

## Item 9B: School/Student Services Report: Columbus/Edison Transition Update

AASD Board of Education

Mon, Mar 31, 2025 6:00PM

**Ed Ruffolo (Board Member)** 15:25

With that, we'll move on to item nine, reports to the board, and we have an update from Nan Bunnow tonight related to a very important topic, the Columbus/Edison transition. With that, and it's all yours.

**Nan Bunnow (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level)** 15:45

You know, Kayla's pulling up her document. Thank you. Appreciate the opportunity to provide an update to the board related to the Columbus Edison transition.

**Ed Ruffolo (Board Member)** 15:55

I'm sorry to interrupt. Is your microphone on? I'm having trouble hearing.

**Nan Bunnow (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level)** 16:02

So, since we last talked, the Edison/Columbus transition team met on Wednesday, March 12, and the goal of that meeting was to finalize the project and task list for the transition. And so, as you can see with this document, it boiled down to—four transition related projects were identified by the team, as well as a list of potential tasks that were developed to guide the group's work. And then for each project, two of the transition team members were identified as leads for that work group, and then we brainstormed a list of suggested team members, knowing that folks that wanted to be involved weren't necessarily on the transition team. And so, we broadened it to a general brainstorm list that the leads could use as they're forming their work groups.

**Nan Bunnow (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level)** 17:02

So just—I'll go through each of the work groups, just to give you a flavor of what each of them will be doing. The first work group is a Safe Routes to School work group that will be partnering with the City of Appleton and the Safe Routes to School organization to determine what are realistic walking routes from the Columbus—the current Columbus attendance area to Edison. They have already light bulbs that have been put on the sidewalk in the Edison attendance area, or portions of it, to identify those walking areas. And so, we're wanting to make sure that those—that consistent marking goes through the new Edison attendance area. Also looking at different options related to vehicle traffic patterns, etc. But you can see this was a list of potential tasks that was put together to guide the group, but as the group comes together, there will be some synergy and some pivots that they'll make as they work forward with these topics.

**Nan Bunnow (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level)** 18:13

The second group is introducing Edison to the Columbus students. One of the things that we're going to capitalize on is that the middle school transition day is Wednesday, May 14, from 12:30 to 2:30, so all of the fifth graders at Columbus will be at their next year's Middle School, and it gives an opportunity for those students that are planning to attend Edison to come over to Edison as well. And so, this group will be working to put together a plan for different stations that could be provided, presentations, welcome bags through the student council, but they'll be putting together that afternoon as far as a student transition opportunity at Edison school. In addition, this group is going to be putting some videos together about the building, as well as a video of staff members that can be shared prior to open house so that they—students that maybe perhaps weren't able to participate in the transition day will have an opportunity, as well as to introduce new staff that maybe are hired over the course of the summer.

**Nan Bunnaw (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level) 19:21**

The third work group that is coming together is planning a special event, a transition event, for Columbus families at Edison. This—you can see there it's going to be an event, most likely in May, where the families can come and tour Edison and get to know the building and the staff. So that that's the third group that's going to be meeting.

**Nan Bunnaw (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level) 19:49**

And then the fourth group—we know it's not going to be called Link Crew, but I think we're all familiar with Link Crew for ninth grade and about what that has been done, a wonderful program at our high schools to welcome freshmen into the building. But it's a Link Crew idea that's going to—program—that'll be put together that will allow some current Edison students to be part of this link crew and to be work—put into small groups with students that are new to Edison next year, which will include the Columbus students, but also any other new students that that arrived at Edison. And we think that this—at least the thought is that this isn't just going to be a one-year thing. This is something that they'll adopt and will be a co-curricular-like activity where students can come forward some intermediate students to partner up with new students, particularly at the beginning of the year. But then, as you can see, they're also talking about possibly some different activities to continue throughout each quarter of the year.

**Nan Bunnaw (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level) 20:49**

So those are, again, the potential tasks that the teams put together that were brainstormed by the transition team. But now there's these individual groups that are coming together in the next month to put some legs underneath these ideas and to finalize the plans.

**Nan Bunnaw (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level) 21:08**

The next page is kind of—it was a catch all of all these other tasks that came forward from the transition team to be accomplished. And in this case, these transition tasks were assigned to either an individual or a group of people. So, you can see that there's a list of items for the Columbus for Joel Cannon and the Columbus staff and PTO to focus on. There's a very long list for Joel and Katie and myself to work on, as far as all the other things that we will put into place, we'll take the lead on. The third column involves the Community Schools Resource Coordinator which should be hired within the next week or two. So even though we don't know who that person is, yet, they already have a list of things to accomplish. And then finally, the Edison PTO, some things that they're considering as well.

**Nan Bunnaw (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level) 22:04**

So, I'm not going to go through each and every one of the tasks. They're there, but particularly one that's very timely right now that is coming together this week for Columbus is the Columbus—I think they're calling it the Columbus Commemoration Group that's going to be putting on the opportunity in at the end of May. So, we should—their first meeting is this week, and our my next update, I'll be able to have a little bit more information about that that event, but we certainly want to capitalize on providing an opportunity for current Columbus families as well as alumni to come back to the building and to recognize its historical impact on our district.

**Nan Bunnaw (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level) 22:52**

So, the Edison Columbus transition team will meet again. Our next meeting is Wednesday, May 7, and this meeting will be an opportunity for all of these leads to come forward and provide an update to the transition team on their work. It'll also be an opportunity for them to seek the transition team's feedback on any of their ideas, as well as provide an opportunity for transition team members to ask questions and provide guidance to the work groups or to the task—the task masters on that final di—final page.

**Nan Bunnaw (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level) 23:27**

In addition to what the transition team has been doing, a survey was sent out to all Columbus k4 families in February regarding their intended enrollment for next year. And then at Columbus, they held their conference, their parent teacher conferences, in early March. And so for those families that indicated in February that they were either unsure or that they were going to Edison, a follow up survey was provided during that conference time that secured their feedback related to such topics as what their plans are for their children getting to and from Edison next year, interest in before and after school care, as well as their interest in different types of family transition activities that could be provided this spring and summer and fall. And so, and then the final question was just basically, "Do you have any questions or concerns about the transition?" So, we feel that this cadence of this initial survey and now directly to the families that we know are for sure going to Edison, or potentially could be, this information that we're able to collect from them is going to help guide the work of these work groups and task teams, as well as provide administration the opportunity to provide timely feedback to their questions or their concerns.

**Nan Bunnaw (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level) 24:52**

So, we really feel at this point that we're in a very good position with our transition plans, and look forward to the, you know, the stakeholders coming together in these work groups, as well as to start moving forward on some of those other tasks, to have those accomplished by the spring when we're actually putting this these plans into action. So, with that, are there any questions?

**Ed Ruffolo (Board Member) 25:20**

Just a question for you, Nan. I saw one of the headings was the Community Schools resource coordinator, so I'm assuming from that that Edison is definitely going to be a community school starting next year.

**Nan Bunnaw (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level) 25:33**

It is.

**Ed Ruffolo (Board Member) 25:34**

Are people excited about that?

**Nan Bunnaw (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level) 25:35**

They're very excited about that. And the intention is to have that person identified in April so that they can, first of all, begin their knowledge base working with the Community School Resource Coordinators at Dunlap and Jefferson, as well as with Julie Barkholtz as the coordinator, but then also be an integral part of this transition planning to help bring in that community aspect as we move forward.

**Ed Ruffolo (Board Member) 26:06**

And I know, in fact, we had an email from Brianne Conley who's part of the historic neighborhood group. It's very active group I understand. Sounds like, are we connecting with them? And they're participating in this planning as well?

**Nan Bunnaw (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level) 26:21**

Brianne's a member of the transition team, and has been very helpful as far as communicating out to members in the Columbus attendance area that do not have students at school yet, and so that we're able to reach out to them so that they're aware of what our plans are.

**Ed Ruffolo (Board Member) 26:41**

And we're also making sure we're connecting, because it is a change for Edison too. I know some of the parents expressed some concerns. Are we also connecting that set of stakeholders?

**Nan Bunnaw (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level) 26:53**

Quite a few of the Edison PTO members that are on the transition team, and then they're working with Katie Schmeltzer the principal to relay that communication out to the families. We do—are in the process of planning more formal communication out to both the Columbus and Edison families. We wanted to get all of this transition work done and presented to you, but and then we'll be getting a formal communication out to them as well, related to what I just shared with you.

**Ed Ruffolo (Board Member) 27:24**

And then just a final question, because a change of this magnitude is always going to generate some apprehension from our families and our stakeholders. As you and the others from the district have had a chance to begin to interact with and engage with the stakeholders in the neighborhood, are they—what is their mood? Are they enthusiastic, or are they beginning to understand the changes and are they appreciative, or is there more that we could be doing to support them?

**Nan Bunnaw (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level) 27:56**

You know, I really have to lean into the transition team, because we have members of the staff, the PTOs, and administration, and in general, there's a excitement on the part of the Edison community to welcome the Columbus families, and almost to the point where we're like, we really need to let them finish out at Columbus. And so that that's that—and that's been understood. You know, there initially was, "Well, should we be inviting them to our school events at Edison now?" And it's like, no, they have their Columbus events now, and we'll do that in the spring. So, we really had to work through that excitement, but to temper it a little bit. And as far as the Columbus, I think our approach to really provide in February that that survey, and then if there was an opportunity, would you like a call from the school? And Joel was able to follow up on each one of those regarding individual concerns. But now this follow up at conferences with a teacher, with the with principal, with the counselor there, I feel I my sense is that the families feel supported because of the fact that we're doing the outreach and wanting to address their individual questions. And sometimes it's not even about the move. It could be—it could be, you know, that where's the drop off and pick up things so, and that's good information for us, so that we can make sure we get them that information in a timely manner.

**Ed Ruffolo (Board Member) 29:24**

And just one last comment or appeal to both you and to Greg, we only have one chance to get this right. And so, if you do need something, or if there are concerns, if you need resources, please bring that forward as quickly as you can, so we can resolve any issues and make sure that this is a very smooth transition. Thank you so much. Anybody else? Any follow up questions? Kris, did you have a question? Please?

**Kris Sauter (Board Member) 29:49**

Yes, I do. I have a couple. Thank you, Ed. You asked many of my questions already. So, thank you. I do want to say thank you for the report out tonight and for I know Brianne Connolly reached out also to the board to invite us to some events, so I appreciate that as well. Nan, do you have [audio glitched]

**Nan Bunnaw (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level) 30:16**

It's—right now we have [26?] confirmed students that are attending Edison. There are 16 that are unsure at this time. So, a lot of them, when I looked at the feedback, it was their family may be moving and they're not sure. So those where they are identified, and we're working with those families. 11 are moving out of district so they

will not be attending AASD schools. And eight have indicated that they're planning going to a different AASD Elementary School. And when I looked at that, some had applied for school of choice, to a different school, some are have applied for charter school enrollment, and some of those eight had—are going to their—you know, they live in a different neighborhood, but they are school of choice to Columbus, and so now they're planning on just attending their neighborhood school instead of moving to Edison. So that, that's the survey information we have. So, the 26 and the 16, those are the ones that we are targeting as far as that second survey.

**Kris Sauter (Board Member)** 31:29

Thank you for that. And then when you meet again on May 7, are you anticipating that you'll have all of the dates put in place, if not all the details, for the for the different events that will be happening?

**Nan Bunnaw (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level)** 31:44

Yes, that's why we wanted to meet as ear—we wanted to—it was—we had to find that sweet spot to give the work groups enough time to pull together and meet and make those decisions, but then enough time to get the dates out to families. So, yes, we felt that that was about the right time. But there's going to be some things like the Columbus commemoration, and that day that we've already determined for the Edison or the Columbus students to come over to Edison. Those dates have already been set.

**Kris Sauter (Board Member)** 32:15

So, do you—you already have the dates for the Columbus commemoration then or is that to be determine?

**Nan Bunnaw (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level)** 32:21

No, but so they're meeting this week, so they will be picking that date, and that's going to be something that they can move forward with without going through our committee and as is the transition Day on May 14, those are dates that already have been set.

**Kris Sauter (Board Member)** 32:38

Thank you.

**Nan Bunnaw (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level)** 32:40

I was just gonna say the event for the transitioning families at Edison, that date hasn't been set, but that will be in in May at some point.

**Kris Sauter (Board Member)** 32:49

Alright, well, and hopefully we'll get those dates to get on our calendars as well, I'm sure. So—

**Nan Bunnaw (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level)** 32:55

I definitely will pass them off to Kayla so it can be on in your update.

**Kris Sauter (Board Member)** 33:00

All right. Thank you so much. And thanks too to the community members who are participating in this too. It's obviously a very large project and appreciate all the different perspectives. So, thanks for your report.

**Ed Ruffolo (Board Member)** 33:17

James.

**James Bacon (Board Member)** 33:18

Yeah, first, I just want to also echo the thanks for the report. It's helpful to get a sense of it, kind of in this way. And I think it's helpful to have it, you know, for our community members that are, you know, whether they're invested or involved directly, or just helpful in general, I think it's just really helpful to have the space. So, thanks. Also, Kris and Ed asked a lot of the questions I had, but a few follow ups. You shared some enrollment projections, or at least the survey for the Columbus families. Have we done anything in a similar nature for Edison families, or, you know, that would impact enrollment projections on that side of things? Knowing this is a change for both Columbus families and Edison families?

**Nan Bunnow (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level)** 34:01

We have not. Certainly, we're actually meeting this week on school of choice was determined what the deadline has passed, and so we will be meeting this week to review those requests. So that will be an opportunity for us to look at that. But no, we have not chosen to survey Edison families regarding their plan, their intention. It will happen. All of our elementary schools, as we get to May do that, but we haven't done anything special for this circumstance.

**James Bacon (Board Member)** 34:32

Sure. In the nature of not over surveying, I think that makes sense but just wondered. I would say at the next update, though, it'd be helpful to know if we have any evidence of any kind that is impacting what enrollment projections might look like at Edison, for those that are already there this year too. Just knowing we heard from any community members that just had a lot of questions, and I'm just curious to know what might play out from there.

**Nan Bunnow (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level)** 34:58

I def—I definitely can bring that forward.

**James Bacon (Board Member)** 35:00

Awesome. Thank you. And especially, maybe how it compares to historical trends or something too, if that's kind of how we're looking at it.

**Nan Bunnow (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level)** 35:07

Yeah.

**James Bacon (Board Member)** 35:07

But whatever you have. And then I also—the plan's not pulled up anymore, so, but I know you said that there you're planning, I think it was on a Wednesday afternoon, Columbus students going to Edison. I assume that's during the school day. And so, I was wondering, is that being treated kind of like a field trip where kids can opt in to go, or they—and they don't have to go, but they can go, and if they're not going to Edison next year, there'll be other opportunities for them. Is that kind of the idea of how it's being planned?

**Nan Bunnow (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level)** 35:39

Yes, thanks for asking that. We do have one of their one of their tasks is to plan an activity for Columbus students that are staying back, that aren't going to Edison next year, because that's important too that they have the opportunity to do something that they will be putting the details on that. But yes, it is just like a field trip so we would be seeking parent parental permission just like we do for when they go to the middle schools.

**James Bacon (Board Member)** 36:09

Okay. And just out of curiosity, are they walking do you anticipate? Or will they be bused over for the field trip?

**Nan Bunnaw (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level)** 36:15

I assume they'll be walking, but—

**James Bacon (Board Member)** 36:17

Okay.

**Nan Bunnaw (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level)** 36:17

—that will be up for the group too—

**James Bacon (Board Member)** 36:19

Sure.

**Nan Bunnaw (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level)** 36:19

—to discuss.

**James Bacon (Board Member)** 36:20

Cool. Just thought I'd—seemed like an opportunity for the walking school bus to see it in action, you know? But yeah.

**Nan Bunnaw (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level)** 36:27

And certainly, that's something that the walk that—one of the questions that we asked on the survey is, "If we put a walking school bus in from Columbus to Edison and Edison to Columbus at the end of the day, would they participate in that?" Because we're—so the follow up survey is going to give us additional information about what they're looking for.

**James Bacon (Board Member)** 36:46

That's great. Awesome. Well, thank you so much for the update. I appreciate it.