

**Westside Community Schools
Facilities Task Force Committee Meeting
August 28, 2014**

Dr. McCann welcomed the group.

Objective: Go over some the data since the last meeting - we have no polling data yet. The meeting discussed the advantages and disadvantages surrounding the middle school options – the criteria needed to make a recommendation to the Board. What are the burning issues that need to be considered?

What is the best grade configuration for our schools?

One middle school (7-8)

Two middle schools (7-8)

Two middle schools (6-8)

5-minute activity: Refer to the overview provided re: grade configurations

Student voices *and* teacher voices were heard.

Surveys: District administrators talked to 6th and 7th grade students about moving 6th graders to the middle school. Sixth grade pros and cons:

Cons: bullies, lunch, no recess.

Pros: They are excited about going to a school for more than 2 years. They like the possibility of more friends, more activities, etc.

Administrators reported that students could have been easily swayed either way. The answers could be different depending on the time of year that you talk to the students. The majority of 6th grade teachers thought that 6th graders should be at the middle school.

(Jim Sides): After talking with students he found that choice, multiple teachers, movement is important to them.

(Russ Olsen): Students heard from peers who previously attended middle school as 6th graders. These peer conversations were beneficial. Again, students liked the idea of choice, movement, and taking things more seriously. They liked developing new friendships and the specialization from teachers. They liked the idea of being with a teacher and the same students for just a short period of time during the day.

BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES (projected on the screen)

10-minute activity: Work in teams. Make one person a master recorder. Look through the Benefits and Challenges document and see what you think.

What is the best grade configuration for our middle school? What issues do we need to address? (See PowerPoint)

Activity: Take 3 minutes to brainstorm a list of possible issues (individual activity). Identify the most important issue.

Table 1 (Communications/Marketing Committee): Maximize the best learning environment for students

Table 2 (Teaching and Learning Committee): Relieve over-crowding at Westside Middle School.

Table 3 (Construction Committee): Maintain Westside's educational philosophy.

Table 4 (Safety Committee): Buy-in from parents and students. Due to the current 7-8 configuration, you're either coming or going from the school.

Table 5 (Finance Committee): Best educational interest for 6, 7, and 8 graders. (Make middle school less transitory for students).

Next Step: Building tours outside our District for facilities task force members.

Dr. McCann is planning a special board of education meeting on September 15 to meet with the Board and discuss the middle school options. This meeting will be open to the public.