To: Oneida School Community Advisory Committee

From: Steve Bocciolatt

Re: Meeting Notes – Meeting of March 21, 2023

Date: April 21, 2023

#### In Attendance:

<u>Committee Members</u>: Jennifer Armlin, Matt Archer, Erin Belanger, Alana Boylan, Alex Cafalone, Hannah Cleveland, Ian Farwell, Michele Farwell, Pete Gillander, Gretchen Ironside, Jennifer Jones, Meg Kelly, Nicole LaVeck, Adam Litwak, Kate Plunkett, Gary Reisman, Megan Rose, Megan Rice, Jim Rowley, Bernie Sharlette, Matt Shene, Cindy Smith, Stacey Tice, Kathy Zangrilli

Consultant: Stephen Bocciolatt

Resource: Matthew Carpenter

Location: Willard Prior Elementary School

Note: A building tour was conducted prior to the committee meeting by Alana Boylan, Principal of Willard Prior Elementary School.

- 1. Mr. Bocciolatt began the meeting with a review of the agenda for the meeting
  - o Introduce New Committee Member(s)
  - o Questions/Comments from Building Tour
  - o Review Minutes from 2/16/2023 Meeting
  - o Review/Update District Facilities Information
  - o Elementary Program
    - 1. Elementary Class Size
    - 2. Elementary Special Schedules
    - 3. ELA & Math Scores
  - o Public Questions/Comments
  - Next Meeting Dates/Locations/Topics

#### 2. New committee members

- o Jessica Jones, special education teacher at Willard Prior Elementary School
- o Gretchen Ironside parent from Seneca Street Elementary School

- 3. Questions/Comments from the building tour
  - Tour Feedback
    - Separate gym space
    - One story
    - Land to expand
    - o Bathrooms in the classrooms
    - Very few shared spaces
    - o St. Patrick's services are provided by WP staff
    - UCP space rental
- 4. Minutes from 2/16/2023 meeting were not reviewed for any possible changes.
- 5. Mr. Bocciolatt gave a PowerPoint presentation reviewing the following items:
  - Reviewed takeaways from committee meeting #1 and meeting #2.
    - Meeting #1: The district has seen declining enrollment and will likely continue to see enrollments drop. The study process will be open to ensure there is not a perception it is being conducted behind closed doors. The advisory committee was formed to assist the consultant throughout the process, but the final recommendation(s) will be the consultant's.
    - Meeting #2:
      - 1. Building tour of Durhamville
      - 2. The 2020 Building Condition Survey (BCS) costs for all buildings in the district identified approximately \$15,800,000 of work to be completed in the district's facilities. This dollar amount does not take into account the work being done in the current capital project.
      - 3. Two common approaches to organizing elementary attendance zones
        - a) Neighborhood concept
        - b) Grade Center Concept (Princeton Plan)
  - Overview of the current Pre-K-5 school/grade organization
    - Review of:
      - Class size policy
      - Class size language in teacher contract
      - Review of class sizes: From the 2017-18 school year to the 2022-23 school year, the number of classroom sections were reduced from 48 sections to 40 sections with the average class size remaining at approximately 18 students per class.
        - 2017-2018 48 Sections
          - If all sections were combined, the average class size would be approximately 18 students per class
        - 2022-2023 40 Sections
          - If all sections were combined, the average class size would be approximately 18 students per class

- Special area schedule: Art, Music, Library, PE
  - Special subject area minutes are comparable between all elementary buildings
  - Special subject area teachers are shared between WP/DV and NB/SS
  - Discussion was held on special area blocks of time and prep time for special area classes
- New York State testing review ELA and Math
  - 2014-2017
  - 2018-2022
- Breakout Conversations: Four Groups
  - Advantages/disadvantages of current Pre-K -5 neighborhood school model
  - Groups shared out brainstorming conversations (See Appendix A)
- Following the break-out sessions, the presentation continued with an overview of grade organization
  - o Considerations/Information
    - Changes in space is a consideration when considering reorganizing
    - Most common structure in NYS is K-5, 5-8, 9-12
    - Most common structure in suburban schools is K-4, 5-8, 9-12
    - A consistent theme among researchers seems to be that there is no one best way to arrange grades.
    - General conclusion is that "what" a district does with grade configuration is more important, not "which" grade configuration it uses.
    - Common issues with grade reconfiguration include the cost and length of bus ride, parent involvement, grouping of students, etc.
- Class size in a grade center option was reviewed based on current student enrollment.
- Initial takeaways from meeting #3 as presented by Mr. Bocciolatt
  - Neighborhood concept has been embraced by Oneida
  - Current class sizes are below policy, general procedures, and teacher contract
  - Elementary special area program is comparable between schools
- General Questions/Comments:
  - Is the data that is shared at facility study meetings reviewed/discussed as an administrative team?
  - Discussion was held of how a Pre-K full day program evolved for the next school year. The district recently became aware of an increase in funding in the Pre-K grant program as part of the 2023-2024 New York State Budget. The district plans to move from a half-day program to a full-day program. The additional classrooms will be made available at Willard Prior Elementary School.

- With respect to the current grade configuration study, there is not yet a recommendation
  as to what the final plan could look like, only an eye on what is right for kids, fiscally and
  academically.
- What is the timeline when a recommendation will be made to the district? The target date
  for a recommendation(s) to be made to the Board of Education is December 2023 with an
  implementation date for any grade organization changes to be made by September 2024.
- Who makes the final decision? A recommendation(s) will be presented by the consultant to the OCSD Board of Education for their consideration. Ultimately, a decision will be made by the Board of Education.
- Can we invite other schools/districts to future meetings to share insight on their process to a grade level configuration? The consultant will look into the possibility of having someone from another school district attend a future advisory committee meeting.
- 6. Upcoming School Community Advisory Committee meetings
  - o Thursday, April 27, 2023 at Seneca Street Elementary School in the gymnasium
  - o Thursday, May 25, 2023 at North Broad Elementary School in the gymnasium.

Note: Optional tours will precede each meeting and will begin at 5:45 pm. Meetings will begin at 6:30 pm and last no longer than two hours.

C: Matt Carpenter

# Appendix A

### **Break-out Sessions on Current Grade Configurations**

# Group 1: Option 1

Advantages	Disadvantages
(Academic)	(Academic)
-consistency-comfortable with all staff -vertical collaboration -younger/older modeling -sense of community with peers they live near	-Collaborating amongst grade level colleagues -Inequities in terms of shared staffing -Horizontal curriculum alignment -Lack of diverse opportunities/mix of students
Advantages	Disadvantages
(Logistics)	(Logistics)
-Less transition	-Bussing
-Bussing?	-Shared staffing
-attending same school assemblies	-inequity in class sizes
-Students able to walk to school	-Are neighborhood schools made up entirely of
-Attendance	students in that area
-Carpool opportunities	-differences in schedules
-Variety size for larger variety of needs	

# Group 2: Option 1

Advantages	Disadvantages
- Education	-Education
-Get to know whole families -consistency for families, students, teachers -support service providers are consistent -admin/counselors support staff can build relationships -it's familiar – no "valley of tears"	-Single graded teachers have limited support/resources -Students tracked with same cohorts -less diversity: economic; special need based -fewer opportunities for Sp.Ed. to push in -fewer options for students to have other classrooms from year to year
Advantages	Disadvantages
<u>Logistics</u>	<u>Logistics</u>
-Transportation -Attendance -easier on families with multiple kids -kids can still get to school if miss the bus -consistency of school events – easier for families	-over-flow when students move from one school to another -sharing staff who need to travel (OT/PT/Speech) -scheduling duties (i.e. lunch, recess, bus, etc.) is difficult

### Group 3: Option 1

#### Advantages Disadvantages -relationships over time – students, families, -different messages -zoning -younger kids have older role models -stigmas -single graded building -public relations are easier -lack opportunities for collaboration -busing -socioeconomic grouping -culture/tradition/sense of pride -condition of facilities -multi-generational -space -no unified idea of Oneida kids - not unified -different programming -creates havoc -busing -shared staff -no home buildings -spec. ed. classrooms/programs

### Group 4: Option 1

Advantages	Disadvantages
-Family connection -Watch the kids grow -Transportation (parent) -Vertical Alignment -Mentoring (Student role models)	-Consistency across grade level -Ability for service providers to specialize -Scheduling -Resources – per class, per grade level -Bus Transportation -Lack of Opportunity to break up/class lists/departmentalize