

Fort Worth Independent School District

Resolution on Facilities Planning and Development: Calling for a Study of School Building Capacity

WHEREAS the Fort Worth Independent School District (“District”) is committed to preparing ALL students for success in college, career, and community leadership;

WHEREAS, with nearly 71,000¹ students, the District enjoys a diverse student population and strong community partnerships. Under the leadership of the District Board of Education (the “Board”) and the Superintendent, the District is undergoing a series of initiatives that will redesign, transform, and revitalize District schools;

WHEREAS, in Fort Worth, the District, community organizations, and individuals come together and listen and learn from each other with the goal of improving student outcomes in every school and in every zip code;

WHEREAS, in pursuit of these aspirations the Board has clear goals and guardrails to guide District staff;

WHEREAS, the District will soon embark on a strategic planning process that will unite the District in its effort to meet the Board’s goals, while embracing their guardrails;

WHEREAS, one fundamental strategy is to develop a new Facilities Master Plan to serve students, teachers, school leaders, staff, and the community;

WHEREAS, the Facilities Master Plan will be informed by evidence, including quantitative and qualitative data, so as a District we can assure our community that we are approaching our best hopes to thrive;

WHEREAS, since 2016², the District’s enrollment has declined steadily, from 87,233 to 72,783 in 2023, or a total of 14,450 students;

WHEREAS, data has tied this decrease in enrollment not only to demographic trends but also to regional shortages of housing options for young families and the proliferation of charter schools;

WHEREAS, over the last seven years, the District has decreased the number of schools it operates, but not in proportion to its declining enrollment;

WHEREAS, the District has a functional school capacity for as many as 90,000 students and a projected enrollment of 70,675 students, with vacant space representing a significant underutilization of District assets;

¹ September 5, 2023 FOCUS District report

² 2016 TAPR Data & 2023 PEIMS 1st Submission

WHEREAS, maintaining excess facilities and excess facility square feet even while enrollment steadily decreases means that individual schools, especially those in neighborhoods where enrollment is steadily decreasing, have smaller and smaller student bodies;

WHEREAS, smaller schools are more expensive to operate, creating an inequitable distribution of financial resources between smaller schools and larger schools;

WHEREAS, smaller schools are less able to provide adequate academic program offerings, even as they are more expensive to operate, creating an inequitable distribution of academic program resources between small schools and large schools, including, but not limited to:

- split grade classrooms, or classes of mixed subjects or content;
- teachers with no grade level or subject area partners to grow with and share responsibilities;
- teachers burdened with too many course preparations;
- fewer security, mental health, and other support personnel; and
- fewer electives or academic choice opportunities, including extra-curricular activities.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,

The Superintendent and District staff are directed to complete a study of excess capacity in the District's school buildings to assess each school's staffing levels and programming and maintenance conditions in order to determine the District's ability to deliver on the expectations of the Board and community. This study shall include rightsizing recommendations that aim to address the inequitable distribution of resources among schools and create improved opportunities for all District students to attend a thriving school.

The study will analyze at least the following factors and their alignment with the Board's goals and the community's expectations:

- Educational programming;
- Operating costs;
- Per pupil costs;
- Staffing structures;
- Student dislocation;
- Building capacity;
- Projected enrollment;
- Desirability of the site;
- Building and property condition;
- Life expectancy of the building; and
- Community use of the facility and historical context.

Prior to the publication of the study, the District will present a decision framework composed of these factors to the District Advisory Committee as well as the general District community in a series of regional meetings. At those meetings, District staff will present the factors along with a preliminary analysis before making any recommendations to the Board.

After this round of preliminary feedback, the District will prepare a draft of the study, which shall include its initial rightsizing recommendations, and share it with the Board, school staff, and school families, as well as offer presentations to the community in a series of regional meetings.

Notification of the initial rightsizing recommendation will be shared first and directly with impacted school staff, families, and area elected officials.

Prior to enacting any approved rightsizing recommendation, the District shall establish a Rightsizing Transition Team the purpose of which shall be to support students, families, and staff through the rightsizing process.

Following the initial rightsizing recommendation, the District shall prepare a final report, including rightsizing recommendations, and present it to the Board.

The above Resolution, being read, was moved by _____ and seconded by _____ that same do pass. Thereupon, the question being called, the members of the Board voted:

AYE: _____ NO: _____

Passed, approved, and adopted this 26th day of September, 2023.

Dr. Camille Rodriguez, President
Board of Education
Fort Worth Independent School District

ATTEST:

Anael Luebanos, Secretary
Board of Education
Fort Worth Independent School District