

### **Community Blueprint CRITERIA**

1. Does this improve the **learning environment** of many students?
2. Does this improve the **safety** of students?
3. Does this improve the **quality of life** in the area?
4. Does this **save resources** that can be used in positive ways?
5. Does this respond to the **needs and requests of parents**?
6. Does this improve the **economic vitality** of the City?
7. Is this **more likely to increase the diversity** in our schools?
8. Does this **decrease student travel time**?
9. Will this **attract students/parents** and make our schools **more competitive**?

### **Important Questions and Concerns from the Community about K-8s and other Key Components of the Initial Facilities Options.**

Through open-ended questions on the survey and idea gathering at the Community Design Sessions, we received many questions, concerns, and recommendations for the District that cut across all of the schools. These representative comments are included here as an Appendix to the Facilities Blueprint ideas from the community.

#### **Questions about the Facilities Planning and Strategy**

1. For K-8 schools when it comes to transportation how do you address that? Will all of the students (K-8) ride the same bus? First grade students on the bus with middle school students?
2. Where does the money come from upfront to do the renovations?
3. Has an audit been done on Forest Heights to support the claims? We struggle to provide needed wrap around services in small schools. Can we meet the demand in larger schools?
4. What would happen to all the displaced teachers [in these facility plans]?
5. Would they be given new jobs in the district, given the opportunity to funnel into new schools with their students or what?
6. If our enrollment continues to decline, how will this ambitious construction plan be financed?
7. Why can't the district use existing schools which can be fixed at a much cheaper price versus always new?
8. How many K-8 STEM schools do you want to have? Can the District support three K-8 schools? Why not a K-8 arts academy?
9. How will teachers be trained to maximize the use of all the new features? What will be done to address the broad array of social needs that students attending the school will have?
10. Can we train all employees of LRSD to understand the toxic stress that so many of our students live within and take a trauma informed approach in the classroom and throughout the building?
11. What is the data regarding achievement at these schools currently? Would this new K-8 improve academics for these students to be redirected--what are the projections related to this potential transition? What would be the impact of having these elementary students redirected from a particular neighborhood? What would it do to a particular neighborhood related to residential homes and property values? What would be the impact from having students travel from outside of their neighborhoods to attend a school farther away? Could more data be obtained and made available to the public related to these issues?
12. What is the research behind 1400 students in one school?

13. What are the weights for the different criteria to evaluate ideas to recommend for the Blueprint? The criteria for the evaluation of ideas don't say the idea should have "7 of 9" to be considered by the administration. Criteria decreasing student travel time should have higher weight than any of the other criteria to avoid discrimination on racial groups.

### **Community Concerns about the Little Rock School System**

1. I think the LRSD would do well to start processes of possible changes, developmental growth, and vision planning with community rather than host community conversations after ideas, plans and decisions have already been made. In the absence of a school board, who would have likely done so or at least would have had the responsibility to do so, it seems the LRSD has been practicing tyranny that has driven a wedge and expected disengagement and distrust from community rather than implement genuine diplomacy and meaningful community engagement while trying to development more community support and involvement.
2. I would suggest to proceed with focusing on cultivating trust through community meetings, the news media, keeping patrons involved, examine and know when to scale back on some items proposed if there are indications that certain proposals are too grandiose, build on strengths and interests of each area, and encourage and require training for LRSD personnel to be aware of the mission and goals of the Little Rock School District that benefit students and the community at-large.
3. I think it would be cool to reach out to students to get ideas and input on things that affect them to see if they think they are good ideas before proposing them, and students have a unique outlook and perspective. I think good ways to do this could be through social media, which a lot of students use frequently. I'm not very familiar with most social media, only a little bit for class related stuff, but I know that Instagram has a poll feature and you could post things to keep students updated and in the loop.
4. Seek all waivers available from the state; Empower building level control of personnel and operations, then hold principals accountable; replace Central administrators responsible for decline of district with bold student-focused leaders; decertify the union for collective bargaining.
5. Continue to be open in your conversations, report your feedback publicly, engage all stakeholders in the process, keep trying to tell your story as often as you can, enlist the support of the business community and ask them to publicly stand with you, get them to push for local control and when you get that have something of worth to showcase that everyone can take pride and ownership in. Get used to being smaller it may be better in the long run. Stop trying to win students back show by your results that you are a better choice for parents. Invest. Telling the story well over and over until it never gets old. Don't worry about the students you don't have focus on the ones who stayed for the duration. That is where your best efforts will be realized.
6. We need to have our own school board for LRSD before any of these kind of changes are seriously considered. Making these changes without the voices of the neighborhoods and families is going to increase the distrust in the "leadership" of the schools so that there will be little/no trust or confidence from the community.
7. Continue to do the good work you are doing, and please reinstate the school board soon. I am a supporter of LRSD and plan for both of my kids to complete K-12 in the district. I look forward to seeing what happens over the next few years.

8. There are entirely too many elementary schools in close proximity to each other. Some can be combined due to enrollment numbers. Most of the schools need major improvements. Instead of building or rebuilding place the funds into your existing infrastructure.
9. More use of facilities for effective alternatives to in school and out of school suspensions. Also, a new high school is needed in west Little Rock—but their needs must always be balanced with even greater needs in lower income parts of the city that have been underserved for too long.
10. Dunbar is the forgotten stepchild middle school of the LRSD. It is basically indestructible with brick and stucco walls that students cannot break. Nevertheless, little is done to improve it. A new AC system was put in but some genius decided control of temperature in each room is controlled by an office elsewhere instead of each teacher controlling their own room.
11. Parkview should become the feed in school for students from FHSA!!
12. Parkview is in need of major repairs. Really not sure how Parkview got completely left off the facilities plans...
13. LR Central High School has too many students; we need improved science and technology labs and better parking. We need to get out of portable buildings and end the practice of “floating” teachers who have no dedicated classroom.

### **TEACHERS**

1. Improve teachers and value teachers. Support the teachers. The schools only perform well based on the teachers and the students. Plans for redesigning and improve the way that the schools function should have been in this survey as well.
2. Please increase teacher's salary and medical benefits, so most teachers can stop working a second job and spend more time with their families.
3. We need to have stricter requirements for teachers (an undergrad degree and teaching certificate AT LEAST) and then pay them the salary and respect they deserve. If we put money into public education without charters, we will see better teacher applicants, more parent and community involvement, and higher esteem in the students.
4. There should be other options for PD for teachers that doesn't require them being away from their class room for 3-5 days in a week. One day this week my middle school child had a sub in 4 of his 8 periods. How is he supposed to learn without those educators? Also subs should be better screened. I witnessed a sub checking in with the school secretary and he was barely able to speak to her, I can only imagine how he did with a class full of children.
5. If we can change the teachers and principals approaches on the children to be back to that “home away from home feel” invested into them more parents would stay with that and a combination of a stricter curriculum.
6. Too many good teachers are forced to spend precious time putting out fires and handling discipline problems from repeat offenders. This must be addressed.
7. Pay the teachers more money instead of closing down schools and building new ones. Spend more money on educating our students because I feel we are failing them.
8. There also needs to be more transparency when decisions are made such as the recent reassignment of teachers at the elementary school level. I still have not heard a single thing from the district as to why my child's school lost two teachers almost a month into school. I would like to see a specific plan with dates of implementation and outreach well in advance of the changes.
9. More diverse school teachers and better training for the teachers
10. We must stop suspending students and leaving them in the community unsupervised. LRSD must develop a plan for these students that surpasses the Alternative School Approach. Please consider addressing the African American male students with a facility and teachers that understand them

and the issues they face. A separate facility should be considered for African American young ladies in the same category.

11. Diverse offerings, diverse staff and administration.
12. My kids are getting a great education. I'm proud of our school district and I am very impressed by the teachers. I'm also super fed up with the haters. We have a lot to be proud of.

### **CLASS SIZE**

1. Lower the class sizes especially for students in high poverty schools. Stop saying "under-utilized" because all these charters mentioned earlier don't have packed class sizes. They also can't keep staff. Another reason parents come back to the district.
2. Try it out in a couple of schools with different dynamics for a couple of years. See how it affects student test scores and behaviors.
3. Please reduce class size, allow more time for collaboration & spend time listening to the employees - some are holding onto frustrations & need to be heard

### **THANK YOU**

1. Thank you for listening to our opinions (and Mr. Poore, I hope you register to vote in our wonderful city). Thank you!
2. Thank you for this process.
3. Thank you for all of the ideas and thoughts that have gone into this process. I just hope every area of town gets something that can entice parents to bring their students back into the district.
4. There seems to be a strong emphasis on science and technology education. Music education in elementary enhances a student's ability to learn in all areas.

### **BOUNDARIES & MAGNETS**

1. Boundaries need to be redrawn to reduce attendance at Central. The only way the portable buildings will be removed is if the student body is reduced. While it is a wonderful and historic school, part of its success since 1989 has come at the expense of other LRSD high the schools. The 1988 redrawing of boundaries and transformation of Parkview to a magnet school shifted all of the higher income neighborhoods to Central instead of what had been fairly evenly distributed between Hall, Central and Parkview. This needs to be addressed.
2. The district should not eliminate the magnet options to allow students to go to schools outside of their home areas...without it I believe the students who live in more disadvantaged areas are going to wind up at distressed schools ultimately
3. Having magnets or "specialized" campuses deteriorates interest in neighborhood schools.
4. Allow magnet school pre-k students to automatically 'roll up' into the magnet school kindergarten.
5. Continue to focus on STEAM as our district curriculum set up. The arts such as dance, drama, speech, creative writing, music, art, etc. make children more well -rounded and is an attractive learning environment for families.
6. Look at revitalizing the integrity of the magnet programs. True neighborhood schools are needed in the east LR areas as well as the west LR areas. To create larger schools with more concentrated problems cause parents to choose alternative schools. Charters ! We have to create clarity about our purpose before we can create competence

### **MARKETING AND REBRANDING**

1. Instead of closing schools in areas as the SOMA and Pettaway neighborhoods begin to revitalize. Let's rebrand the schools.

2. We need to market LRSD. I get something in the mail from a charter school at least weekly. I know LRSD doesn't have the funding for that but I do think we could require charter school parents to participate in an open house at their zoned school or a magnet before they apply for charter. LRSD has a lot to offer people don't know about. This should happen at every level before parents apply for charter.
3. Increase District Communication Budget to enhance advertisement of the district strategically.
4. Student Outreach. Instagram campaign, possibly student-run where students get to give input on things that concern and affect them, and provide ideas rather than having adults make all our decisions for us. Instagram can do polls, reach a lot of students, keep students updated, and students can comment with ideas and thoughts. Then, students can express ideas, etc. and stay informed. This could give LRSD important info about what the kids want and allow student perspective to be heard by adults.
5. Billboards on I-30 about arts and STEM in the area.

### **GENERAL FEEDBACK**

1. STEM (and I'm a scientist) and STEAM and single gender and K-8, and all the rest is great, but it means little and will be considered window-dressing if test scores, reading levels, teacher/parent/staff engagement, and similar items aren't strong at ALL schools. Excellence and consistency of excellence are critical for the future of our students, our city, and our District.
2. Updating is necessary especially to help retain & attract new students
3. I think there should be some consideration as to just having 2 grades per building. Pre-k and K; 1-2; 3-4; 5-6; 7-8; 9-10; 11-12.
4. Please do not let any of our facilities go to charter schools. Make these plans happen. We need to change to stay competitive.
5. I think this is a significant project. I suggest that it may take more time. I also want to Community to know that they influenced the plan. So please highlight what Community ideas were adopted by the Commissioner. The other question is funding. A mileage is needed, then it will likely not pass without some changes in the community's perception in the Commissioner and whether the community's ideas are actually being considered. There is a prevailing though that there is already a plan in place and that this perfunctory. I don't believe that but a lot of people do. We need to re-recruit families back to the district with targeted mailing to "compete" with the ads from charters. We have to continue to make enrollment easier and accessible.
6. Extend school day to provide babysitting like the charters to match parents workday.
7. A more uniform way of communication to parents in the middle schools. It's our first year in middle school and I am shocked at the lack of communication with parents. There should be more continuity and structure for each class
8. We must continue to strive to ensure equal and world class educational opportunities for all LRSD students.
9. Making our public schools stronger and providing quality pre-K options are of utmost importance. I like that some of the ideas presented in these plans suggest that STEM and technology-based education, as well as trades and post-graduation careers, are getting more attention and perhaps will be high priorities. I like that LRSD is offering lots of different pathways for Little Rock students.
10. My main concern is the literacy rates in this district. Without RISE being implemented in every school LRSD will still be graduating kids who are illiterate. Crime is soaring in LR and LRSD is partially to blame. School to Prison pipeline is real.
11. We must increase our budget. LRSD is becoming an embarrassment aside from a few gems like FHSA.

12. A scholarship incentive program between the AR Dept. of Higher Education and AR Public Schools for students/families that graduate from AR Public Schools. To incentivize enrollment versus private schools
13. You spend a ton of money busing people all over and if the courts will let you, you need to stop.
14. I think that we have to have innovative, exciting ideas to maintain our population and bring back students who have left the district.
15. I think it's time the zoning lines are redrawn.
16. I am discouraged by the prevalence of charter schools. I would like there to be more emphasis on public NEIGHBORHOOD schools. My children would be far more emotionally and socially connected and protected if their neighbors were also their schoolmates. LRSD should partner with the city on integrating neighborhoods rather than integrating by flinging children around town. Also, I understand that STEM is important, but how about we improve the quality of STEM education in all schools rather than picking out some for specialization? My children wonder what they aren't learning that others are by being in a "regular" middle school and elementary school.
17. Science of reading curriculum used from day one in schools so that we no longer have such a literacy issue. Using a true science based program will teach ALL of the children to read, avoid the struggles of dyslexics and free up SPED for children that need it since dyslexics could spend more time in the classroom learning to read and not missing out on other subjects. As it stands today, intervention for dyslexics (1in5 kids have it, but we know they are not all being found!) takes up specialists' time and they are NOT pulled during "reading" time so they miss other subjects in the classroom to simply learn to read. This change in teaching strategy could save millions in time and money, not to mention the self-esteem and confidence of these kids.
18. Connecting students with mentors in specific areas of study!! We can do this!!
19. Need vocational curriculum.
20. Encourage diversity. We need to train staff to work with this generation of students.
21. Diverse city matters! Si, se puede!
22. We would like to see less tracking of students and more equity for all students in all classes in all schools. Focus on education inside the schools for all. We want a community conversation on the educational performance in the schools.
23. Develop a transportation timeline to/from school for students with proposed plan
24. Invest more time with parents and students in each school to be sure that they are aware of the proposed charges and areas where they can suggest options changes – thought
25. Central to all strategies that are pursued I think LRSD should adopt a core commitment to establish the most diverse school populations in the city – thought
26. Create a facilities plan that is a growth rather than a shrinkage model - thought
27. Get business and industries to support the LRSD \$\$\$ - thought
28. Study % of residents who are going to LRSD schools in various parts of town compared to where we are opening and closing schools – thought
29. More training should be incorporated into LRSD to represent the “restorative justice” aspect. - idea
30. Buy out retirement age – Eliminate those just “hanging on” – thought
31. Training for teachers on what/when/how/why restorative justice is important – thought
32. An all 9<sup>th</sup> grade academy #just9thgradeonly!! – idea
33. Continue special programs like EAST; Destination Imagination; Chess Club, Drama-Arts programs, Math Teams, Robotics—things we have and Do Well.
34. Homework centers after school.
35. Need social workers - (Family support workers)
36. Invest in schools that have innovative and impactful programs (Wakefield, Baseline)
37. Need more healthcare partnerships @ schools

38. No visible plans for using facilities after school hours to meet community needs – community centers after hours; extended school day; recreational facilities for community building; build community programs
39. No evidence/information about property taxes that we have already been paying and how they are being used
40. Why is the burden of transportation always being done to minority/low income students?