

Consolidation Advisory Committee
Minutes
April 2, 2009

Committee Members Present:

Chair, Peter Horoschak, Superintendent
Robert Bushell, Director of Elementary Education
Richard D'Agostino, Director of Special Services
Lynn Dambruch, Principal, Robertson Elementary School
Nancy Plumb, Principal, Norwood Elementary School
David Testa, Parent, Member of Parent Communication Advisory Committee
Jillian Saytes, Parent, Council President, PTA/PTO

Committee Resource Present:

Mark Carruolo, Planning Director, City of Warwick Public Schools
Paul Jansson, Construction Coordinator, Warwick Public Schools
Stephen O'Haire, Supervisor of Transportation, Warwick Public Schools
Absent: Leonard Flood, Director of Business Affairs

Dr. Horoschak stated that factors for consideration moving toward school consolidation for the coming school year are due to financial concerns because of declining state support and, with the City of Warwick facing its own financial problems, the school department cannot anticipate receiving the financial aid it would otherwise be entitled to.

Factors for the consideration of closure

- Educational/financial advantages
- Retain students in Gorton/Veterans feeder zone
- Displacement of students and faculty from sending school
 - Redrawing attendance zones
 - How many faculty members will be needed at receiving schools
 - Faculty who provide special services, such as ELL, special education programs must be able to attend to those services in the receiving schools.
- Availability of space in receiving schools
 - Itinerant rooms in receiving schools will be utilized
- Prospect of moving students from unique neighborhoods to same receiving school
 - Keeping neighborhood integrity intact
- Impact of airport expansion or possible residential development
 - Lippitt will have to be available to receive students from Wickes if airport expansion causes Wickes School to close.

Based on what is best educationally for students the Superintendent expects the Committee to narrow down the list of six schools considered for closure to two. The objectives for April 2, 2009 meeting:

- Establish criteria for selecting school to be closed
- Analyze enrollment, available open space, educational advantages and financial impact of each closing scenario
- Narrow down options

Mr. Bushell

Mr. Bushell provided a comparison of the six schools (Greene, Lippitt, Oakland Beach, Park, Sherman and

Warwick Neck) to include the historical and cohort enrollment by grade, the enrollment history, and a three and five year average cohort projection.

- K-6 enrollment ranges from 226 at Greene to 354 at Sherman
 - Oakland Beach has 1 preschool, which adds an additional 25 students
- Building capacity at 85 percent ranges from 294 at Greene to 458 at Oakland Beach
- Functional capacity (elimination of itinerant rooms) ranges from 337 at Greene to 522 at Oakland Beach

Estimate number of students going from the closed school to the receiving school(s):

- Greene: 82 students to Sherman, 113 to Warwick Neck
- Lippitt: 62 students to Park, 72 to Sherman, 75 to Oakland Beach
- Oakland Beach: 83 students to Lippitt, 52 to Sherman, 144 to Warwick Neck
 - Students would be double-bumped from Oakland Beach to Lippitt to Park
- Park: 173 students to Lippitt
 - Students would be double-bumped from Park to Lippitt to Oakland Beach
- Sherman: 49 students to Greene, 100 to Lippitt, 111 to Oakland Beach, 144 to Warwick Neck
- Warwick Neck: 85 students to Greene, 84 to Sherman, 37 to Oakland Beach

Additional buses needed to accommodate displaced students:

- 3 if Oakland Beach or Sherman close
- 2 if Greene, Lippitt, Park or Warwick Neck close
- The cost of operating one school bus is approximately \$60,000

Mr. Bushell provided an overview of significant factors to be considered at each school to include the K-6 enrollment as of 3/1/09; number of special needs students in the schools, number of ELL students, number of families attending schools; the building capacity at 85% of current set up, the available space, number of itinerant rooms currently used, the functional capacity (85%) without itinerant rooms; the available space using the itinerant rooms; number of preschool students; how many special ed classes would have to be relocated from each school; if it's a Title I school; the numbers breakdown of where students would go from closure; full day kindergarten; Title I preschools; parent center; additional buses required; use of boys and girls club and undeveloped land. (See attachment)

- Dr. D'Agostino noted that Oakland Beach is the only school with a full day kindergarten. Drum Rock Early Childhood Center has a kindergarten class which is paid for with IDEA grant funds (Individual with Disabilities Education Act) Dr. D'Agostino said that because of the declining enrollment projections, it may be possible to give back an itinerant room in a receiving school.
- Park School houses the districts only ELL Program (a program which Dr. D'Agostino said cannot be successfully moved to another school)
- Approximately 22 acres of developable land exist at Buttonwoods Farm. Mr. Bushell speculates the likelihood of this being used for residential purposes in the near future is minimal.
- Mr. Carruolo said the land at Rocky Point may possibly be purchased by the City and designated as open space. Mr. Carruolo anticipates 90% participation from people to sell their homes to RIAC once roadway construction begins for the airport. He expects a 5 year steady reduction of homes due to airport expansion. Urges Lippitt and Park remain open to take displaced students upon the closure of Wickes due to airport expansion.

Mr. Jansson

Mr. Jansson addressed a letter which challenged the estimating methodology for re-roofing. In reference to the Warwick Neck Elementary School roof, Mr. Jansson said the first issue is the existing roof condition. According to his records, the last roof replacement was in 1989 and 1992. His staff has evaluated the roof as one of the top 5 that will require replacement in the future. He prepares "conceptual" or "ball-park" estimates due to the unknown conditions that will affect a new roofing project. For instance, asbestos, adequate roof drains, condition of the structural deck and when will this work be done...one year, two to three years, five years. All of these factors will dramatically impact the roof cost. Upon completion of investigations and new designs prepared, the estimates are then adjusted accordingly.

Regarding the boiler replacement at Warwick Neck, Mr. Jansson stated that the boiler in question was built and installed in 1962 (47 years old). Based upon the WPS boiler mechanics opinions, and the age of the boiler, it is reasonable, he stated, to include the boiler replacement in a 5 year capital improvement plan.

In reference to the sewers at Greene, Mr. Jansson stated that the odor problem occurs in extremely heavy rain and occurs once every 5 years on average. Its cause is due to the waste lines from drinking fountains being tied into the same drywells as the roof drains. It is not caused by the septic system. The repairs and renovations estimate for school consolidation indicates approximately \$15,000 for tying into the future municipal sewers. The estimate also notes that in the event the municipal sewers do not become available or the existing septic system fails prior to the installation of municipal sewers, then a new on-site system or a new force-main system would have to be installed at a cost of approximately \$60,000.

Mr. Jansson stated that if the bonds had been released they would be 65% of the way into finished projects. As an alternative way of handling projects, Dr. Horoschak said the school committee has authorized going before City Council to pursue the Performance Contracting. If this goes thru, lighting upgrades and boiler replacement projects can be immediately handled.

Estimate of Cost Savings

In Mr. Flood's absence, the Superintendent said the total estimate of cost savings from school closures ranges from Sherman - \$728,563 to Lippitt - \$779,209. The differences among the six schools is not a significant factor in deciding which school to close.

Factors Committee members concluded should be taken into account for closure of school.

- No double bumping
- Minimize the impact on students and families
- Amount of time on buses
- Available space within schools currently and in the future
- Keep the integrity of the neighborhoods
- Number of students to be displaced

After analyzing the data from March 19th and April 2nd meetings, and after much discussion amongst the committee and input from resource members, the committee members voted, with a show of hands, unanimously to eliminate Oakland Beach, Park and Sherman schools from closure.

Dr. D'Agostino said he would propose to eliminate Lippitt School from closure due to the impact on Wickes School and the surrounding neighborhood with the proposed airport expansion. He stated that Lippitt currently has 2 special education programs and there is available space to receive students at the school.

The committee members voted, with a show of hands, unanimously to eliminate Lippitt School from closure.

Mr. Bushell and Dr. D'Agostino will report back to the Committee on April 9, 2009 regarding the impact of closing either Greene or Warwick Neck to include new enrollment, use of space, assignment of teachers, and configuration of the new attendance zones. Dr. D'Agostino will do a detailed analysis of special needs at both schools: self-contained classrooms, integrated classrooms, weighting 1 ½ and 2. Average class size will be estimated.

- Dr. Horoschak said another important consideration is for the school department to make good use of a closed facility and asked the committee to consider what uses a closed facility could offer the school department.
- David Testa commended the school department on the website made available for parents to submit comments on.

- Principals Lynn Dambruch and Nancy Plumb, Parent and PTA/PTO Council President Jillian Saytes will be touring Greene and Warwick Neck Elementary Schools before the next Advisory Committee meeting.
- David Testa toured all six schools on March 31st.
- Next Consolidation Advisory Committee Meeting to be held on Thursday, April 9, 2009, 6:30 p.m., Gorton Junior High School Auditorium.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:20 p.m.