

MINUTES



**Addison Central School District
Policy Committee
Committee Meeting
Tuesday, November 5, 2024, 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm
49 Charles Avenue
Middlebury VT
05753**

ACSD District Vision and Mission

OUR VISION

Our vision is for all ACSD students to reach their full learning potential, have a sense of belonging in our schools, and enrich our community and the communities where they live in the future.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to provide high-quality, equitable, and varied learning environments that inspire a passion for learning and growth among our students.

A. Call to Order Upon Reaching a Quorum

Jamie called the meeting to order at 4:31 pm

1. Introductions - Board Members, Administrators and Staff

Jamie McCallum, Ellen Whelan-Wuest, Laura Harthan, Steve Orzech, Wendy Baker

B. Public Comment - Agenda Items

No public Comment

C. Recommendation to Approve Minutes of 10-22-24

Minutes approved

Steve abstains.

Move: Ellen Whelan-Wuest Second: Jamie McCallum Status: Passed

D. Committee Discussion:

Jamie moved to amend the agenda to include a discussion of policy E20. Ellen seconded.

Policy: E20 Community Use of School Facilities

Jamie explained that he realized after the board approved E20 that there was a last provision in the policy language related to options for how use of the facilities will or won't allow for different uses of firearms or dangerous or deadly weapons.

Steve pointed out that this is tricky because there are certain academic programs that require the use of scalpels or tools that could be considered deadly or dangerous. Ellen noted that this policy

speaks to community use of facilities rather than normal educational purposes.

Committee members discussed the options and determined that the ideal version is the one that applies a straight ban on firearms or dangerous or deadly weapons within school facilities, because it will allow some discretion to the superintendent in interpreting what a “dangerous or deadly weapon” is, and also because it does not open the door to exceptions like gun shows or gun safety courses.

1. Policy: C30 School Residence

Jamie explained that based on the last policy committee meeting, he took the step of drafting some changes to C30, largely adopting elements from the CVU school choice policy. Under one scenario, our district would allow for universal school choice across all schools. Under a second scenario, Middlebury residents have school choice to choose any other elementary school. Under a third scenario, Middlebury residents may choose between Ripton, Middlebury or Weybridge. Under all of these scenarios the underlying assumption would be that everyone attends their town schools, but under the latter two scenarios Middlebury residents would have some degree of school choice.

Ellen pointed out that this would not necessarily solve for the unpredictability in our class sizes across the district. Jamie explained that the rationale around these proposals is to provide a toe in the water or a slow introduction towards creating more movement and flexibility.

Wendy shared that next year projections look like: Ripton 28, Weybridge holding around 42, Bridport without Pre-K will be 41, Salisbury and Shoreham will be around 65, Cornwall will be steady (90-100) and MHS steady. So if the idea is to repopulate the smallest schools, we would want to consider Bridport too.

Jamie shared his next proposal/idea that would combine school campuses to serve different ages. All seven elementary schools would remain open, but the Ripton school might become the K-2 campus for students from Ripton and Salisbury, while the Salisbury school would become the 3-5 campus for the same towns.

Steve said he likes this option because it addresses the multi-age classroom issue/challenge.

Wendy noted that if you are solving for educational outcomes, this is a much better option. If you are solving for financial feasibility, the cost per pupil is still very high and it doesn't solve for that.

Ellen read off some possible class size numbers based on these configurations, based on current enrollment numbers. The class sizes would hover much closer to 15 or so kids per class.

Wendy said that this plan combined with Middlebury school choice may create the class size stability we're looking for. Most Middlebury families would prefer to stay at Mary Hogan, but some may want to go to other schools.

Steve asked how this might affect other instructional staff outside classroom teachers, as far as numbers. Wendy said that would be its own process to determine who goes where.

Laura said she likes this idea, it creates stability and may be a path forward.

Wendy pointed out that this may not satisfy what the state is considering around mandatory school sizes of 100 students. Ellen wondered if we could think of this as having 4 schools, but with 7 campuses.

Courtney pointed out this may create some order to the specials. For example, we could change board policy to having Spanish for grades 3-5 instead of 2-5.

Wendy said another nice thing is that it could allow for a lot of creative development among teachers if they can work within cohorts in specific environments.

There was discussion about possibly changing the configuration so that Title 1 schools are combined with non Title 1 schools as well.

Ellen offered research she did on intra-school choice in which every family offers three

choices of a school they would like to attend, and ultimately the administration chooses where everyone goes based on certain criteria. This is highly complicated. Wendy said that going from the multi-campus model first might allow for eventually moving to a intra-school choice as a model to develop into, but to do it first would be very difficult and complex.

Steve asked if there are other Vermont districts that do something like this, and Wendy listed some districts that do.

Ellen asked if, hypothetically, the board were to adopt something like this for next year, would implementing next year be too disruptive for students or academically? Wendy and Courtney both said no, it would be fine academically.

Courtney pointed out that we should be really thoughtful about making sure the space is ready for students as well, though in this configuration the buildings should be able to accommodate well.

Ellen pointed out that we have to, as a board, engage directly with the assumption by a lot of people that costs would be reduced simply by closing schools, who are convinced that is the financial solution. Wendy suggested we work on presenting an FY25 budget now vs. FY25 budget with this in place when we bring the proposal to the full board.

The committee will bring this proposal to the board for the November 25th meeting.

Wendy suggested also offering families at any school the option for school choice, and Ellen said politically this would feel more equitable for all the towns.

Ellen will work on a new ppt version for the committee to weigh in on.

Jamie asked if there is additional research about class size and academic outcomes.

Courtney said there is minimal research on this, and Wendy explained that class size doesn't matter as much as the quality of the teacher and the guaranteed and universal curriculum, which we do not have now.

This option also avoids needing many more multi-grade classrooms that we are facing for next year.

Next committee meeting will be Tuesday, November 12th.

2. Policy: D6 Class Size

Not discussed

3. Policy: D4 Title 1 Comparability

Not discussed

E. Public Comment - Any Topic

No public comment

F. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 5:55 pm.

Move: Jamie McCallum Second: Laura Harthan Status: Passed

*Public Comment Guidelines:

Public comments are encouraged and welcome at each regular board meeting during the period designated for public comment. Comments are limited to three minutes per person. Citizens will be called to make their statement by the board chair. Public comments regarding personnel, students or legal matters will not be heard by the Board.