

To: Oneida School Community Advisory Committee

From: Steve Bociolatt

Re: Meeting Notes – Meeting of July 24, 2023

Date: August 22, 2023

**In Attendance:**

Committee Members: Jen Armlin, Matt Archer, Erin Belanger, Alana Boylan, Alex Cafalone, Holly Cafalone, Penny Houser, Jessica Jones, Megan Kelly, Drew Laube, Nikki LaVeck, Kate Plunkett, Megan Rose, Megan Rice, Jim Rowley, Matt Shene, Stacey Tice, Kathy Zangrilli

Consultant: Stephen Bociolatt

Resource: Matthew Carpenter, Tanya Destito

Location: Costello Training Center

1. Mr. Bociolatt began the meeting with a review of the agenda for the meeting.
2. Minutes from 6/05/2023 Meeting were distributed to committee members prior to the meeting.
3. Follow-Up Discussion: K-1, 2-3, 4-5 Grade Configuration
  - Identified common themes from the list of advantages and disadvantages developed by two committee subgroups at the 4/27/2023 advisory committee meeting. Common themes discussed included the following:
    - Advantages
      - Equity in resources
      - Single sense of community
      - Consistency with special education services
      - Scheduling (staff and students)
      - Flexibility (staff and students)
      - Horizontal collaboration
      - Elimination of social stigmas
      - Diversity
    - Disadvantages
      - Transportation
      - Multiple transitions
      - Reduction in vertical collaboration
      - Students in multiple buildings may be challenging for families
      - Transportation for parents/students outside of each neighborhood

4. Mr. Bocciolatt gave a PowerPoint presentation reviewing the following items:

- Grade Configuration Options for the Elementary Buildings
  - Feasible - Is it possible?
  - Desirable - Is it a good idea?
- Four Elementary School Buildings
  - Option 1: Status Quo; Remain as four K-5 buildings
  - Option 2: Grade Center Plan (K-2, 3-5)
    - Transition to a Grade Center Plan
      - (2) buildings: grades K-2
      - (2) buildings: grades 3-5
- Three Elementary School Buildings
  - Option 3 - Close an Elementary School - (3) K-5 Neighborhood Schools
  - Option 4 - Close an Elementary School - (3) K-1; 2-3; 4-5 Grade Center Schools
    - Transition to a Grade Center Plan
      - (1) School - Grades K-1
      - (1) School - Grades 2-3
      - (1) School - Grades 4-5

- Other Possible Options, if any – To Be Determined

- Communicate the “Why” in a change in grade configuration

- Enrollment decline
  - K-12 enrollment has declined over the past 11 years.
    - In 2012-13: 2,211 students
    - In 2017-18: 1,948 students
    - In 2022-23: 1,689 students (23.6% decrease from 2012-13)
- Enrollment decline is expected to continue
  - Projected for 2024-25: 1584 students
  - Projected for 2027-28: 1445 students (14.4% decrease from 2022-23)

This future decline will impact all three grade ranges – elementary, middle school and high school.

- Live births in the Oneida City School District declined from 186 births in 2005 to 124 births in 2020. The average number of births over the past 5 years is 148.
- Reviewed age of the buildings
- Condition of Facilities
  - A Building Condition Survey (BCS) is required by the State Education Department for every school district in NYS. The survey must be conducted by an architect every five years.

- For Oneida, the last BCS was completed in 2020. The next BCS for the district must be conducted in 2025.
  - The purpose of the BCS is to maintain buildings in an acceptable condition. Health and safety items are prioritized as decisions are made for work to be done in each building.
- Educational Space Utilization/Program Delivery
  - Each elementary building classroom usage was reviewed in relation to the following spaces:
    - General Classrooms – # and size of classrooms for core subjects (English, Math, SS, Sci.)
    - Special Services – # and size of special education classrooms; related services
    - Building Specific Areas – office space, faculty room, conference room
    - Program Specific Areas – special subject areas (art, music, library, PE.)
    - Land/Site – recess/playground space; room for growth
    - Miscellaneous Areas – storage, custodial areas
  - Reviewed committee’s feedback from previous meetings of the building tours of each elementary building.
  - Reviewed building classroom usage charts of each elementary building for each grade configuration option. Draft building maps of each grade configuration option will be reviewed at the next committee meeting. These draft building maps will show how the space could be utilized. These maps, along with projected student enrollment and other data shared at previous meetings will help continue to guide the committee’s discussion about each grade configuration option.
- Financial
  - A summary of **2024-2025 estimated savings** was given for each grade option. These cost savings used an **average** salary for the various staff categories. Use of average salaries, may make the estimated savings higher than the actual savings depending on the circumstances of a particular staff position (retirement vs. reduction of a staff position with a lower salary position). A review of estimated savings by options is as follows:
 

▪ Status Quo (Four K-5 elementary schools):	Estimated savings: \$229,947
▪ Grade Center Plan (Four elementary schools):	Estimated savings: \$229,947
○ (2) Schools: Grades K-2	
○ (2) Schools: Grades 3-5	
▪ Close an Elementary School (Three K-5 elementary schools)	Estimated savings: \$963,792**
OR	
▪ Close an Elementary School (Three grade center schools - K-1, 2-3, 4-5):	Estimated savings: \$963,792**
  - \*\* **Note: It has not been determined if there is enough space to close an elementary building to realize the estimated savings.** Also, as noted above, these savings are calculated on the use of average salaries. Actual cost savings will be dependent on the type of position reduction (retirement, resignation, layoff). Any staff changes will be done whenever possible through staff attrition.
  - Utility cost savings were reviewed for each school if an elementary school was closed.

- Other Considerations – District Office Building
  - If an elementary school is closed, should the district .....
    - Option 1: Keep the building for district use (i.e. Full-day Pre-K program; district offices, other)
      - Move full-day Pre- K program
      - Move district offices
        - Sell or lease district office building
    - Option 2: Lease the elementary building to another organization
    - Option 3: Sell the elementary building
  - Costello Transportation Building -upstairs area leased by BOCES

**Note:** If the district keeps an elementary building for the district office and Pre-K instead of leasing or selling the building, this option **decreases the estimated staff savings previous** shown. A reduction in savings would depend on the program delivery of the Pre-K program (staff coverage, specials, custodial staff, teacher aides, food service).

- Draft building maps of each of the elementary buildings were reviewed showing how the space in each of the four elementary buildings could be utilized for the Pre-K program and district offices.

## 5. Questions/Comments

## 6. Upcoming School Community Advisory Committee meeting

- Thursday, September 28, 2023 at Otto Shortell Middle School in the gymnasium
- Thursday, October 26, 2023 at Oneida High School: Location to be determined

Note (1): An optional tour will precede each meeting and will begin at 5:45 pm. The meetings will begin at 6:30 pm and last no longer than two hours.

C: Matt Carpenter