

ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 728

VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE

FINAL REPORT

Prepared for

School Board

And

Dr. Mark Bezek, Superintendent of Schools

Elk River Area School District No. 728

Dr. Roger B. Worner

Dr. Kay T. Worner

Project Consultants

Roger Worner Associates, Inc.

Cedar, Minnesota

September 25, 2006

FINAL REPORT

1.0 Introduction

The Elk River Area School District No. 728 Voluntary Local Task Force (hereafter referred to as the Voluntary Local Task Force) was a creation of the Minnesota State Legislature in its 84th Legislative Session (2005-06). As delineated in Senate File No. 2894, First Engrossment, a Voluntary Local Task Force for Independent School District No. 728, Elk River, was created to examine the governance, facilities, and programming of the Elk River (Area) School District.

The law stated that “the superintendent of Independent School District No. 728, Elk River, must convene a voluntary local task force composed of the district superintendent, district and school administrators, licensed and non licensed district and school staff, parents of students enrolled in the district school, and interested district residents and representatives of community-based entities appointed by the superintendent to examine and make recommendations regarding the governance, facilities, and programming of the Elk River School District. Task force members may elect/create subcommittees to accomplish this task. Task force members may not be reimbursed or receive compensation for their participation. The task force must submit a written report to the Elk River school board by September 1, 2006, containing its findings and recommendations. The Elk River school board must submit the task force report and any school board recommendations to the education policy and finance committees of the legislature by January 15, 2007.”

(It should be noted that with the agreement of area legislators, the timetable for completion of the Voluntary Local Task Force's report to the School Board and Superintendent of Elk River Area School District No. 728 was extended from September 1 to September 30, 2006).

2.0 Mission

The mission of the Voluntary Local Task Force was specified as follows:

The mission of the voluntary local task force is “to examine and make recommendations regarding governance, facilities, and programming of the district.”

3.0 Membership, Facilitation, Meetings, Agendas, Minutes

The Voluntary Local Task Force was created to match the specifications established by the Minnesota State Legislature. Members of the Voluntary Local Task Force were as follows:

- ❖ Dr. Mark Bezek
- ❖ Dr. Ron Bratlie
- ❖ Jana Hennen-Burr
- ❖ Nancy Elsmore
- ❖ Carole Boelter
- ❖ Katie Solliday
- ❖ Paulie Skaja-Bell
- ❖ Blair Irwin
- ❖ Chris Anderson
- ❖ Kevin Hannan
- ❖ Mark Kraemer
- ❖ Nancy Fordahl
- ❖ Cyndy Meyer

- ❖ Ted Vecchio
- ❖ Michael Ingham
- ❖ Lori Snyder
- ❖ Jeff Martinson
- ❖ Dick Erickson
- ❖ Jodi Sims
- ❖ Mike Jacobs

Dr. Roger Worner, Roger Worner Associates, Inc., was selected by the Minnesota Department of Education to serve as the Facilitator of the Voluntary Local Task Force. Dr. Kay Worner, Roger Worner Associates, Inc., assisted in the facilitation process.

The Voluntary Local Task Force met on six occasions to fulfill their mission. Meetings were convened at the Elk River Area School District No. 728 School District Office on August 2, August 15, August 21, August 29, September 7, and September 14. Meetings were typically two hours in duration.

The Facilitator and representatives of the Voluntary Local Task Force presented its final report to the School Board and Superintendent of Elk River Area School District No. 728 on Monday, September 25, 2006.

Agendas and Short Minutes were prepared for each of the Voluntary Local Task Force's meetings and are included, respectively, in Appendix I and II.

4.0 Roles, Advisory Capacity

The Facilitator developed and distributed working descriptions of the Role of the Facilitator and Role of Task Force Members (Appendix III). At formation of the Voluntary Local Task Force, it was explained and understood that the body functioned in an advisory capacity to the School Board and Superintendent of Elk River Area School District No. 728 (Appendix III). It was further explained that, upon receiving the Voluntary Local Task Force's Final Report, the School Board of Elk River Area School District No. 728 is empowered to accept without modification, accept with modification, or reject the Task Force's advisory recommendations. (Appendix III).

5.0 Issues/Concerns and Priorities

The Voluntary Local Task Force identified and prioritized issues/concerns—as instructed by the Minnesota State Legislature—in Elk River Area School District No. 728 regarding governance, facilities, and programming (Appendix IV). The highest priority issues/concerns in Elk River Area School District No. 728—as envisioned by Voluntary Local Task Force members—were as follows:

Governance

- ◆ Management Process Consistency/Inconsistency; schools responding differently to plans (8; 1)
- ◆ Need for communication and education about the needs/priorities (2; 5)
- ◆ Split the school district (0; 7)

Facilities

- ◇ Parity/inequities (6; 6)
- ◇ Need for facility (planning process) policy/standards/specifications (6; 6)
- ◇ Structure facilities to allow programming to have parity (0; 9)

Programming

- ◇ Program shortcomings/comparative (with other districts) inequities (7; 6)
- ◇ Programming inequities/course variations (internal) (3; 7)
- ◇ Curriculum compatibility; curriculum map/consistency (3; 5)

6.0 Alternatives for Addressing (Highest Priority) Issues/Concerns

The Voluntary Local Task Force focused its attention on the highest priority issues/concerns—as previously specified—and identified alternatives for addressing those (highest priorities) issues/concerns (Appendix V).

Subsequently, the Voluntary Local Task Force employed the alternatives for addressing (highest priority) issues/concerns in formulating their advisory recommendations to the School Board and Superintendent of Elk River Area School District No. 728.

7.0 Acknowledgement of Financial Constraints

As an outcome of its examination of issues and concerns and alternatives for addressing those issues and concerns in Elk River Area School District No. 728, the Voluntary Local Task Force wished to issue the following statement to the School Board, Superintendent, staff, parents, and patrons of Elk River Area School District No. 728, acknowledging the impact that fiscal constraints have had on the school district in the past:

- ◆ **Task Force acknowledges to the School Board that financial constraints placed on the school district have negatively impacted facility (and program, service and staffing) parity and, if unresolved, will continue to promulgate inequities.**

In so issuing this statement, the Voluntary Local Task Force desired it be recognized by all parties that fiscal constraints have played a significant role in creating inequities in the organization (rather than malicious intent).

8.0 Advisory Recommendations

At the conclusion of its work, the Voluntary Local Task Force painstakingly prepared and now tenders the following advisory recommendations to the School Board and Superintendent of Elk River Area School District No. 728. It should be noted that the Voluntary Local Task Force viewed all advisory recommendations as important for and instrumental in strengthening Elk River Area School District No. 728. Furthermore, the advisory recommendations were purposefully sequenced in the manner detailed below, and priority ratings along side in parentheses (first number illustrates highest priority votes; second number illustrates second highest priority votes) illustrate the highest priority—for early School Board and Superintendent attention—among all advisory recommendations.

- ◆ **The Task Force recommends the School Board commit to developing and communicating a uniform, consistent mission for the school district in a highly visible format. (0; 0)**
- ◆ **The Task Force recommends that, since the issue will remain divisive if unaddressed and unresolved, the School Board**

commission the conduct of a comprehensive study on the efficacy of dividing the school district. (4; 4)

- ◆ **The Task Force recommends the School Board institute a process to create a broad-based, five year, strategic plan to provide direction to the school district in addressing priority needs, including programs, services, staffing, and facilities. (6; 5)**

- ◆ **The Task Force recommends the School Board commission an audit to identify facility equities/inequities, develop a plan to address those inequities, and create a planning process that delineates facility policies, standards, and specifications (including building size and population) which will be applied, district-wide, in addressing identified inequities and in constructing new facilities. (0; 0)**

- ◆ **The Task Force recommends the School Board establish high standards for school district programs, services, staffing, and achievement (including—but not limited to—implementation consideration of distance learning; all day/every day kindergarten; gifted/talented programming; world language at all levels; middle school and high school schedule expansion; elementary and middle school co-curricular and extra-curricular programming) to insure competitive parity with world class school districts. (0; 1)**

- ◆ **The Task Force recommends the School Board commission the conduct of an audit of district and school programs, services, and class sizes to identify equities and inequities, set high performance (internal), compatible, consistent, district-wide standards, establish common goals and expectations among schools and organizational levels, and explore options to achieve equitable programs, services, and staffing. (3; 2)**

- ◆ **The Task Force recommends the School Board establish an expectation that the performances of school district systems and services (internal and external) will be regularly evaluated and, as appropriate, addressed. (0; 1)**

- ◆ **The Task Force recommends the School Board conduct the business of the district and interactions with one another in a manner befitting elected officials. (0; 0)**

9.0 Commentary/Notes

The Voluntary Local Task Force recognizes there is a significant commitment of time and resources required to accomplish a comprehensive study of the issues identified in Elk River Area School District No. 728 and, hence, the need for substantial financial assistance from sources other than the school district to cost-underwrite such complex analyses. Toward that end, the Voluntary Local Task Force recommends the School Board and Superintendent of Elk River Area School District No. 728 request a significant financial commitment from the Minnesota State Legislature and Minnesota Department of Education to support and

promote further study and planning by the school district to address the Voluntary Local Task Force's advisory recommendations.

The Voluntary Local Task Force believes that a State-sponsored and conducted comprehensive study on the efficacy of dividing Elk River Area School District No. 728 would be valuable to both this school district organization and other school districts facing similar challenges and, hence, should be fully-funded by the State of Minnesota.

RBW:dkh
9-21-06ElkRiverFinalReport

APPENDIX I

ELK RIVER SCHOOL DISTRICT #728 VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE

AGENDA

August 2, 2006

- ❖ Welcome and Introductions
- ❖ Facilitator Background
- ❖ Task Force Mission
- ❖ Role of the Facilitator
- ❖ Task Force Members
- ❖ Role of Task Force Members
- ❖ Task Force Product
- ❖ Options Available to the School Board
- ❖ Future Meeting Schedule
- ❖ Defining the Issue
- ❖ Questions/Comments
- ❖ Next Meeting: Date; Time; Location
- ❖ Adjournment

ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #728 VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE

AGENDA

August 15, 2006

- ❖ **Welcome**
- ❖ **Minutes**
- ❖ **Brief Review and Questions**
- ❖ **Identifying Additional Issues/Concerns**
- ❖ **Setting Priorities Among Issues/Concerns**
- ❖ **Discussing Priority Issues/Concerns (Further)**
- ❖ **Alternatives for Addressing Issues/Concerns**
- ❖ **Questions/Comments**
- ❖ **Next Meeting: Date; Time; Location**
- ❖ **Adjournment**

ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #728 VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE

AGENDA

August 21, 2006

- ❖ **Welcome**
- ❖ **Minutes**
- ❖ **Brief Review and Questions**
- ❖ **Identifying Additional Issues/Concerns**
- ❖ **Setting Priorities Among Issues/Concerns (Programming)**
- ❖ **Discussing Priority Issues/Concerns (Further)**
- ❖ **Alternatives for Addressing Issues/Concerns**
- ❖ **Draft Recommendations**
- ❖ **Questions/Comments**
- ❖ **Next Meeting: Date; Time; Location**
- ❖ **Adjournment**

ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #728 VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE

AGENDA

August 29, 2006

- ❖ **Welcome**
- ❖ **Minutes**
- ❖ **Brief Review and Questions**
- ❖ **Alternatives for Addressing Issues/Concerns (Facilities and Programming)**
- ❖ **Draft Recommendations**
- ❖ **Questions/Comments**
- ❖ **Next Meeting: Date; Time; Location**
- ❖ **Adjournment**

ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #728 VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE

AGENDA

September 7, 2006

- ❖ **Welcome**
- ❖ **Minutes**
- ❖ **Brief Review and Questions**
- ❖ **Alternatives for Addressing Issues/Concerns**
- ❖ **Draft Recommendations**
- ❖ **Questions/Comments**
- ❖ **Next Meeting: Date; Time; Location**
- ❖ **Adjournment**

ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #728 VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE

AGENDA

September 14, 2006

- ❖ Welcome**
- ❖ Minutes**
- ❖ Brief Review and Questions**
- ❖ Draft Advisory Recommendations**
- ❖ Outline of Final Report Document**
- ❖ Presentation of Final Report Document to the School Board and
Superintendent**
- ❖ Questions/Comments**
- ❖ Adjournment/Thank You**

APPENDIX II

ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 728
VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE
SHORT MINUTES
August 2, 2006

The first meeting of the Elk River Area School District No. 728 Voluntary Local Task Force was called to order at 7:05 p.m. on Wednesday, August 2, 2006 in the School District Office, 815 Highway 10, Elk River, by Facilitator Roger Worner. Members of the task force in attendance were as follows: Bezek; Bratlie; Hennen-Burr; Ellsmore; Boelter; Bell; Irwin; Kraemer; Meyer; Vecchio; Ingham; Snyder; Erickson; Jacobs; and Facilitator Worner.

A copy of the Task Force agenda for August 2 was distributed and reviewed. The Facilitator reported that, at each subsequent meeting, an agenda and Short Minutes would be distributed.

The Facilitator reported he had attempted to structure a meeting with Representative Joyce Peppin to discuss events which had led up to and the under-girding logic for authoring a bill for consideration by the Minnesota State Legislature to create the Voluntary Local Task Force. The Facilitator had been unable to visit by telephone or in person with Representative Peppin prior to the meeting. It was suggested that, perhaps, the Facilitator should attempt to converse and/or meet with Representative Jim Abeler as well.

Members of the Task Force introduced themselves and, in turn, the Facilitator introduced himself, briefly discussed his background in serving as an independent third party neutral in conducting studies for school districts, and explained his appointment as Facilitator by the Minnesota Department of Education.

Members of the Task Force and Facilitator reviewed the Task Force's mission; the role of the Facilitator; the role of Task Force members; the product of the Task Force (to the Elk River Area School District School Board); the role of the Task Force as an advisory body; and options available to the School Board in receiving the Task Force's report.

Future meetings of the Task Force were established as follows: Tuesday, August 15; Monday, August 21; Tuesday, August 29; Thursday, September 7. Meetings will convene in the School District Office at 7:00 p.m. The August 21 meeting will extend from 7:00-9:00 p.m.

The Facilitator read the contents of Senate File No. 2894 which instructed the Task Force to examine the governance, facilities, and programming of Elk River Area School District. The Facilitator explained that it will be the Task Force's responsibilities to identify issues/concerns regarding governance, programming, and facilities. Those issues/concerns will be prioritized, and the most significant issues/concerns will be fully discussed and explained. Subsequently, alternatives for addressing/improving the status of the highest priority issues/concerns will be delineated. Recommendations and potential courses of action for consideration by the School Board, Superintendent of Schools, and administrative staff will be prepared in a formal report to the School Board by no later than September 30, 2006. As appropriate (or necessary), a minority report may be offered. The Facilitator reported he would be responsible for preparing the draft final report on behalf of and for consideration by the Task Force.

Task Force members identified multiple issues/concerns regarding governance, programming, and facilities. Considerable discussion ensued.

The first meeting of the Voluntary Local Task Force was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

RBW:dkh
STUDIES/8-02-06ElkRiverMinutes

ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 728
VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE
SHORT MINUTES
August 15, 2006

The second meeting of the Elk River Area School District No. 728 Voluntary Local Task Force was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 15, 2006 in the School District Office, 815 Highway 10, Elk River, by Facilitator Roger Worner. Members of the task force in attendance were as follows: Bezek; Hennen-Burr; Ellsmore; Boelter; Solliday (replaces Hjertstedt); Skaja-Bell; Anderson; Kraemer; Meyer; Vecchio; Ingham; Snyder; Martinson; Erickson; and Facilitator Worner.

A copy of the Task Force agenda for August 15 was distributed and reviewed. Short Minutes for the meeting of August 2 were distributed.

The Facilitator reported he had spoken by telephone with Representative James Abeler and in person with Representative Joyce Peppin regarding the legislation which resulted in the creation of the Voluntary Local Task Force.

Members of the Task Force and guests introduced themselves. The Facilitator introduced Dr. Kay Worner, Roger Worner Associates Partner.

Task Force members identified additional issues/concerns regarding the governance and facilities.

Task Force members prioritized issues/concerns regarding governance and facilities. (Issues/concerns regarding programming will be the initial focus of the Task Force at the next meeting on Monday, August 21).

The second meeting of the Voluntary Local Task Force was adjourned at 8:55 p.m. The next meeting of the Voluntary Local Task Force is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on Monday, August 21 in the School District Office.

ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 728
VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE
SHORT MINUTES
August 21, 2006

The third meeting of the Elk River Area School District No. 728 Voluntary Local Task Force was called to order at 7:02 p.m. on Monday, August 21, 2006 in the School District Office, 815 Highway 10, Elk River, by Facilitator Roger Worner. Members of the Task Force in attendance were as follows: Bezek; Bratlie; Hennen-Burr; Boelter, Solliday; Skaja-Bell; Anderson; Fordahl; Meyer; Vecchio; Ingham; Snyder; Martinson; Erickson; Jacobs; and Facilitator Worner.

A copy of the Task Force agenda for August 21 was distributed and reviewed. Short Minutes for the meeting of August 15 were distributed. Issues/concerns sheets on governance, facilities, and programming—as well as a new listing of Task Force members—were distributed.

Task Force members identified additional issues/concerns regarding programming.

Task Force members prioritized issues/concerns regarding programming.

Task Force member identified alternatives for addressing issues/concerns regarding the three highest priority governance issues/concerns: (1) need for communication and education about needs/concerns; (2) management process consistency/inconsistency; responding differently to plans; and (3) splitting the district.

The facilitator complimented members of the Voluntary Local Task Force for their outstanding participation, support and consideration of one another, and the quality of their contributions to the school district.

The third meeting of the Voluntary Local Task Force was adjourned at 9:00 p.m. The fourth meeting of the Voluntary Local Task Force is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 29 in the School District Office.

ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 728
VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE
SHORT MINUTES
August 29, 2006

The fourth meeting of the Elk River Area School District No. 728 Voluntary Local Task Force was called to order at 7:05 p.m. on Tuesday, August 29, 2006 in the School District Office, 815 Highway 10, Elk River, by Facilitator Roger Worner. Members of the Task Force in attendance were as follows: Bezek; Bratlie; Hennen-Burr; Elsmore; Solliday; Skaja-Bell; Anderson; Kraemer; Fordahl; Meyer; Vecchio; Martinson; Erickson; Jacobs; and Facilitator Worner.

A copy of the Task Force agenda for August 29 was distributed and reviewed. Short Minutes for the meeting of August 21 were distributed. Issues/concerns/ priorities sheets on programming, alternatives for addressing issues/concerns on governance, and a new listing of the Task Force members were distributed.

Task Force members identified alternatives for addressing issues/concerns regarding the three highest priorities facility and programming issues/concerns. Alternatives for addressing issues/concerns regarding governance (splitting the district) were modified.

The next meeting of the Task Force will focus on further identification and/or refinement of priority issues/concerns related to governance, facilities, and programming and, then, formulating draft, advisory recommendations for Elk River School District No. 728's School Board and Superintendent.

The fourth meeting of the Voluntary Local Task Force was adjourned at 8:55 p.m. The fifth meeting of the Task Force is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 7 in the School District Office. If needed, a sixth Task Force meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, September 14 in the School District Office at **6:00 p.m.** (note time change).

ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 728
VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE
SHORT MINUTES
September 7, 2006

The fifth meeting of the Elk River Area School District No. 728 Voluntary Local Task Force was called to order at 7:05 p.m. on Thursday, September 7, 2006 in the School District Office, 815 Highway 10, Elk River, by Facilitator Roger Worner. Members of the Task Force in attendance were as follows: Bezek; Bratlie; Hennen-Burr; Elsmore; Boelter; Solliday; Skaja-Bell; Kraemer; Meyer; Ingham; Erickson; Jacobs; and Facilitator Worner.

A copy of the Task Force agenda for September 7 was distributed and reviewed. Short Minutes for the meeting of August 29 were distributed. Issues/concerns/priorities sheets on governance, facilities, and programming, were distributed. Revised alternatives for addressing issues/concerns on governance, facilities, and programming were distributed.

Task Force members identified and/or refined alternatives for addressing issues/concerns regarding the three highest priorities for governance, facility, and programming issues/concerns. Wording clarification was provided by Task Force members.

Task Force members identified the topic titles of tentative advisory recommendations for consideration by the School Board of Elk River Area School District No. 728.

The final meeting of the Task Force will focus on “word-smithing” advisory recommendations to the School Board of Elk River Area School District No. 728 and examining the draft content outline of the Voluntary Local Task Force’s report to the School Board and Superintendent.

The fifth meeting of the Voluntary Local Task Force was adjourned at 8:55 p.m. The sixth meeting of the Task Force is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 14 in the School District Office.

ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 728
VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE
SHORT MINUTES
September 14, 2006

The sixth meeting of the Elk River Area School District No. 728 Voluntary Local Task Force was called to order at 6:10 p.m. on Thursday, September 14, 2006 in the School District Office, 815 Highway 10, Elk River, by Facilitator Roger Worner. Members of the Task Force in attendance were as follows: Bezek; Bratlie; Hennen-Burr; Elsmore; Boelter; Solliday; Skaja-Bell; Anderson; Kraemer; Fordahl; Meyer; Ingham; Martinson; Jacobs; and Facilitator Worner.

A copy of the Task Force agenda for September 14 was distributed and reviewed. Short Minutes for the meeting of September 7 were distributed. Revised alternatives for addressing issues/concerns on governance, facilities, and programming were distributed.

The Facilitator distributed a draft outline of the final report to the Elk River Area School District School Board and Superintendent by the Voluntary Local Task Force. No modifications were made to the draft final report outline.

The Facilitator distributed draft advisory recommendations to the School Board and Superintendent from the Voluntary Local Task Force. Revisions were made to the draft advisory recommendations, and directions were offered to the Facilitator to include in the draft advisory recommendations a request of the Minnesota State Legislature to fund the conduct of a comprehensive study on the efficacy of dividing the school district (that could be used by other Minnesota school districts which may wish to consider such an action in the future). Task Force members requested that the Facilitator emphasize to the School Board, Superintendent, public, and Minnesota State Legislature that the Task Force recognized that financial constraints placed on the school district have negatively impacted facility (and program, service, and staffing) parity and, if unresolved, will continue to promulgate inequities.

Task Force members sequenced the order of the draft advisory recommendations to the School Board and Superintendent and, further, rated—for special emphasis to the School Board and Superintendent—the two highest priority advisory recommendations.

The Task Force requested that Facilitator Roger Worner provide an overview of the Voluntary Local Task Force final report to the School Board and Superintendent of Elk River Area School District No. 728 at the regular School Board meeting on Monday, October 25.

The Facilitator expressed gratitude to the members of the Voluntary Local Task Force for their service to the parents, patrons, staff, and students of Elk River Area School District No. 728. The sixth meeting of the Voluntary Local Task Force was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

RBW:dkh
STUDIES9-14-06ElkRiverMinutes

APPENDIX III

ELK RIVER SCHOOL DISTRICT #728 VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE

ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR

The role of the Facilitator shall be as follows:

- ❖ Convene the meetings of the Task Force.
- ❖ Establish agendas for meetings.
- ❖ Prepare meeting minutes
- ❖ Provide leadership and guidance to the Task Force.
- ❖ Facilitate discussion and deliberation.
- ❖ Assist in defining issues.
- ❖ Be fair, open, responsive, and receptive.
- ❖ Assist the Task Force in completion of its assigned responsibilities.
- ❖ Insure all Task Force members have an opportunity to express their viewpoints and that time monopolization does not occur.
- ❖ Prepare draft documents for Task Force review and, as approved, for School Board consideration.
- ❖ Prepare final advisory recommendations of the Task Force to the School Board.
- ❖ Perform other duties as may be warranted to fulfill the Task Force mission.

ELK RIVER SCHOOL DISTRICT #728 VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE

ROLE OF TASK FORCE MEMBERS

The role of Task Force members shall be as follows:

- ❖ Regularly attend meetings.
- ❖ Offer your best, most conscientious advice to the Task Force on behalf of the students, staff, and communities of the school district.
- ❖ Assist the Task Force in fulfilling its mission.
- ❖ Assist the Facilitator in keeping the Task Force “on task.”
- ❖ Refrain from monopolizing the Task Force’s time.
- ❖ Do not become personal or personalize.

ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #728 VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE

ADVISORY BODY

The Voluntary Local Task Force is a creation of the Minnesota State Legislature and Elk River School District #728. Its function is to provide advice to the School Board on the matters of governance, programming, and facilities. Upon completion of the mission, the Task Force shall be discharged unless additional responsibilities are assigned.

The School Board and Superintendent express gratitude to the members of the Task Force for their generous donation of time and effort on behalf of the students, staff, and residents of the school district's communities.

ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #728 VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE

OPTIONS OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

The School Board of Elk River School District #728 is a duly-elected, policy-making body, and as a consequence, has options available to itself, by law, regarding the receipt of reports/information from staff, patrons, citizens, task forces, committees, and other individuals or bodies.

The options available to the School Board in receiving the Task Force's advisory recommendations are as follows:

- ❖ Receive the recommendations and implement them as proposed (no modification).
- ❖ Receive the recommendations, implement them in part, and not implement them in part (partial modification).
- ❖ Receive the recommendations and not implement them (complete modification).

Any of the aforementioned options may be elected by the School Board on the Task Force's advisory recommendations.

APPENDIX IV

ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #728 VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE

ISSUES/CONCERNS

GOVERNANCE

- ❖ Conflicts on School Board
- ❖ Lack of trust (School Board); past history (2; 2)
- ❖ Board clashes (past/present)
- ❖ Competing community factions
- ❖ Management process consistency/inconsistency; schools responding differently to plans (8; 1)
- ❖ Opinion: administration is top heavy (District Office) (0; 1)
- ❖ Carry over (from previous administration) concerns about trust of administration
- ❖ Split the school district (0; 7)
- ❖ Perceived inequities in treatment (in governing) (1; 4)
- ❖ Some areas represented more/better (by School Board) than others (1; 2)
- ❖ Accountability (0; 5)
- ❖ Need for communication and education about the needs/priorities (2; 5)

ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #728

VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE

ISSUES/CONCERNS

FACILITIES

- ❖ Not enough
- ❖ Parity/inequities (6; 6)
- ❖ Structure facilities to allow programming to have parity (0; 9)
- ❖ Financial limitations (2; 2)
- ❖ Outdoor (grounds and maintenance) (0; 1)
- ❖ Using facilities to maximum year round
- ❖ Access to facilities (Who gets what? What are the priorities?) (0; 1)
- ❖ Inadequate district office/staff—poor staff standards/
specifications
- ❖ Need for facility (planning process) policy/standards/
specifications (6; 6)
- ❖ Rising class sizes
- ❖ Build facilities with same design as existing quality structure
(save \$)
- ❖ Dollars not kept in community (donated by community);
local contributions not taken into consideration (0; 1)

ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #728 VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE

ISSUES/CONCERNS

PROGRAMMING

- ❖ Technology staff
- ❖ Programming inequities/course variations (internal) (3; 7)
- ❖ Elementary/middle school extra-curriculars (do not exist)
- ❖ Control of programming and program planning; examine
- ❖ Honors program/Challenge program (0; 3)
- ❖ (Programs) not as rigorous (0; 1)
- ❖ Fund curriculum/textbooks (0; 1)
- ❖ Expand evaluation
- ❖ Rising class sizes
- ❖ Program shortcomings/comparative (with other districts)
Inequities (7; 6)
- ❖ Curriculum compatibility; curriculum map/consistency (3;5)
- ❖ Distance learning consideration; alternative delivery
Methodologies (1; 3)
- ❖ Alternative scheduling (0; 2)

APPENDIX V

ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #728 VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE

ALTERNATIVES FOR ADDRESSING ISSUES/CONCERNS

GOVERNANCE: SPLITTING THE DISTRICT

- ❖ **Inequity issues need to be addressed.**
- ❖ **The unresolved issue of splitting the school district will continue to be a divisive issue throughout the district. Therefore, a comprehensive study of splitting the district needs to be undertaken.**

ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #728 VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE

ALTERNATIVES FOR ADDRESSING ISSUES/CONCERNS

GOVERNANCE: NEED FOR COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION ABOUT NEEDS/CONCERNS

- ❖ **Need more face to face contact (by School Board and administration)**
- ❖ **Need for area meetings**
- ❖ **Stop making disparaging remarks**
- ❖ **Stop making divisive remarks**
- ❖ **Don't make School Board meetings a "soap opera"**
- ❖ **Articulate our common mission**
- ❖ **Attend PTO meetings**
- ❖ **Board members should set aside personal agendas and formulate a unified agenda**
- ❖ **Provide continuous communication—not just when the district needs something (from the electorate)**

ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #728 VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE

ALTERNATIVES FOR ADDRESSING ISSUES/CONCERNS

GOVERNANCE: MANAGEMENT PROCESS CONSISTENCY/INCONSISTENCY; RESPONDING DIFFERENTLY TO PLANS

- ❖ Appearance of inconsistent applications (operations among buildings)
- ❖ Need for a (strategic) plan
- ❖ Need for monitoring system.
- ❖ Need for evaluation
- ❖ Need for accountability to that plan
- ❖ Need to correct (directions) as necessary

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ALTERNATIVES FOR ADDRESSING ISSUES/CONCERNS

FACILITIES: PARITY/INEQUITIES

- ❖ **Conduct an audit of facilities that tie to/illustrate program inequities.**
- ❖ **As an outcome of the audit, develop a plan to address identified facility inequities.**
- ❖ **Develop a district planning process that identifies facility policies, standards, and specifications throughout the district (template) (including desired building size or population).**
- ❖ **Communicate the plan.**
- ❖ **Structure facilities to allow programming parity.**
- ❖ **The financial constraints of the school district have negatively impacted facility parity/created inequities and—if unresolved—will continue to do so.**

**ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #728
VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE**

ALTERNATIVES FOR ADDRESSING ISSUES/CONCERNS

**FACILITIES: NEED FOR FACILITY (PLANNING
PROCESS) POLICY/STANDARDS/
SPECIFICATIONS**



ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #728 VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE

ALTERNATIVES FOR ADDRESSING ISSUES/CONCERNS

PROGRAMMING: PROGRAM SHORTCOMINGS/ COMPARATIVE (WITH OTHER DISTRICTS) INEQUITIES

- ❖ **Need to set standards for high performance (achievement and offerings).**
- ❖ **All day/every day kindergarten (implementation).**
- ❖ **Middle school foreign language (implementation).**
- ❖ **Gifted/talented programming (implementation and expansion).**
- ❖ **Middle school schedule expansion (implementation).**
- ❖ **Middle school “true team” time (implementation).**
- ❖ **Absence of extra-and co-curricular programs at elementary and middle school level (need to be reinstated) (implementation).**
- ❖ **Continuous performance of district systems/services need to be evaluated and addressed as appropriate.**

ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #728 VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE

ALTERNATIVES FOR ADDRESSING ISSUES/CONCERNS

PROGRAMMING: CURRICULUM COMPATIBILITY; CURRICULUM MAP/CONSISTENCY

- ❖ **Need to set high performing standards.**
- ❖ **Establish common set of goals/expectations among schools.**
- ❖ **Standards needed for class sizes.**
- ❖ **Conduct an audit/inventory of programs/services between/among schools and school levels to identify differences/inequities/commonalities.**

**ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #728
VOLUNTARY LOCAL TASK FORCE**

ALTERNATIVES FOR ADDRESSING ISSUES/CONCERNS

**PROGRAMMING: PROGRAMMING INEQUITIES/COURSE
VARIATIONS (INTERNAL)**

- ❖ (Pursue/expand) alternative delivery systems (e.g. ITV)