

Clinton Community Committee on Facility Needs Input Summary

The Board of Education created a means for submission of comments and questions related to the decision to close Pierson Elementary School and realign the grades in Joel Elementary to be pK-4 and Eliot Middle School to be 5-8. The submission period began on October 23, 2018 and concluded on October 30, 2018. A total of 39 submissions were received, 37 through the online portal and 2 were delivered in hard copy to Central Office. All 39 were compiled and provided to Board of Education members prior to the Regular Meeting of November 5, 2018.

The following Question-Answer document was created from the submissions:

1. *Did the Clinton Community Committee on Facility Needs consider additional options for grade reconfiguration, including moving an additional grade to Morgan?*

The scope of the committee was to examine the configurations of grades pK-8 and the use of the three buildings that currently house those grades. As the committee reviewed enrollment information and programming, many ideas were discussed, but the focus was on grade configurations and programming that was developmentally appropriate.

2. *What happens if enrollment soars?*

By recommending to realign the grades with pK-4 at Joel School and grades 5-8 at Eliot Middle School, the committee allowed for the possibility of enrollment increasing in a way that is not currently projected. Both schools will have space to absorb and manage increases in enrollment. Extreme increases in enrollment would result in the need to examine a way to realign and use available space or to expand space at the remaining buildings.

3. *Will 5th grade participate in current extracurricular experiences at the middle school, such as dances, sports, after school activities, etc.?*

Students in 5th grade will have opportunities to engage in activities beyond the school day. Programming for 5th grade at Eliot is in process but no final decisions have been made.

4. *What measures will be taken to keep 5th grade apart from older students?*

Considerations for space and locations for students and classrooms are in process. The administration will be working with staff to determine developmentally appropriate clustering of all grades and spaces to ensure a safe and supportive school experience for all of our middle school students.

5. *Is regionalization a solution to maintain strength of programs?*

Regionalization is always a consideration for school district leaders where possible and practical. Statutory requirements, desire for local control, and coordination of schedules and service needs all factor into the potential for cost-savings and opportunity in regionalized efforts. Continuing to explore areas that are possible for regionalization is necessary.

6. *What are plans to return Pierson Elementary School to the Town and how will the space be used?*

The school district will coordinate the transition activities needed to move all programs, materials, and equipment from Pierson School. When that is finalized, the Board of Education will officially act to return the building to the Town. The decision about future use of the building is not in the purview of the Board of Education.

7. *Why were the cost-savings characterized as a 1-year savings and not yearly savings?*

The savings that will be realized from the closure of the Pierson School will be notable as a reduction in monetary requests in the 2019-2020 proposed operating and capital budgets. Moving forward, the baseline of the budget will have been reduced, but a reduction in line items in future years will not be seen. The cost-savings realized in this budget will result in future overall costs being less, but will not be an annual amount that can be cut from the budget going forward.

8. *What is the breakdown of Personnel & Benefits savings and Maintenance & Utilities savings?*

The administration shared with the committee an estimate of operation savings in the area of Personnel and Benefits (\$329,157) and in Building Maintenance (\$146,581). The total projected operating budget savings of \$475,738 was based on an initial review of Pierson Elementary School operational costs for maintenance, repairs, supplies, and utilities, as well as estimated savings due to reduction of personnel. Many of the costs associated with Pierson School will be shifted to Joel and Eliot school budgets. This includes personnel and costs to support instruction and experiences for students. The 2019-2020 budget will detail the cost-savings that will actually be realized and will be dependent on the programming needs, student needs, and transition costs.

9. *What considerations are being given to account for the successful middle school transition and needs of 4th and 5th graders to prepare for it?*

School administrators and staff will be working together to determine a transition model that will support students and families and provide for a successful transition.

10. What is the cost(s) for transition?

Transition costs have not been fully itemized, but will include costs for the physical move of materials and equipment, technology infrastructure, and some small-scale classroom renovations that may be necessary. These costs will be itemized and become part of the 2019-2020 operating and capital budgets.

11. Would added employees be needed for Joel and Eliot?

Staffing will be determined once the programming planning is completed, but it is not likely that additional staff will be needed. The new configuration is anticipated to result in the reduction of some staff positions in the district and repurposing of others.