

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

Date: February 27, 2013
Place: Board Room – Commodore Campus
Time: 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Welcome & School Configuration “Guiding Principles” (Draft 2)

Superintendent Faith Chapel welcomed committee members and asked them to review the minutes from the February 13th meeting, and note any additions or revisions needed. Following the review of the minutes, Ms. Chapel explained another draft of the School Configuration Committee Guiding Principles had been created based on comments made at the last meeting. Suggestions included collapsing items contained in the document to make it more succinct, and streamlined. Committee members reviewed the latest document, with folks commenting it was indeed concise, succinct, and well done. Other comments noted some adjustment in the category of short-term vs long-term may be needed. The intent of this category was explained to be a balancing process, that could include trade-offs. The construction of Wilkes was used as an example, as staff had to be moved out and moved back in, with short-term costs incurred. Another suggestion was related to the category of *facility costs*, with the term *facility usage* eliminated so as not to infer community usage would be curtailed. Hearing no further comments, Ms. Chapel noted the guiding principles would be kept in draft form, with the committee referring back to the document as filter for decision-making.

Continued Analysis of Grade Configuration Scenarios Utilizing Framework

Ms. Chapel asked Assistant Superintendent Dr. Peter Bang-Knudsen to be the scribe during committee discussion, and record ideas and suggestions live on the big screen. Prior to beginning work on the scenario frameworks, committee members reengaged in discussion regarding certain elements of the guiding principles. Specifically, comments related to making the best use of district facilities in ways that support educational programs, promote efficiencies, and maintain the best investment value for tax payers. In addition, the reason for the committee’s work was restated as the issue of declining enrollment and declining resources. The group referred back to the original charge to the committee as being clear and well written.

The committee began work with the scenario frameworks, with a question raised regarding the analytical process for *pros* and *cons*. Ms. Chapel suggested the committee begin populating the pros and cons fields, and then provide an opportunity for staff and community members to submit input regarding the scenarios. It was also noted the volume of comments and input would be grouped into classifications for ease of review. Ms. Chapel asked folks to look back at the pros and cons for the K-8 scenario and asked if there were other comments. As there were none, the K-8 scenario was closed for now. It was suggested the committee compare K-6 and K-5 scenarios to understand which of those models were the strongest. Then once that is determined, the strongest of those models be compared to the current model.

The committee looked at the number and size of schools, with an overview of each facility's capacity provided for consideration. One committee member noted the grade-level configuration matrixes also talks about closing schools – putting “apples and oranges” in the same basket for comparison. It was suggested, the committee should first decide a grade level scenario in the context of all current buildings, then discuss closing buildings or moving folks around. Ms. Chapel had the group consider if another grade level were added to the current elementary schools, and how the capacity of those buildings would be impacted. Another observation was that with the current grade level configuration, school buildings are being underutilized. A second observation was that with a K-6 configuration, elementary schools would be jam-packed (and OK at the middle school), and with a K-5 configuration schools are within bounds for capacity, but the middle school reaches its limits. Ms. Chapel suggested if there were four elementary schools (K-5), the average would be an enrollment of 359 across those schools. This would leave Sakai with empty space, and the other schools about the same. Using this process for consideration demonstrates how the number and size of schools makes a difference. It would help to have data about how many sections of each grade level are currently in the district. The group talked about a variety of issues including considering grade level configurations with six schools or seven schools, and the implications related to numbers. Summarizing the discussion, Ms. Chapel noted if the district moves to a K-5 configuration (with four schools), Woodward gets larger (6-8) and the average for the elementary buildings will be 360. If the K-5 configuration is divided across three elementary buildings, the student population would be 460 – 500. That puts it in the context of looking at it from a grade configuration balanced against the number and size of schools.

Ms. Chapel put forward the idea that if the grade configuration was changed, and the district stayed with seven schools, are there benefits. It was noted state curriculum is developed for a K-5 configuration. With current buildings, those buildings would be underutilized. The possibility of closing Commodore was suggested, moving the various elements of that program to other school buildings. Based on Commodore's capacity, moving that program could provide more options rather than closing Blakely. It was suggested that if a K-5 grade configuration was implemented with seven schools, it would not solve the current specialists' situation. The question was posed, does the K-5 grade level configuration make sense with seven schools, and the group agreed it did not. It was noted that looking at the average population of the schools was a great tool to define whether the configuration scenario makes sense. The group continued the discussion and several members suggested that, based on building capacity and the educational program that favors K-5, does the K-6 configuration make sense. Summarizing the discussion, Ms. Chapel compared the K-5 and K-6 configurations. In the case of the K-5 configuration, if a school isn't closed, Woodward ends up being very full and four schools are underutilized. With the K-6 scenario, if a school is closed, the elementary schools end up too large. K-6 only makes sense if the same number of schools is maintained. A con for the K-5 configuration could be putting Woodward at capacity, and there are designated classrooms in Woodward that may impact space options.

Ms. Chapel distributed two documents: *Facility Operational Costs* (Blakely, Commodore, Ordway), and *Transportation Cost Implications*. She noted the district's storm water fees have been removed from the cost estimates, because as long as the district owns the property it will have to pay these fees. In addition, staff spoke with other districts that have closed buildings and they indicated there is not 100% savings when a building is closed. North Kitsap and Central

Kitsap indicated they used an estimate of 60% savings to close a building. The transportation cost implications of closing a building were provided as follows: *Grade K-5 Configuration* – There is every possibility the district will save money going to this model if Blakely is not moved to Sakai. Routes would be spread equally between the elementary runs and the grade 6-12 runs. Depending on where students are located, bus runs may be condensed. Overall savings are estimated at \$20K. *Grade K-6 Configuration* – This model would be more difficult to implement. Busses will have to be added to the elementary runs, and the high school runs would have to be reduced. Driver shifts for those runs would be difficult to fill. *Blakely Implications* – If Blakely were to close and those students were transported to Sakai, \$6,500 would be added to employee costs, and \$2,000 would be added to fuel costs. South end students would ride the bus for 40-45 minutes.

The document *Savings/Cost Increases by Configuration* was distributed to the group. Ms. Chapel noted district staff revised the document and it is conservative. If the district maintained the current grade level configuration for 2013/14, Ms. Chapel explained there would be a cost savings of \$102,000, with a reduction in certificated staff of 1.3 FTE (based on anticipated decrease in enrollment). The other scenarios assume a school would be closed. The K-5/6-8 configuration would result in a cost savings of \$268,651, and the K-6/7-8 configuration would result in a cost savings of \$328,756.50. The group talked about the tradeoff between closing a school and making necessary renovations to other schools to accommodate a configuration change. The group also talked about implications for future bonds for things such as a new Blakely Elementary School, or other capital projects. Ms. Chapel noted that as the committee's process continues, it will be important to provide opportunities for the community as a whole to give input regarding the committee's ideas and considerations.

Ms. Chapel noted the next meeting will focus on facilities information and educational program data. She asked if there were other pieces of information the committee would like addressed. One request was for information regarding the Commodore Options waiting list for programs at that school.

Next Meetings:

March 13 & 27

April 17

May 8 & 22