

Memo

To: Members of the Ashland School Community

From: Jim Adams, Superintendent of Schools

Date: October 22, 2016

Re: Recommendation for District Reorganization

Dear Ashland School Community:

I write to share an update connected with the planned district reorganization, as approved by the Ashland School Committee in January of 2016. On Saturday, October 22, 2016 the School Committee hosted a three-hour long workshop to discuss current reorganization plans and plans moving forward. At this workshop Mr. Cairra, Principal of Mindess, Mr. DiGirolamo, Principal of AMS, Ms. Bennett, Assistant Principal of Mindess, Ms. Durand, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, and I collaboratively requested the School Committee to reconsider their vote to reorganize our schools. Discussion will continue at our next School Committee meeting on October 26, however, I wanted to provide the community with the rationale behind administration's recommendation. I want to emphasize that no vote to change the initial recommendation has been taken by the Ashland School Committee.

Reorganization Study and Decision: Background

The need to respond to our expected enrollment increase and space demands at the Warren and Mindess Elementary Schools was identified a number of years ago. A *School Reorganization Task Force* met between 2015-2016 to analyze these space needs and provide a recommendation for school configurations moving forward. The Warren School added modular classrooms in 2015-16 to meet their needs. . Opportunities were not identified in meeting the space needs of Mindess at that time. Thus, the School Committee based on my recommendation and that of the District Reorganizational Task Force, voted to reorganize our schools for the 2017-18 school year. The move as approved is below:

- Create a new 3-6 grade school at 87 West Union Street (currently the Ashland Middle School and Central Offices).
- Create a 7-8 School at the David Mindess School
- Move central office personnel to the David Mindess School
- Move the special education offices to the Pittaway School
- Create a District Reorganization Logistical Task Force (LTF) led by the superintendent. The LTF will also include faculty, staff, administration, and a member of the school committee. A finalized plan will be presented no later than February of 2017.

Revised Recommendation on Reorganization to Reorganize: Rationale

As the leader of this District, I value and hope I model reflective leadership. My administrative team and I continually analyze the needs of our district and aspire to make informed, data driven decisions that are student-centered and meet the goals of our *Blueprint for Continuous Student Improvement*. We are not afraid to change our recommendations to the School Committee if the recommendations are in the best interest of students, faculty, and staff. To this end, our leadership team continuously reviews enrollment data, student performance data, and facility data.

A major factor in my decision to ask the School Committee to reconsider their initial approval is based on the fact that new leadership under the direction of Mr. Caira has uncovered sufficient space opportunities for meeting the needs of our students now, next year, and in the years to come. My recommendation is also based on a smaller increase in student population this year compared to the projections provided by NESDEC (New England School Development Council.).

In our recent workshop, we also considered the current financial and programming needs of the district.

Due to our constant analysis, I have asked the Ashland School Committee to place on our next School Committee meeting on Wednesday, October 26, an agenda item to discuss, and potentially vote, whether to reverse their original decision for reorganization or not. I have included an attachment to the presentation we made yesterday as an administrative team for your convenience. We understand that you may have questions prior to the meeting and encourage you to please email Laurie Tosti, School Committee Chair or me with questions.. Additionally, as noted above, please feel free to join us for an opportunity to be heard at the School Committee meeting on the 26th.

School Start Times

It is important to note that the reorganization decision is independent of the conversation around school start times. Per our communication last Spring, we will still be changing school start times for the 2017-18 school year. We continue to feel strongly that the change in times is in the best interest of our students' well-being. A final determination of what this looks like will follow the reorganization discussion.

Links:

Presentation to the Ashland School Committee on Saturday, October 22, 2016

Email Addresses:

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laurietosti@ashland.k12.ma.us

Be well,

Jim Adams, Superintendent of Schools

District ReOrganization: 2016



Does this change really need to happen?

Proposal to the Ashland School Committee

Prepared by: Michael A. Caira, Jr - David Mindess Principal

David DiGirolamo - Ashland Middle School Principal

Saturday, October 22, 2016

Why ReOrganize?

“Mindess has been effectively meeting the needs of its current population, but swelling class sizes and the need for space to provide student services are taxing the available resources and creating the need for more space. A solution is needed for the 2016-17 academic year and beyond that will address continued town growth (and thus enrollment growth) while still effectively meeting the needs of our most vulnerable students” (Durand, et.al., 2015, pg. 2).

Enrollment

2016/2017	Multiage	Single Age	Total
3	68	146	214
4	57	152	209
5	58	140	198
Total	183	438	621

Projected Enrollments for 2017-2019

2017/18	Multiage	Single Age	Total
3	58	162	220
4	68	146	214
5	57	152	209
Total	183	460	643

2018/19	Multiage	Single Age	Total
3	57	163	220
4	58	162	220
5	68	146	214
Total	183	471	654

Projected Class Size

Year	MultiAge	3	4	5
2016/2017	23	21	22	20
2017/2018	23	23	21	22
2018/2019	23	23	23	21

From the District ReOrganization Proposal

- 1). Most beneficial/least impactful to the students from a developmental and programmatic perspective. Our primary concern at all times was the well-being of the students and how we could best foster their educational experience within the confines of our existing resources.
- 2). Least disruptive to the District as a whole. Many potential solutions included a variety of actions. Beyond looking at the impact of any single action of an option, we also considered how much disruption/change was involved in total for any given solution.
- 3). Most cost effective. Ashland's budgetary challenges are well known to this group therefore the financial impact needed to be among the top concerns.

From the District ReOrganization Proposal

4.) Sustainability. It was of critical importance to our group that our recommendations be solutions that could conceivably be maintained for between 5-10 years to allow for a longer term solution to be thoroughly vetted and put in place.

5.) Least impact on staff. We considered the impact to teachers, specialists, nursing, SPED staff, and administrators.

6.) Least impact to logistics and facilities. Given that our discussions included options that considered a wide range of grades, each with its own unique physical challenges given the age of the children, we would have been remiss to ignore the facility limitations within a given building as well as the field / playground / open space facilities outside those buildings. Extra curriculums requiring specialized space and/or additional travel time was a concern.

Another Option.....

Explore the current space at the David Mindess Elementary School

- Not ReOrganizing is the most effective and efficient way to succeed in the goals mentioned in the previous two slides.
- Information provided to the District ReOrganization Committee regarding the Mindess Elementary School was provided by Mr. Gregory Irvine (former Mindess School principal)
- The 2016/2017 has presented new opportunity for the Mindess Elementary School.

NEW LEADERSHIP, NEW VIEWS, NEW VISION, NEW POSSIBILITIES

Ashland Middle School

Closing the achievement gap and maintaining high growth:

- Title 1 Math in grade 6 last year, all grades this year
- Study Skills - ESPs provide additional support services
- Remediation and Enrichment during Discovery
- Increased integration of technology: Addition of Chromebooks, increased PD for technology-Google Classroom, Twitter, Online Assessments, Khan Academy, Stemscoptes
- ISSPs(Individualized Student Success Plans) - implementation of strategies during class and beyond
- Team meeting time: targeting students in need of support, RTI interventions

Ashland Middle School

Accountability Data:

<http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/accountability/report/school.aspx?linkid=31&orgcode=00140405&orgtypecode=6&>

Preliminary and Very Draft Projected Costs (Incomplete)

Staff/Personnel	Amount	Building Adjustments	Amount	Various Other	Amount
.40 2nd Step 87W	\$30,000.00	Science Lab	\$100,000.00	Moving Company	\$50,000.00
1.0 Assist Princ 87W	\$80,000.00	Painting	\$0.00	Boxes	\$10,000.00
1.0 Stem Mind	\$52,000.00	Science Lab	\$100,000.00		
.50 Nurse 87W	\$30,000.00	Playground - 87W	\$30,000.00		
.40 2nd Step87W	\$30,000.00	Computer Lab	\$50,000.00		
		Kitchen 87W	\$150,000.00		
Sub-Total	\$192,000.00		\$400,000.00		\$60,000.00
Recurring	\$192,000.00				
Non-Recurring	\$460,000.00				
	\$652,000.00				

Space at Mindess

- Room 36/37: currently being used for Sub Separate Special Education
 - (10 students in Room for 2016/2017)
 - (9 students projected for 2017/2018)
- Room 6: currently being used for Sub Separate Special Education
 - (12 students 2016/2017)
 - (11-13 students projected for 2017/2018)
- Room 7/Locker Room: currently being used for Extended Day Program
- Room 13: currently being used for Grade 5 classroom
- Physical Education Office: currently housing office space for 2 teachers
- Room 26: currently being used for Pull Out Instruction/Office Space for 1.0 ELL teacher (2 individuals)
- Room 8: currently being used for ELL service delivery for 1.0 ELL teacher (90 min/day Pull Out Instruction)

How do we make it work?

- Room 36/37: currently being used for Sub Separate Special Education
 - (10 students in Room for 2016/2017)
 - (9 students projected for 2017/2018)
 - MOVE TO ROOM 13
- Room 13: currently being used for Grade 5 classroom (Erin Mulligan)
 - Move to Room 8
- Room 8: currently being used for ELL service delivery (Pull Out Instruction)
 - Move to Physical Education Office OR Room 26
- Physical Education Office: currently housing office space for 2 teachers
 - Move to Locker Room Space (TO BE BUILT)
- Room 7/Locker Room: currently being used for Extended Day Program
 - Move to Band Room
- Band Room ---Donna Walsh Office to AHS
 - Move to Stage for practice/EDP space for private lessons
- Room 26: currently being used for office space for 1.0 ELL teacher (2 Individuals)
 - COULD move to PE office Space

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

EMPTY SPACE!

- Room 36 ---potential TLC space (projected 2-4 students)
- Room 37
- Room 7
 - Reduce class size to hire an additional teacher if deemed necessary

Questions

