

Dexter Community Schools Ad Hoc Committee on Annexation

Direction Provided by Dexter Board of Education 1-26-15

Purpose of the Ad Hoc Committee on Annexation

The Dexter Board of Education (BOE) formed an Ad Hoc Committee on Annexation in December 2014. The BOE requested that the committee research and analyze the potential annexation of Whitmore Lake Public Schools (WLPS) to Dexter Community Schools (DCS). The committee was asked to address several critical issues including:

- The broad-based implications of annexation on DCS and the Dexter community;
- Identification of key variables -- both known and unknown;
- Identification of principal risks and benefits of annexation; and
- Identification of other long-term options that may be beneficial to DCS and students.

The committee is comprised of three members of the BOE (Daryl Kipke, Julie Schumaker and Michael Wendorf) and five members from the Dexter community (Regina Bell, Jennifer Kangas, Rob Mitzel, Marlo Rojeck and Tim Sposito).

Criteria for Determining if Annexation is in the Best Interest of DCS

The BOE has identified five criteria for evaluating the potential annexation of WLPS:

1. Educational benefit and impact on our students;
2. Impact on our employees;
3. Impact on our community;
4. Financially sustainability; and
5. Reasonable risk profile.

Phased Approach to Researching Annexation

- **Phase I** - Gather and analyze readily available information and identify "hot button" issues. Identify preliminary risks and benefits based upon what is currently known.
- **Phase II** – Conduct further research regarding "hot button" issues. Refine list of risks and benefits based upon what is currently known.
- **Phase III** - Explore long-term options which may be beneficial to both districts. Identify preliminary risks and benefits of each option based upon what is currently known.
- **Phase IV** - Conduct more thorough research of key questions/factors which are necessary to making an informed decision regarding annexation and/or other long-term options. Summarize risks and benefits of each option.

At each phase, the committee will share its findings with the DCS Board of Education. The Board will then decide if the committee should continue to the next phase of research.

Timeline

1. Possible election dates for Whitmore Lake vote: Feb., May, August, Nov. Ballot language needs to be set 84 days prior to election – Nov. (for Feb election), Feb. (for May), May (for Aug), August (for Nov).

Background Information

The starting point for both districts is, “What is in the best interest of kids?” and assessing whether we share a common vision for the future to enhance the education of our students. The economics will either work out or not. It's not the driver, but it's a necessary piece to consider. Both districts want to thrive, not just survive.

Three key factors for Whitmore Lake Schools:

1. A shared, positive vision for the future;
2. Maintaining a strong sense of local community; and
3. Financial stability.

Challenges facing both districts:

1. Declining State funding.
2. Declining student enrollment is a statewide trend.