

BAINBRIDGE ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 303
School Configuration Committee
Meeting Minutes

Date: April 24, 2013
Place: Board Room – Commodore Campus
Time: 5:30 p.m.

Welcome & Update/Review of April 10th Minutes

Superintendent Faith Chapel welcomed committee members to the meeting and asked that they review the minutes from the April 10th meeting. As no corrections or additions were suggested, the minutes will be posted on the district website as part of the committee meeting materials. Ms. Chapel provided a brief overview of the topics to be discussed and noted citizen feedback that had been distributed to the committee.

Discussion: Report from Staffing Costs Subcommittee

Ms. Chapel noted one of the key questions throughout the committee process has been the numbers, and it was agreed it is important to vet that data. An updated draft of the estimated cost savings/ increases by configuration was distributed to the group. Dr. Peter Bang-Knudsen chaired the subcommittee and introduced participants Gregg Dawson, John Brown, Bob Fortner, and Shelia Jakubik. The subcommittee spent about two hours reviewing the projected staffing costs and assumptions behind each of the grade configuration models being considered. Some of the assumptions included a review of the language contained in employee negotiated agreements, and staffing formulas tied directly to students. An example of a staffing formula would be if twenty-five students move from one school to another, a teacher would follow those students. Similarly, if special education students move, paraeducator staffing could move with those students. Then there are other staff more generalized and assigned to a building such as a principal or secretary. The subcommittee reviewed this data in detail, and in general, were in consensus the data made sense.

Subcommittee members commented it was helpful to review the “mechanics” associated with the staffing models and understand how the calculations were applied. It was noted the costs of moving associated with a change in configuration had not yet been addressed. There is still work to be done. Dr. Bang-Knudsen stated the costs related to moving could be compiled, and it was also noted moving costs would be covered by capital funds not general funds. Subcommittee members did talk about administrative capacity and whether a 6-8 middle school would require assistance that wasn’t in the models as yet, and a question mark was added. Another clarification was that elementary level specialists’ and librarians’ time is tied to teacher planning schedules as opposed to the number of students. At the middle and high school level, libraries are staffed differently based on the level of activity. There was a question whether there would be a need to increase library time depending on the configuration scenario. A concern was also raised related to library research conducted by fifth grade students currently housed at Sakai versus fifth grade students that would be housed in an elementary school. It was noted the staffing of any school model was a very complex process. Ms. Chapel spoke about the District Budget Advisory Committee (DBAC) process and the cumulative budget reductions made over the past several years. She noted that every year there are discussions regarding priorities and recommendations by that committee. While both the DBAC and the SCC groups may review similar information related to staffing, recommendations for staffing changes (reinstatements, etc.) really falls under the DBAC process. At the conclusion of the discussion regarding the subcommittee’s work, committee members talked about student and staff success

related to the configuration scenarios that remain. It was also noted there are 400+ fewer students in the district, resulting in a funding issue that creates a forced choice, and the only area yet to be reduced is facilities. Another suggestion from a committee member was to include the assumption of demand being met for the Odyssey program in the staffing scenarios. Finally, several adjustments to the draft staffing and operational costs estimates document were suggested and will be incorporated into the next iteration.

The committee talked about the “numbers” being just one of the criteria to be used to form a recommendation, and it was important to circle back to the impact on teachers, students and educational program. Several folks commented it was important to do this right and to be flexible as the deliberations moved forward. It was suggested that a document encompassing the discussions regarding educational programs be created so as the community meetings take place, questions regarding those types of issues could be addressed. Ms. Chapel asked if there were other areas of information committee members would like to review, and would committee members like to do site visits. Committee members liked the idea of doing site visits.

Discussion: Review & Discuss Key Assumptions

Ms. Chapel distributed the draft Key Findings and asked committee members to review both the findings and the rationales. Again, committee members underscored the staffing and operational costs continue to be vetted, with a range of costs to be included in the information brought to the community. Committee members agreed the subcommittee that has been working on this task continue their work. Ms. Chapel noted the assumption for reviewing the staffing/operational costs should be based on current staffing compared to staffing two years from now – a program to program comparison. Regarding the facilities cost estimates, if the projected 60% savings (previously discussed) is reflected in the numbers, which should be noted on the document for clarity. A few committee members expressed their angst and trepidation about whether the three configuration options being considered and vetted are the choices. Other committee members noted in previous meetings, the whole group had voted to narrow the options to the three remaining configuration scenarios. Another option was brought forward that involved the cost savings for an Ordway closure versus a Commodore closure. This would include changing the order for building replacement. The question was raised, does this option now have to be vetted for costs impacts. At this point, the group talked about the key findings and it was noted the assumptions and rationales are “working” assumptions that can be refined as the work moves forward. Following a long conversation, it was suggested the key finding #2 be revised to read a facility to be closed in the center of the island, and that all agreed Blakely should not be closed. It was also suggested the order of the key findings be changed, with several edits in terminology such as replacing “significant” with “projected” annual savings. Finally, it was underscored the school board would be making the final decisions related to any configuration changes, and input and questions from the community will provide the opportunity for the committee to respond. The input can also be incorporated into the committee’s recommendations. It was suggested revisiting scenarios that were previously agreed to was counterproductive. A brief discussion ensued, resulting in a change to key finding #2 to read “if the district consolidates to six schools, the facility currently being considered for closure is Commodore.

Next Meetings:

May 8 & 22