

Step #2 of the Comprehensive Planning Process

Suggested Prototype:

Southwestern Community Engagement Process

Study Initiation

The *Comprehensive Advisory Task Force or staff recommends the study area through preliminary analysis of the region and/or issues identified. Staff recommendations for studies can be based upon its own work, recommendations from School Board members, or from community members.

In the case of the southwestern region of the county, staff recommends to the School Board that a comprehensive planning study should be undertaken based on concerns of enrollment and capacity deficits in this area of the county and based on the renovation challenges associated with Clifton Elementary School.

Study Objectives

The study process is designed to accomplish three primary objectives through community engagement:

1. To review and validate/determine the issues and the appropriate scope of the study.
2. To determine the most complete list of possible solutions to the issue(s) identified.
3. To document all advantages and disadvantages of each potential solution.

**This statement envisions the creation of an FCPS Comprehensive Advisory Task Force or similar planning group to provide comprehensive planning oversight and guidance for the entire county. That decision has yet to be made by the School Board but will be scheduled for discussion in the near future.*

Phase I: Exploration of Issues

An ad hoc committee is created with two participants from each school directly or potentially impacted by the study. Participants are nominated by the PTA/PTOs and can include community members not associated with the school but chosen by the PTA/PTO. PTA/PTOs should nominate individuals who are willing to commit to attending at least 75 percent of all meetings. Participation should be an important element for selecting persons to represent each school that might be impacted by the study.

Committee members are encouraged to communicate directly with their school communities throughout this process with the goal of keeping all potentially impacted communities aware of the committee's work, findings, and progress. If community outreach support is needed by committee members, FCPS staff will assist the committee to facilitate outreach for their particular school community.

- Staff is present to introduce the process and assist with questions. Staff supports the committee with information about enrollment projections, school capacity calculations, educational programs in schools, etc., at all meetings and is an available resource.
- The Committee elects its own leadership at the first meeting. Changes to leadership can be made during the process by the committee.
- The Committee sets calendar dates for first phase designed to achieve the first objective.
- The internal structure of the committee, such as, creating sub-committees to address specific topics, is a decision left to the work of the committee.
- Attendance is taken at all meetings.
- All meetings are open to the public.
- The Committee spends approximately six weeks gathering information, considering issues, and scope of the identified problem(s).

The committee reports to the School Board after careful review of the scope of concern and either validates staff recommendation of the study scope or suggests changes that could range from cancellation of the suggested study to modifications of the scope of study. The School Board desires that the committee make clear the level of support within the committee on the Phase I findings and report.

The School Board gives direction to the committee on the scope and issues to be considered by the committee.

Phase II: Solution Exploration and Community Engagement

For the second phase, the committee prepares a report containing the information and findings that they have gathered during this process. Recommendations will not be asked of the committee but rather, the committee is to ensure the final report includes all potential solutions and all advantages and disadvantages of each. It is acceptable for the report to show the numbers of committee members who concur with each advantage and disadvantage so that the School Board can have a sense of the

committee's validation of them. This report will be presented to the School Board by the officers of the committee. For Phase II, the committee will undertake the following:

- The committee sets calendar dates for the second phase designed to achieve the complete list of possible solutions to the issue(s).
- Attendance is taken at all meetings.
- All meetings are open to the public.
- The committee works to develop a comprehensive list of potential solutions to address the issues.
- The committee works to develop an inclusive list of the advantages and disadvantages of each potential solution.
- The committee can recommend changes to the draft feasibility studies prepared by staff based upon findings during this process. These studies should ultimately reflect the input of both staff and the committee.
- Staff is present at all meetings to assist with resources needed to respond to committee questions.
- The committee holds a series of community engagement meetings to share the results of their work and to gain additional thoughts on potential solutions and advantages and disadvantages. The FCPS Department of Community Outreach will assist with such meetings and work with the Committee to help identify locations for meetings, provide public notice, and be responsible for meeting protocol and process.
- Based upon the committee's report, staff will prepare its report in response to the committee's work and submit it to the School Board.

Because this is a new process and it is anticipated that much will be learned, the School Board recognizes that the committee might desire during its fact finding and deliberations to make changes to the processes described in this document. The committee can petition the Board for permission to make changes. The Board will respond in a timely manner to such requests.

School Board Role: In an attempt to avoid potential influence, School Board members are encouraged to attend committee meetings but to refrain from public comment. Members are encouraged to support a fair and open participation process

School Board Decision and Direction

After discussion and deliberation of the reports, the School Board gives direction to staff on the next appropriate steps.

Staff Support to Committee

FCPS staff will support the work of the committee by providing expert advice and information, by providing a facilitator(s) for the committee as needed and by providing technology that will facilitate internal committee discussions and deliberations on issues related to the study.

Communications Plan

Clear and timely communication is critical to all stakeholders involved in the Southwestern Community Engagement Process. The communications plan for this process will include:

- A web page <http://www.fcps.edu/news/swcountyschls> that contains the most updated information on the issues will include dates of upcoming meetings of the Southwestern County Task Force, presentations to School Board, actions taken by the School Board, and updates as they occur.
- The web page includes a form for visitors to sign up to receive email updates on the issue, including alerts when the web page has been updated. Promotion of this special email update opportunity will be sent out through a regular Keep in Touch message to school board news and current issues subscribers.
- KIT updates shall be sent to all school communities involved in the study when new information is posted, meetings scheduled, etc.
- The web page will also include a form for visitors to pose a question. Questions posed by web visitors and collected via e-mail will be answered in a Frequently Asked Question format that will be posted on the web page. People who submit questions will receive a reply that outlines the FAQ process about when answers will be posted.