

To: Oneida School Community Advisory Committee

From: Steve Bocciolatt

Re: Meeting Notes – Meeting of November 13, 2023

Date: January 26, 2024

In Attendance:

Committee Members: Jen Armlin, Matt Archer, Alana Boylan, Alex Cafalone, Holly Cafalone, Hannah Ezman, Pete Gillander, Gretchen Ironside, Jessica Jones, Megan Kelly, Nikki LaVeck, Kate Plunkett, Megan Rice, Megan Rose, Matt Shene, Cindy Smith, Stacey Tice, Kathy Zangrilli

Observers: Lori Collea, Peter Gleason, Shane Todd

Consultant: Stephen Bocciolatt

Resource: Matthew Carpenter

Location: Costello Transportation Center

1. Mr. Bocciolatt began the meeting with a review of the agenda for the meeting.
2. Mr. Bocciolatt highlighted major points of the 10/4 meeting minutes. The committee continued their whole group discussion on many of the topics outlined in the minutes.
3. Mr. Bocciolatt updated the committee on separate meetings held with administrators, staff and parents. The committee received two handouts that listed questions asked by parents and community members at meetings held on 11/6/2023 at Durhamville Elementary School and 11/8/2023 at North Broad Elementary School. The questions from these meetings are attached at the end of these minutes. A considerable amount of time was spent discussing the major points from these meetings. Overall, the meetings were well received. Many committee members attended the parent/community meetings and were helpful throughout the meetings as they gave their perspective on the study process and various grade configuration options.
4. Mr. Bocciolatt referred to his PowerPoint presentation throughout the meeting. In addition to the discussion of the 10/4 committee meeting minutes and the debrief from the various staff and parent meetings, continued discussion was held on the various grade configuration options with most of the discussion centered on the following two grade configuration options if an elementary school is closed:
 - Option 3: three K-5 schools;
 - Option 4: three grade center schools: PreK-1; 2-3; 4-5)

5. Key questions and additional questions and areas to consider were discussed and are listed below.
 - Key Questions
 - Three or Four Elementary Buildings? Which Configuration?
 - Neighborhood Schools
 - Grade Center Schools
 - If three elementary buildings, which building to close?
 - Target date(s) for implementation of any change in grade configuration
 - Location and delivery of programs (Pre-K, Special Education Services, Support Services, Band, Chorus, Other)
 - Additional questions and areas to consider were reviewed and discussed.
 - Will there be enough classroom space in three buildings to house elementary students?
 - Program delivery and location
 - Full day Pre-K Program
 - Special Education Services (In District, BOCES)
 - Special Education Support Services (OT, PT, Speech, Counseling)
 - Other Support Services (AIS Reading and Math)
 - Special Subject Areas (Art, Music, Library and Physical Education)
 - 4th and 5th Grade Band/Band Lessons
 - 4th and 5th Grade Chorus
 - Other Special Areas (Cafeteria/Kitchen; Gym, Indoor recess)
 - Staff Room
 - What will be the impact on transportation with any change in grade configuration?
 - Additional comments/questions from the meeting included:
 - Single graded buildings difficult for staff and students.
 - Whatever the recommendation/decision, support is needed.
 - If a different grade configuration, will a change in starting time be needed?
 - September 2024 could be a challenge.
 - General education and 15-1 classes. Reservation about moving back into a general education classroom.
 - Need to change any special education placements soon as some CSE meetings are currently being held.
 - Many comments were re-emphasized as outlined in 9/19 and 10/4 meeting including the list of advantages and disadvantages of Option 3 and Option 4 as outlined by the committee.
6. Next Steps/Moving Forward: An update will be given to the Board of Education on Tuesday, November 14th with a recommendation to be given at the December 12th Board of Education meeting.
 - Timeline for Recommendation(s) – Answer Key Questions
 - Communication
7. This was the final committee meeting prior to a recommendation being made to the Board of Education on 12/12/2023. Mr. Bocciaolatt thanked the committee for their time commitment and input throughout the study process.

Attachments Below: List of questions from parent/community meetings held on 11/6 at Durhamville Elementary School and held on 11/8 at North Broad Elementary School.

C: Matt Carpenter

Parent Meeting

11/6/2023

Questions:

- How do the proposed student section/class numbers compare to neighboring schools?
 - Is there data that supports one structure (K-5/grade center) over the other?
 - What are the operating costs, insurance, etc. that would be saved? Is that included in the savings projection?
 - Did we consider transportation? Would there be three different buses? Start times?
 - Logistically it will be very challenging to have kids in three buildings. Are other parents concerned about this?
 - How many other districts use grade centers in our area?
 - Where will Pre-K go? Is it another transition?
 - What about splitting your kids up? I want them to go to school together and see each other.
 - Sibling and community connection is very important at Durhamville. They look out and check up on each other. They care about each other. We would lose that if we went to grade centers.
 - On the flip side, they will all be together for the entire K-12 experience.
 - I have seen the negative effects of community schools. We are separate communities within one district. "I don't want my kids with *those* kids."
 - We should try to bring the kids together without closing the school.
 - I do like the idea of grade center for SPED purposes.
 - We need to bring everyone together - programs, district wide events, etc.
 - This needs to start happening.
 - Kids are wondering and asking. I hope this is announced in a timely fashion. This will help the kids adjust.
 - Is there a way to use everything you have and give the community two options?
 - Every kid is different, but this is a lot of transitions.
 - The PTO is going to suffer. Maybe we should do a single PTO.
 - Not every school has the same experiences. I.e: One 5th grade went to the dump and another grade 5 class went to Boston.
 - Cohesive identity will be good for us!
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Questions from 11/8

- Can we adjust zoning lines for other districts?
 - Are the advantages/disadvantages lists weighted?
 - What is the purpose for closing (financial, spacing)?
 - Is there room for all of the kids to fit into three buildings?
 - Which building could possibly be closed?
 - Why is it seen negatively that a building has three stories?
 - How would redistricting work?
 - Are numbers skewed in the single graded building?
 - Do we know which zone students who are not attending their home buildings live in?
 - How will this impact busing?
 - How many walkers are in each building that will now have to take a bus?
 - Where will classes go if a building closes?
 - What happens if numbers rise?
 - Why is there is a sense of urgency, as the numbers seem to be drop gently?
 - How many kids from each area will be moved out of zone?
 - Is there a specific reason that in the grade-center model, certain buildings have already been identified?
 - Was there feedback/recommendation from the facilities director?
 - We need to do better as being "Oneida," and see all of our kids as one.
 - We need to provide our kids with equity in programing.
 - We need to be a community when it comes to this decision.
 - Could there be a full elementary-wide PTO?
 - No matter where the kids are, all staff will take care of them.
 - How will this impact busing?
 - Is there a transportation plan in progress?
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