

Presentation to the Carroll County Board of Education

**Redistricting and Facility Utilization
December 6, 2017**

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Agenda

- **Brief presentation**
- **Answer questions of members of the Board of Education**
- **Q+A**
- **Board member discussion**
- **Note:**
 - **Handouts: full report, survey graphs, comments, executive summary**

Project Background

On July 25, 2017, the BOE voted to engage a consultant/facilitator to gather input from the public via survey and stakeholder focus groups

- 1. Who**
- 2. Timeline**
- 3. Factors**
- 4. Primary focus**
- 5. Supported Actions**

Survey

- **Singer Group and CCPS partnered to develop the questions; factors provided by the Board of Education (BOE)**
- **BOE approved survey**
- **Distributed and marketed by CCPS**

Worked with Jon O'Neal, Gregory Bricca and Carey Gaddis

Public Feedback

- **Community survey on redistricting and facility utilization**
 - Survey open October 11 – 31
 - 3,637 responses collected
 - 1562 comments
 - Most respondents (~ 75%) parent or guardian
- **Key stakeholder groups**
 - Employee bargaining units
 - Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
 - Teacher Advisory Committee (TAC), facilitated by Assistant Superintendent Steve Johnson
 - Carroll County Student Government Association (CCSGA)
 - Board of County Commissioners (2)
 - Non-profit organizations/ Local Management Board
- **Public Meeting**

Process: **Who**

- **Public Committee; CCPS; Consultant**
- **Survey: Public committee (66%); many comments suggesting a combination**

Themes from Comments on Process

- **Combine all options**
- **Need public input, expertise of CCPS staff and leaders, and an independent perspective**
- **Committee should be fair, impartial, neutral**
- **Concern about bias/agendas of CCPS and community**
- **Public too emotional to be unbiased**
- **Lack of trust; desire for transparency**
- **Want decisions made with 'head' not just 'heart'**
- **Concern that previously used independent consultant, paid a lot of money and did not use their recommendations**
- **Criticism of prior processes; NCHS should not have been closed**
- **Politics**
- **Emotions**

Focus Group Feedback Process

Bargaining Units – Combination of public and internal committee; public so they feel part of process; community members but should be impartial (not parents)

CAC – Large cross section of community; staff could have difficulty making unbiased decisions; general public knows more about their own communities

Public Forum – All should be included (public, internal and consultant). Public committee should not be too large (cumbersome); consultant needs to have experience with the issue

CCSGA – A committee of public stakeholders and staff with independent consultant reporting findings

Local Management Board – Combination of all three options; include business representatives and commissioners

Commissioners – (BOCC #1) Small group focusing on business and economic development decisions (BOCC #2) same blend as CEC including municipalities, business community, hospital, library, law enforcement, scouts, recreation councils, regional leaders; chaired by emeritus, non-political local leader

Frequency

- **Survey: 3-5 years (51%)**
- **Focus Groups: Most 3-5 years; triggers**
- **“Regularly every 5 or so years. I believe it will be an easier pill to swallow for parents if it is expected and happens regularly.”**
- **“...continually monitor attendance, the housing markets and economic growth patterns to identify trends and develop plans with significant headway.”**
- **Commissioners** – (BOCC #1) comprehensive redistricting at least every 10 years; and, function of growth (BOCC #2) complete major redistricting now, then every 3-4 years and look at annually; should have trigger/formula – set policies and guidelines so no surprises

Discussion Question

Should the timeline be determined by clear “triggers” in policy or simply occur at a regular interval?

Bargaining Units – Needs to be done so student population is “appropriate” across county

CAC – Favor triggers rather than arbitrary timeline. Seek input of teachers and CCPS staff and if instructional programs are being adversely affected. Look at feeder patterns.

Public Forum – look at capacity and 5 year projections. Regular intervals with option to address if issue of overcrowding becomes apparent.

CCSGA – Declining enrollment making it costly to keep a school open; consider culture of school. Consider multiple factors, not just triggers.

Local Management Board – Regular intervals so you don’t have to have triggers

Timeline for Implementation

- **Survey** – One year in advance (36%)
- **CAC** – Most people favored one year in advance, or following school year
- **Public Forum** – 18+ months in advance
- **CCSGA** – 12 to 18 months in advance
- **Local Management Board** – One year in advance is enough – make decision and do it!
- **Commissioners** – (BOCC #1) 3 years in advance, get kids through HS (BOCC #2) 18 months

Five Most Important Factors (Survey)

when making redistricting and facilities decisions

- Students attend schools *nearest* to residence- 16%
- Ensure *capacity* for growth of students and programs- 12%
- Provide space for *unique* educational opportunities- 11%
- Student transportation *ride times*- 11%
- Provide space for *special* educational needs- 10%

Focus Groups Feedback

on Most Important Factors

when making redistricting and facilities decisions

- Bargaining Units** – Educational programming needs; optimal capacity for efficiency; student needs met; school feeder patterns and attending local schools
- CAC** – Optimal capacity, space for special education and unique opportunities; redistrict students; school feeder patterns.
- Public Forum** – Feeder patterns; Students attend their community schools; ride times; space for growth
- TAC** – Balanced utilization; optimal capacity for efficiency; cost of maintenance projects; space to meet needs of special students and to provide unique opportunities
- CCSGA** – Space for special education; redistricting; students attend schools closest to residence; transportation ride times
- Local Management Board** – Adequate space for students; space for special education and unique opportunities; capacity for future growth; maintenance of facilities
- Commissioners** – (BOCC#1) Cost of maintenance “get rid of the junk,” economic viability of schools for redeployment, impact on surrounding community (BOCC#2) quality of education (shouldn’t be about buildings and budgets) ride times, ensuring capacity for growth

Themes for Comments on Redistricting

- **Community schools**
- **Do not redistrict those impacted already**
- **Ride times**
- **Feeder Schools – keep communities intact**
- **Stability and continuity**
 - **Friendships**
 - **Sports and other extracurricular activities**
 - **High schools define communities – don't close any**
 - **Community commitment, school spirit**

Comments -Survey

- **Increase taxes (for the sake of quality)**
 - “Our kids are worthy of our dollars.”
 - “Raise taxes and redistrict to find optimal school efficiency.”
- **“ Redistricting affects home values; bad idea.”**
- **“Families have purchased homes to reside in specific districts. This has to be taken into account. They may move out of county if their district is changed.”**
- **“Establish reasons for people to cross the border into Carroll County rather than reasons for them to cross the border out.”**

Focus Group Feedback

- **Bargaining Units** – Start county-wide redistricting (partial doesn't solve issues)
- **CAC** – Large majority favors redistricting, a few said grade reconfigurations; none said close schools
- **Public Forum** – Felt they don't have enough information to decide, but some said to reverse the prior decision and close East Middle and reopen New Windsor Middle
- **TAC** – First choice is redistricting to balance enrollments, followed by changing grade configuration. Closing schools not viable.
- **CCSGA** – Most in favor of redistricting, some favor closing schools but not in their community, none favor changing grade configuration
- **Local Management Board** – Closing schools, closing school in community, followed by county wide redistricting, not targeted
- **Commissioners** – (BOCC# 1) needed (BOCC# 2) need community wide conversation

Options for Grade Reconfigurations

- K-8 (close elementary schools to consolidate in a middle school)
- Grades 5-8 (move grade 5 to middle school)
- Grades 6-9 (moving 9th grade to a middle school facility and consolidate high schools)
- Grades 6-12 (close middle school and consolidate into high school)
- Grades 8-12 (consolidate middle and high school)

Themes for Comments on Grade Reconfiguration

- **Safety of children; on buses and in schools**
- **Bullying**
- **Developmental differences**
- **Could consider K-8 if in different parts of building**
- **Move 5th grade to middle school**

Focus Group Feedback on Grade Reconfiguration

- **Bargaining Units** – most not in favor; 1 vote for 5-8
- **CAC** – K-8 only if separate spaces for different age groups; needs to be an educational advantage for consolidation
- **Public Forum** – would consider K-8. Not 6-12
- **TAC** – Would support 5-8 and 6-9 but split on K-8; does not endorse 6-12
- **CCSGA** – It's fine the way it is now. K-12 not viable; one said move grade 5 to middle school
- **Local Management Board** – K-8 not 6-12; be consistent across county; thoughtful process-consider what is reasonable and feasible; put students and instruction first (before buildings)
- **Commissioners** – (BOCC# 1) Try it, shouldn't be afraid of creative solutions; does not have to be consistent (BOCC #2) be flexible and consistent; pilot and replicate; supportive of K-8. Both believe that fewer number of buildings is best

Primary Focus- survey

Ranked Order

- 1. Improve instructional programs**
- 2. Maintain class size**
- 3. Maintain public schools in the community**
- 4. Increase efficiencies**
- 5. Reduce operating costs to balance budget**
- 6. Align system with 5 or 10 year enrollment projections**

Focus Groups Feedback

on Primary Focus

for redistricting and facilities decisions

Bargaining Units – Increase efficiencies; maintain class size or student/staff ratios; Maintain public schools in the community

CAC – Improving the instructional program; class size; reducing operation costs to balance the budget

CCSGA – Maintaining schools in the community; improving instructional program; increasing efficiencies

Local Management Board – Increasing efficiencies; aligning the system with 5 year enrollment projections; not just a school system problem – county needs to take some responsibility

Commissioners – (BOCC #1) minimum infrastructure to maintain quality education, reserve ~ 10% for growth; keep communities intact (BOCC #2) improving instructional program; align with 5 year enrollment projections; leave room to grow

Supported Actions- survey

If declining enrollments and fiscal realities lead to major changes in the school system, what changes do you support?

- 1. Redistricting to balance enrollments (54%)**
- 2. Closing one or more schools (44%)**
- 3. Closing a school in my community (38%)**
- 4. Grade reconfiguration to maximize building utilization (34% agree or strongly agree)** *Moving grade 5 to middle school was most acceptable choice (39%), Moving grade 9 into middle school (38%), K-8 schools (30%), Consolidating 6-12 into high school (closing middle schools) was the least acceptable (15%).*

Trends

- Highly motivated participants in survey, comments, forum and focus groups. Grateful for opportunity.
- **Process:** Transparent; made up of combination of community, CCPS and independent consultant
- **Timeline:** Every 3-5 years and with at least a year's advance notice

Trends

- **Factors to Consider:** Students attend schools nearest to residence, growth of programs, unique educational opportunities, bus ride times, special educational opportunities
- **Primary Focus:** Improving instructional programs, maintaining class size, improving efficiencies
“...high quality education across the entire county to provide equitable learning experiences across all ability levels within a reasonable distance from each child’s home.”
- **Supported Actions:** Redistricting, closing schools, grade reconfigurations

QUESTIONS ?