

Bainbridge Island School District

School Configuration Committee

Guiding Principles

April 2013

The primary purpose of all economically or demographically driven strategic change is to utilize available resources to provide the students of Bainbridge Island with the highest quality educational opportunities in alignment with the district's mission, vision, and guiding principles.

The School Board's charge to the committee is to develop configuration options that best accomplish the district's mission, vision, and guiding principles within the constraints of the district's economic and demographic limitations.

-- School Board Charge to the School Configuration Committee

The members of the School Configuration Committee should consider the following guiding principles when formulating their recommendations.

The committee should analyze and consider...

1. **Educational Programs and Educational Research:**

Seek to maintain or enhance educational programs and opportunities for students that are aligned with educational research and support the district's mission, vision, and guiding principles.

2. **Costs and Cost Savings:**

- **Operational Costs:**

Maximize opportunities to increase efficiency and operational cost savings over time while sustaining and enhancing educational programs.

- **Facility Costs:**

Maximize the use of district facilities to provide the highest quality learning environment for students while enhancing efficiency, flexibility, and optimal investment of taxpayer dollars.

- **Human Costs:**

Consider implications for staff, students, and parents as well as organizational capacity to manage change.

- **Short-term vs. Long-term Costs:**

Balance one-time and short-term (1-2 year) transition costs with long-term (10-15 year) opportunities for reducing operational and facility costs.

3. **Community Values and Input:**

Integrate community perspectives and values into options analysis, providing numerous outreach opportunities for constituent groups to engage in dialogue with committee representatives and the Board.

Working Assumptions

The School Configuration Committee has identified several pivotal “findings” after analyzing numerous grade and school configurations; potential impacts on staff, students and families; staffing and operational costs (General Fund); and facility costs (Capital Fund). The following findings have guided the development of the 3 options that are being forwarded for consideration and discussion by Bainbridge Island School District staff, parents and community members:

1. A change in grade configuration should only be considered by the District if there will be consolidation from 7 schools to 6 schools.

Rationale: Changing grade configurations while maintaining 7 schools would not reduce General Fund or Capital Fund expenditures and would create significant disruption. Students in each grade would be spread across a greater number of schools, resulting in fewer sections of each grade at each school. This would create the need to transfer a significant number of students each year to balance class size or change to multi-age classes at each school. Changing grade configurations while maintaining 7 schools would also lead to boundary changes for several schools.

2. Grade configurations that were analyzed by the School Configuration Committee but are not currently being considered:

- Gr. K-8, 9-12

Rationale: With only 1 transition between elementary and high school, students may not be ready for the size and complexity of program when they reach Gr. 9. It would be very difficult to duplicate Woodward Middle School's elective offerings across 4-5 schools; most K-8 schools have a narrower set of elective courses and often have a "specialist" model similar to our elementary schools. Many districts that have changed from an elementary school/middle school model to K-8 have made the change due to concerns about poor academic achievement in middle school programs.

- Gr. K-3, 4-6, 7-8, 9-12

Rationale: This configuration does not change the number of school transitions (students would continue to change schools 3 times from K-12). This configuration would not work with just 1 K-3 school or 1 Gr. 4-6 school. The only way to carry out this configuration with 1 less school would be to close Commodore and disband its programs. This option would increase transportation costs by \$200,000. The District would need to change back to a 3-bell schedule with 3 morning and afternoon bus runs in order to transport all K-3 students from the center of the Island to the north and south ends and then transport all Gr. 4-12 students from all around the Island to the center (Ordway, Sakai, MWS, BHS, Commodore).

- Gr. K-6, 7-8, 9-12

Rationale: A change to a K-6 configuration would reduce the number of transitions (students would change schools 2 times from K-12). However, this configuration would require facility changes that cannot be accomplished by adding portables. Several classrooms would need to be added to Blakely and Wilkes, including science labs for Gr. 6 science. This configuration poses challenges for assignment of Gr. 6 academic teachers, some of whom are not elementary certified but are instead certified as subject area specialists (e.g. science, math, or LA/SS endorsements). Most school districts have moved away from a K-6 configuration; it may limit academic acceleration opportunities for Gr. 6 students.

3. The 3 options programs currently housed at Commodore (Mosaic, Odyssey, Eagle Harbor) should continue to be kept together on the main campus.

Rationale: These programs have unique components (e.g. Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) courses, home-based parent partnership) with specific requirements. It is more efficient to keep these programs

together, with staff who are knowledgeable about state laws governing ALE regulations or requirements for Written Student Learning Plans (WSLP). The Eagle Harbor High School program needs to be located in close proximity to Bainbridge High School since many EHHS students need to access courses that are only offered at BHS.

4. Closing a building would offer the opportunity for annual savings in General Fund expenditures that could be used for educational program and staffing enhancements. Initial estimates indicate that the savings would be in the range of \$300-450 K.

Rationale: The closure of a building reduces operational costs (e.g. utilities, transportation, etc.) and staffing costs. It would also reduce long-term capital costs by reducing the number of buildings that need to be renovated or replaced over time.

5. If the District consolidates to 6 schools, the facility that is currently being considered for closure is Commodore.

Rationale: The current Commodore facility is a combination of different buildings built at different times, with different operating systems that have been added over time. It is inefficient to operate and would require significant funds to maintain. The facility was scheduled to close after the construction of Woodward and Sakai; however, enrollment increases from 1999-2005 and construction projects on the BHS campus created the need to keep it open. (NOTE: The District recently received a grant that will pay for an update to the 2004 "Study and Survey" analysis of every school structure and its electrical and mechanical systems. The survey will begin with an analysis of Commodore and Ordway facilities.)

6. Blakely Elementary School should not be closed and will need to be replaced at some point in the near future.

Rationale: Blakely Elementary is now the oldest school in the District. The possibility of closing Blakely was considered by the committee; however, transportation costs would increase since students from the south end would all need to be transported to the center of the Island. Demographic studies also indicate that the south end of the Island is likely to have higher number of school-age children. The grade and school configuration options that are currently being considered assume that Blakely would not be closed.

