

PK-5 School Modernization Committee Meeting 3/29/2023

Committee Members Present: Lauren Andrews, Moregan Beaulieu, Danielle Chabot, Maureen Griffin, Walter Kruzel, Leslie Lawlor (Sec.), Vicky MacLeod, Kelsey McGuire-Bruce, Nicole Ricci, Aimee Sobinski, Jessica Soule, Shannon Steere, Jacquelyn Sawn, Kurt Stroiney, Jennifer Wheeler

Committee Members Absent: Emily Hulevitch

Liaisons Present: Scott Ryder (BOE), Tina LeBlanc (BOE), Christopher Drezek (EPS), Andy Longey (EPS), John Dague (EPS), Fred Gerber (ToE), Bob Cressotti (TC), Gina Cekala (TC), Ken Nelson (TC), Janet Cushman (BOE)

Liaisons Absent: none

Committee Guests: Lisa Hunter, Kristen Fitzsimons, Andrew Duperre, Amber Venoutsos, Alex Reale, Mary Trifone, Charlotte Zenzick, Sheree Winans, Tami Croyle

Introductions by Tina LeBlanc – BOE Chair

Committee Liaisons:

BOE – Scott Ryder and Janet Cushman
TC – Gina Cekala and Ken Nelson

Additional in attendance:

BOE – Josh Hamre
TC – Bob Cressotti and John Santanella

Committee Member Introductions:

Fred Gerber – Deputy Director of Public Works – here to advise/consult on the facilities aspect
John Dague – Director of Strategic Development and Partnerships for EPS
Moregan Beaulieu – parent of 3 in EPS – family advocate at Headstart
Danielle Chabot – EPS alumni – parent of 2 in EPS
LA – parent of 3 kids in 3 different EPS schools – works at Eagle Academy – EPS alumni
JW – parent of 2 kids in EPS – EPS alumni
KMB – Teacher at PC – EPS alumni – 2 littles not yet in school
JS – Teacher at PC – no kids here – granddaughter may be in EPS one day
JS – Teacher at HB – EPS alumni – live in Enfield – no kids
VM – parent of 2 kids in EPS – new to town/state
AS – EPS alumni – 2 kids in EPS
KS – EPS alumni – 2 kids in EPS
WK – former BOE member - was on EHS/JFK Building Committees
NR – Teacher at EW – EPS alumni
SS – parent of 2 at EHS – works at Stowe - offering perspective from the Preschool level

Additional EPS Staff:

Superintendent - Chris Drezek
Assistant Superintendent – Andy Longey
HMS Principal – Lisa Hunter
EW Assistant Principal – Kristen Fitzsimons

PC Principal – Andrew Duperre

TL – This committee is a balanced mix of staff, parents and community members

Ability to see things from all perspectives

We know we have a space issue and the buildings are old

So what do we do next?

This needs to be a staff led initiative as well as a community initiative

We all need to share our thoughts on the buildings

We need to have honest conversations to come up with a plan

Our question to answer is - How do we envision the town of Enfield going forward?

Is going back to the K-5 model what we want?

What will cause the least disruption for students and families?

The plan is to present to the TC/BOE next Thursday 4/6

We would like to get it this on the ballot in November 2023

We will be touring every school over the next 2 weeks see how they are all unique in their spaces

We need to invest our time looking at the schools to be able to make an informed decision

We will end at JFK on Tuesday 4/4 to see the innovative things done there during the renovation

CD – it is important that we make this decision as a community

BOE doesn't pay for a new roof or parking lot – the Town does

Town Manager has to put aside money for improvements

We have an aggressive time schedule to figure out what do we want to do

Need to know how much to budget for capital improvement budget

If as a community we decide to keep the current model then we already know the estimated cost

What are we willing to pay for?

We already know how much it costs to have 6 elementary schools in town

We don't know the costs if we want to change that – that's why we need your input

Decisions need to be made very quickly – this has an impact on the whole town

For example - Do we delay repairing a parking lot if there's a chance the school won't be used?

It's ok if everyone agrees we like things the way they are – the committee's job is to decide

I have invited some of the Teachers in town to come and share their stories

What was it like the last time? What were your experiences throughout the process?

These are all long-standing Teachers who were working in Enfield during the reorganization

Representation from each of our buildings – teachers who are in the classrooms every day

They lived through the reorganization and have ideas about how it could've been improved

They will speak about how it impacted them and how it impacted our kids

For those who don't know, the reorganization was a shift from K-6 to the current model

We created K-2 schools and 3-5 schools

At that time, 2 buildings closed – Alcorn and Stowe

Hale closed a few years later

All of the schools are represented here by their Admins tonight so they can hear the presentation

Teacher Presentation (see PPT attached)

Introductions:

Amber Venoutsos – Thank you for including us in the conversation

We all have a common goal – to make a better place for the kids

There is a lot of experience within the district – many who lived through the original reorganization

12 years later we still see how it impacted the town and continues to impact the staff, families and kids
I have taught for 16 years in Enfield district - started at EW, then moved to HMS

Alex Reale – Kindergarten Teacher at HB

Grew up in Enfield – Fermi graduate

Kids currently attend HMS

15 years teaching at PC, EW, HB

After the reorganization – ESS for two weeks, HB Special Ed, K at HB when full day was approved

Mary Trifone – ESS Teacher

22 years teaching in Enfield

Taught at EW, Hale, ESS

Charlotte Zenzick – EW teacher for 25 years

Grew up in Enfield and still lives here

Has nieces in EPS

Sheree Winans – PC Teacher

31 years teaching in Enfield

HB, Alcorn, and after the reorganization to PC

Grew up in Enfield

Son graduated last year from EHS

Tami Croyle – Parkman Teacher

Grew up in Enfield

Alcorn, ESS and after reorganization to Parkman

23 years teaching

2 kids in EPS

Kids only in school together one year because of the reorganization

Experiences during the reorganization:

SW – Lots of emotional issues for staff, kids and families

It was a really rough time

I worked for 17 years at Alcorn – started when it reopened with a new principal

Grass roots effort to build a community

Celebrated a lot with families and kids

Families could walk to the school - only one bus run

The very definition of a neighborhood school

Suffered 2 staff losses over the years – processed the losses as a community

One year later the building was shut down – it was awful

Reorg left Stowe and Alcorn teachers dropped into openings in town

Didn't move together as a team – were all split up

Hard to change grades and schools at the same time

As teachers we just make it work and don't complain a lot

The motto is “We got this!” no matter how we are feeling on the inside

When the families found out, the staff tried to keep the spirits in the building up for the rest of the year

Kids looked lost – not knowing how to handle the situation

No one wanted to leave
Last day of school – staff came together (90% of staff showed up) shared experiences and stories
There was a common quiet – we were ready to say goodbye and we all walked out together
One of the hardest things I've ever done
Felt like we were tasked as “fill ins” after that
Whatever the choice of the committee ends up being – please just do it right for all that are involved

MT – started at EW and worked there for 10 years
Celebrated life events together with the staff
It was very hard when the reorg happened
Came back from maternity leave – had to pack up classroom to move – while still teaching
Kids didn't understand what was happening
Subconsciously in denial and procrastinate the packing
Felt like more than just the end of something
Breaking up a family
Only EW teacher moved to Hale (the rest went to HMS together)
3 fill ins added to the Hale staff
Created a new community there and made it work for 6 years
Then the news came that Hale was closing – in the same situation all over again
Saying goodbye again – sad kids again - leaving family again
Traveled with a teaching partner to ESS
Part of a team that had already been together – felt like the odd ones out
Took a few years to get that sense of community back
It's more than just packing up boxes and moving from one building to another
Hard with the littles – building relationships is so important

CZ – one of the few who never had to move – lucky in that regard
Having to say goodbye to teachers you've been with and mentored – really tough – like family
No boxes and packing – but still traumatic – a loss was felt by all

2011 reorganization also had effects on families
Siblings were split up
Start times shifted
Schools were hubs for the community
Trust is critical – it makes the academic experience better
Students move just when they get the hang of the building
Had a family with kids at HMS, EW, JFK and EHS – 4 PTOs, 4 sets of conferences, etc, etc.
Juggling all the school activities week after week
Families have to make choices about which events to attend with multiple schools
We want to make the process easier
Families will figure out a way to make it work – but they are impacted the most

AT – kids coming to school for the first time in Kindergarten is a big transition
First time in school for most families – some kids have never been in a school before
Want it to be positive experience for them
K teachers host an Info night for new parents
Offer resources – what happens in the K classroom
Orientation – meet new teacher, see the classroom, etc
All ways to ease the stress coming in and make a positive 1st connection
Then only to lose that connection with students who move on after just 3 years
We lose touch after 2nd grade and don't see them go off to middle school after 5th grade

CZ – our original model was K-6

Now the 5th graders are the oldest members of our elementary school community

Some of the classroom jobs are lost on these kids

They are not as old as the 6th graders and can't handle the responsibilities yet

Peer modeling with the younger kids works better and may curb behaviors of the 5th graders

They are still too closely connected to the 3rd graders

AV – current model impacts all the kids

Transition between 2nd and 3rd grade is a big jump for kids

Then we add in moving buildings too

7/8 year olds are the oldest in the K-2 school and expected to be role models

It's a lot of NEW to put on kids at this age - new building, new staff, new peers, etc.

They go from being the oldest learners in the building to being the youngest in the new building

It is very similar to the transition to Kindergarten – except that it is expected at the K level

We plan for it and supports exist to ease that transition

There isn't the same level of transitional support for the 2nd graders

They are expected to be able to navigate it all on their own – we are finding out that they can't

TC – students develop relationships and are building trust with their teacher and support staff

Moving buildings after just 3 years makes it more difficult

There is a huge academic change as well

In K-2 they are learning to read

In Grade 3 they are reading to learn

There is a higher level of independence

3rd grade teachers only see a reading level or math data on paper – they can't see the whole child

There is a disconnect – so frustrating in the beginning of the year for 3rd grade

Spend more time teaching expectations and routine

Need to be able to collaborate with the K-2 teachers more to find out what's best for the students

That part of the process is missing in our current model

Social emotional growth is lost from 2nd to 3rd

AV – struggling students have an even harder time

Those below grade level need additional support and have a more difficult time adjusting

SAT process – team to monitor progress for programming

Students who may have been dysregulated in K are finally finding their way by 2nd grade

We find that when they transition to 3rd that the big picture growth from K-2 is lost

New staff has all the documentation, but not as powerful if they saw the growth in a student since K

NR – taught 3rd grade for 6 years and now in 4th

Disconnect in staff teams in general

Special Ed teachers and staff working together have a collective thought process

It's another line of thinking based on how the new team works and their cohesiveness

Can't put everything on paper – not the same as if all in same building

Should have SAT meetings together with all grade levels

We all have the same philosophy but different way of getting there

Path interrupted to transition to new team in a new building

CD – we've lost consistency and the ability to be cohesive

Logistically it won't work – two different schedules with different start and end times

Times just don't line up – would need to cover classes and travel to meet

KMB – difficult for newer a teacher who doesn't know everyone in the district
Not sure who to reach out to outside of your building
Don't have any connections

AV – we've seen the data regarding academics
Alliance district – the data is showing kids in transition grades are struggling
Big picture not the root cause, but not helping either

MT – PBIS expectations are different in different buildings
Philosophy is the same but process and systems are different
2nd graders have a PBIS coach in the building
Those don't exist at 3-5 schools
New processes to learn and become familiar with
Big relationship – huge loss

Expectations are diff – lead to escalating behaviors
Teaching new expectations and new routines – everything new for 3rd graders
Housekeeping at the start of the year
Go from being the big guys to the little guys

Familiarity – all students know who the teachers are
There isn't a period of resettling – not knowing who your teacher would be
And not knowing the teachers at all
Brand new staff to meet and feel comfortable with
On-site younger staff to step in and help with that transition would be comforting for them

CZ – since reorg, families can't even remember who their additional supports were/are
So many changes over the years
Connection to people is huge at these ages
When you don't see them anymore you forget
This doesn't happen when they are still right down the hall
Families need to have trust in the system and streamlined supports

SW – social piece – relationships with staff
Takes a few years struggling with change and readjusting
Might be involved in more things sooner

MT – 2nd grade teachers know that it is more than just Spring fever
Notice behaviors increase – present in different ways
More emotional, needy, anxious, nervous
We set expectations for the next year – preparing them without scaring them
Fear of the unknown
Especially in students already with behavior issues – effects academics at the end of year
They know end is coming and now sure how to deal with it
Heartbreaking every year to watch – 2nd graders aren't ready for that transition

AV – consistency is missing

CZ – if we hadn't done the reorg how much more successful would our kids be?

More streamlined support system
Staff gets to see the kids straight through until middle school

SW – personal journey has been amazing
To know firsthand what this town can do
We need to collectively think about the positive long-term effects this will have on our kids
They are all OUR kids
We are all invested in them and want what is best for them
Take into consideration how we can make it better

AV – timeline of the reorg
December 2010 was the initial presentation for districting
By end of June we were moving to new schools
Had to box up before the last day of school – no time to pack after school ended
And given no extra time to set up in September
Kindergarten set up was not on contractual time prior to start of school because of orientation

TL – I was against the reorganization
Alcorn's role in community was so ingrained in this town
My son went HMS, EW, then JFK
I believe his 2nd grade year made the rest of his years more difficult
Affected many families and made it hard to stay involved
Had to picking a PTO
Peer models lost
Family impact from the perspective of the Teachers is spot on
It's scary for parents to send kids to a new school – and now we were doing it more often

JH – from the family perspective – we felt the same things as the Teachers
The outcome was predicted and avoidable
My family lived thru reorg
We also fought against it
Attended full day kindergarten at Alcorn (pilot program before rolled out to everyone)
After reorg we went back to half day kindergarten
Different levels of trauma – family aspect changed
Lived right next to Alcorn – we went from walking to busing to a new school
Moved our kids to a Parochial school
Families have been juggling ever since
Not a joke for families

TL – This is going to be a long-term plan (3-5+ years)
It's not going to happen in September
Doing our diligence seeing the structures of the buildings and hearing from the staff - part of the process
It is important to our families and to our staff
A lot of thought is going into this
Teaching and academics are in forefront

GC – sounds like the position of teachers is that they would love to go back to K-5
There is going to be a lot of transitions in these years to come – moving of teachers and kids again
Are you all collectively prepared to live through that again?

AV – We believe we can make it better by planning for it in advance

Not a knee jerk reaction this time
We should have a long-term plan in place that takes all pieces into consideration
We know can do this better this time
K-5 model works better for our kids for a lot of reasons
We can find a way to make it not so traumatize for all parties involve

CD – The only options are to keep things the way they are now or go to 3 schools
If we go to more than 3 schools, we would have to redistrict again
We don't want to redistrict again – harder on families who specifically bought near a school in town
Transition is just the schools and not the area
This way softens the blow
We have a lot of bus runs in town because of the model we have now
4 tiers of bus runs
Not just a driver shortage – don't have the buses or people to do additional academic supports
All are spread very thin

JS – with the current system was there economic savings when the buildings were closed?

CD – We didn't save any money with reorg

KMB – Agree with having 3 schools to keep consistency
Agree K-5 model is best
Some schools are currently more populated than others
Will we look at lines?
Some schools have more kids per class and more classes per building

JD – looked at district lines and mapped every kid
Certain schools have more Choice kids, some pull from other areas of town
We can distribute some of the programs to balance out the population

CD – HB has a lot of special programming
If we are going to do it, we're going to do it right
We will take the time and effort to put special programming where it needs to be

TL – We are looking at the buildings to see what makes the most sense
Making things more equitable throughout the town
We'd like to be able to bring back late buses to EHS and JFK – make more programs available
1st step as a committee is what is that recommendation

SR – We all know that we can't combine HB and PC into one building – not going to fit at either school
We need to talk to Town about the buildings
Which buildings are able to be used – which site works best – which has enough acreage
This committee can help make those decision
That's what the tours are for – to make those decisions
We will have discussions at the end of each session

JS – are we committed to keeping one of each sister school?

GC – at this point we aren't locked into anything
For "Renovate as New" there is a really massive reimbursement rate
Building a new school may not get that much in reimbursement

Might be different level as an Alliance District
JFK and EHS were Renovate as New
Alliance may the bump rate up

TL – we need to look at how much is it going to cost us to get our buildings where we need them to be
And appealing to the taxpayers who are going to be voting on this

KN - JFK cost us less to Renovate as New then to build new

TC – how much can we afford without hitting the taxpayers – just to fix it?
How long are we going to keep doing that without a real long-term solution?

TL – we are making this as non-political as we can
Repres from both sides of the party agree that we need to do something

BC – financially doing what is best for the town – after the needs of the kids
Reorg set us back academically
Teachers were displaced - moral was low
It is the right move at the right time to go back to K-5
Vision is spot on
Goal is to figure out what three buildings are going to be best to Renovate as New
Will bring new people to this town
Busing is a huge issue
Have to look at what is best for the families in town
We can make it work
Teams will stay together and work together
Very exciting time for Enfield
Will need to market to the public that this is the right thing to do
Referendum in November

SW – don't mind packing and moving as long as it's done the right way
Would be excited to go to a wonderful new building and new community

CD – I want to set expectations
We don't know which schools will be used at this point
We do know that keeping things the same way they are now will cost more than \$36M
We need to be prepared to ask the BOE/TC next week for what we need
Even if we come up with a plan, the data may tell us something different
There are a lot of rules that we need to take into consideration before anything is final

Hazardville Memorial Building Tour

HMS is the second oldest school building in town
Built in 1954 – addition built in 1966 and then another addition in 2002

All of the school were originally designed as neighborhood schools
The needs have shifted since the 1950's
Many other professionals are working in the schools now too – not just teachers
We need to have space for all of the kids and all of the staff
All of our buildings were built before the concept of universal design
They need to be open and usable for anyone regardless of ability

Many spaces are converted classrooms and converted closets
We want you to see the structure of the rooms at our elementary schools compared to JFK now
Every system in a building has a useful life
\$4.7M in capital improvement needs over the next 2 years

Addition built in 2002 is the newest portion of the building

Lockers – school was a Middle School
Don't use the lockers anymore

Converted classrooms – use mobile partitions to separate staff
No additional electrical added to the spaces for additional staff working in the space
PBIS and Social Worker share a room – not conducive to confidential conversations
School Psychologist office – converted closet

No adult handicap accessible bathroom in building

Main office was too far from the front door – became a conference room and moved the office

Heat readings in one room around 6pm
Floor by radiator = 80 degrees
Window A/C unit (encased in aluminum) = 54 degrees
Floor in center of room (above pipes running under the floor) = 87 degrees
Temps range from 50 – 80 degrees in the same room at the same time
This is the case consistently throughout the building

Playground – new
Courtyard area
Wood doors – swell with humidity and have issues latching – don't meet current code
Glass box, vinyl beadboard, and wood framing
Windows – some of the older windows are wood – different sizes throughout the building
Some open/some don't - some have A/C units
Building not designed for the additional power load of the A/C units
One of the 2 schools with steam heat – major heat loss happening through windows
\$2.4M to replace windows and bring up to code (conservative estimate)
Windows are the most urgent item on the list and the most expensive

Drainage/runoff going back under the building
Warping and rotting the wood
Wood framing buckling around the windows and doors

2002 addition of kindergarten classrooms – notice the newer doors and windows (not wood)
Did not replace the roof on this addition – no reimbursement for addition under 25 years old

Was originally a neighborhood school – lots of walkers
Now has many traffic issues with drop off and pick up – parking lot size not adequate
Would cost \$450k to pave the current lots







Next Meeting at EW – Thursday, March 30th at 5:30PM (then to HB and PC)

Reflections

The impact of our current model on our elementary community



1

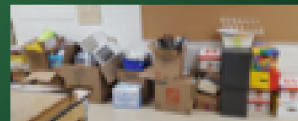
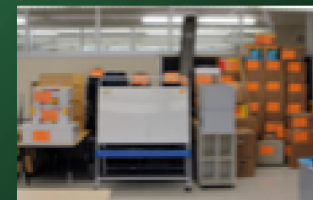
 <p>Amber Venoutsos Hazardville Memorial Grade 2</p>	 <p>Alex Reale Henry Barnard Grade K</p>	 <p>Mary Trifone Enfield Street Grade 2</p>
 <p>Charlotte Zenzick Eli Whitney Grade 5</p>	 <p>Sheree Winans Prudence Crandall Grade 5</p>	 <p>Tami Croyle Edgar H. Parkman Grade 3</p>

2

Elementary Reorganization: Staff Impact

In 2011, district shifted from K-6 model at elementary schools to a K-2/3-5 "sister-school" model with 6th grade at JFK

- Buildings closed
- Staff navigated new grade-level teams
- Challenges in creating new building cultures
- In 2017, district closed Nathan Hale
- Staff and families moved into established teams at new schools



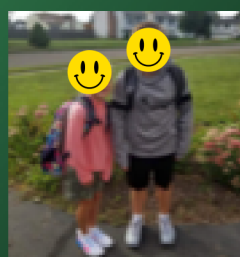
Impact on staff morale

- We make it work
- In some ways morale hasn't recovered

3

Elementary Reorganization: Family Impact

- Siblings often not in the same buildings
- PTOs were split
- Difficulty scheduling conferences
- Shared buses
- Students who did not previously ride bus now need to
- Before-/after-school childcare
- Efforts to build community across "sister schools"
- Six separate schools



4

2nd/3rd Transition: Logistics

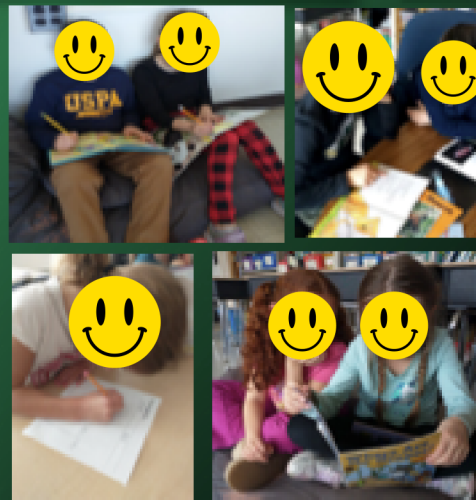


- New building to navigate
- New teachers, principals, counselors
- New service providers for students who receive additional support
- Go from being oldest students to youngest
- Third grade has become a similar transition to entering kindergarten but without as many supports in place

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2nd/3rd Transition: Academic Impact

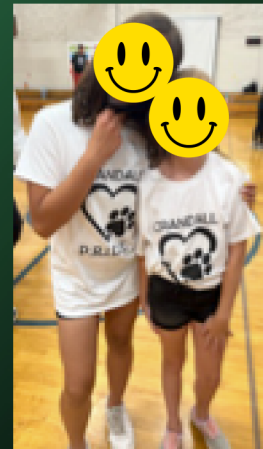
- Learning to read becomes reading to learn
- Summer learning loss amplified by transition
- SAT process interrupted
- Cross grade-level discussions limited
- Third-grade teachers see new students in isolation as opposed to seeing growth made over multiple years
- Alliance district status - current structure not the cause, but the mid-elementary transition is not helping



6

2nd/3rd Transition: Behavioral Impact

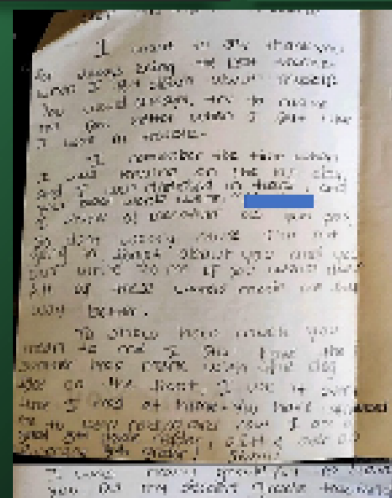
- Different PBIS expectations between buildings
- Increased expectations in third grade leads to escalated behaviors
 - Takes time away from academics
 - Increased number of behavior plans implemented
 - Successful plans at previous school may not work
- Behavior spikes at the end of second grade
 - Displayed in many different ways
 - Even behavior of students who have been successful tend to escalate in the spring



7

2nd/3rd Transition: Social Emotional Impact

- Relationships built with staff over 3 years in building- start all over at new school
- Trust in new staff takes time to build
- Heightened emotions/anxiety in second grade beginning in the spring
- Extreme impact on students with:
 - History of trauma
 - In-school therapy/CHC
 - 504/IEPs
- Challenge for students to maintain positive momentum from K to 5
- Primary teachers lose connections with students when they move to the intermediate schools




8



Large district - One big family
Supporting our kids is top priority
Consistency is key for student success
Opportunity to address our students' academic, behavioral and social emotional needs with thoughtful, long-term changes

9



Thank you!

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