

To Corbett School Board:

I have now been a Corbett School Board member for eight years and this is my last meeting. It has been a good experience, but I must say that it was not always a good time. I have enjoyed working with all of you and wish the new Board the best of luck in selecting a superintendent, getting kids settled into the Woodard campus, and generally keeping the doors open and the kids well educated. One of my primary objectives as a Board member was to get our kids and staff out of the existing middle school building, and I am pleased to see that it will happen. It did not happen as quickly as I had hoped, but am satisfied that we are moving in that direction.

I would like to share my thoughts on the size of the District and the new high school building. Clearly there are differing opinions about how big the school district should be. Over my eight years on the Board the rationale for decreasing the size of the student population was inconsistent and somewhat nebulous. The various rationales included too much traffic, too many students to be competitive in sports, the subsidizing of out-of-district students, the inability to afford a new high school building, and others. The only one that ever really made sense to me is the rationale that the district patrons cannot afford to support a bond that is large enough to build a new high school for much more than the in-district students. I understand that. But I think there may be a solution that would keep rates down for Corbett tax payers and make Corbett School District better and stronger. It may not be simple.

I recommend that the Board investigate charging out-of-district parents a capital improvement fee that is commensurate with what the in-district rate payers would be paying for a quality new high school building. I think that if a tuition fee is charged it may eliminate the State funding that currently follows the out-of-district students (see policy JECB, condition #2). If this is the case, then any fee charged to out-of-district parents should not be for tuition; it should be dedicated to capital improvements.

A capital improvement fee charged to out-of-district parents would make them just as responsible for the support of the district as the in-district parents. It could potentially raise enough capital to provide the quality high school building that Corbett deserves. Corbett is already a small district and I am afraid that shrinking it will only reduce the educational opportunities available to Corbett students. I believe that the out-of-district students add to the quality of education for the in-district students, and it might be wise for us to welcome them into the district without the locals feeling as though they are subsidizing them. A slightly larger district would provide more opportunities for Corbett kids, including CTE.

In closing I would like to remind the Board that you will be faced with adult issues and student issues. It is important to listen to the adult issues and address them the best you can, but your primary objective is to do what is best for the education of the kids. You have been elected to do that. Thanks for listening.

David Gorman
Vice Chair, Corbett School Board