



2016 School Study Committee

Meeting Minutes

January 19, 2017

5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Harvey Education Center, Board Room

Present: Ted Berryhill, Brian Bushey, Erik Cargill, Lance Delbridge, Susie Disselkoen, Liz Evans, Shelly Fanson, Josh Galloway, Amy McVaugh, Kerry Minshall, Mitch Perrault, Mike Prelesnik, Jerry Schaffer, Sandy Smalley, Joe Starch, Mike Thompson, Sally Trout, Chris Waltz, Russ Whipple, Tim Williams, Chris Wright

Absent: Tim Ayres, Jessica Curtis, Jon Droscha, Steve Duane, Laura Fenger, Matt Hall, Emily Kress, Patrick Meyers, Christopher Mumby

Also Present: Superintendent Ron Drzewicki, Mike Kenney, Steve Merriman, and Ted Moore

Public Comment:

No comment from the public.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made to amend the minutes to read, the committee was asked to consider the pros/cons of moving zero, one or two grades. The committee was told not to consider any costs associated or possible building locations at this point. The minutes were approved as amended.

Request/Clarification Forms:

There was no discussion of request/clarification forms.

Configuration Options:

Committee members discussed various configuration options and felt the survey should include questions about the need to or lack of need to further utilize HEC.

The committee discussed configuration options #4 and #9 – moving grades to HEC. Currently, HEC has 10 acres with a potential of adding one additional acre. HEC has at any point during the day 150+ students in the building. If two grades were moved to HEC, the total number of students would be approximately 650. Some committee members felt the traffic on Cedar St. and Ash St. should be considered if two grades were moved to HEC. Discussions continued about moving kindergartners and 1st grade versus 4th and 5th graders. Additional items to consider are the location of administration, early learning programs, parking, traffic flow, playground space, storm water, and number of students at the building. The consultants shared with the committee that it is best to have 12 to 15 acres for an elementary site.

A member asked if there has been any consideration given to acquiring new land and moving a certain number of grades to HEC or looking at the existing configuration for what could be done at HEC. At this time, no draft planning has been done related to that question because committee has not firmly discussed moving administration and/or early learning at this point. A member felt that we should consider all scenarios for moving 2 grades while limiting new construction.

The committee discussed the construction needed at HEC if kindergarten was moved to HEC and no other configuration changes at the existing buildings. If administration and early learning remain at HEC, twelve additional classrooms would need to be added for kindergarten and possibly special classroom space. Currently there is 1 to 2 rooms at the south end of HEC not fully utilized however, the west side of HEC is fully utilized. However, it would be good to have some space available at HEC for potential future educational learning. Classroom space should be larger for kindergartners than 5th graders.

A member asked how many kindergarten classrooms could utilize the administration space and early learning space at HEC. Could we add an addition to HEC where administration is on a second level of an addition to the HEC. Due to building construction it would also need an elevator. There is currently 6,300 square feet for administration which equates to 5.6 kindergarten classrooms. Today, we have 10 kindergarten classrooms and we should plan for 12 classrooms.

The committee discussed that the general maintenance needs to be addressed first before additional items, such as larger gyms, etc. A member feels that having a larger bond proposal will not be supported by the community. The committee hopes to have the survey address these issues. A member asked if the survey could include a question about support of increasing the sinking fund. The committee discussed if the survey could include questions about how much money is the community open to spending on a new bond. A member commented that there is a lack of trust within the community that the school is able to manage the sinking fund to maintain the buildings. Another member commented that the survey could address this type question.

A member asked if the oldest building can be used or not for a modern education system? If a building is too old why is it not usable? The consultants responded that there are many factors that are considered in using an older building for modern education. For example, the size of the classroom space, the type of rooms, technology needs, break out spaces, project space, etc.

Some buildings built in the 1940's were built very different than those built in the 1950's and 1960's. Sometimes the materials used were cheaper. Sometimes it is difficult in some buildings to have revised to modern day educational learning.

The committee was asked to narrow the 2 classroom options in order to provide Mr. Porn additional information for helping him draft the survey. A member asked why the committee would consider moving 500 children to HEC when the committee has wanted to have the elementary buildings down to 350 or so students. The committee discussed the pros and cons of having 300+ to 500+ students in an elementary building. If two grades were moved to HEC and administration and early learning remain at HEC, the building would have 650 students. A member asked if two grades were added to HEC, whether or not the HEC site could handle that many students. A member suggested that if building additions to HEC site is not ideal than the discussion should stop on these options. A member felt that having transitions can be difficult for younger students. Another member commented that if the programming is maintained for the student that it lessens the difficulty of the transition. The programming is more a factor to consider for transition than moving from one building to another. An example was that the transition to 6th grade from the elementary building may be less challenging for students than moving from 6th to 7th grade.

The committee was reminded that we are trying to address a few main questions: If kindergarten and 1st grade or 4th and 5th grade are moved to HEC, should administration and early learning remain at HEC or be moved. If the administration and early learning remains at HEC, there will be an additional 500 students at HEC for a total of 650 (which includes early learning) and HEC would require additional construction. A member asked if an option would be to have HEC as a three story building to accommodate administration offices as well

The committee was asked if having 650 or 500 students at HEC was preferable. Do not support 650 students at HEC = 9 votes. A member said 650 was ok if 4th and 5th graders were HEC with early learning but if HEC is kindergarten and 1st grade with early learning at 650 is not ok. An alternative proposal was brought up for 4/5 at Steele, K – 3 HEC of 2 sections each, the remaining K-3 would be split between Steele, N. Aurelius, Alaeidon. A consideration for this option would be land acquisition, parking, and traffic circulation. A possible con is that a majority of the students living in the city of Mason may be bused out to the further elementary buildings. A member recommended that the committee needs to come to some compromise in the middle so that this committee can move forward because this group has been spinning without making much progress.

The committee discussed option #10 (kindergarten to HEC and 5th to MMS). A question was asked of the committee if moving 5th grade to the middle school was a good option as it would result in 1,000 students at the middle school. A discussion occurred that the MMS would be too large and not ideal. It could be a problem having barriers in the buildings to segregate 5th and 6th from 7th and 8th. Also, having students start at different times would be difficult. A member felt that having survey data from the community regarding moving 5th grade to MMS would be helpful.

Epic MRA Survey:

Superintendent Drzewicki, provided Mr. Porn some information to draft a survey. A sub-committee would be helpful to review the draft survey. Patrick Meyers has already asked to be included on the sub-committee. It would be good to have a few members on a sub-committee. The purpose of the sub-committee would be to look at the questions to make sure the proper topics are included. Sally Trout and Sandy Smalley volunteered to be part of the sub-committee. The plan for the January 31st meeting would be a final survey with the possibility of questions from Mr. Porn already starting. A member asked if demolition of certain buildings could be added to the survey as a hot topic item. Alternatively, a question asking how strongly the community feels about using the HEC building could be presented.

Public Comment:

Mr. Michael Kelly from the public commented that moving two grades felt that the community will struggle as it could be viewed as a radical change. Moving two grades could jeopardize support from the community. He feels enrollment numbers need to be revisited as growth is going down. He felt moving one grade option is something to further consider and would further utilize HEC. He feels that more options at other locations would be available if the committee focused on moving one grade at this time. He feels there is a misconception in the community that there is growth occurring. As a point to the survey, there are close to 300 students that move out of the Mason district. It would be good to address the needs of the families that are leaving rather than try to bring in students from other communities.