

BRIDGE PTA MEETING ON BRIDGE ENROLLMENT MEETING NOTES

Held on Friday, December 13, 2013, 8:45 AM, Bridge Cafeteria

Present: Bridge Principal Meg Colella, Superintendent Dr. Paul Ash, School Committee Member Jesse Steigerwald, and (~70) Bridge Parents

- Bridge
 - Has the largest student body of all the elementary schools in Lexington.
 - Next year planning 5 2nd grade and 5 5th grade classrooms.
 - The new classrooms where the boiler used to be are currently used for PALs and a Resource room.
 - The square footage is the smallest at Bridge.
 - Teachers for new 5th classroom – hire staff who is flexible – can switch grades when needed.

- Crammed
 - 582 lockers for 550 students – kids share to be close to the classroom
 - Gym will be an issue for all-school assembly when exceed 27 classrooms

- Lunch
 - Find grade levels that are bigger – match with grades that are smaller
 - Lunches are staggered
 - Issues
 - noisy
 - less time to eat

- Traffic issues
 - Mary Ellen Dunn will propose a solution
 - 8 buses at Bridge
 - Crossing guard for Bridge traffic

- Classroom sizes are the same across schools.
 - 900 square feet – 30x30

- Fiske
 - Houses the ILP program
 - Additional support space needed with 6 kids each in 4 classrooms
 - Options
 - Modular classroom
 - Not possible to add to building
 - Reuse of art and music rooms

- LPS School projections
 - \$16,000/pupil cost for education
 - 475 students increase per year
 - birth: 200/year is stable
 - 25% -> 100% migration rate
 - 3 options:
 - enrollment goes up
 - level off
 - goes down
 - Should give up on long-term planning

- Jesse
 - Hastings is now 422, used to be 504 (so population varies)
 - Fiske can be fine with art in a cart
 - Cafeteria in Bridge is small for the current student population
 - Build Hastings bigger
 - Allocating city's resources: Fire station and police station really bad (\$30-40M/building)
 - Principal's doing their job – making the most of what's available
 - Classroom size guidelines provide ideal # and max #; there's a contract with teachers; it's not by law

- Avalon
 - Currently about 105 students from Avalon
 - Research in and out migration
 - Ma be different from typical population
 - Once a child is in the school, don't want to change
 - Forward redistricting as an option
 - Each bus costs the city \$30K

- Capacity
 - Based on # of classrooms
 - For Bridge: 466 -> 521 -> 540 -> 643
 - Now says 643,
 - Different models have different assumptions and algorithms
 - During renovation quote was 540 – number given by MSBA
 - Credibility issue – community approved \$\$ given the 540 number
 - At what point is the school full? Debatable point
 - One view – when 1 classroom less is used
 - Another view – when each classroom is full
 - Need definition of “Capacity”
 - Create policy of when school is full
 - Create policy of when PALs program is full
 - Art and Music requirements
 - Policy needs to be fair – can't pick out Avalon/discriminate
 - “Please change the 643 number down to 5xx”
 - “Please acknowledge that 550 is a problem”
 - We are in control of this
 - We need to create our own working definition, not depend on state or national definitions
 - We should plan for the worst and be happy with the extra space
 - Need to plan for the outlier
 - But as town member, we cannot use taxes for a “hypothetical” size
 - Jesse:
 - Write a letter to each school committee member to define and make a policy around capacity
 - School committee meets every other Tuesday
 - Transparent process
 - Open comments
 - On video
 - Have more smaller meetings
 - Have more information documented

- No specific plans to deal with the capacity issues at Bridge were offered at this meeting.