

**March 10, 2010**  
**Administration Response**  
**to**  
**Neighborhood School Proposal of March 1, 2010**

David Krem:	Welcome/Overview
Reed Lindley:	Context and Needs
Jeff Sparagana:	Schedule/Personnel Implications
Pam Bateson:	Pupil Service and Special Education Implications
Lisa Snyder	
Rita Cohen	
David Krem:	Summary

# Continuously Improving School District

Meets student needs

Attracts families and businesses

## People

Visionary and committed leaders

Highly competent instructors

Strong support staff

## Programs

Academics

- Instructional Support

Arts and Music

21<sup>st</sup> C employability skills

Co-Curricular Activities

## Facilities

- Structurally sound
- Well maintained
- Attractive learning environments
- Adequate space for instruction & support

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## SOLID FISCAL FOUNDATION

(Sustainable System/Within community's ability to pay)

- Streamlined Organization
- Public-Private Partnerships
- Economic Growth and Development

(Reduce Expenditures)

(Leverage tax dollars to promote private development)

**There seems to be Board and community consensus on the following points:**

- 1. Pottstown needs and deserves quality schools.**
- 2. PSD needs to maintain and improve the school buildings.**
- 3. PSD needs to move forward in a fiscally responsible manner.**

## **Continued discussion topics:**

**Timing and extent of expenditures**

**Quality and extent of educational spaces**

**School and grade level configuration**

**Priorities of programming and expenditures**

## **Our reality checks:**

The majority of the Board is committed to 5 elementary schools and to addressing the facility concerns that have been discussed over the past number of years.

There are low-interest stimulus loans, possibly available to PSD.

## **Reality checks (2)**

**Grade configuration tends to be driven by economic realities as well as educational philosophy.**

**There are effective schools with a variety of grade level configurations.**

**Most effective schools are designed for a particular grade configuration.**

## **Administration response:**

- 1. This community cannot continue to support the escalating economics of the status quo; we must begin to creatively explore alternative funding and delivery options.**
- 2. The district needs a plan that addresses facility upgrades and educational quality.**
- 3. There is some space available at the HS , MS, and Annex (Need to determine most appropriate use at this point-- for elementary/administrative use).**

**The District should apply for stimulus loans (deadline of April 1)**

- **Provides OPTIONS and CONTROL to the Board.**

**If funds are received; implement the plan.**

**OR**

**If funds are received; reject the funds.**

**OR**

**If funds are received; incorporate them into a plan with a larger scope if desired.**

**Mrs. Adams in consultation with District financial planner believes that there may be a number of financial options to assist PSD address facility upgrades AND educational sustainability.**

# **Administration Recommendations**

- 1. Apply for stimulus loan (Qualified Zone Academy Bond)**
  - 2. Direct Linda Adams to work with the District financial planner; to prepare a review of financial options for the Board to consider RE: facility and program upgrades.**
- Consider the stimulus funds, Build America Bonds, Tax Free Bonds, Conventional Financing, Plan Con, Non-Plan Con, etc.**

## Grade 5 to PMS

MS was renovated with design for a 3 grade configuration (6, 7, 8) stacked academic wings.

- **MS does have room to accommodate additional students.**

**Consideration:** Grade 5-6 and 7-8 students would interact during the school day – due to placement of related arts spaces. Not sure about adequate space to maintain quality programming.

## Grade 5 to PMS

### 5th Grade Regular Ed/Inclusion Class Sizes and Room Needs:

- Currently have 10 grade 5 teachers, with 21 students per classroom
- If downsized into 9 classrooms, class size increases to 22.3 students per classroom
- Or if 8 classrooms, size increases 26.3 students per classroom

## Grade 5 to PMS

### **Additional Special Education Needs:**

- Grade 5 will bring 50+ special education students to the MS in addition to the 50+ transitioning into grade 6.

**Consideration:** Will need additional classrooms: 3

Learning Support, 1 Emotional Support classroom and 1 Life Skills classroom

## Grade 5 to PMS

### Cursory look by Mrs. Cooper:

- MS could make 8 rooms available.
  - 2 are full size classrooms (720 Sq. Ft.), 6 are seminar rooms (528 Sq Ft. means a 27% space reduction).

### Consideration:

If all 8 rooms can be utilized to hold 26 students per class in grade 5, we will need to secure 4 additional rooms for Special Education needs.

## Grade 5 to PMS

### MS Scheduling for 5/6-7/8 configuration:

- Elementary schedule in grades 5-6.
- This is a change for grade 6.
- Maintain MS schedule in Grades 7-8.

## Grade 5 to PMS

### Other Considerations:

- Staffing
- Transportation
- Training and preparation for MS staff for ADA/IDEA protected students.
- Will additional space be required to maintain a quality instructional program, TBD.

## Send PSD - PK to PEAK Partners

**PSD in 2009/2010 school year has:**

- **Sessions:** 8 half-day PK sessions
- **Enrollment** - 111 students
- **Location:** across all 5 elementary buildings
- **Staffing:** 4 district teachers

**Send PSD - PK to PEAK Partners**

**Options for Consideration**

## Option 1:

**Return 111 children currently enrolled in PSD half-day PK program to PEAK Partners and MOVE to PK Counts full day model in partner sites**

### **Benefits:**

- Gain the space of 5 classrooms in elementary schools.
- PK Counts High Quality Program governance.

### **Costs:**

- \$6850 per student x 111 students - \$760,350.
- Funds available from PSD to fund 111 full day slots maintaining PK Counts model - \$296,705 (4 PSD PK staff salaries and benefits).
- Funds still needed - \$463,645 to maintain full day PK Counts model in PEAK Partner sites with PSD 111 children.

## **Option 2:**

**Pottstown School District Moves PK Program to Community Site with ONLY Change in Location.**

**PSD would maintain half-day program.**

### **Benefits:**

- Gain the space of 5 classrooms in elementary schools.

### **Costs:**

- In addition current cost PSD must pay rent for space in community site.

## **Option 3:**

**Pottstown School District Contracts with Community/ PEAK Partner Program to Provide Full -Day PK Program at a negotiated rate (may be less than the \$6850).**

### **Benefits:**

- Gain the space of 5 classrooms in elementary schools.
- Negotiated rate

### **Costs:**

- Governance by school code/NOT PK Counts program standards
- Negotiated rate

## Option 4:

# Pottstown School District Contracts with Community Partner Program to Provide Half-Day PK Program

### Benefits:

- Pottstown School District would contract with a community partner program for Half-day services at the rate of \$3500 per child or other negotiated amount.
- Gain the space of 5 classrooms in elementary schools.

### Cost:

- $111 \times \$3500 = \$388,500$
- Cost to district = \$91,975
- Governance by school code/NOT PK Counts program standards

## Other Considerations

- Need to continue to provide a PK program to all eligible students in community.
- If renting space, oversight will be necessary in community programs by PSD or PEAK.
- Moving PK classes to partners may have negative impact on Bright Hope Community/Barth families. How will children get to partner sites across Route 100?
- To be determined.

# Administrative Space

Additional space is available at High School and Annex

# Administrative Space at PHS

Possible considerations:

- A section of rooms could reconfigure for office space.
- 9<sup>th</sup> grade seminar room could be converted to an office space
- Basement could house some functions with upgrades(ventilation, ADA accessibility)
- PCTV relocation

# Administrative Space at Annex

Possible considerations :

- Reallocate spaces to support additional administration

# Administrative spaces at PHS & Annex

## Other Considerations:

- Need to determine best location for fiber hub for district; conference room space; copy center; IT dept.; PEAK; Tax Office; etc.
- Consider cost for scanning files and storage at administration building.

# Financial Projections

Deficit to meet 2010-2011 index = \$1,896,485

Deficit to meet 2011-2012 index = \$2,315,206  
(stimulus funding eliminated)

Deficit to meet 2012-2013 index = \$1,075,375

Deficit to meet 2013-2014 index - **+\$1,633,080**

- Over the retirement hump
- No additional debt service is included

**Question submitted to all Superintendents in the  
Commonwealth of PA:**

If your district has or had a grade configuration of Grades 5 to 8, please let us know if your building was originally designed to house the fifth graders or if they were added to the building at a later date?

Also, has this configuration worked or have you moved or are planning to move the fifth graders back to your elementary schools?

**From their responses (27) I noted the following common thoughts:**

- Schools viewed as running successfully were designed intentionally to provide separate wings or floors for their 5<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students.
- Schools not designed specifically to house grade 5 but were viewed as successful had low student numbers (e.g.: 2 classrooms/grade level).
- Schools operating K – 8 were successful because of a lack of transitions and these schools had a low student population (e.g.: total student population K – 8 approximately 350 students).
- A few indicated they made room for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade by moving the 8<sup>th</sup> grade to the high school.

**Of the 27 responding Superintendents 4 offered to speak to me directly. The following are the common thoughts shared during these telephone conversations:**

- PSSA test scores are aligned in grade level configurations of: 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> and grade 11. 5<sup>th</sup> grade AYP attainment took on a middle school attitude which was calculated into the students “home” elementary school and AYP status was lost.
- 5<sup>th</sup> grade students tend to not fit socially or emotionally. Some became targets for bullying and inappropriate relationships. Most recommended a self-contained academic classroom setting as a mean for addressing most issues plus the need to separate 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> from 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Where grade 8 was moved to the high school, the curriculum did not match. Additionally, participation in co-curricular activities dropped measurably. 8<sup>th</sup> grade students lost interest in participating in an activity with younger students. 8<sup>th</sup> grader students appeared as social outcasts and were often the target of bullying and inappropriate relationships.