

Vision 20/20

12/9/08 Committee Meeting Notes



Attendees: Harry Applegate, Cathy Axcell, Bill Baddour, Jon Dregalla, Brian Gottfried, Bob Hertl, Dan Keenan, Andrew Mangels, Kim Mather, Michael Medoro, Duane Miller, Chris Milowicki, Dave Puffer, Nancy Schill, Steve Schill, Bonnie Smith, Steve Steffas, Melisa Yeoman, Del Younglas, Mark Pepera

Welcome: Dr. Keenan. We had an incident 3-4 years in a row, with a pipe break at the high school that costs several thousand dollars each time to repair. It's another example of the same things we've been talking about year after year. We were able to keep the high school open because of some repairs last year, but it was not without struggles and a different allocation of personnel. We had to adjust parking and had a career day that day. It's not an unforeseen thing. It's happening consistently.

We had a great meeting last week. We need to stick to the goal tonight of putting together a good look at the two plans. I'd like to be able to have a good start on describing why these would be two great plans for us for the next 50 years. We also need to show we were thorough in understanding the weaknesses and threats of each plan. We should also list ways to meet those challenges.

Congratulations to Mark Pepera on his recent Ohio Treasurer of the Year award. It speaks highly of the organization and something to keep in mind through this process to say your finances are in such excellent shape and in such fabulous hands.

Teacher Reaction to Plans: In general terms, I think they were expecting this was something we'd propose and they understand there is great potential for both plans. I think there is concern about how we progressively change grade level configurations. I think they felt in general it's great because they can see we've looked at those things. They want to be part of that process. There was not significant negative reaction to the plans, and after speaking with them about the process, they attributed their hesitation to more of a lack of experience working with the grade level configurations.

It would be a cultural change. They understand we're looking at the future of the district. After meeting with this group and presenting to the administrators and staff, it's best to go forward stating that the grade level concept will be represented by five buildings that are grade configured. We need to have more in-depth discussions with school districts within 1,000 students of our enrollment and talk about their arrangements and see what's the best fit for us. We can work with the staff and have focus groups doing more research on why this makes sense. The grade level configuration presents the greatest amount of change and thoughts about student leadership, transitions and how it impacts the buildings senses of community were all items that were brought up as things that need to be considered. These things can be addressed to an extent by reviewing which configuration works best for Westlake.

Additional Research: We're doing a phone survey before the holidays. The survey will be research based and statistically significant with 400 community members contacted. We're going to ask them a series of questions asking if they are aware of state of facilities, if they will support moving forward with a master facilities plan and if they are informed about our situation with regard to facilities. We need to get this planned out so when our opportunity is there we're able to jump and take advantage of that.

SWOT Discussion:

Option 1A

- *Strengths & Opportunities of Grade Level Configurations*
 - Advantages of grade level configuration
 - Synergy of instruction, aligning with certification, consistent/equitable instruction
 - Economies with 5 buildings
 - Economies of construction. There are cost savings in actual construction of 5 buildings
 - Resulting operational efficiencies (administrative, cafeterias)
 - Age appropriate equipment (playgrounds)
 - Resultant vacant properties (Parkside & Hilliard)
 - New buildings would increase desirability of Westlake
 - Would bring us in line with surrounding districts
 - Would attract young families and business to the area
 - Might attract better teachers because of teaching in grade level configurations
 - Best value, innovative, strategic
 - Focused on program and teaching
 - Collaboration among best teachers
 - Offers a world class education with new technology, labs
 - Increases desirability of living/doing business in Westlake
 - Reduces duplication by investing more in grade-level buildings
- *Weaknesses & Threats (These are things that we need to acknowledge that will either be real OR perceived and a discussion should take place indicating ways these challenges can be addressed)*
 - Transportation costs
 - Selling the costs of the plan
 - Traffic congestion
 - What happens with facilities? May need some of those properties for athletic facilities
 - Interruption of athletics and extracurricular activities during construction
 - Project LINK issue needs to be addressed
 - Additional student transition
 - What happens to Hilliard and Parkside properties?

- Previous maintenance history. Does that impact voters looking at this plan as something they would support?
- Loss of neighborhood schools
- Lost a smaller building environment
- We're doing great already, is this plan really necessary?
- All buildings will age at the same time
- Nostalgia, emotional connection to buildings

Option 3

- *Strengths & Opportunities*
 - Design for the 21st century – ability to have equipment and environment so students prepared properly
 - You have smaller learning communities & community pride
 - More flexibility for the future and more efficient
 - Being a partner in the community, showing commitment to sustainability, good stewards of our environment
 - Reducing administrative costs
 - Leadership issue with older students working with younger students
 - Other organizations might find use for unused buildings
 - Promised continued involvement in community
 - Wider community involvement with three buildings spread throughout the community
 - Ability to have multipurpose athletic facilities
 - Schools play huge role in defining community – better educational opportunities, allows community to achieve excellence, as well as schools
 - Familiar concept/proven success
 - Improvement on the status quo
 - Targets needs for a world-class system
 - Renting/income opportunities
 - Students develop long-term, in-depth relationships
 - Operational savings
 - Green building opportunities
- *Weaknesses & Threats*
 - Duplication of staff
 - Perception that it allows for full-day kindergarten, but cost associated with it
 - Increased transportation
 - Personnel shifting
 - Redistricting
 - Fear of change
 - Cost to taxpayers – too much at once
 - Bradley Road albatross

- Permanent Improvement levy – haven't maintained buildings in the past
- People don't understand the magnitude of the problem
- Dover closing – history
- Collaboration still a hurdle in K-3
- No understanding of how schools impact community for residents with no children in schools
- More expensive option

We should investigate our overflow figures to determine to what level neighborhood schools exist in Westlake.

**** Next meeting: Tuesday, Jan. 13, 6-7:30pm, Board of Education Office**

Possible Board presentation on Jan. 26, 2009 **