From "Rob Anderson <rob.anderson@bvsd.org>" <rob.anderson@bvsd.org>
Subject **Feedback**
To Alex Medler <alex.medler@bvsd.org>
Date April 10, 2026 1:46:50 PM MDT

Hey Alex,

Thanks for the feedback. We have made significant improvements and adjustments to the presentation. I think we are ready for next week!

Rob

On Wed, Apr 8, 2026 at 1:08 PM Alex Medler <alex.medler@bvsd.org> wrote:

> Nice job last night. On balance, I think the discussions went as hoped and people were super engaged in what we wanted them to discuss, and not what would have otherwise happened if we just asked for public input on a "district school closure plan". This is such a good idea, and I'm proud to be even indirectly associated with it. I also think the materials used at the table created by ERS were very helpful.
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> My suggestions for change are all in the spirit of how to get the most out of less-expert groups than our DAC, in the time available. I think we want folks to spend more time talking and less time receiving updates or being told what to do. Let table-top facilitators do more of the explanation of process, and condense the lecture on the issue a lot.
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> Maybe the whole thing does shorten to 90 minutes, but I do think 2 hours is actually o.k., and it is o.k. if people are tired when it is done. I especially would protect 2 hours if we make them feel heard somehow by summarizing what we heard or how input will be analyzed and considered. I know others think it should just be 90, but this is big stuff. Or we do the first one or two for 2 hours and decide whether to shorten for the last 4 meetings
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> A. My biggest concern, facilitation by ERS.
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> 1. The facilitation by ERS was sub-par. Table facilitation by the principals was great as I observed it. Maybe responsibilities can be shifted to the tables.
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> Specifics facilitation issues:
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> a. Letting people combine into too large of tables, undermines everyone's ability to truly engage as a single person. By combining every table we effectively cut every participant's speaking time in half. The facilitators didn't recognize how big a problem this was, or they were unwilling or unable to fix it. That gave me serious concerns right out the gate. The DAC is used to being in three large subgroups, so they handled the problem o.k. themselves.
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> b. Not being able to focus people when trying to reconvene the whole group. Wastes time, makes it seem chaotic, and the audience doesn't hear the next directions.
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> c. Ability to explain some of the concepts and options with concrete examples was limited. Lack of knowledge of our details made it harder to share a concrete example that may have worked for some of the audience. sd
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> d. Using too much of the time to repeat issues in process, directions, or details.
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> B. The second concern was the amount of content, repetitiveness, and time participants were being "told to" by district and ERS folks. Specific concerns or suggestions:
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> 1. Even though the audiences won't be as expert as DAC or LRAC, they are motivated to attend. If we have 50-60 folks at 6 meetings, that is 300 to 360 of our most motivated parents. That is probably the most informed or agitated 5 to 10% of parents. Given all the coverage, communication, I think we can assume a reasonable proportion of them have heard a version of our speal. Of course some have not, and will need information, and everybody could use a reminder of facts we want them to know. Still I'd cut it by 50-75%.
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> 2. Perhaps use the 2 minute video and see how many slides it addresses. I think you could replace at least 10 minutes of set up with the video.
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> 3. Less time on the timeline and process, but discuss in a concise way and still share the timeline.
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> 4. Do explain how this input is going to be gathered, analyzed, and reported. Tell them how they will be able to see the output that comes from this process.
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> 5. While one outcome is they know and understand more, they must also feel like a primary outcome is we know more about what they think, feel, want, and fear. I think folks left yesterday with inadequate closure, or less sense the district would benefit from what they had just done. In that sense make it both an educational experience, and a data-gathering exercise. I think reading people as they left, some felt too much like their education (and pacification) was the goal, and data-gathering was less important to the district. I would still achieve both, but participants should feel the intent and purpose is reversed: more data-gathering, by deepening knowledge and understanding. The last thing we want is for them to come away feeling like it is an exercise for its own sake or make-work.
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> C. A couple of the options are not clearly understood or defined, and even the principals didn't know what we meant by them.
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> a. Co-locating two schools in one building: is that two separate schools with their own admin and system like BCSIS and High Peaks; or is it two programs in the same institution (like Platt and Platt Choice)? Folks wasted a lot of time trying to define those two things and wondered what we meant by that option. If we mean both, then we should explain with the real-examples like those two iI mentioned above. Or add, Community Montessori co-

locating in Mesa's campus with an ongoing Mesa.

d. Consolidation and redistribution: In all these cases, it would help to say: "close one of the schools, and consolidate or redistribute the students", it seems like we are sugar coating that by not starting with, "close a school, and then..." it makes more sense. And just use the figures right away to explain these concisely and use examples of real schools to help focus people. By not using the close word, and staying so conceptual, we lose a lot of concrete thinkers. The ERS facilitators weren't great at this part either, but principals did better. The audience is sophisticated to see through the effort to not emphasize the closure and focus on the what we do after a closure. To the extent a 'school' lives in a new building, that is much less relevant if it is a neighborhood school before or after it "moves".

i. if you have schools A and B. Consolidation means you close A, and the students from both schools (and perhaps staff and program) are combined into school B. Real world example in my neighborhood: You close Mesa and its students are assigned to Bear Creek.

ii. Redistribution: you have schools A, B, C, and D. You close A, and their students (and perhaps staff and program) are redistributed to schools B,C, and D. YOu close Mesa, and students from catchment zone are too many to all fit in Bear Creek, and instead they are distributed among Bear Creek and Creekside or Community Montessori.

iii. Moving choice schools: Explain BCSIS and High Peaks were combined into one campus, and community montessori moved from other school sites it had shared, to its own campus when New Vista moved from the Paddock campus. Concrete example: community Motessori, could relocate east, where most of its current parents come from.

Yes, being concrete with names may risk participants getting defensive and undermining all the trade-off discussion, but 20% of the time in that stage of the discussion I observed was spent on clarifying questions about what the option really was, and folks never got to a single or clear answer. Perhaps just use schools, A,B,C and D. Or neighborhood School A, and Focus School B. Some Principals didn't know any better what we meant than the participants.

C. Reorient time for the different table assignments.

1. Spend less time on the Life-of a student or teacher. I think we should still do it, but figure out a way to make it shorter, and don't give options of which ones to pick, just have one student and one teacher.

2. For the prioritization let the facilitators know they are doing the set up, and still give it more time.

3. Give a lot more time to the last task of shared discussion of the trade-offs. Doing those alone, and then with turn-and-share made, it less engaged, although that did get everybody talking in the large tables.

4. Add a real report out/debrief and explain what we will do with input

D. A couple issues/facts to add (concisely). The scale of open enrollment and education/school options in the district

1. I do think there are a few considerations for which people could use a reminder. These two things came up in the table discussion. In particular, many people don't understand the scale of open-enrollment that is going on, nor the breadth and scope of our various alternative programs. I saw the conversations, as usual from parents in Boulder, from folks attending neighborhood schools, being dismissive of the parents who open-enroll, and discounting the attributes of schools that make them different, and how much people value that. Folks in neighborhood schools often wish the choices were gone and all families attended their neighborhood school.

2. Like myself, I saw the folks representing our special schools take (a slight) umbrage. While the tension between neighborhood and specialized schools is one of the big issues to address, I think these issues can quickly start reflecting ideology, and produce unnecessary divisiveness, if not set up correctly.

3. Since it is possible that our actions may impact neighborhood and specialized schools differently, to avoid the specialized schools getting defensive, I think it would help to quickly give a couple facts in the set up that make sure everybody in the room knows how many BVSD parents are choosing a school other than their neighborhood school, and the number and impact on families of our specialized schools, and that both these things are best considered a feature in BVSD, rather than a glitch.

Sorry for overly-detailed sharing here (definitely in the weeds). Nice work, great idea, well done and strong engagement. Some of the points above may be relatively easy to implement to get an even better outcome,

Alex

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