

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

Date: October 3, 2012

Place: Board Room – Commodore Campus

Time: 5:30 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions

Superintendent Faith Chapel welcomed the committee members and asked folks to introduce themselves. Committee members were introduced as follows: Faith Chapel (Superintendent), Kathy Roberts (Recorder), Peter Bang-Knudsen (Assistant Superintendent), Melinda Reynvaan (Principal – Ordway Elementary), Jim Corsetti (Principal – Sakai Intermediate), John Brown (Parent/Community Representative), Marty Cavalluzzi (Parent/Community Representative), Michael Cox (Parent/Community Representative), Bob Fortner (Parent/Community Representative), Sheila Jakubik (Parent/Community Representative), Carolyn Harper (Parent/Community Representative), Jennifer MacDonald (Parent/Community Representative), Joshua Richards (Parent/Community Representative), Julie Yunt (Parent/Community Representative), Kathy Ellison (Cert. Staff - Sakai), Janette Dodge (Cert. Staff - Ordway), Susanne Darling (Cert. Staff - Wilkes), Dave Layton (BIEA President - BHS), Peg Dight (Class. Staff – Sakai), and Lisa Jowise (Class. Staff – Blakely). (The following committee members were unable to attend: Mary Curtis (Ex-Officio School Board Representative), Patty Fielding (Ex-Officio School Board Representative), Warren Boeker (Parent/Community Representative), Tamela Van Winkle (Director – Facilities/Capital Projects), Gregg Dawson (Parent/Community Representative), Kelly Webster (Parent/Community Representative), Linda Purdom (Cert. Staff – Woodward/Sp. Ed.), and Liz Finin (Cert. Staff - COS). Following introductions, Ms Chapel noted all the materials and minutes for the School Configuration Committee meetings would be available on the District’s website. She also explained by the end of this first meeting, committee members should have an understanding of their task and responsibilities, the timeline for accomplishment of each task, the operating assumptions and key considerations for the work, and a historical context related to the configuration of the district schools.

School Board President Mike Spence was introduced and provided an overview of the Board’s charge to the committee related to the development of school configuration options that best accomplish the district’s mission, vision, and guiding principles within the constraints of the district’s economic and demographic limitations. Mr. Spence explained several years ago, the board began to notice enrollment appeared to be in a declining or “flat” mode, which led to the question whether the district schools were configured to realize maximum efficiency. During the same period, the state legislature began cutting school funding over many sessions, with no idea when some of that funding could be reinstated. Those two challenges – declining enrollment and shrinking education funding – led the board to hire a demographer to do a professional study of enrollment projections for the coming years. The demographer found that 2005 was the peak year for a district enrollment of 4223, and since then enrollment has declined. Future projections from the demographer were provided in three scenarios, with a projected high of 3977, and a low of 3504. With a possible 500 students fewer than the district’s peak, it is extremely important to conduct an exercise to assess whether or not the district’s current configuration is the most effective and efficient possible to support education. Mr. Spence noted hearing from the community that the district will not consider keeping the current configuration, however he stated the committee will analyze the current configuration as well as others. He reviewed with the committee, the document *Charge to the Committee* which defines the committee tasks and responsibilities, the assumptions that frame their work, and the operating principles.

Ms. Chapel noted when a committee starts this kind of work, it is important to have a set of assumptions and a framework to guide them. She explained the district’s primary goal is to utilize available resources to provide students with the highest quality educational opportunities in alignment with the district’s mission, vision and guiding beliefs. The committee will analyze multiple scenarios and recommend a set of options to be considered for implementation. Those recommendations will be brought to the Board in an advisory capacity, with the ultimate decision for any change being the responsibility of the school board. Ms. Chapel emphasized there was no preconceived school configuration to begin the committee work. She noted the committee will address four variables in formulating its recommendations: 1) The grade levels to be served by the district’s schools; 2) The size of schools for various grade levels; 3) The number of schools in the district; and 4) The location of schools in the district. The committee will also consider the potential impact of recommended options on the General Fund, Capital Fund and Transportation Fund, with potential for cost savings, future levy and bond requests, transition costs, staffing changes, and the cost of transportation.

It was noted the committee will consider the potential impact of recommended options on existing programs. Ms. Chapel explained the Grade K-6 Education Programs and Innovation Committee would begin their work in November and will run in parallel with the SCC. It will be important for the two committees to have conversation, probably next May, about each committee’s work. Both committees are expected to gather input from parents, staff members, and the community at large prior to formulating final recommendations. Ms. Chapel also noted the district does not anticipate significant reductions in state allocations for K-12 education funding in the next biennium, due to the recent Supreme Court ruling in the McCleary lawsuit. However, state economic projections do not provide a foundation for optimism that K-12 General Fund allocations will be significantly higher in the immediate future. Responding to a committee question regarding facilities and how far out into the future should be considered, Ms. Chapel said currently the district builds new facilities to a 50 plus year life standard. Anything that will be looked at will be a long-term consideration. It will be important to think short-term and long-term. Long-term vision will include the work of several committees (SCC, EPI and those addressing curriculum).

The committee reviewed the timeline for their work. The timeline is as follows:

<u>October</u>	Initial Meeting – Committee role, tasks, operating assumptions and historical context related to the district configuration of schools
<u>October</u>	Consideration of research regarding school size & grade level transitions
<u>November</u>	Consideration of research regarding grade configuration
<u>November</u>	Consideration of district facilities & current programs and services
<u>December</u>	Consideration of staffing & enrollment patterns and projections
<u>January – March</u>	Discussion of configuration Options
<u>February – March</u>	Community outreach
<u>March-April</u>	Development of recommendations
<u>May</u>	Develop final recommendations

Historical Context for School Configuration

Ms. Chapel provided a historical overview of Bainbridge Island schools, noting it was one of the oldest school districts in the state. The first school was Port Madison School (District No. 2) established in 1860, with the school year three to four months long. Port Blakely School was established in 1876. It was noted “Lizzie” Ordway (Ordway Elementary) became a teacher on Bainbridge Island in 1867, and became superintendent of Kitsap County schools in 1881. In the early 1900s there were 10 different school districts – Port Madison (Dist. 2), Port Blakely (Dist. 5), Eagle Harbor/Madrone/Winslow (Dist. 6), Pleasant Beach (Dist. 11), Island Center (Dist. 15), Rolling Bay (Dist. 16), McDonald/Eagledale (Dist. 33), Seabold (Dist. 38), Manzanita (Dist. 18), Union High School (Dist. 3). Olympic/Union High School (1912) served the north end of the Island prior to consolidation. By 1922, Bainbridge had 10 school districts with 2 high schools, 9 grammar schools, 7 high school teachers, 22 grammar school teacher, and 125 high school students and 675 grammar school students. At that time, several of the districts began discussing consolidation of all the Island schools. Six of the districts voted to consolidate and became District #303. Initially, the three districts located on the north end of the island refused to consolidate based on questions of transportation and safety for the children. After much debate and compromise about the location of a consolidated high school, the three dissenting northern districts voted to join District #303. The commitment was made to have 3 elementary schools (K-8) located at the north end, the center and the south end of the island. In 1928, Bainbridge High School was built, with new/replacement buildings added over the years. Ms. Chapel highlighted changes and configurations through 1950 to present, noting some of the changes related to Commodore School (built in 1948). Commodore began as an elementary school and later became Commodore Middle School. After Woodward Middle School was built in 1994, Commodore became the home of Commodore Options School. At one time it also housed community agencies such as Bainbridge Youth Services and Head Start. The elementary schools on the island included Wilkes (originally built 1955 – new building 2012), Blakely (1964), and Ordway (1978). The Odyssey Multiage Program was added in the 1990s. Woodward Middle School was built in 1994 and Sakai Intermediate School was built in 1999.

Currently, Bainbridge Island School District has seven schools as follows: Bainbridge High School (Gr. 9-12 – Enrollment 1224), Woodward Middle School (Gr. 7-8 – Enrollment 545), Sakai Intermediate School (Gr. 5-6 – Enrollment - 511), Blakely Elementary (Gr. K-4 – Enrollment - 388), Ordway Elementary (Gr. K-4 – Enrollment - 385), Wilkes Elementary (Gr. K-4 – Enrollment 396), and Commodore Options (K-12 – Enrollment - 327). As of October 2012, the district has a headcount enrollment of 3792. Staffing for 2012-13 includes 230 certificated staff, 121 classified staff, and 19 administrators (includes school building and district office).

Work of Past Configuration Committees 1990 – Present

Committee members received copies of past school configuration committees recommendations for review and discussion. Those documents included *New School Configuration Task Force Report and Recommendations* (March 10, 1997), and *K-8 School Configuration Committee* (April 26, 1993). Ms. Chapel divided committee members into groups of four, with two groups reviewing the *New School* document and two reviewing the *K-8 School* document. She asked the groups to review the assumptions guiding the past committee’s work, the criteria for development of the options, the final recommendations and the reasons for those recommendations, and finally the relevance to the work being considered by the SCC. The four groups worked together for approximately 30 minutes, and returned to the whole group to share their review and analysis. The two groups reviewing the work done in 1993 noted the original “*supporting rationale*” for an alternative configuration was the belief that the eighth grade was the grade level best suited to be housed in a “single grade” environment adjacent to the high school. The finale recommendation organized the district into three grade K-5 schools, a new middle school of grades 6 – 7, grade 8 housed in the Commodore facility, and grades 9 – 12 housed at Bainbridge High School. The rationale for the committee’s recommendation included maintaining the commitment to the “K-5, 6-8, 9-

12” model, financial considerations, input from school staff and the community, and maintaining significant flexibility in the availability of space at Commodore for use by the high school and other district programs. It was noted there was little “data” attached to the final recommendations.

The two groups reviewing the work of the New School Configuration Task Force noted the assumptions included easing crowded conditions in the middle school and at the elementary schools, that the new school needed to be adaptable to further growth, and that at some time in the future, the new school was expected to serve as an elementary school. The task force conducted a survey in the community that included three options and a “write-in” option 4. When the survey results were reviewed, two of the options “fell off,” with the option 1 (new school grades 5 & 6) or option 2 (new school and existing elementary schools grades K-6) remaining the two most viable school configuration options. It was noted that research around class size, school size, and transitions would be extremely important to the work of the current School Configuration Committee.

At the conclusion of the group discussion, Ms. Chapel provided committee members with “homework” in the form of research materials regarding school transitions and school size. The materials included: *School Transitions and Adjustment During Early Adolescence* from the University of Nebraska – Lincoln, *The Effect of Number of School-To-School Transitions on District Performance* by Eric L. Brown, *School Size and its Relationship to Student Outcomes and School Climate* by Kenneth R. Stevenson – University of South Carolina, and *A Review of Empirical Evidence about School Size Effects: A Policy Perspective* by Kenneth Leithwood and Doris Jantzi. Ms. Chapel noted the topics covered in the articles – school size and school transitions – will be discussed at the October 17th meeting.

Meeting Dates:

October 3 & 17
November 7 & 28
December 12
January 16 & 30
February 13 & 27
March 13 & 27
April 17
May 8 & 22

All meetings will be held in the Board Room (next to Commodore Commons) from 5:30 – 7:30 PM.