

FACILITIES ADVISORY TEAM COMMITTEE MEETING  
Thursday, March 12, 2009 – 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.  
East High School

## MINUTES

**PRESENT:** M. Ginalski, J. Delorme, A. Danquah, B. Cameron, K. Murdock, J. Reilly, S. Romans, P. Webster, T. Decker, R. Kimble, T. Tunney, J. Tobia, M. Whittenhall, B. Pierce, M. Roe, K. Houck, K. Monastra, M. Franklin, J. Meteer, S. Bathrick, J. Castiglione, R. Gosden R. McMaster, J. Robbins, R. Smith, C. Woodcock

**ABSENT:** R. Gillespie, N. Jakobson, A. Knowles, V. Zingler

**RECORDER:** K. Dutcher

**VISITORS:** There were several visitors in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m. by Facilitator, Mr. Anthony Danquah. He reviewed the agenda and asked if there were any other discussion items from the group that they would like placed on the agenda-there were none. The minutes from the February 26<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved by consensus.

Following up with the February 26<sup>th</sup> meeting, Mr. Mike Ginalski noted that he felt the group was “locked up” in their discussions relative to the plans being discussed. His understanding was that there were two ideas on the table of equal value: 1) grade reconfiguration (5/6 & 7/8); and, 2) one Middle School using existing High School. The group agreed.

The group focused their discussion on the Middle School dilemma, what happens to grades 5 and 6? Mr. Ginalski noted that there are two things that they do know - no new building is wanted and there is not a lot of available land surrounding the middle schools. The Committee discussed the viability of the middle schools and what they need to do with the two middle school buildings. Many in the group noted they are struggling with issue of money versus philosophy and what is going to drive the plan. The group also discussed the need for equity. Further discussion surrounded how to distinguish between data and facts versus emotion.

It was noted that there are three major points that have to be reconciled:

1. Where does the community want to go with 6<sup>th</sup> grade?
2. Does the community really want to maintain Northside Blodgett and Corning Free Academy Middle Schools?
3. Does the community want 2 high schools?

Mr. Jeff Robbins presented their findings on how Corning Free Academy and Northside Blodgett Middle Schools could be utilized. He reviewed the program study for each building which provided a programmatic layout redesign of each building.

The Committee separated into group A-Northside Blodgett Middle School and Group B –Corning Free Academy Middle School to discuss the issues involved in using their assigned building for grades 5 and 6, what are the positives and negatives; and, to recommend an alternative building that could be used for 5 and 6.

## **Group A – Northside Blodgett Middle School**

Stacy Bathrick reported out for this group

### **Positives**

- Does have adequate space
- Green space-compared to some existing elementary buildings
- Maintains community
- Keep use of building
- Solves what to do with 5/6
- Keeps “maturity” level of students in one building
- Matches certification of teachers
- Related arts could be stronger
- Enhanced team teaching
- Manageable school size
- 25% of building is less than 20 years old (8-12 classes were remodeled)

### **Negatives**

- Middle Years Program is separated
- No auditorium space as is (could possibly be developed into a plan)
- Bussing – would have to be reconfigured
- Related Arts (what happens to 4<sup>th</sup> graders in band, etc.)
- Less work/less money if done in two phases (two votes)
- Some don’t want to reuse building
- Hard sell crowded versus structure

### **If not, then what?**

- Keep Frank Pierce with Pre-K  
Leaves room or possibility in elementary schools to bring back 6<sup>th</sup> grade or use large elementary
- There is not another building alternative

The group noted that the assumption should not be that there will be 1 high school. They also raised the question, are we using grades 5/6 to save the middle schools?

## **Group B – Corning Free Academy Middle School**

Joseph Tobia reported out for this group

### **Positives**

- Enrollment more “workable”
- Auditorium and two gyms
- Support space
- Making the building viable
- CFA fits better as a 5/6 building
- Fewer buildings w/grade 5 (now just 2)

### **Negatives**

- Bearing walls removal
- Classroom configuration
- Site concern (landlocked)

**If not, then what?**

The group talked about three other options

K-6 (Grade 6 in Elementary  $\longrightarrow$  7-12 (2 high schools)  
Transition concerns (parents)

K-4  $\longrightarrow$  5-6  $\longrightarrow$  7-9  $\longrightarrow$  10-12  
(Elem) (2-Middle) (West) (East)

K-4  $\longrightarrow$  5-6  $\longrightarrow$  7-12  
(Elem) (2 Middle) (2 High)

- 5-6 @ Northside Blodgett and Corning Free Academy, if not, then another model (no use of CFA)
- Another model (Pre-K-5, 6-12)

The group discussed public perception of renovating the middle school buildings for elementary grades 5-6, if it isn't good enough for middle school, why is it good enough for elementary students? Mr. Bill Cameron discussed briefly the survey trend and noted that it shows that the community wants students out of the middle school buildings. Mr. Jeff Robbins from Hunt Engineers provided the Committee with a handout showing comparison of grade configurations and design options. The Committee felt this information was very useful and could be used as a base for further discussions relative to options.

Mr. Ginalski stated that the Committee needs to begin weighting issues such as equity, funding and instructional programming. He noted that he will provide more information on middle school and high school programming at the next meeting.

Next meeting will take place on April 2, 2009 at West High School beginning at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.