

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Board of Education
School Choice Special Committee
Minutes
May 6, 2019
5:00 p.m.
Education Building Auditorium

Board Committee Members

Andrea Bramer, Chair
Dana Caudill Jones, Vice-Chair
Lori Goins Clark
Deanna Kaplan
Malishai Woodbury

Ms. Andrea Bramer called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

Mr. Darrell Taylor, Director of Transportation, shared the transportation efficiency rating is 90.7%. The district has 348 buses and there are 138 magnet bus stops. Over 27,000 students ride buses every day.

Mr. Taylor showed a map that indicates the locations from which students travel to specific magnet schools. In elementary, 3352 students participate in choice by opting to attend a different school in their residential zone other than their residential school. In middle school, 2511 students attend a "choice" school.

Ms. Malishai Woodbury asked about students who are residential to Hanes Magnet School and whether their residential zone changed. Mr. Taylor indicated that it did not. Those students still attend Hanes at the new location.

Ms. Dana Caudill Jones clarified that students who are residential to Hanes were not re-zoned because a new middle school was being built.

Ms. Leah Crowley responded that no one still attends from old location. Ms. Lori Goins Clark asked Homan Atashbar to clarify.

Mr. Atashbar confirmed that no original students are there because the move was 5 years ago. However, some siblings may still be there. Students who are residential to Hanes may zone choice to Mineral Springs, Walkertown, or Northwest middle schools. He tries to grant choice requests to help students stay in zone.

Mr. Taylor indicated that we do pick up one student for Hanes at 5:30 a.m.

Ms. Bramer contributed that is not far off from other schools. There are students at Clemmons middle who board the bus at least an hour before school starts. Ms. Crowley asserted that 5:30 a.m. is not common.

Mr. Atashbar indicated that if a student chooses Hanes from within the zone, then the ride could be across the county.

Mr. Taylor continued with his presentation. In high school, 1932 students attend from within the zone. Magnet express sites are used for students outside of zone, and there are 23 magnet express stops across county.

The district provides transportation county-wide for Exceptional Children, Early College/Middle College, Main Street Academy, Project Hope, Atkins HS, and Carter HS.

Ms. Bramer asked how the budget is impacted by efficiency. Mr. Taylor responded that 90% state dollars necessitate a 10% addition of local dollars. Ms. Bramer clarified if magnets are a big cause of efficiency impact. Mr. Taylor responded that it depends on how students use the buses. For example, 4 students utilize the magnet bus for Old Richmond ES versus 120 students who ride the magnet bus for Old Town ES. That's something to consider. How many students does it take for a magnet stop?

Ms. Woodbury asserted that if a student is going to be on a bus for over an hour, that's not a good choice.

Mr. Taylor stated that the number of drivers that call out can impact efficiency too. We run 40-50 drivers short each day. This means we have to combine routes.

Ms. Woodbury asked for data about buses impacted by low student ridership and for how many students have extremely long bus rides. Mr. Taylor explained that the state has a 90-minute recommendation. Ms. Bramer asked about having access to the number of students whose ride is over the recommendation. Mr. Taylor agreed to provide the data.

Ms. Barbara Burke asked about the cost of transportation pre-choice v. post-choice because the board is considering modifying choice in some way. Dr. Simington agreed to provide the data.

Ms. Christina Forney, Program Manager for AIG, IB/AP, and Magnet Schools, provided a presentation on magnet schools in WS/FCS. Her presentation may be found [here](#).

Ms. Bramer asked for clarification around the building capacity and student population. Ms. Forney affirmed Ms. Bramer's understanding.

Ms. Crowley asked about the data for WSPA. Ms. Forney responded that the data reflects grades 6-12.

Ms. Crowley clarified that The Downtown School is at capacity with a waiting list, and Ms. Forney confirmed.

Ms. Woodbury asked about the use of "experiential learning" language. Ms. Forney clarified that the theme of schools is used in marketing, not the category. Ms. Woodbury indicated that clearer language may prevent some students from applying.

Ms. Bramer asked if the North Forsyth program would address nursing. Ms. Forney responded affirmatively. Dr. Simington added that the program is intended to retain residential students.

Ms. Elisabeth Motsinger asked adding an additional IB program at the elementary level due to the success of the program at Speas. Ms. Forney responded that it is something to consider and that there are lots of implications. Dr. Simington clarified that Ashley chose not to continue as an IB school. Ms. Motsinger stated that it took a while for Paisley's program to take off but is not showing success. Dr. Simington said that the intention of tonight's conversation is to get a good view of thriving programs and consider challenged programs.

Ms. Crowley asked about budget implications for each magnet school. Ms. Forney responded that IB is the most expensive program and that each school's need is different. Ms. Crowley asked about the line item of the budget. Ms. Forney clarified that magnet schools are part of the Instructional Services budget.

Ms. Crowley stated that her children have attended magnet schools. She shared that those schools have all relied on PTA resources instead of district funds, which negatively impacts enrollment. Dr. Simington asserted that the magnet office always applies for available grant opportunities.

Ms. Woodbury encouraged the committee to consider grant funds as an option for magnet schools. She asserted that magnet schools need to be strategic in location and purpose.

Ms. Bramer asked about Southwest ES not being a magnet as an HAG site. Ms. Forney affirmed.

Ms. Crowley asked about Southwest being a temporary location. Dr. Simington responded that there has not been any conversation about discontinuing Southwest as an HAG site.

Ms. Bramer adjourned the meeting at 5:54 p.m.