

Community Engagement Responses

September 14, 2016

Focus #3
Area #3

Community Engagement

The big issues (future economy, education) are not of twitter size and cannot be handled by the process as so far occurring.

- We've used a committee of leaders; this process is more invitational and transparent based on criticisms of the prior process. We are moving to small group work for future meetings.

To get community buy-in, the district has to be better at the basics like communication. This is an area to focus on before selling the community on the plans. They won't trust the district with more until it improves. The website is the biggest area of concern.

- In terms of communication, we are emphasizing the use of all systems and transparency.
- For example, we use the Falls News Press, ROAR, Facebook, Twitter, cfalls.org, all-call system, Final Forms, and many of our leaders use Remind101 and other apps to communicate with small groups.

Focus #4
Area #4

Facilities/Resources

In the PowerPoint presentation (page 14), it is stated that the property at the Bolich site is 45 acres, when the Bolich property is only 35 acres. Where are the additional 10 acres?

- Per the assessments, the Bolich site is comprised of 35 acres and the Newberry site is comprised of 10 acres. Together the campus environment would be comprised of 45 acres; thus, our largest property in the District.

At the end of the plan, what happens to the elementary students who now go to Silver Lake and Preston?

- Part of the original plan included site selection and redistricting which would have occurred during construction of the 7-8 and 9-12 buildings.
- Those decisions are now embedded within the current process.

Given the required time to design and construct a new building, what is our timeline?

- The OFCC timeline is cyclical and becomes well defined based on the BOE's approval of a master facilities plan.
- As a committee, we need to arrive at consensus on a master facilities plan recommendation and determine when it would be best placed on the ballot, given renewal of current and future operating levies.

Review similar district data. If instructional expenses are the highest (still), highlight not only how much, but how more per pupil is spent.

- Comparison Group data (2500-4999 students) regarding instructional expenses are extremely favorable for CFCSD. For example:
 - Over the last four fiscal years, we have increased the percentage of revenue distributed to the classrooms from 71.5% to 74.0%;
 - Our expenditure per pupil has been consistently lower than the state average;
 - We have reduced the reliance on the local community for overall revenues from 53.4% to 49.9%;
 - And, we have consistently ranked in the top 10 in our similar district group (2500 – 4999 students) in terms of the percentage of funds sent to our classrooms (SY 15-16 we ranked 2nd out of 109 districts).
 - Data can be obtained from the local report cards from the last four years.

Keep putting academics and college credit first (and frequently). This helps create an enhanced perception of pupil vs. bricks.

- As we face crucial decisions for the short term and building issues for the next 50-100 years, it is crucial that we keep academic issues as the central focus in our decision-making process. Our students deserve opportunities to engage with businesses and to become prepared for college and careers.
- As our mission and vision statement suggest, opportunities for our kids is of primary importance. Thus, we must determine the type of model educational environment in which our students will be provided these opportunities.
- Recently, we have been significantly more aggressive with credit acceleration particularly in the middle and high schools. As a result, students are receiving college credits they may not have received in the past (either as a result of preparation or economics).
- Over the last ten years or more, 55-65% of our graduates have entered a two- or four-year college and less than one-third have earned a two- or four-year degree within six years of high school graduation. According to projections, and embedded into some states strategic plans, 60% of working adults will need a certificate or degree beyond high school by 2030 (this year's 5th-grade students six years after graduation).
- If the data holds, we need to continue to be aggressive in our current endeavor and to include a higher-education and adult education component into our plan.

In building talks, keep focusing on ability to create a plan for the next 50-100 years.

Talk about transporting 7th-12th grades. This was a HUGE issue in the first round and tonight was the first time I've heard it was in the plan.

- Included in the current plan is transportation for 7-12 students which includes transportation to non-public schools with structures within a 30-minute bus ride of our structure.
- When the buildings were built, most students walked to school. Today, most are transported by parents/friends. Parental transportation exacerbates the traffic issues we currently face (K-12 across the district). Thus, we anticipate additional transportation (K-12) may help alleviate dangerous pick-up and drop-off environments that currently exist with no viable solution.

When will this big group break into subgroups?

- The big group needs to break into small groups soon; however, we want to address the general questions first such that everyone is working from the same foundation.
- The major topics will be: 1) model educational environment; 2) renovate vs. rebuild; 3) site selection; and, 4) finances. There may be others that evolve, but these have been fairly consistent.

Explain WHY: PK – 3, 4-6, 7-8, 9-12+

- In terms of the current grade band configuration, our foci were:
 - a. Early Childhood Education – the academic and economic benefits thereof.
 - b. Optimum building size of 500-600 students; the smaller learning communities (Dens/Academies) of the high school is, in part, based on this research, too.
 - c. Differences in student needs: Primary vs. Intermediate vs. Secondary.

Why is the current plan not going back on the ballot?

What is the optimal number of open-enrollees and residential students?

- The optimum number of OE students is based on:
 - a. Open seats in current classrooms year by year;
 - b. Open classrooms in the buildings only if it is financially advantageous.

People want to know the major different configurations of buildings and cost estimates/bond estimates including additional levy costs for auditoriums/fields/etc. so there is not a surprise or additional sticker shock if future levies are needed.

- In terms of the original grade-band configuration, our guiding principles were:
 - Early Childhood Education (PK-3)
 - Optimum building size of 500-600 students
 - Differences in student needs: Primary vs. Intermediate vs. Secondary
 - Primary:
 - Literacy and Numeracy
 - Intermediate:
 - Deeper Cross-curricular connections
 - Secondary:
 - Meeting individual needs and interests to help the students prepare for their unique futures
 - Auditoriums/athletic facilities, etc. are Locally Funded Initiatives (LFI) costs. We can cost-out any ideas that the group/community might have.
 - We have reviewed Master Facilities Plan (OFCC) configurations over the years. Any and all configurations can be considered.

How much time is involved in total to get this initiative on the ballot? There seems to be multiple, complicated steps involved.

- Insofar as the time involved in this project, it will take several months of meetings to produce a recommendation that is acceptable to the group. There are, indeed, a lot of very complicated steps. The steps are necessary to produce understanding and consensus strong enough to guide the community toward support.

What are environmental issues that might be associated with this project? (Maybe this is a question for later?)

- Environmental issues associated with the sites, if there are any, are incorporated in the contingency budget built into the construction plan.

With the possible closing of elementary schools, how much thought has been given to redistricting? Will that be made public?

- To date, we have not thought deeply about redistricting other than maintaining a commitment to equitable distribution. Redistricting decisions will be made along with the site selection process. If that needs to take place prior to placing segment one on the ballot, we can engage in that conversation.

There clearly is a need for a new high school. Educating our citizenry, as to that necessity, is paramount. To me it is a no brainer.

- The administration and staff believes we need a new high school as well. In fact, with parts of three buildings nearing 100 years old, we believe it is important to rebuild the District as a whole.
- The original construction of Silver Lake Elementary was 1927; the original construction of CFHS was 1922; and, the original construction of Lincoln Elementary was 1930.

How can an additional 700 students not cause additional class sections? Does the district really have that much open space? Show this on paper.

- Enrollment is an ever changing statistic in Cuyahoga Falls. At this time (9/27), we have 448 Open Enrollment students as follows (406 are returning students):
 - Kindergarten = 13
 - Seventh = 41

- First = 43
- Second = 31
- Third = 35
- Fourth = 28
- Fifth = 37
- Sixth = 27
- Eighth = 34
- Ninth = 36
- Tenth = 43
- Eleventh = 40
- Twelfth = 35
- Other = 5

- On the surface it appears we could suspend Open Enrollment at the K-5 level and close a building; however, when we look at building capacities and the number of sections/students to be moved along with the savings versus lost revenue as well as the political fallout, to do so may not be prudent. For example, the following is the number of Open Enrollment students by building and grade level:
 - DeWitt – 28 of 441 students
 - K = 5; 1st = 5; 2nd = 0; 3rd = 3; 4th = 8; 5th = 7
 - Lincoln – 19 of 522 students
 - K = 1; 1st = 8; 2nd = 2; 3rd = 2; 4th = 3; 5th = 3
 - Price – 25 of 347 students
 - K = 2; 1st = 5; 2nd = 6; 3rd = 5; 4th = 5; 5th = 2
 - Preston – 57 of 279 students
 - K = 2; 1st = 10; 2nd = 16; 3rd = 16; 4th = 4; 5th = 9
 - Richardson – 43 of 425 students
 - K = 3; 1st = 9; 2nd = 6; 3rd = 8; 4th = 7; 5th = 10
 - Silver Lake – 15 of 233 students
 - K = 0; 1st = 6; 2nd = 1; 3rd = 1; 4th = 1; 5th = 6
- To suspend Open Enrollment, K-5 would result in lost revenue of 187 students at \$6,000 each representing \$1,122,000 annually (using the FY17 funding formula)
- Given the enrollment, the two possible candidates for closure would be Preston and/or Silver Lake. Each scenario would require significant numbers of students to be relocated:
 - Preston – 222 students
 - K = 39; 1st = 35; 2nd = 33; 3rd = 32; 4th = 45; 5th = 38
 - Silver Lake – 218 students
 - K = 46; 1st = 28; 2nd = 44; 3rd = 36; 4th = 41; 5th = 23
- Therefore, assuming physical space is available to accommodate additional students/sections in other buildings, we engaged in the re-districting process and cut the entire staff, which would amount to 15 teachers, support staff, and the administration (approximately \$1,180,000) the amount saved is approximately equal to the revenue lost (\$1,122,000).
- Of course, each building has operational costs (natural gas, electric, water/sewage, garbage service, repairs/maintenance, etc.) at Preston the amount is \$63,000 which would add to the savings.
- However, the assumption is likely false due to the lack of necessary physical space in other buildings and/or the need to reassign staff to the additional sections once the students are redistributed after redistricting.
- Do the benefits exceed the costs?
 - All in all, we believe the costs (financially and politically) outweigh the benefits at this time.

What will be the cost for added busing as there is no busing to the high school now? What about the fee we will have to pay to those attending private school that wish for busing reimbursement?

- The additional busing will come at an additional cost.
- We are planning for five additional routes at an additional cost of approximately \$50K per route (driver, fuel, maintenance) per year.
- We may need to purchase three additional buses at \$80-100K (one-time costs).

- The question is, does the addition of busing provide benefit to offset the cost? The additional Permanent Improvement revenue in the original plan would have provided funding for additional transportation and other renovations.

Is there a side-by-side comparison of the costs to renovate vs. new construction? Also a comparison of what it would cost to operate renovated vs. new buildings.

- The assessments offer differences in cost to renovate vs. rebuild; we will attempt to put these differences in a more understandable/readable format. In terms of operating costs, we need to rely upon our partners for those comparisons.

As Mr. Schott suggests, future technology, neuroscience, and cognitive psychology all suggest more of the same is not the right direction.

- We agree that more of the same is not the answer. We need to come to consensus on the amount of change that is tolerable.

New schools will benefit the city, or should benefit the city, by increasing property values and bringing in home buyers. Is there any support from the city or mayor for this project?

- Both Mayors support the project.

I support:

- **7th-12th grade campus on 1 location**
- **Football with Track – Soccer field does not need to be inside football stadium. (Too much football!) Need to develop other sports teams**
- **PLEASE delete old outdated info on the website!**
- **High School/Middle School teams work together**
- **Middle School teams need recognition in *Meet the Tigers Night* (Not Parks & Rec. Football which is not affiliated with the schools).**
- **Better youth (elementary level) programming and team development i.e. no volleyball beyond 7th-grade in district – girls are forced to go outside of the district for programs. Cross-country is the same – there are independent clubs, but nothing affiliated with the schools.**

Propose 9-12 building only at this time. Once the community sees results, perhaps more will be apt to support segment 2 (and 3).

- Proposing the 9-12 only portion is possible; however, we need to consider the whole plan (number and grade configuration of buildings) for OFCC funding and Master Facilities Planning.

Since there's a house for sale on 6th Street, will the school district buy it to give more room for a new H.S.? What happens to this building if empty? Why not lease the old TOPS building to house students while the current H.S. is razed and rebuild?

- The identified property is no longer for sale. That said, the District does not have the funds to purchase additional property. Further, the District currently owns 138.23 acres.
- The former TOPPS building is already purchased and is not in our district.
- What happens to this site? For a period of time it becomes swing space while students are displaced during the construction phase.
- Beyond that, the district needs more event parking and could use the extra space for anything, for example:
 - A comprehensive competition site used by the district and the community with proper field house, locker room, and team room facilities/concession, etc.?
 - The addition of a scene shop, the addition of adequate dressing rooms and restrooms for the auditorium and gymnasium, etc.

I make a motion to accept the previous master plan.

With only 2% of expenses going to supplies, and our students are mostly using outdated and/or badly worn textbooks, shouldn't that be significantly increased?

- If we are to shift more money to supplies it has to come from other categories of the general fund that are pushed to the limit.

Until air conditioning is available in every school, shouldn't school wait to start until after Labor Day? Originally, we were told the calendar was changed to align with Kent State and Akron University, but they did not start until September.

- Our school calendar is predominantly aligned with the Six-District Compact schools. Alignment with university partners is mostly based on end of semester timeframes.

Next Agenda Suggestions

- Even though a bond will be in 2 phases, the committee should agree on a master plan (sites only) for elementary too. We will need to know there is an overall master plan.
- Discuss the student population census for the next 10 years based on the 2017 projection.
- Education program at the unified campus for students 7-12.
- Program for life-long learning (adult education).
- How will the community be able to use the unified facility?
- Discuss the adaptive re-use of the high school property for private development. Also Sill and other demo properties for housing—new valuation for increased property taxes.