

## Re-envisioning our School Facilities

### Minutes

July 17, 2023

1. Attendance: Jean Wall (JW); Elizabeth Deneeve (ED), Glenn Johnson-Moussad (GJM) Christine DeBarge (CD)

Meeting called to order 3:31 pm

No members of the public were in attendance

2. Update from the Superintendent
  - a. Option 2B – update regarding previously shared information
    - i. Worked with transportation to realign catchment areas of the City to ensure the representation is balanced across schools
  - b. School Committee will need to decide about how to handle students who have previously been granted intradistrict choice – do we stop intradistrict and have all students go to their neighborhood school or do we allow students already in a school of choice to age out
    - i. Making a stop would allow us to not have families with split schools
    - ii. If we phase out choice, we would have to have three sections of grades 3, 4 and 5 at Four Corners, we would likely have to move two special education programs (Newton and Four Corners would switch)
    - iii. If we phase out choice we may also need to have specials on a cart until the student enrollment reduces and we have only two sections of each
    - iv. We do have enough physical space to accommodate three schools with a K-5 configuration
    - v. The potential move of special education programs is the greatest concern
  - c. Survey of Staff
    - i. Provided brief survey of all staff, opportunity for comments and also opportunity to provide email if they wanted further discussion
    - ii. Three staff included email but one was a mistake
    - iii. Just under 85% of our staff wanted the option NOT to be grade bands
  - d. Greatest concern from administration is cost of transportation with Option 1
  - e. There could be shift of up to 6 teachers. With reduction of elementary sections, we could have reductions of 6 at the elementary; however middle school is moving to full year science and social studies which would require an additional 4 staff. This would allow for many staff to be shifted with reassignment. We would need to look at certifications but jobs likely could be available if displaced staff would want it.

- f. With Grade 5 going to elementary, we need to look at specials schedule. We also need to look at the schedule of Greenfield High School with removal of grade 8. We need to consider options of teachers at GHS who will lose sections of grade 8.
- g. As of this point, transportation looks good for Option 2b (things can change); space looks good at all schools with the criteria above, including moving the Federal Street nurse to a better space.
- h. Administrators don't want to rush to make sure we consider as many questions as possible. Historically perspective shared by staff that last time grades were moved, it went so fast that items were missed.

ED asked if the current timing of Sept 2024 is still sufficient.

CD said yes, given the work and planning that is already occurring. Administration still needs to sit with unions to discuss how to shift staff

JW asked if we should discuss at August School Committee regarding the issue of Intradistrict Choice. CD stated that we are weighing the impact of stopping Choice with the impact on two special education programs.

CD mentioned that at least one comment in the staff survey mentioned renaming the schools. Discussion about the impact on that and the fact that Four Corners is now using the same curriculum and instructional approaches.

JW asked what we'd do with the extra classrooms available if the 8<sup>th</sup> grade leaves GHS. CD referenced that in NESDEC study references additional electives being possible. Administration would need to look at what staff have open sections before that discussion. We may also be able to split classes, or spread out special education programs if needed. There has been discussion with GHS and district administration about discussions with Greenfield Community College about course options that could help students be better prepared for GCC.

JW asked if we expected an impact on student behavior in 8<sup>th</sup> grade if they move to Greenfield Middle School. CD stated that while we don't know, we do wonder if the higher level of freedom at GHS may be challenging for the maturity level of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

One negative is that we won't be able to keep teams of grade 5 teachers if they move to elementary due to instructional time requirements for literacy and math.

ED asked if there was any additional information about Green River. CD stated she had reached out to the Mayor to determine what options may be and discussed the documentation needs to be completed to officially close Green River with the Massachusetts School Building Authority. It doesn't appear that we need to use Green River given enrollment. CD discussed the barriers to using Green River as a therapeutic program, primarily financial.

Discussion about adding the topic of intradistrict choice to the September School Committee meeting for a decision. That will impact several other elements to Option 2b if that is the vote of the School Committee.

3. Motion to adjourn
  - a. ED – yes; GJM – yes; ED – yes

Meeting adjourned 4:22 pm