

Neighborhood Schools Project Committee Minutes
Wednesday, August 6, 2008 7:00 pm
Administration Building Conference Room

Present were Committee Chairs; Mr. Ed Edwards, Mrs. Michele Pargeon, Committee Members; Mrs. Julia Wilson, Mr. Dennis Wausnock. Mr. David Krem representing the Administration.

We opened the meeting up by discussing a comfortable figure, a maximum amount of students per classroom. We came to a figure of 21 students per classroom, with the expectation that class sizes for the 4-k, 5-k, and 1st grade classrooms would be lower. This figure would be relative to how many classrooms would need to be added to a 3 or 5 building configuration.

The need for additional classrooms for learning support, SGI, Title 1, and conference rooms were also mentioned.

We discussed the current enrollment figures, and how high figures had been when they were at their highest. (1650 - 1850)

We average between 235 and 285 students per grade level 5-k through 5th grades.

Any additional new construction to accommodate modular classrooms, plus 4 classrooms in each building would help to offset any sudden influx of students, keeping our class sizes within the district's targeted goal.

It was expressed that should we go to a 3 school option, one of the schools to remain open should be the Barth elementary school.

Truency was a continuing topic of the committee, and our discussion focussed around children in the Barth area who currently walk to school, and what would be done if they missed the bus.

We also went over the district's lack of a truency officer at this time, and how much of this is handled by a social worker.

When our discussion turned back to the properties, we had gone over the existing school building square footage and the acreage that each of those buildings stand on. We also discussed the current amount of open space surrounding those buildings, and when considering a 3 school scenario, whether the properties could support the additional new construction and still have parking accommodations and open space/play areas.

The number of students currently walking to each of the schools would also be a contributing factor when determining which schools the district would retain for the purpose of renovation and expansion with a 3 school scenario.

Some concern was expressed regarding the Chorus, 24, Reading Olympics, and Awards Ceremonies, and whether reducing down to a 3 school option would make these programs too competitive.

We also recognized that our elementary buildings should have a specific space for art and music, and that these rooms should not have to share space with other programs.

When regarding green buildings, and LEED certified renovations and constructions, we would like to see additional figures for these costs once we have decided upon the one option.

We would also like those figures to include razing of the existing properties with new construction, or renovation of existing properties with new construction to accommodate more classrooms for future growth, and obtaining smaller class sizes.

As the committee believes to still be at a 2 - 2 split regarding the number of schools, we will be unable to make a recommendation to the Board at the COW meeting set for Thursday, August 7, 2008. Therefore, the Board will have one remaining discussion at the COW meeting, with the expectation that Board members will be ready to vote at the Regular Business Meeting of The Board Of Pottstown School Directors on Thursday, August 21, 2008 their position on a 3 school, 4 school. or 5 school option with each of those schools housing 4-k through 5th grade.

mp