

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

Date: May 28, 2013
Place: Board Room – Commodore Campus
Time: 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Welcome/Update/Review of May 8th Minutes

Superintendent Faith Chapel welcomed committee members to the final meeting for 2012-2013. She asked folks to review the minutes from the May 8th meeting and suggest any additions or corrections to the text. Following the incorporation of suggested edits, the meeting minutes will be posted as part of the committee record. Ms. Chapel reviewed the agenda for the meeting that included a discussion of feedback from the Community Meetings, consideration of a possible “Option 4” (data about costs and facility implications), and the staff/parent/community survey. The committee will also consider the configuration timeline and plans for the fall.

Discussion: Feedback from Community Meetings

Ms. Chapel distributed a draft document containing a summary of themes taken from the small group discussion notes and report-out across all the public meetings regarding the School Configuration Committee work. Ex-Officio School Board committee representatives Patty Fielding and Mary Curtis worked to distill the community meeting feedback into neutral themes that could provide the information the committee needs to continue with objective analysis of the configuration options. It was noted information related to preferred paths or options was intentionally kept out of the document. Ms. Fielding asked the other committee members to review the summary of themes and provide edits where they might feel the information was inaccurate or biased, and add any themes that may have been missed. Committee members suggested the reasons for convening the committee be made clear – financial concerns, enrollment decline, splitting specialists between schools, etc. It was not as clear as it could have been at the community meetings, and it would be important that information be part of the survey. People need to see a “win,” to understand what they are fighting for, such as in the 90’s when the reconfiguration occurred to address overcrowding at the middle school. One committee member thought there would be a much stronger reaction to the capital savings that would be realized by closing a school. Another theme not heard at the community meetings was related to what could be done programmatically with the monies saved (\$300K) from closing a school. Also noted was the disruption of school culture such as the 5/6 “tween” group and the options programs.

As the committee continued a review of the summary of themes, folks noted hearing several questions about the “assumptions” the demographic data used as a basis for some of the analysis, and how long does the demographic data hold true. Ms. Chapel asked folks to share out additional thoughts and comments from around the table. Comments included: a) What is the cost to students for remaining with the current configuration? While the committee has discussed the impact, it may not have been as apparent in the community. b) There were comments about data transparency. c) While staff voiced they liked things the way they are, no one was clamoring for Option 3. There were also comments about the loss of program. d) One committee member noted a lot of debate about school choice, and there was no educational vision as to how the district could be better. e) With the enrollment declining, how does the district attract more people to come to the island? f) Besides peoples’ resistance to change, people thought the committee had done a pretty good job analyzing the configurations. g) It was noted one of the largest voting blocks in the community involves folks who do not have children in the schools, and those folks were absent from the community meetings – even the meeting held during the day. h) Some folks expressed the opinion that the school board was invisible in the process, and there was no “imperative” in the process. What is driving

this work? Noting the board's charge to the committee, Ms. Fielding and Ms. Curtis explained the impetus for board conversation focused on the economic and declining enrollment issues. The question was posed whether the current number, size and configuration of schools was the best way to deliver education efficiently, considering staffing and operational costs. It was further noted that if it were not for the Bainbridge Schools Foundation, the district would be operating approximately \$1 million dollars in the red – or have to make drastic cuts to make up for that amount. While the board didn't know if there could be economies, it was important to do the analysis. i) Understanding the tradeoffs related to staying with the current configuration or moving to another configuration needs to be clear to parents. j) The theme taken from the list was management of risk. More data analysis is needed before moving forward.

At the conclusion of the group discussion, Ms. Chapel acknowledged communication about Option 1, maintaining the current school configuration and the financial impact had not been as clear as it could have been. She noted folks need to understand the district has been deficit spending, and maintaining current programs has depended on the Bainbridge Schools Foundation (BSF), supplemental levy dollars, and conservative budget management. The budget planning process through the District Budget Advisory Committee (DBAC) has been as involved as is the SCC process, but unless you were inside the system it was not as apparent. Ms. Chapel also noted presenting information about the SCC process to a group of Bainbridge High School students, with that group viewing the configuration process in terms of financial concerns. Ms. Chapel talked about the support of the Bainbridge Schools Foundation, with the priorities focused on maintaining reasonable class sizes and educational programs. If the state legislature provides additional revenue, the district could return to more sustainable funding of basic staff positions rather than relying on fundraising. If there are additional reductions necessary, the same items that have been on the table through the DBAC process would be considered, and the district would spend down the reserves over the next couple of years. The big question is state funding, and it is possible there will be a second special session. Ms. Chapel noted should additional state funding be realized that would support staff positions in a sustainable way, BSF support could be directed to program enrichment such as in the area of STEM, music offerings, or elementary world languages. It was suggested a one page "talking points" information sheet be created that summarized the current budget realities in the district.

Discussion: Consideration of Possible "Option 4" (Data re: Cost & Facility Implications)

Ms. Chapel stated the committee agreed at their May 8th meeting to take into consideration community feedback and look at the cost analysis and facility implications of disaggregating the options programs. She underscored the analysis was not about dismantling the programs and returning students to the general school populations. Part of the analysis included a matrix of the district's option program history created by retired Commodore Principal Catherine Camp. The matrix was distributed to committee members, as was the Estimated Cost Savings/Increases by Configuration analysis related to the disaggregation of the options programs. Assistant Superintendent Dr. Peter Bang-Knudsen spoke about the challenge of the staffing and facility implications of moving portions of the options programs to other facilities. One scenario moved Eagle Harbor High School (EHHS) to the Bainbridge High School (BHS) campus, and moved Mosaic and Odyssey to the portables on the Woodward Middle School campus. While the staffing implications were estimated, it was noted moving both Mosaic and Odyssey to portables was not really viable with the space available. Two other scenarios involved (1) moving Mosaic to Ordway Elementary, Odyssey to Woodward, and Eagle Harbor High to the Bainbridge High campus, and (2) moving Mosaic to Woodward, Odyssey to Ordway, and Eagle Harbor to BHS. All of the scenarios involved complex staffing analysis, with implications related to the availability of specialists (elementary students on Woodward campus), having elementary students on a middle school campus or middle school students on an elementary school campus, and transportation issues. Committee discussion included concerns about maintaining Eagle Harbor High School as an independent "school within a school" on the BHS campus, understanding what the true staff savings would be, and the importance of having an administrator with oversight of the options programs. It was also noted how important it would be to have the general community understand the options programs and the impact of disaggregating those programs.

Continuing the review of the “option 4” data and facility impacts, Director of Facilities and Capital Projects Tamela Van Winkle provided maps of the school buildings indicated in the option 4 configuration. She talked about moving EHHS to the BHS campus and noted the most logical building to house the EHHS program would be the 100 Building where four classrooms could be dedicated to the EHHS program. Ms. Chapel added comments about the programs currently housed in the 100 Building, which includes Bainbridge Youth Services, special needs classrooms, ceramics, woodshop, drafting, home economics, and a preschool program. It was also noted there are no science classrooms in the 100 Building, therefore EHHS students would have to be integrated into the science classes in the BHS environment. There was a brief discussion about programs and instructional models and how they would survive moving to another building.

Ms. Van Winkle continued the review of option 4 facility impacts, and noted the opportunity to grow the Odyssey program would not work in the scenarios contained in this option due to space issues. In the scenario where Mosaic was moved to Ordway, and Odyssey was moved to Woodward, portables would have to be added on the Woodward campus to accommodate the program. As portables are considered “temporary” this would be a Phase I project. Group discussion included how to provide specialists time for elementary students on a middle school campus, what was the better placement for the Mosaic and Odyssey programs, possible useable space for the Odyssey program within the Sakai and Woodward buildings (classrooms that can be split), and whether an additional option involving revenue generation should be formulated. In addition, it was suggested the old Commodore building be torn down and a new building be erected to house the options programs together. The last scenarios to be reviewed was moving Mosaic to Woodward, and moving Odyssey to Ordway, which would involve a large number of portables on the Ordway campus. One committee member commented that while growing a program such as Odyssey was fine, what about increasing the student population at the elementary schools that have less than fulltime specialists and counselors because of declining enrollment. Another committee member suggested the district could generate revenue by getting into offering preschool programs that are tuition-based. The conversation was brought back to the central question before the committee; is the district’s current configuration – seven schools – the best to serve students and support the financial issues faced by the district. It was noted the work continues on the data and cost savings estimates, with more work to come before a school is closed. Ms. Chapel asked the committee if Option 4 was a viable option, which considers disaggregation of the Commodore Options programs based on the analysis of the estimated cost savings and increases. Committee members engaged in a fairly intense discussion in which they revisited previous conversations about keeping the options programs together, the value of the options programs, and the previously validated working assumptions. There was also a suggestion made during the discussion that information sheets related to an option 4 be created. It was suggested keeping the options programs together was strategic to the district as it provides alternative pathways for every student. Ms. Chapel asked the committee if they were reaffirming working assumption #3 that states *the 3 options programs currently housed at Commodore (Mosaic, Odyssey, Eagle Harbor) should continue to be kept together on the main campus*. It was suggested that rather than tying a statement to a working assumption, the committee state that after analyzing the cost estimates and facilities impact of Option 4 (disaggregate the options programs) as requested and it was found not to be a viable option. (Ex-officio board representative Mary Curtis proposed the School Configuration Committee work be placed on the June 13th school board meeting agenda.) Ms. Chapel again asked for committee vote (option to disaggregate the options programs not being viable) with the results being 19 yes, 3 opposed and 5 abstain and the motion carried.

Discussion: Staff & Parent/Community Survey

As the committee reviewed the draft survey, it was suggested that to help clarify things for the public, four or five bullet points preface the survey stating why other options were no longer being considered (with the pros and cons), as well as the options that remain under consideration. Components of the draft survey include a description of the individual participating in the survey (i.e. community member, parent with a BISD student, etc.), if they are a parent, which school does their child attend, have they attended any of

the SCC community presentations, and their level of awareness about the options currently being considered. As questions 3 and 4 had some redundancy, it was suggested question 3 be eliminated, and in question 4 the word “awareness” be replaced with the word “knowledge.” Several folks felt question 5, the identified criteria used to assess the configuration options, was unnecessary and a bit confusing. It was suggested that just a list of criteria doesn’t provide a clear understanding of the trade-offs that would come as a result of choosing one criteria (value) over another. It was also suggested better descriptors, for example criteria defined as “small” school size, would provide better clarity for survey participants. In addition, the ranking connected with this question may not offer the committee the kind feedback they seek due to lack of specificity. It was noted how important it was to get the survey out, especially to staff before the end of the school year, in a timely manner. The committee reviewed survey question #6, and it was noted the key variables listed in this question were linked to the key elements reviewed by the committee during their work. It was suggested item “K” on the list be removed as this variable is “assumed” within the bond information. In addition, the idea the committee will come back to the community in the fall should be included in the introduction to the survey.

Ms. Chapel talked about the timeline for the committee work, and it was noted the “drop dead date” for having a decision made in order to implement any change by the fall of 2014 was November 2013. Committee members indicated meeting this timeline was not possible. In addition, the survey will be available throughout the summer, with analysis of the results coming in the fall. Ms. Chapel suggested taking off the table any change for 2014, with the soonest timeline for change being the fall of 2015. Committee members agreed with the change in timeline, and agreed to see the work through to the next year. At the conclusion of the meeting, a few final “tweaks” were made to the content of the survey.