area that could be used for additional classroom space.

Joanne Karchmer, Hillcrest parent, asked the district not to create the same problems in the hills that are in the rest of the District. Hillcrest is a model that can be replicated throughout the District.

Ann Sinclair, Montclair parent, said this is a real community problem and Montclair could be a very important part of the solution if it is done in a thoughtful manner. It is a long-term problem and one of the first things which need to be done is to address the resource needs at Montclair.

Jeff Roberts, Chabot parent, said PR is one of the problems in the District. It appears that Hillcrest got to make all the decisions and it is getting shoved down their throats. What about Montclair and Chabot: Do they get to make any input on this? What about the community that do not have kids in the school yet? The District needs to start advertising this so that people can have input.

Eric Abrams, Hillcrest parent, said he is saddened by the insinuation that Hillcrest parents do not care about diversity. The Hillcrest parents saw a problem coming and a bunch of them formed a group who worked very hard for a couple of years. They would love to work with other schools. He called two principals who during the summer two years ago said they did not see an issue for a long-range planning committee. He would love to work with parents and families of other schools. We need to end some of the divisive conversation and figure out how we can solve the problem in our community.

Committee Comments:

Director Hamill recommended the Committee meet in two weeks; that we ask staff to explore alternative 4, which is that we keep Hillcrest as a K-8; that we build capacity at Montclair; that we have both a short-term and long-term solution to what we do there; then we look at redrawing the boundaries from the top. She said Kaiser is very interested in being a factor in this. They are very interested in taking future Hillcrest families. That we redraw the boundaries from the top from the north and then we shift the eastern boundary west. The reason she recommends that is because of proximity to both Kaiser and

Montclair; that we look at what those numbers look like. She feels very frustrated that we are here today without that analysis because it is what some board members have been asking for and we need it before we go forward. We need to make some decisions by December or January.

An unidentified speaker recommended that the Board get together young families who are going to be directly impacted by this process and figure out what the families' opinions are.

Director Yee said he agrees to wait a week. Although the District has been hemorrhaging, the declining enrollment has actually been slowing down and we do not have the demographic projection. People may misunderstand the notion of lottery. When people start talking about redirection that is what we are basically talking about. It is part of a policy already passed. He takes responsibility for the proposal to add capacity at Montclair School. Any kind of implication that it can simply be done without full consultation and engagement of the Montclair community would be a terrible travesty on the Montclair community. The Montclair community has been generous and flexible with adding overcrowded Kindergarten capacity than nearly any other school in the District in an effort to maintain inclusion and flexibility. To the extent that we would be imposing a decision on the Montclair community, he apologized. He believes it is his responsibility to look at the overcrowding across the hills and having looked at the situation for two years now that seems to be the most reasonable solution. He has talked of the middle school issue and the K-8 and he does not think that going from a K-8 to a K-5 is going to be part of the short-term solution that we are talking about. He would prefer to add capacity.

Chairperson Dobbins said we did not even talk about Claremont. Part of the concern in the room is that we want to support Claremont Middle School. He agrees that we need to put this off for a week. There are questions that need to be answered. He said he is not clear about the lottery concept; additional clarification was requested. What is currently the policy for every fifth grader at Hillcrest? Ms. Vital said we count on attrition as one of the pieces. They have been able to very creatively with more kids make a K-8 work. At some point, we were proposing was looking, if we had to do a lottery at fifth grade if the principal could not make it work in any year; we wanted to forewarn people as this problem came up, they might need to do that.

Director Yee said all of us agree that we want to increase capacity. He does not want a capacity building discussion without full content with the Montclair community which means the staff and parents need to be informed. They need to have an opportunity to voice any issues and concerns. We still have time because there will be a first and second reading at the full board level. It is not a done deal.

Chairperson Dobbins said the Committee will reconvene on November 21 at 7:30 A.M. In the meantime there will be a meeting at Montclair on November 18.

Director Hamill said the Facilities Department has been somewhat silent on this. As we have going along month after month, we keep asking Facilities to come forward with recommendations and analyses. She does not want to go up to Montclair without a short-term and long-term strategy. We need to discuss the possibilities with staff.

Director Dobbins adjourned the meeting at 10:01 A.M.

Tabled to a Date Certain

E. New Business



08-2252 Administrative Regulation - Students - AR 5116 - School Attendance Boundaries

Update on proposed Administrative Regulation - Students - AR 5116 - School Attendance Boundaries.

Attachments: [08-2252 - Administrative Regulation - Students - AR 5116 - School Attendance Boundaries.pdf](#)

Tabled to a Date Certain



08-2253 Administrative Regulation - Students - AR 5116.1 - Intradistrict Open Enrollment

Update on proposed Administrative Regulation - Students - AR 5116.1 - Intradistrict Open Enrollment.

Attachments: [08-2253 - Administrative Regulation - Students - AR 5116.1 - Intradistrict Open Enrollment.pdf](#)



08-2623 Administrative Regulation - Students - AR 5117.1 - Interdistrict Attendance Agreement

Update on proposed Administrative Regulation - Students - AR 5117.1 - Interdistrict Attendance Agreement

Attachments: [08-2623 - Administrative Regulation - Students - AR 5117.1 - Interdistrict Attendance Agreement.pdf](#)

F. Adjournment

Chairperson Dobbins adjourned the meeting at 10:01 A.M. The next Committee Meeting is scheduled for Friday, November 21, 2008, 7:30 A.M., in the Board Room.

Prepared By: _____

Approved By: _____