

ELEMENTARY CONFIGURATION / 6TH GRADE POSITIONING STRATEGIC PLANNING SUB COMMITTEES

Date: November 29, 2022

Location: R.C. Murphy Junior High School
351 Oxhead Road, Stony Brook, NY 11790

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Facilitators: Deanna Bavlnka, Brian Biscari, Gary Dabrusky, Jeff Kerman

Attendees: Christina Anselmo, Gretchen Argyros, Michele Biggart, Michele Byrne, Vince Cereola, Melissa Drewisis, Adam Dumelle, Jessie French Danzi, Greg DeSanctis, Marybeth Esposito, Ian Farber, Alicia Ferrer, Benjamin Gabriele, Laurie Groth, Marcie Groth, Michelle Hanczor, Brian Harvey, Amanda Harvey, Tanya Hurowitz, Dana Iaquina, Corinne Keane, Kyra Kenwood, Sarah Kiersh, Allyson Konczynin, Barbara Konczynin, Shannon Kulick, Michelle Lambert, Christine Latham, Kim Lawrence, Michele Lawrence, Jenna Lisa, Dawn Mason, Terri McCrave, Alyson McGrath, David McKinnon, Jessica Metrio, Paul Mueller, Stefanie Murray, Ashley Ockner, Melissa Panasci, Nancy Pickford, Barbara Rosati, Kevin Scanlon, Michelle Schultz, Sarah Shakesby, Jamie Sowden, Jackie Sullivan, Brad Terris, Gina Traube, Pam Travis, Adrianus Van der Velden, Dawn Vanterpool, Laura Williams, Megan Zamujeiro, Emily Zigon

AGENDA

- 6th Grade Positioning
 - Co-curricular Opportunities
 - More co-curricular options will be available in the middle school model.
 - Academic Offerings
 - Lessons will be before school.
 - Math, science, language, music, art, health, PE, FACS, Tech, and Electives will be offered in Middle School.
 - Electives
 - Science Research, Creative Studio, Farm to School, Writing Center, Math Learning Center available.
 - House Plan
 - Any transition can be difficult, if these changes occur, we would have two grade levels transitioning at the same time.
 - Students will be grouped together for the core academic subjects. Science, math, social studies, ELA. A lot of support. Less chance of students falling through the cracks.

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- We would need two house plans. 16 teachers. This would be a great idea no matter what occurs.
- Teaming of the teachers.
- Special needs classes and Honors within each house plan.

- Lunch
 - Scheduled by grade.
 - Weather permitting, they can go outside for recess.

- Services Built In
 - Resource Room, speech, reading lab and math labs are built in the schedule. There are no pull-outs. Part of the schedule the whole year. Not losing instructional time.
 - NYSED did a study to increase the number of days of school. Students performed better. Increasing instructional time will improve student performance.

- Honors
 - Criteria includes teacher observation report, based on data, instructional reading level, AIMS, & I-ready assessment.

- Guidance in Elementary Level Now
 - Elementary Guidance once a week for 6th grade. There is no counseling (Not ideal). At middle school level counselors will provide many services: counseling, consultation, information services, records, scheduling, referral, team participation. Formulate graduation plan.

- Elementary Configuration
 - Standards
 - New York State Standards have changed. Subject areas are becoming difficult to keep up with.
 - Capacity and Utilization - We are using more building space. We need specialized programs OT/PT & AIS space for the teachers to teach.

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- Positives / Negatives

Present Configuration-Pre K to 6

Positives

- Familiar
- Keeps neighborhood schools
- Students in the same school for 7 or 8 years.
- Convenience for parents in drop off and pick up
- Unique (75% of schools in NYS are 6-8 Middle Schools)

Negatives

- Does not match NYSED Standards
- Students in the same school for 7 or 8 years
- Students must leave their home school for some specialized programs
 - ENL, IG, some special needs programs, higher math
- 6th Grade not receiving benefit of middle school course offerings as their counterparts in other districts do
- Budget
- Enrollment decline will lead to:
 - Less sections per grade level
 - Limits parent and student choice



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Place Pre-K in One School (please note that Pre-K is not required under NYSED regulations)

Positives

- Centralize program
- Increases enrollment at one school
- Utilizes more of one school
- Frees two rooms at the other four schools
- May allow the program to expand
 - Budget implications
 - Staffing
 - Minimum of 5 more teachers needed.
 - \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 more in salary & benefits
- Could consider making the program full day
 - Budget implications

Negatives

- Consumes space in one school
 - What if that school's enrollment increases?
- Costs
 - Full time v. Part time
 - Enrichment
- NYSED mandate discussion & issues
 - Full day for 4 year olds by 2030
 - Full day for 3 year olds by 2035
 - Special Education services are provided by the county for Pre-K

Move 6th grade, but maintain five elementary schools- Pre-K-5

Positives

- Follows a middle school model
- Provides more course opportunities
- Ends loss of instruction for pull-outs for 6th grade (except lessons)
- Maintains neighborhood schools
- Students in the same school for 6 or 7 years
- Matches NYSED Standards

Negatives

- Elementary schools are smaller
- Students in the same school for 6 or 7 years
- Students must leave their home school for some specialized programs
 - ENL, IG, some special needs programs, higher math
 - No transportation savings
- 6th Grade not receiving benefit of middle school course offerings as their counterparts in other districts do
- Budget
- Enrollment decline will lead to:
 - Less sections per grade level
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6th Grade Schedule Comparison-Elementary v. Middle School

- **Elementary**
 - Trimesters
 - Math-45 minutes
 - Literacy-45 minutes
 - Science or Social Studies-45 minutes, rotated
 - Reading and/or Writing-90 minutes
 - Lunch-45 minutes with recess
 - Specials
 - Art-1X/week
 - Guidance 1X/week
 - Health-1X/week
 - Music-1X/week
 - Physical Education-2X/week-to meet requirements
 - Pull outs from classes
 - Math AIS, Reading, OT, PT, Resource Room, Speech
- **Secondary-9 period day**
 - Quarters & Semesters
 - English (ELA)
 - Math
 - Science-with lab every other day
 - Social Studies
 - World Language
 - Physical Education-every other day, opposite Science lab
 - Lunch
 - 3 periods for:
 - Math AIS-every other day, Reading-every other day, OT, PT, Resource Room, Speech-No pull outs
 - Specials
 - Art, Music, Health-1/2 year-1st or 2nd semester
 - Electives
 - Business, FACS, Tech, 1/2 Year-1st or 2nd semester

Middle School-Junior High School

One middle school-Gr. 6 & 7, One junior high school-Grades 8 & 9

Positives

- Allows transitions in stages to secondary schools
- Balances sizes
- Ends comparisons of Gelinas and Murphy

Negatives

- Too many transitions
- Staffing
- Limits offerings
- Transportation costs
- Potentially increases the number of schools for drop-off and pick-up

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Create a 6th Grade Center

Positives

- Allows for 6th grade to stand alone
- Transitions for secondary

Negatives

- Limits course offerings
- Knowledge of students
- Connections for students
- What model should be followed?
 - Elementary or Secondary
- Costs for transportation

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Princeton Plan

Positives

- Allows for more sections in a grade level
- Aligns with NYSED Standards
- Streamlines the schools
- No one leaves their home school for a program
- Cost savings?
- Age brackets across a school would be:
 - From 5-8 in Primary
 - From 9-11 in Intermediate
 - From 12-14 in Middle School
 - From 15-18 in High School

Negatives

- Three transitions instead of two
 - Primary to Intermediate
 - Intermediate to Middle Schools or Junior High Schools
 - Middle Schools or Junior High Schools to High School
- Loss of neighborhood school
- Parents would drop-off and pick-up from multiple schools if all of their children are in elementary at the same time depending on grade levels
- Transportation costs?

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- Surveys
 - All information will be part of a survey. All will weigh in including staff and parents.
- Questions / Comments
 - Teacher of Princeton plan has concerns. The 2nd grade to 3rd grade connection. Communication is an issue. There's no band and no orchestra in their school. No spring or winter concert to watch. They are missing out. The little ones are not seeing the older kids as role models between classes. Reading buddies is eliminated. Class sizes increased. She wants us to look at it holistically.

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- A researcher states research is very important. Research reports should be current. Everything is changing a lot. 2 main types of research: Narrow Hypothesis and Research Summaries/Reviews. Let's stick to research reviews. One grade configuration is not greater than others. Effectiveness is the most important. When researching, what is important? What should we look at? We should shift the discussion toward the second presentation.
 - A 19 year veteran/music teacher states, she is against Princeton. Teacher morale is poor and is not open to role modeling and peer modeling. K-2 is very demanding and not easy. Puts strain on teachers and minimal opportunity to move. For special area teachers, there is not much variety. Lose meaningful experiences. Burn out special area teachers. Logistics of this method "really stink." Ten sections of kids getting on and off the bus. Need more staff to help with safety. The amount of behavioral issues was a drastic difference. Clubs and specials need more help.
 - Question asked about money. Do we have it to make the transitions for K-5? One grade is just moving from one building to another. She hasn't gotten to the level of interest in the teacher movement. Are there concerns about the number of 6th graders leaving? The only issue would be, if these numbers stayed this way, future education would have to talk about it because the number is low. If the building is getting utilized, great. Hopefully, enrollment will increase. Special education services only in Arrowhead? So would it be cost effective to take 6th grade students with needs out of the schools. With declining enrollment we may not have to replace teachers. We need more kids.
 - Woman says she understands we are not interested in the emotional aspect. However, increased transitions will affect academic performance. Shown by decades of research. If we go to Princeton, still being bussed to one school. Where is the guarantee? That is an impact. We will proceed slowly. There are no guarantees in anything. More students that can go in the IG program.
- IG requires teacher certification. Did not discuss bussing time. Bussing will not take an hour. There are many possibilities.
- Woman has not found a parent interested in K-2 configuration. Consider putting Pre-K and K together. Seems more age and developmentally appropriate. Pre-K should be centralized. Some districts have early childhood centers. Only trouble is moving Kindergarteners to another location where Pre-K is set in one location. We need transportation.
 - Concerned about transportation for children to school. Pre-K could cause a problem for parents to get home in time for bus pick up for other children.

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Children love working with younger peers. Enriches the older kids to help the younger children. Very valuable. Has a question, if one elementary school closed, would it only affect that school or would it affect the entire district? Too early to answer that question. We don't want a school to close. Trying to reopen would be very difficult. We want to repurpose a school if anything. Minnesauke is the most utilized building. Last issue, Princeton Model, parents can't handle multiple pick up times regarding school hours and extra-curriculars. If 9th grade moved, and 6th grade moved to middle school, you can sustain the primary building and its grades. Most of the country is on a middle school model. 6th graders will be exposed to courses earlier.

- Most are comfortable to move to 6th grade. You can transition these grades and see how that goes. If you give people a heads up, that seems reasonable for the change. He can see the advantages of the Princeton model. Plan over decades academically as well as financially. There's an amount of uncertainty. We can do part of this. Not everyone is on board with moving the 9th graders. Enrollment can increase. 8,800 students were projected. They are only as good as the data of birth rates of Long Island. We have a lot of parents coming in for secondary education. They want a WM diploma. Depends on what is driving the parents. Some of the families coming in are coming in with special needs. Attracting kids to programs. We have to be conscious of that. Make parents and the community aware of a 5 year plan to transition.
- New parent to district. Kids are all in the same building. As many grades in one building is beneficial to siblings. Each transition was incredibly difficult. Communications with teachers are more difficult. Special education programs are essential.
- Parent, teacher morale is very important. I want special education to be emphasized. Daughter is suffering because the school does not have a program she needs. If they move, they will have to do additional transitions which would impair special education programs.
- When will there be a final decision? Recommendations come this year. We are in no rush. We need to start talking about a plan now. 4,400 parents in the district. Rumors fluctuate from previous meetings among parents. There is no decision yet. We are researching and exploring the future. We are not going to rush it for the sake of rushing. If recommendations come, we will go from there. Early start times can be a health issue. What do start and end times mean to us?
- Is it a possibility that we consider Nassakeag to go to one middle school? Friendships suffer by going to different schools. It seems like there is space.

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Please tell us where the kids are going so we can prepare them for where they are going. One JHS will be significantly larger.

- Pre-K, K-6, 7-8 in one middle school. Repurpose the one middle school.
- It would be 800 students but we need to decide which middle school to house them.
- 3 Village Academy is overflowing. We cannot add any more students. Repurposing a JHS would be beneficial to the Three Village Academy.
- Is a school closing a rumor? The idea is to repurpose the schools and not close them. Just as a possibility. Moving the 6th grade out, each building will save 3 to 5 classrooms. We are waiting for enrollment to come up. It's just what makes fiscal sense. We have to be responsible of how we divide it. If the budget doesn't change, if we close, what is the benefit? Didn't say there was a benefit. Still have to keep it up, so repurposing would work. Budget line items are available online.