

April 5, 2016, Regular Board Meeting

Title

8. PUBLIC HEARING AND VOTE: CONSOLIDATION OF RICHARD L. BROWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL #148 INTO JOHN LOVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL #73; and LONG BRANCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL #106

Recommendation

That the Duval County School Board conduct a public hearing and approve the proposed consolidation of Richard L. Brown Elementary School #148 into John Love Elementary School #73; and Long Branch Elementary School #106 thereby making R. L. Brown a Dedicated Gifted and Talented Academy.

Description

Student enrollment at Richard L. Brown is declining each year and has reached a utilization index of only 48% for the 2015-16 school year. Since September, 2012, enrollment has dropped from 537 students to only 378 in September, 2015. Not only is enrollment continuing to decline, but since 2011, R. L. Brown has received two grades of "C" two "D"s and two "F"s. R. L. Brown is currently a district managed turnaround school under the state's accountability system and is nearing options that may include charter conversion, being run by a private management company, or closure. There is also a growing demand for an elementary charter school in the Springfield area. This conversion will enable the district to recoup students from the area back to the school while expanding other options to parents whose students attend private or charter schools from outside of the boundary.

R. L. Brown is built to hold 758 students, however only 378 are enrolled. The school is located in an area that has low resident growth, so even with the 134 students who are opting for other choices, neighborhood students alone will not be enough to bring the school to full capacity. Presently 57 students are leaving the school for some form of special assignment, 34 for other magnet school options, 25 for local charters and 18 for other reasons such as homeschool, McKay, etc. Schools within the same feeder pattern are facing the same challenges of low enrollment, low utilization, low residential growth, and lower performance.

As a result of the low enrollment and performance and to offer parents within the proposed former boundary and districtwide with the gifted and talented programming they demand, R. L. Brown is being recommended for consolidation into two nearby elementary schools.

A community meeting was held on October 29, 2015 at Englewood High School with various working groups to review the R. L. Brown dedicated academy proposal with feeder pattern adjustments and to share demographic data. Meetings were also held on November 10th, November 17th and November 24th at Long Branch Elementary to engage parents and the community about the proposed changes.

At the final meeting held on November 24, 2015, by a vote of 8-1, the working group voted to accept the Superintendent's original recommendation to consolidate the school and convert it into a Gifted and Talented Dedicated Academy. A community meeting was also held on March 14, 2016 to further engage and inform the community regarding the proposal.

The Public Hearing was duly noticed.

Gap Analysis

R. L. Brown Elementary continues to show a decline in enrollment and academic achievement. The school was built to educate 758 students; however, only 378 were registered at the 20 day count in September, 2015. Enrollment has dropped for four consecutive years, from 537 in 2013, 508 in 2014, 498 by the end of the 14-15 school year and down to 378 at the beginning of 2015-16.

R. L. Brown's academic achievement falls within the low range. As with enrollment, the school's grade declined from a grade of "C" in 2011-12, a D held harmless "F" (based on its performance the school should have been an F) in 2012-13, and an "F" in 2014-15 and 2015-16.

There is a high demand for elementary schools that offer gifted and academically talented services. As the only dedicated gifted and academically talented elementary school in the district, Jacksonville Beach Elementary averages a waitlist of more than 400 on time applications each year. With approximately 439 students waiting for an available seat, many parents are opting to homeschool, move to adjacent counties, or apply to charter schools.

Previous Outcomes

Since 2012, R. L. Brown has received one "C" two "D"s (one a hold harmless F), and two "F"s. Based on the 2015 Florida State Assessment results, only 20% of R.L. Brown's 3rd, 4th and 5th graders are showing proficient in English/Language Arts; 25% are proficient in Mathematics and only 27% of 5th graders are proficient in Science.

Expected Outcomes

In addition to the expected outcome of increased enrollment and utilization for the building over time, the proposed conversion of R. L. Brown Elementary School to a dedicated gifted and talented academy, we will be able to provide the opportunity for under-served advanced students to receive more centralized services with improved strategic resources. In addition to increasing Brown's utilization over time, it is the expectation that this change will increase enrollment and utilization at John Love and Long Branch. With this change, John Love's utilization will increase from 64% to 101% and will be at capacity when factoring in Pre-K and Head Start classes. Long Branch will show a 17% increase moving from a low 48% utilization to 65%.

Strategic Plan Goal

Develop the Whole Child

Engage Parents, Caregivers, and Community

Ensure Effective, Equitable, and Efficient Use of Resources

Financial Impact

Better use of the building through increased utilization as well as FTE generated based on increased student enrollment. Since R. L. Brown is already a magnet school that offers transportation in zones 4, 5 and 6, there will be no additional cost for transportation. With the possibility to recapture 25% of home education and charter students back to the district would be 13 students (~\$71,500) and recapturing 50 students from outside of the district to attend gifted magnet would be an additional \$275,000.

My Contact

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Attachment: [Boundary for RL Brown.pdf](#)