



Elementary Reassignment Committee **AGENDA and MINUTES**

Date: Monday, September 25, 2017; **6:15 PM**

Location: District Services Center, Community Room

Attendees: Kara DiLiberto, Bekke Kowalski, Sarah Litvinchuk, Diane Richino, Jon Sell, Becky Smith, Stephanie Zajkowski, Dr. Orathia Bradley, Eric Thompson, Nancianne Edwards

Guest participants: Dr. Lisa Hoffman, Assistant Superintendent OTL and Mr. Kelly Harper, Director of Facilities

Unable to Attend: Amy Harwick, Colleen Miller, Jon Sell (all at Back to School nights)

Committee Goal: Charge to the Elementary Reassignment Options Committee

The Committee is charged with (1) generating options for the reassignment of elementary students in the event Tohickon Valley Elementary School is closed; (2) evaluating those options based on: impact on academic program, impact on students and families, cost effectiveness, efficiency, impact on facilities, requirement for construction, renovations, or modular classrooms, impact on transportation, impact on personnel savings, and other criteria as the committee deems appropriate; and (3) to report its findings, decision matrix and recommendations to the Board no later than October 31, 2017.

Committee Norms:

Start on time, end on time

Respectful discussion

Share

Public Comment time at end of each meeting

Meeting Objectives:

- Review K-5 classroom availability information and updated enrollment information
- Develop more detailed understanding of the academic program options for each grade configuration
- Develop more detailed understanding of the facilities impact for each grade configuration
- Continue the scoring process

Schedule [105 mins]

Time	Mins.	Activity
6:15 - 6:20 pm	5	Welcome
6:20 - 6:40 pm	20	Review of K-5 classroom availability and updated enrollment information - Nancianne New documents were reviewed. Also review the capacity of the core facilities to make sure it is feasible to add students

		to a school even where there is classroom space theoretically available.
6:40 - 7:40 pm	60	<p>Academic Program Options - Dr. Lisa Hoffman, Assistant Superintendent OTL</p> <p>Facilities Options - Kelly Harper, Director of Facilities</p> <p>Dr. Hoffman discussed the academic program impacts of different options. There is not a single “recommendation” per se from the research. There are pros and cons of all configurations. Most of the research on 6th grade configurations deal with combining 6th graders with 7th and 8th graders as opposed to with K-5 students. Since a 6-7-8 configuration is not being examined by the committee, much of the research doesn’t apply. Many elementary programs are developed for K-6. For example, the proposed new RELA curriculum is considered much stronger for 6th grade than even the current curriculum, so where 6th grade is housed doesn’t impact the strength of the program from a curricular standpoint.</p> <p>Scheduling is another thing to think about. It wouldn’t be appropriate to have 5th grade on a middle school schedule with only a 45 minutes literacy block, so the schedule for 5th would have to allow for a longer literacy block. Another option to consider is a rotation model for 5th and 6th grade regardless of their location (or for 4th, 5th and 6th if configured that way) where students get the advantage of subject specialization without a full middle school schedule.</p> <p>Another issue, impacting facilities, is the lack of playground facilities at the SGC building. If 5th graders still have recess, should the 6th graders also? In terms of electives, the 6th grade electives are not really “elective” and are similar to 5th grade electives - art, music, spanish, library, PE, digital literacy - so there wouldn’t be a significant difference in elective offerings if 5-6 were together or separate.</p> <p>In terms of certification, almost all teachers teaching 6th grade have elementary certification, and do not have academic preparation in a specialized subject (though many have earned a middle level content certificate via praxis testing.) Teachers can be assigned to one or two specialized subjects to reduce the number of classes they have to prepare for, but it doesn’t impact their skills or abilities to teach all the subject areas in 6th grade.</p> <p>What impact did the change in certification to K-4 or 4-8 have on preparation? This is a confusing area and it’s not clear what the additional preparation provides. The new certificates will not impact us for a number of years yet because there are still many teachers with the prior certificates K-6 or K-8 or middle level content areas.</p> <p>A bigger issue than the configuration is the number of transitions. Our current configuration requires transition at 6th, 7th, and 9th. None of the options require more than three transitions, so there isn’t any increase in the number of transitions in any case.</p> <p>There are pros and cons to each. The biggest issue to address if there is a 5th-6th configuration is whether two schedules could operate within the same building successfully to meet the needs of the 5th graders. K-6 could also work and provide the same program for 6th graders no matter where the 6th graders are housed. Math and ELA get more time in the elementary schools than in 6th grade.</p>

The main options right now are staying K-5, going to K-6, or K-4 with a 5-6 building. Is there one of these that is optimal from a program standpoint? Honestly, the curriculum can be adjusted no matter what the configuration is or where a particular grade level is housed. Dr. Hoffman is not concerned with any of the options in terms of academic program. They can offer the appropriate program in any of the options. Bringing the whole grade level together prior to 9th grade has been very beneficial. Being able to implement some kind of rotational schedule as early as 4th grade would be beneficial to all students. Also, the more grade levels that are together, the easier it is to meet the needs of students who need more support and students who need more accelerated options because there is a wider variety of curricular options available within the building.

Are there facilities implications in the different options in terms of science lab spaces or music spaces, if 6th graders are in the elementary schools? According to Mr. Leshner, the 6th grade science kits that are part of the just-adopted science program that addresses Next Gen science standards are actually more rigorous than the current 6th grade science curriculum. The lab requirements in 6th grade do not require a highly specialized lab space, and could be addressed with some equipment.

Athletics and activities are another area to consider. Sixth graders can't participate in PIAA athletics, and are already participating with 7th and 8th graders in clubs and activities and are traveling to Strayer after school. If 6th graders were in elementary school, more clubs and activities would have to be added. Music might be challenging to staff the general music and the instrumental/choral pieces to provide the same experience as they have in the current 6th grade center. All staffing projections assume that some FTEs from TV would be needed at other buildings that would have more students, while others could be eliminated. Overall, the more students at the same grade level that are in a building, the more efficient the staffing will be.

Facilities Options - Kelly Harper, Director of Facilities

Modulars and their costs are on the decision matrix worksheet. There are recurring lease costs and one-time setup and break-down costs, and there is a break even point to be considered as to whether it is most cost effective to lease or buy the modulars.

The numbers provided assume leasing 10 modular classrooms. **How do the costs change if it is fewer (say 4 or 6 classrooms)?** The costs also include fencing and security to make the modular area included in the building footprint. All these lease costs are scalable based on the number of modulars - the \$165,000 setup cost is still scalable but probably not as cleanly as the lease number for the number of classrooms if there is more than one site.

Parking considerations - the Board did approve going out to bid to repave that parking lot at the 6th grade center. **How much additional parking would be needed to accommodate two grade levels? If we add 400 students and 18 staff members to that building, would we have enough spots?** Kelly will confirm the number of spaces required to meet code.

		<p>Considering utilizing the Sixth Grade Center as an elementary school? There are no code requirements to have a restroom in a classroom. Essentially, the cost is about \$50k per classroom restroom, so if there were four kindergarten classrooms, it would be \$200k. Another option would be to convert one of the gang lavatories to scale down the fixtures to be appropriate for primary age students and cluster the primary classes in that area of the building.</p> <p>What else would be required to address if the 6th grade center was used as an elementary building? It would require different size furniture, but not changes to the structure of the building itself. Some pieces of equipment might need to be adjusted or lowered. There shouldn't be anything else that isn't pretty standard.</p> <p>Questions about modulares and bathrooms: how will students get to use the bathroom if their class is in the modulares? What safety concerns would occur from students crossing the blacktop to get into the building for bathrooms? The modulares would be fenced in to be contiguous with the building footprint. Dr. Harner shared his experiences with a significant number of modulares in a previous school district. There are many ways to make the modulares safe. It's not included in the cost estimates but modulares with bathrooms could be added. At Pfaff, the area would need to provide emergency access for fire and emergency vehicles. The site outside the cafeteria would be able to have modulares but not as many as option A1 would require.</p> <p>Minimum setback for modulares is 20 feet from the building. Trum would be difficult to fit. Richland and Neidig are the tightest areas and are experiencing the most growth. When can we afford to renovate and add to Neidig? The scenarios considered by the committee need to be sufficient for the next 3-5 years absent growth.</p> <p>Kelly cannot think of any facilities considerations we have not included in our discussion.</p>
7:40 - 8:00 pm	20	<p>Continue scoring of options</p> <p>General discussion about the pros and cons of the options still under consideration ensued, as well as the impact of the different options on the implementation of the Facilities Plan and future renovation and addition to Neidig Elementary.</p>
8:00 - 8:15 pm	15	<p>Public Comment</p> <p>Chris Spear - asked about whether the Borough would require permits to have modulares and whether it would affect any grandfathering agreements regarding parking. Kelly did not think that would be a problem because there is excess parking there already. Do modulares have sprinklers? Kelly thought that was not a requirement and that the requirement was for two egress points. Are the basketball court areas a good location for modulares at Pfaff? Theoretically yes, but space used by students and the slope of the ground there would be problematic. Kelly looked at a variety of options for the best placement of modulares on the Pfaff site.</p>
8:15 pm		<p>Adjourn</p> <p>Next Meeting: Monday, October 2, 2017 from 6:00 to 8:00PM at DSC. This was an alternate date in the original schedule</p>