

Conneaut School District
Additional Work Session Minutes
January 16, 2018
Alice Schafer Annex Gym

The Conneaut School Board of Directors met Tuesday, January 16, 2018 at the Alice Schafer Annex Building cafeteria.

The meeting was called to order at 7:17 p.m. by Board President Mrs. Dorothy Luckock.

The following members answered to roll call:

Mr. Burnham	Mr. Ellis	Mr. Hornstein
Mrs. Klink	Mrs. Krachkowski	Mrs. Luckock
Mr. McQuiston	Mrs. Miller	

Administrators Present-

Superintendent: Jarrin Sperry

Director of Special Education – Susy Walters

Business Manager: Greg Mayle

Director of Buildings and Grounds- Frank Kimmel

Technology Coordinator – Rick Kelly

Curriculum Director – Brenda Kantz

Principals: Adam Jardina, Kevin Burns, Doug Parks, Joel Wentling, John Hines and Dave Maskrey.

Visitor Recognition

Mrs. Luckock announced this would be moved to after the discussion topics.

Discussion Items-

Middle Schools –

Mrs. Luckock reiterated what again from the Special Board meeting to all present to keep an open mind as Administration presents some facts regarding the Conneaut School District Middle Schools.

Mr. Sperry started off with the driving factors for this consideration such as Poor academic performance at both Middle Schools; Academic gaps reported at the High School level; Middle School teachers report frustration with time for core instruction and remediation resulting in low student performance which in turn reflects on their evaluation; a declining enrollment with 2007 enrollment 5th – 7th = 583; 2012 enrollment 5th – 7th = 525 and currently have enrolled in the 5th

thru 7th grades = 464 with a projection in 2022 enrollment for 5th to 7th graders of 390. Increasing fiscal pressures on the District and limited scheduling options included.

Mr. Sperry further described the benefits to one Middle School at “either” location include changing the elementary to a K-5 grade configuration; there would be better use of each facility, the technology and curriculum; more efficient use of trainers, and teachers’ time for professional development. There would be better use of software, licensing and hosting fees because they are usually based per building. Adequate staffing would allow for a double math period and we could combine Reading with English. With all this said, we could be a true Middle School and could consolidate teachers and resources for specific grade levels.

The Middle School Special Education program currently are at a maximum caseload with Learning Support staff at both Middle Schools, according to state mandates. Leaving the opportunity for full inclusion at a minimum and no opportunity to run intervention/remedial groups. We also have no planned time for collaboration with regular education teachers on instructional programming for our special education students with the current setup.

We also have an anticipated addition of one more LS teacher at each middle school for the 18/19 school year if there is no change to our student enrollment.

With Consolidation, the Middle School Special Education Program could see caseloads for the learning support staff at the Middle schools decrease with 5th grade moved back to the elementary schools. The need for one more learning support teacher for the next school year could be split between the two elementary schools and we would be working towards full inclusion at grades K-8.

Because of new schedules, the learning support teachers would be able to offer interventions/remediation during the scheduled periods during the day. And grade level team meeting participation would allow for collaboration on instructional programming for the special education students.

On a side note, so to put a different perspective in what the Special Education Department includes are the medical emergency concerns that come with our students with medical needs, we currently have 26 students who suffer seizure disorders; 15 with Diabetic Disorders and 11 with other serious medical conditions.

Mr. Sperry, Mrs. Walters, Mrs. Kantz, Mr. Burns and Mr. Wentling conducted interviews with teachers in the Middle School and asked each what it takes to be a successful Middle School. Teachers responded with the following:

- Longer periods for core subjects
- Better teacher access for remediation plans
- Common planning time for grade level teams

- Interventionist teacher to support classrooms and monitor remediation plans in Math and ELA
- Data review time with grade level teams, principal and coach monthly.

Within the interviews, teachers expressed the following concerns;

- What would be the method for teacher reassignment(s), furloughs,
- What would be the timeline, start and end times,
- Bussing,
- Number of Admin/Nurses/Guidance in each building,
- Preparation during the summer
- Would there be more time for content in the school year,
- Are both schools being considered for consolidation,
- Would there be a consideration for a future of the satellite Tech Center
- Some suggested the best facility for particular activities such as music, sports, library,
- Inquiries about enrollment numbers in the elementary,
- a belief that grade level teaming which includes a common plan period to be a priority,
- Inclusion and small classes to work on academic gaps.

Mr. Mayle addressed some key financial impact(s) he could see in the event of a Middle School consolidation. These included long term staffing levels, transportation and PlanCon implications. One time expenditures included preparing/readying the buildings.

In reviewing the financial impact transportation has with the Board, Mr. Mayle noted the current contract expires this June 30, 2018 and RFP (request for proposal) process begins February 1, 2018. We have many scenarios to examine such as K-12 or staggered with results anticipated sometime between March and April, 2018. Transportation costs are a large variable based on structure of the day and school locations.

PlanCon implications – which stand for Planning and Construction, a Pennsylvania Department of Education financial assistance with construction projects. Our District has achieved PlanCon funding through PDE reimbursement s of a portion of the debt service. Conneaut Valley Middle School is currently receiving PlanCon reimbursement, Conneaut Lake Middle School is not. In calling PDE regarding Conneaut Valley Middle School, PDE politically blamed record keeping in assigning to buildings as to why this building does not receive funding. We have received all the revenue we should have received but when refinanced deemed CLMS paid for and placed the balance onto CVMS. We are still receiving what the State promised the District.

What does this mean? Mr. Mayle explained a school must have 50% of its' educational space used regularly for K-12 education at all times in order to continue receiving reimbursement. Therefore, if Conneaut Lake Middle School were to close, there would be no impact on the schools revenues regardless of the buildings use. If Conneaut Valley Middle School were to be

the school closed, then there would need to be a 50% use of the building must be achieved or revenues would be impacted with a loss of over \$975,000 in a 16 year span.

Mr. Kimmel Director of Buildings and Grounds spoke next, he provided a backup showing each elementary and middle schools capacities with total rooms, building cap, PDE Fte Adjusted Capacity, current enrollment and square footage.

In reviewing each of the Middle Schools facilities we must take into consideration the cost to operate versus the space available, each locations athletic field repairs, expenses to maintain the occupied building, their potential energy savings, the classroom needs for special needs students and address the needs of each facility after consolidation, if that is the avenue the District goes.

The estimated costs in a five year Plan for each Middle School are-
CLMS- \$607,000 includes new lockers
CVMS- \$741,000 and includes the competition and auxiliary gym floors.

It was noted, the five year plan matches current district structure; under consolidation some expenses from idle areas of the remaining building could largely be deferred depending on future use.

Mr. Kimmel and Mr. Sperry provided a snapshot of our Districts Population demographics for where Middle School students live based on a student's address i.e., Adamsville, Conneautville, Espyville, Harmonsburg, Jamestown, Linesville. Etc.

Mr. Sperry reviewed briefly several options for the Board to review with consolidating the middle schools-

Option #1, which was No Change to the Middle School locations.

Positives-

- Elementary schools are achieving, and will maintain their progress,
- The budgeting process can continue with less variables
- Students, families will experience no change.

Negatives-

- Risk of stagnant achievement with inadequate staffing levels in many areas,
- Continued financial pressure to include new materials/resources will be ordered for two schools, more expense.
- More technology equipment to cover multiple facilities,
- Double costs of programs like SWPBS, WEB, trainings,
- Major facility improvements are needed at both schools
- Continuity of programs is difficult and scheduling options are limited.

Option #1A- No change with increased core instruction-

What would that look like...

- Full team of teachers at each grade level
- Full inclusion staffing
- Reading/math interventionist
- Technology integrator/instructional coach.

What would be needed...

CLMS-

- 3 Regular Ed Teachers
- 1 Special Ed Teacher
- 1 Reading/Math Interventionist
- 1 Integrator/Coach (shared?)

CVMS-

- 1 Regular Ed Teacher
- 1 Special Ed Teacher
- 1 Reading/Math Interventionist
- 1 integrator/coach (shared?)

This option contains the positives and negatives of Option #1 but addresses achievement levels at an increased financial burden.

The staffing level of financial implications of Option #1A is as follows;

Anticipated addition of 9 teachers with a low cost of a new teacher - \$74,963 and high cost of a new teacher at \$97,897. Estimated additional cost of \$674,667 to \$881,073 annual cost.

Option #1B- 5th Grade to the elementary only, this is 4th grade students would stay in their current building next year and add 5th grade to the elementary schools.

Positives discussed include:

- More grades in the same school allows review of vertical transmission of ideas and content and curriculum consistency,
- The largest achievement decline occurs the year after students shift from one teacher to multiple teachers as well as transitioning to another school
- Found that elementary school students did significantly better than middle school students of the same age in G.P.A. and standardized state scores.

Negatives include:

- Compounds the issue of staffing at the Middle Schools
- Additional staff would need to be hired.

This option contains the positives and negatives of Option #1 but some achievement levels at the 5th grade would be addressed.

Option #2 – Moving CLMS Grades 6-8 to CVMS

Current 4th grade would remain in elementary schools for their 5th grade year.

Positives include:

- CLMS is not tied to PlanCon, will not lose reimbursement
- External sports facilities at CVMS
- Only building with loading dock
- Library is more conducive to group instruction

Negatives:

- Less Building Capacity
- Emergency Services not readily available
- Parking is more limited for events
- CCCTC expansion programs (current and future) would need to be relocated
- More costs will be needed in immediate for facility repairs
- Special Education Life Skills programs would need to be remodeled.

Option #3 – Moving CVMS Grades 6-8 to CLMS

Current 4th grade would remain in elementary schools for their 5th grade year

Positives include:

- More building capacity
- Emergency services readily available
- CCCTC expansion programs (current and future) would not need to be relocated
- Parking has more potential for events
- Less costs will be needed in immediate facility repairs
- Special Education Life Skills programs are currently located at CLMS

Negatives include:

- CVMS is tied to PlanCon Reimbursement, must use 50% of square footage for students
- External sports facilities need more improvements(i.e. lacking field house)
- No loading dock

Staffing Level Financial Implications of 2 or 3

Transition to one middle school is anticipated to result in a savings of 6-9 positions through unfilled retirements.

- Low cost of a new teacher – 474,963

- High cost of a new teacher - \$97,897
- Estimated Savings: \$449,777 - \$881,076 (annual savings).

Staffing level of financial implications if the District choose Option 2 or 3:

Transition to one middle school would be anticipated to result in a savings of 6-9 positions through unfilled retirements.

- Low cost of a new teacher = \$74,963
- High cost of a new teacher= \$97,897
- Estimated savings: \$449,777 to \$881,076 in annual savings.

Mr. Mayle explained the decision timeline and next steps if the District were to go with Options 2 or 3 as follows;

- February – Notice of Public Hearing to be published
- March - Hold Public Hearing on Closure
- April - Notice given to affected staff members
- May - Formal written notice of intent to suspend/furlough
- June - Board Vote to close

Mrs. Luckock opened the meeting for Board Discussion-

Mrs. Miller said the option not on the table right now is bringing all the students to Linesville to increase this school size. This would leave us with two elementary and a campus for 7-12 or 6-12 which would achieve core planning. Mr. Sperry replied, that option he does not believe to be immediate but in three to four years down the road if we continue to decline this may happen but right now our building is too tight. We need 90% occupancy and bring 7-12 or 6-12 to Linesville would put us over the 90%. In three to four years from now with the numbers continuing we will be close, it is certainly possible but not now.

Mrs. Miller then asked the idea of full inclusion and how to have teachers plan and work together; she doesn't understand why this is not happening now. What will be the difference if we merge if we can't get them to work together? Mr. Sperry replied that numbers are affecting it. Mrs. Walters added that just in the elementary schools the plan was as the students in 4th grade move up to 5th that the inclusion would stay. One of the reasons along with the number of students who move in have IEP's. This is why we need another teacher in each middle school. That would change if we were to have one middle school. Right now we have one learning support teacher for 5th and 6th grade in each middle school, and one for 7th and 8th grade in each middle school. If we take a grade level away and have 4 teachers to work with we would have 3 grade levels instead of four. We will then need one in the elementary school.

The Board asked why we are not having planning on our buildings today. Mrs. Kantz replied, currently we do not have full teams in the middle schools. Mrs. Miller questioned then how do

we get the teachers to work together. Mrs. Kantz answered it is a matter of having the time, we are fragmented as some teachers are teaching other subjects in other grades therefore each grade does not have the same planning period.

Board then questioned where the student number page tally came from, if it was townships or community zip code. Mr. Sperry answered it is based on the students address/zip code. He would have liked to see what townships they live in not just zip code. Class schedules, rotations and specials were explained in the middle school as well as proposed 38 minute period.

The double math period was questioned for middle school students as it is hard to keep them focused for one period let alone two in a row. Mrs. Kantz reminded the Board the district is already doing double Math periods in the Elementary so the students are accustomed to it. We find students are not doing well in our advanced/top students so the opportunity for five days might be too much. We are looking at 2 days a week half periods used for enhancement in the elementary. Levels show students are not growing in the elementary.

Mr. McQuiston asked how a consolidation would impact our Smart Edge Agreement. Mr. Kimmel indicated he has already spoken with them and without numbers and which building might be closed, they cannot provide numbers. Mr. McQuiston admitted that tonight's discussion has a lot of information that muddies the water, he didn't realize how it affects the consolidation.

Mrs. Miller had conducted her own research that showed our scores are not improving and asked what is better for the students, which is not necessarily the hottest thing in the education world. What do we need to do to have a path for our students to succeed? Sometimes that means we let them be high and low standards and proceed at that. We really focus on full inclusion, she understands that but pushing our advance kids ahead is important too. In talking about full inclusion and IEP's and again students who are struggling she understands we need to support but how do we bring up our gifted.

Mrs. Miller had spoken with the principals before publishing an article, one mention was that of our advanced kids figured it out. It is a darn shame, we need to support them as well so maybe we need to step back and focus on what is best five to ten years down the road, a plan to bring to Linesville where we already started to build a community. Then let's not piece meal it like the high school consolidation. We are not settling to a 20 year plan to get loans paid off and buildings paid off, we don't want a loan with a long tail. What is missing in the presentation is we haven't talked about transportation. How long are they on the bus, 20 more minutes to drive to CVMS and drop off and drive to CLMS. When I was driving my own children to practice I wondered how I stay involved in what they are doing and what impact will it make in the communities, and then what intangibles are there to save a million dollars.

Mr. Burnham mentioned we don't have the student numbers involved in extracurricular nor the parental involvement like we have had before. This self-fulfilling prophecy of declining enrollment, those student numbers we discussed last fall since the consolidation numbers have

dropped off more than other counties. He feels the self-appointed prophecy goes back to 2000 if we had consolidated the high school you would have built a new school community. Harmonsburg area, Summit Township, Sadsbury, Conneaut Lake, Pine Township, and Linesville would have formed the nucleus of a new high school. But Summerhill, summit and further out away from the consolidation, those schools north of Conneautville due to the distance will not happen and Adamsville, Hartstown, Custard area have the same problem. People that live there will not live there long or they will home school or Cyber School so consequently student numbers will decline further. We then have the elephant in the room and do not know what Education at the National level will do. As President Trump said will they get some type of open enrollment nationwide, if that happens all bets are off and there will be change over everywhere. All of us will be affected and those north of Conneautville will go to Northwestern. We have a lot of variables to consider.

Mrs. Luckock made notice with this process tonight is that everyone sitting around this table serving on the Board has a number of us who graduated from this District, all had either students now or graduated, we all have chosen to live here and raise our families so we share the same. There is not one person on this Board taking this evaluation, recommendations and questions casually because we too live here, we live in the community, are a part of the community. Please know we really are trying to take in multiple aspects, to hear and try to vision, there is no crystal ball. She remembers the discussions with the original discussion of consolidating the schools as one of the parents who stood up in the meetings, our economy back at that time was very robust and so there was a time where we were able to make financial commitments and head in that direction. Prior to the decision to consolidate the high school no one took casually and even now we know the decision that this Board makes affects real people's lives, affects lives of staff, lives of our students and families and lives of the community so please know that we do not take this lightly, we are trying to get information so that we have an opportunity to process it, ask more questions and evaluate it in the timeframe the Board feels we can do.

Mr. McQuiston welcomed input from the public, noted his phone number is in the book and welcomed comments to hear how everyone feels.

Mrs. Krachkowski asked to have the presentation available on the website for the public.

Visitor Recognition

Mrs. Luckock now offered a visitor recognition, referencing Policy 903 – Public Participation in Board Meetings. He announced all visitors who are recognized during the Visitor Recognition are allotted a maximum of five (5) minutes to address matters of their concern, unless otherwise determined by the Board President. Visitor recognition is to be limited to thirty (30) minutes unless otherwise decided by the Board.

Mrs. Krachkowski asked President Luckock if the public wished to address, can they ask a question or is it only addressing us. Mrs. Luckock asked what the consensus of the Board was. Several indicated it depended on the question as there will be some questions we do not have the

answer to or will not have the answer. Mrs. Krachkowski added to that generally when the public addresses the Board they are typically allowed to address but not ask questions.

Mrs. Luckock made note as information to the public that it is normal Board policy to not address, we do take notes and we will get back to you, we may not have the information and need to address with Administration. The public may also use email and offered the group email address to the public if a question comes to them at a later date.

Sarah Miatga addressed the Board. A lot of information given today and I could not right it down but you said we would be able to get this information. When would it be available, when would the presentation be loaded to the District website. Mr. Sperry replied, within 48 hours.

Jessica Ellis addressed the Board. Her concern as a mom of an 8th grader and a 5th grader is busing and sports. My husband is active in the military and she lives alone, works 48 hours a week as a social worker and trucks her children to practice. She is concerned when we had the football with the bus driving to and from Lake and Valley for practice, they were also bused for every game. Will this happen for our students, she knows you can't answer it now. As a social worker she sees what happens in Crawford, Springboro and Conneaut Valley and it concerns her. Not only demographically but economically she is afraid sports participation will decline if there is no transportation from Valley to Lake to play sports. AS someone working on my own right now I can't transport as a parent that works two or three jobs. Just something to consider. She noted that her children if on the bus one way every day for an hour and a half, homework, dinner and chores there is not performing very well with much sleep. Also, the year she graduated the school adopted block scheduling, what happened to that.

Randi Fields addressed the Board last. One topic she keeps hearing tonight is there is no time, what is the average work day for in the community, she puts in 8-12 hours a day so people. Mr. Sperry replied teachers work 7 ½ hours/day. Ms. Fields then added the school and community make 2-3 times more than I do and I work 8 hours to 12 hours. So why not put in an extra half hour and put in an 8 hour work day to make all this communication so essential. She is very frustrated hearing no time, on top of that Girard and other school districts I am a nurse and go to the school with these children. These teachers have plenty of time to play on their phones, on the computer and have seen this with my own eyes. She has been put in a position were a special education teacher asks me to do their job. If they have time to email then why not take time to email or work together. 7 ½ hours a day to make more than half of our community is a little out of control.

Mrs. Luckock asked her to elaborate on her experience witnessing the referenced teachers. Ms. Fields stated they were not in this district, she has not been in our district but works for an outside agency with heal h problems and is a personal nurse. She does that job and sitting in first grade class and teacher had students taking and laughing and put something on TV and got on her phone. She suspects she has been to four different schools and seen the same thing.

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Mrs. Luckock thanked her that is what we wanted to know.

Mr. Sperry noted that currently the number of hours worked is a contractual matter.

No one else approached the podium.

Mrs. Luckock noted there would not be an executive session after adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:31 pm.


Dorothy Luckock, Board Vice President


Greg Mayle, Board Secretary