

Latham *from A1*

there are currently 86 students in the building.

At the Dec. 3 meeting, board member Merlene Martin inquired about if the decline had any relation to the school's status being up in the air. Sullivan responded by noting that they were "trying not to get into conjecture."

Whether there is a clear tie or not, Latham parents, as noted in the report's final section of parent comments, have felt that the district has not always had their back. One parent said, "It feels like the district has not been very supportive of Latham. This school was a very popular school and it feels neglected and not supported. If it stays open the school district needs to give this school the support it needs."

Also included in the enrollment figures was a chart documenting attendance exceptions; there are 37 students in the Latham attendance area that attend other schools (19 Bohemia, 14 Harrison and four at London) while there are 35 students that come from Latham from other attendance areas (15 Bohemia, 12 Harrison, six London and two Dorena.)

The report showed a hypothetical school boundary that would show where the students at Latham would go if the school closed this school year. It does not show student placement for next year, which would have to factor in incoming

kindergarten students and students who would be attending middle school, no longer attending elementary school.

In the current hypothetical of today's students, 39 students would be at Bohemia, 32 at Harrison, seven at London and two at Dorena. Six students were unaccounted for in this because of an address listed at a PO box.

**Staffing**

If Latham were to close, an estimated 3.5-5 positions would be placed elsewhere in the district. These are estimates because it cannot yet be predicted where students would go and what needs other schools would have based on the influx of new students.

At this moment, it is also unclear how many teachers could possibly lose their jobs if the school were to close.

"There's a lot of things that we would have to take into consideration, including where the students are. There are also contractual obligations that we have," said SLSD director of human resources Brian McCasline. "It would be irresponsible to take a look at that and to voice that at this point because we don't know."

While the cost per student was listed, McCasline further noted that this is not an accurate way to look at funding due to the unique makeup of students and specific funding at each school.

"You might have seven education assistants at one building and three at another,

but that's not comparing apples to apples because kids have different characteristics that they bring to the table. You can't just say cost per student would be this. It's not apples to apples," said McCasline.

What was compared on the report included class size where Latham is on par with the rest of the district at 21.5 students per class. Harrison has 25.3 while Bohemia is at 21.7, Dorena 21.3 and London at 19.

**Student Performance**

The report provided each school's state performance from the 2017-18 school year. With buildings fluctuating from year to year, the district does not have any major takeaways from this data.

"It's fairly comparable. So much so that it's really hard to draw any conclusions other than our students are achieving on a certain level based on the state performance of such things," said Sullivan. "Buildings are not standing out versus other buildings."

**Instructional Impact on Student Achievement**

Sullivan made sure to include the research of Dr. John Hattie to show that above all other factors, including class size, the most important factor in a classroom is often the teacher. In an online interview, Hattie clarified his point.

"When teachers have been in classes of typically 25-30 and we compare that to teachers with classes of 15-

20, we do get an increase in achievement by reducing class size. There's no question," Hattie said. "However, that effect size is tiny. And what I'm intrigued on as a researcher is how come the effect is so small? It's positive but it's very small."

As is clear on the chart, the impact, according to Hattie's research, shows that there is some impact of a small class size but it is minimal which is what Sullivan wanted to stress to the board.

"I think there were some questions about whether class size makes a difference in student achievement," said Sullivan. "Sometimes there are misperceptions and we wanted to make sure that — especially with the Hattie stuff — to really make sure we show how important the teacher is and the quality of instruction is. Those are the takeaways."

Sullivan went on to explain that "This district... of all the districts in Lane County I've worked with as ESD superintendent, this district has put the most focus on quality instruction of any of the districts. So when we see those things that really impactful for student achievement, it's all about the work we do with our teachers. It's about expectations with students and the quality instruction we do."

"I don't take any credit for that, it's been going on for years."

In the meeting, board member Martin noted that this research was not in agreement with what the board is often told.

"When Kennedy [High School students do] reports or whatever or parents say that class size matters. And teachers negotiate to get smaller class size so there's got to be something in there that makes class size more important than that small. That's just my opinion," she said.

**Special Education**

When it comes to Special Education, the district works to make sure that there is a service ratio of 25:1 of students working with SPED staff, speech-language pathologists and school psychologists. If Latham were to close, the district is saying in this report that .5 SPED employment would "likely be eliminated" because students from Latham would be able to go to other schools and they would still be below the ratio.

"Essentially, the funding follows the students in each of the schools," said Sullivan. "There's equivalency in terms of how we allocate by ratio for all the buildings based on number of students."

**Transportation**

If Latham were to close, the bus schedules would remain the same with pick up points around town to get to a specific school.

**Technology**

Latham is up to speed on technology at the same level as the other small schools in the district. To get Latham up to the same level of in-class technology as the

likes of Harrison and Bohemia with projectors and smartboards, it would cost \$11,720.

Under potential future issues, it was noted that Latham's internal data wiring will have to be replaced in the next five to 10 years which would cost between \$10,000 and \$15,000 dollars.

It was not addressed in the meeting whether this payment would be made in the next five years if the school was open for at least that amount of time.

**Food Services**

The report noted that kitchen equipment such as a refrigerator, oven, grill top burner and mixer have all been purchased in the last five years while other equipment is dated. Currently, the Latham kitchen is projected to have a \$14,000 deficit for next school year because of labor and benefits for its staff members. The report did not say if other kitchens are in a similar boat.

**Facilities and Maintenance**

To look at the well-being of Latham is to look at the continuing changes and maintenance to the school building itself.

"One of the things that we asked (maintenance and facilities manager) Matt (Allen) to do was to not only give us the last five years of maintenance and repairs that have been in the building but you'll see years in the future, also, if we maintain the building," said Sullivan.

See **REPORT 11A**

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