

Agenda - RSU 13 – Facilities and Transportation Committee
Tuesday, May 21, 2013 at 5:30 PM
At
The McLain Building

	Committee		Committee		Visitors
P	George Emery, Chair	P	Scott Vaitones	P	Tess Kilgour
P	Arvilla Collins	E	Scott Hall	P	Lewis Collins
P	Christine Curtis	E	Todd Johnston	P	Loren Andrews
P	William Pearce				
P	Present	A	Absent	E	Excused

New Business

1. Reports on the Community Forums

Owls Head meeting – Christine Curtis reported:

There were over 40 people in attendance

The overall sentiment was to keep the Owls Head and Gilford Butler open

Group felt small schools were important to the communities

Only opposition were a couple of people who relocated from other areas and felt larger schools work well when configured appropriately

Felt conditions of school were fine

One felt the teachers and students are key factors in good education, not the buildings

Thomaston – Arvilla Collins reported:

8 people attended and all were staff but all identified themselves as being there as a parent or grandparent

A question asked of the Board: When we look at consolidation are we looking at square footage or teacher student ratios?

Middle School should go back to grades 6,7 & 8

High School should go back to 9 – 12

5th back to elementary schools

Feel the 8th and 9th graders should be separate because 9th graders have to earn credit

Feel starting any school at 9:00 is too late

Feel towns should keep small schools

Because 6th and 7th dismiss at a different time then the 8th it creates conflicts with sports

Feel St. George will withdraw no matter what

Need larger high school cafeteria

Some schools do not have adequate handicapped bathrooms

No one expressed concern over financial implications

Felt cafeteria at Oceanside HS-E could seat more with long tables

Cushing – Loren Andrews reported:

Some in favor of middle school merger if done with thought and planning

Mixed feelings about the 8 & 9 school

Would like to see an earlier start at elementary

Like to see Many Flags happen

The Board needs to use a lot of thought as it moves forward

Concern over added transportation cost

Community school is very important part of the culture

2. Continue discussion – Most efficient use of buildings

Reviewed Tess's recommendation as a starting talking point (see last two pages of the minutes)

Feel need to start at the top – High Schools back to a 9 – 12

Middle School back to 6,7, 8.

Make no decisions regarding GB – OHSC until October 2014

Loren asked: What is the purpose of this process?

Tess answered: Streamline, create collegiality, save money that could be reinvested into the programs and schools that remain, look at possible 50 / 50 split to taxpayer relief and program enrichments

Lew stated: He wants to see pre-k and early grade language immersion in the future

George: What I heard so far at the forums is that the schools are very important to the community. The Board needs to discuss whether they value the community schools

George: Feel poll still out on the 8 – 9 school and would like to hear from staff as to how they feel the school works. The 8-9 concepts were born from the high failure rate of 9th graders in the District.

George: Suggested option might be to combine 6 & 7 at Oceanside High School –west, Rockland District Middle becomes 8 – 9 closer to Oceanside High School – east for coarse sharing. Need to rely on data and staff on the 8 & 9 model Thomaston Grammar as a K-5 Owls Head Central and Gilford Butler remain K-5, South School K-5, close Lura Libby and possibly look at when District debt is being paid off in 4 or 5 years to build a new K-5 Owls Head / S. Thomaston / some Rockland

Bill: Feel 8 & 9 needs to stay that the data is still too short. The staff at Oceanside High School - west feel model is working well. Need to look at keeping a community school between Owls Head and S. Thomaston

Lew asked some classes of 10th graders what they thought of 8 & 9 and they all said they missed a year of high school. Lew feels a freshman wing would be the better avenue

Decision needs to be driven on data successes – failures

3. Other business

Next steps:

Need research on buildings

Conditions

Cost to operate at per pupil

Cost per square footage

Projected cost 5 year plan

Can the high school have a second story added?

Feasibility and rough cost

New Science labs

Need to identify long term solutions

What would single bus runs cost?

Would need to add 6 to 8 more buses and drivers. A bus and driver would cost about \$50,000 to \$60,000 per year. We already have trouble finding drivers. It would be a difficult model to make work.

The Board members present are in agreement to merge middle schools with more discussion with goal to improve the middle school

Parents are very involved with elementary schools

The Board needs to define their core values

Do you think it is a good idea to slow down the GB / OHCS conversation?
All agree

list advantages / disadvantages of each option

need data on Oceanside High School – west and staff input

Adjourned 7:05

Consolidation of Schools Proposal – Tess Kilgour

We again find ourselves under narrow time constraints. We have verbally committed to making some building efficiencies. Although we have reduced 50 or more positions in the last 3 budget seasons we are still running less efficiently than we could or should. We also need to get ahead of the curve...that is being proactive and making wise changes that will enhance student outcome.

With that in mind I throw my proposal out there to be kicked around.

School Year 2013-2014

1. **Commit to having Oceanside High School be on one campus.** This would mean moving the 9th grade back to the East campus. We have the debt for the South School addition coming to an end in November 2014. We could take that payment amount (\$105,500) and see how much money we could bond in order to do the renovations that have been overlooked at that OHE, primarily the consideration of a cafeteria update and whatever we would need to house the 9th grade again. We should consider housing a “Freshmen Academy” or it’s equal as we still struggle with failure rates with this group. We would not require a public vote of approval for anything except the money piece and I anticipate the

communities would welcome having a traditional high school again. If we got moving on this the improvements could potentially be finished for September 2014.

2. **Commit to having one middle school grades 6-8 to be housed at former Oceanside West.** This would require a renaming of the building. It would certainly take care of any space issues. We are planning to merge the two smaller middle schools. Focus on high school preparation. All fifth grades would go back to their respective elementary schools.
3. **Move Lura Libby to the TGS building.** This would take care of the borderline crowding issue at this elementary school and provide space for the fifth grade to return. It also would potentially allow space for a pre K program.
4. **Return Lura Libby to the Town of Thomaston.** They are looking to move their town offices to somewhere with more space and a central location. This would fit the bill and potentially get us some good will from this community. This also would eliminate any friction that might arise due to the fact that we there have not been any building eliminations on the former 50 side.
5. **Return the fifth grade to Cushing Community School.** This outlier is our newest building and we will be paying on this until 2021 to the tune of @\$160,000 per year. It is not used to capacity so let's maximize the space. Perhaps we could funnel some incoming kindergarteners from Thomaston in this school's direction. Maybe a pre K could go here also.
6. **Move grades 2-5 from South School into vacated RDMS building.** These students will fit well with this new building. Should require minimal if any renovations. These children can use lockers (maybe without the locks) and facilities will be at the adequate height (these children use their toilets at home don't they). This will require the renaming of the school which potentially could be a good thing...there seems to be a stigma attached to the South School name. Both sides of elementary would fall under the same name. There will be a new principal in place and people will be able to see more of the potential here. Also leaves room for Owls Head and Gilford Butler 2nd grade to come up without again having to rearrange. (I will be suggesting the Emery B. Howard Jr. Elementary School)
7. **Keep grades K-1 in "old" South School Building and move Central Office to this location.** This space will allow for a bright computer space for our techs. We could house another pre K here. There will be enough space for Gilford Butler students to move here. By separating the former South School students we can begin to have "getting to know you" events with OH and GB students. This would buy some time for the parents to become more familiar and comfortable with the changes coming their way. They could see the new principal in action and I believe the right person in that position can heavily influence the success of our final move in this consolidation plan.
8. **2014-2015 vote as a Board to close Owls Head and Gilford Butler.** If we have done our work well on the front end with forums, getting to know you events, and committing to a real plan to enhance and continue educational growth this could well pave the way for the vote from the communities of So. Thomaston and Owls Head. I would anticipate that it would be supported in the communities. If not the communities will make the commitment to maintain the individual buildings. The move to the new premises in Rockland would be relatively simple.

Changes 1-7 will require no public vote except for a bond for the renovations at the high school. We could move ahead fairly quickly to get the studies necessary. With all of the expected improvements in our Special Ed department and the potential for growth in that area I believe there is space available for this projected in all of the buildings left. With these potential efficiencies I believe we will be in excellent shape for the foreseeable future. If we can be brave and make some of the necessary changes perhaps we can end the cycle of dread and reactivity around budget season. Please give this a serious look.

Respectfully, Tess