

**Summary Report of the Community Advisory Committee
to the Westport Board of Education**

Short Term Solutions for the 2019-2020 School Year

1. Summary of committee work
2. Final options considered
3. Vote counts and ranking of final 3 options
4. Recommendations
5. Attachments

Summary of Committee Work

CAC Committee Members:

- Jeanne Bowles, Chairperson, Teacher
- Liz Blasko, At Large Community Member
- Elena Caggiano, PTA-High School
- Sue Calger, At Large Community Member-WPS Parent
- Kevin Cazzetta, School Administrator-Elementary
- Rosie Curtis, SpEd Community
- Lee Goldstein, PTA-Middle School
- Kerryn Griffin, Pre-School Community
- John Horrigan, Teacher
- Athena McAlenney, At Large Community Member-WPS Parent
- Don O'Day, At Large Community Member
- Amie Peck, PTA-Elementary
- Joe Renzulli, Architectural, Engineering or Building Professional
- Adam Rosen, Administrator-Secondary
- Joe Strickland, Public Site and Building Committee
- Vanessa Valadares, Townwide Maintenance Committee

Meeting Dates:

- Sunday, 11/18/18 5:00 pm
- Tuesday 11/20/18 7:30 pm
- Thursday 11/29/18 7:30 pm
- Monday 12/3/18 7:30 am

Summary of process: At our first meeting we were given the draft document with 9 options for the 2019-2020 school year. Several Board of Education members discussed their expectations for the committee. At our second meeting Jeanne Bowles was elected chairperson. After a conversation about the merits of each option the committee unanimously decided to eliminate the following options for a variety of reasons:

- Option III - KHS and SES 5th graders go to BMS, LLS and CES 5th graders attend CES, GFS 5th graders remains at GFS and all 7th and 8th grade students attend BMS.
- Option VI - All 6th-8th students attend BMS on the same schedule.*
- Option VII - All 6th-8th students attend BMS on a split schedule of 5 hours per session.

The remaining options were divided among committee members, creating 5 subcommittees to further research the remaining options. Options I and II were combined. We agreed to return with a presentation of all known information at our next meeting.

On November 29 the committee met and reviewed the work of the subcommittees. We discussed the merits of each option and decided to take time to consider each option and to get informal feedback from the portion of the community that we each represented. We each read and considered all the emails sent to the CAC. Each subcommittee would now create a one page fact sheet containing top pros/cons, information on how the option could change the structure of our district, and outstanding questions. It was decided that we would vote on the options as they were now presented from the subcommittees (now 9 options.) We would present all options that received a simple majority to the BoE and we would rank the options that passed the vote.

This morning the committee met and voted on the options. We have provided for your consideration the one page fact sheets that were created for our 9 options, the total vote counts on each and a summary of our ranking of the top three options.

*The original Option VI was eliminated but while researching option IV information was presented by a scheduling expert, hired by the district, for a 9 period schedule that could include all 6th, 7th and 8th graders at BMS. This option was presented to the committee as option IV.

All agenda are attached.

Option I/II

All 5 Elementary schools become K-6. Stepping Stones is moved to a rental facility to allow LLS K or 6th to move to CES.

Pros:

- Provides a short-term solution to the current crisis.
- All district 7th and 8th-grade students attend Bedford. BMS can comfortably fit 865 students
- Minimizes disruption for the district for all but Stepping Stones and LLS.
- Middle school teachers and staff will regain primary use of their classrooms and office space. Travel time for teachers will be eliminated.
- Could allow Stepping Stones to move to a superior facility if such a local facility is found and properly developed and staffed.
- This option would not require redistricting. Therefore a minimal disruption to students (except for Stepping Stones and LLS 6th or Kindergarten students)
- At the elementary schools, 6th-grade students will have the opportunity to benefit from longer instructional periods for mathematics and language arts.
- Kindergarten students would remain at their home elementary schools and would not have to go through a double transition. (except for LLS kindergarten if moved to CES)

Cons:

- Requires displacement of the Stepping Stones program from the CES building where the program enjoys the benefits of being co-located within a Westport Elementary school. Some of the benefits of being co-located are onsite administration, use of the gym, specials, larger nursing staff, the mentoring of older students, and potential benefit for parents of siblings attending the same school.
- Stepping Stones Preschool would be moved out of CES to an unknown rented facility. Stepping Stones would be separated from their CES support staff and resources (ie: gym)
- Long Lots kindergarteners or 6th-grade students must double transition leaving siblings and friends at LLS. Parents of elementary school children who attend LLS and have more than one child must address transportation and after-school programs in two schools. LLS is singled out for this process.
Only LLS 6th grade or LLS Kindergarten would be required to make a disruptive double transition if relocated to CES. Inequality for LLS students.
- Keeping rising 5th-grade students at the elementary schools as 6th graders instead of moving to a middle school is inconsistent with Westport's educational philosophy and is currently undefined.
- Sixth grade would be moved to the elementary schools and would become an extension of the elementary school structure. The sixth-grade experience at the Els would differentiate from the sixth-grade experience at the middle schools.
- All available space would be utilized at the elementary schools. This may have an effect on FLEX space, cafeteria, and resource rooms.
- 7th grade would become the entry point for the middle school. This may require a rethinking of the 7th grade social/emotional goals for educators. (not necessarily a Con but something to consider.)
- In Brian Fagan's report it stated that spaces like music rooms, art rooms would be used to create additional classroom space to house sixth grade. Art on a cart would certainly

compromise our art program and the ability to do the amazing things that are done now in a classroom not to mention storage for supplies, kiln, etc.

- Fitting in the schedule for 6th grade in a K-6 model working around what we currently have in place for K-5. This will mean doubling up lunches which may be difficult if a school doesn't have the cafeteria space or a large enough playground to hold double the amount of students. Some schools don't have two spaces for PE so several classes would have to be doubles with two teachers and roughly 40 students in one space.

How does this change the educational structure of our district?

- Sixth-grade students staying in elementary school presents an undefined challenge to replicating the rich current middle school programs for 6th-grade students. This approach would require additional teachers to offer the programs that are currently available only in middle school. Recruitment of teachers to address this challenge may be difficult if the 6th-grade structure in elementary school is seen as temporary.
- The program for sixth grade needs to be clearly defined if this is a viable option. Dr. Palmer did respond to an email with about 10 questions in it but some responses were vague and rightfully so since this would be a hybrid of what currently exists.
- This optional would be a significant shift in the 6th-grade experience. Sixth grade would need to be re-envisioned that the elementary schools. There are areas that may benefit sixth graders, for example, additional instruction time in mathematics/language arts and the benefit of remaining in a smaller more nurturing environment. However, there are other areas in the sixth-grade experience that may not be replicated, for example, opportunities at the middle schools, including specialty clubs, state of the art instructional space and the opportunity for more social "freedom".
- The subjects for the four content areas for sixth in the els would be 42 minutes each and not one hour like we have in fifth for math and LA currently in grade 5.

Outstanding Questions:

- Status of rental space?
- Approach to addressing differentiation of the 6th-grade population from K - 5 in the elementary school?
- Can modular be used at LLS to eliminate the need for LLS students to attend CES?
If all LLS students are able to remain at Long Lots school and Stepping Stones is able to remain at CES, then this would be a far more equitable option.
- How could this option exist if we can't find five classrooms for LLS in the current space? Ted Hunyadi's report said maybe one or two portables could be added. The enrollment alone will be around 650 students. It seems their shared spaces will be very crowded as well similar to BMS.

I would recommend using the "updated" option 1/2 for consideration by the committee.

Option I/II a

All Elementary schools become K-6 with the addition of flex space and or portables until such time that the CMS is reopened or new space is found for either.

Pros:

- All district 7th and 8th-grade students attend Bedford. BMS can comfortably fit 865 students.
- Middle school teachers and staff will regain primary use of their classrooms and office space. Travel time for teachers will be eliminated.
- Stepping Stones and ALL elementary school students would be able to stay at their districted schools. (Portables at some locations)
- At the elementary schools, sixth-grade students may be able to benefit from instructional adjustments, for example, longer learning periods for mathematics and language arts.
- Kindergarten will stay at the elementary schools eliminating a second transition to 1st grade. Kindergarten teachers and staff will retain the support of their fellow educators at the elementary schools.

Cons:

- Population increase at all 5 EIs.
- All available space would be utilized at the elementary schools. This may have an effect on FLEX space, cafeteria lunch waves, and resource rooms. Portable classrooms would be needed at some schools to accommodate K-6.
- Sixth grade would be moved to the elementary schools and become a part of the elementary school structure. The sixth-grade experience at the EIs would differentiate from the sixth-grade experience at the middle schools.
- Financial implications if additional buses need to be added to elementary school bus routes.
- 7th grade would become the entry point for the middle school. This may require a rethinking of the 7th grade social/emotional needs for students and goals for educators. (not necessarily a Con but something to consider)
- Fitting in the schedule for 6th grade in a K-6 model working around what we currently have in place for K-5. This will mean doubling up lunches which may be difficult if a school doesn't have the cafeteria space or a large enough playground to hold double the amount of students.
- Some schools don't have two spaces for PE so several classes would have to be doubles with two teachers and roughly 40 students in one space.
- Brian Fagan's report stated that spaces like music rooms, art rooms would be used to create additional classroom space to house sixth grade. Art on a cart would certainly compromise our art program and the ability to do the amazing things that are done now in a classroom not to mention storage for supplies, kiln, etc.

How does this change the educational structure of our district?

- This option would be a shift in the sixth-grade experience. Sixth grade would need to be re-envisioned at the elementary schools. There are areas that may benefit sixth graders, for example, additional instructional time for language arts and mathematics. Sixth graders may also benefit for remaining in a smaller, more nurturing environment as opposed to attending one large middle school housing 1,300 students, 6th/7th/8th. The social and emotional needs of sixth graders would also have to be considered. Seventh grade will become the middle school entry point for all students, therefore additional considerations would need to be made for 7th grade.

Outstanding Questions:

- Do we have space at CMS to house preschool and K - 6th?
Do we have space at LLS for portable classrooms to house K-6?
- How could this option exist if we can't find five classrooms for LLS in the current space? Ted Hunyadi's report said maybe one or two portables could be added. The enrollment alone will be around 650 students. It seems their shared spaces will be very crowded as well similar to BMS.

Option IV

All 6th, 7th, and 8th-grade students attend BMS with a 9-period schedule from 8 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.

Pros:

- All students would receive the existing middle school education program.
- All students would attend school on the same daily schedule (no need to stagger; no benefit from staggering schedule).
- No need to impact elementary schools or high school (i.e. no need to redistrict, taking over a building, etc.).
- No need to have instruction in LMC, cafeteria, or sub-standard learning spaces.
- Access to before/after school extra help, clubs, activities and performing groups.

Cons:

- Need to further subdivide the school building internally to create offices for counselors, psychologists, special education teachers, administrators, social worker, and nurses.
- Teacher workspace would remain limited, shared and crowded. No room to store and display student work across curriculum as all spaces are shared and occupied.
- Population density dynamics could harm school culture, student conduct, students safety, and security and have a disproportionately negative impact on our most sensitive students (anxiety, ADD, ADHD, depression, autism, etc.) and staff. Reduced class times and increased transitions with 1,300 students and 150 adults inside hallways and common areas.
- Lack of space to honor mandated accommodations in IEPs/504s such as alternate setting for assessments, sensory break areas, and rooms, etc.
- At this time, this model is lacking teacher and parent support. Important to note, while some teachers are in favor of this option, many are staunchly opposed for reasons encapsulated in this report. Also important to note, due to time constraints, incoming data from teachers and parents regarding this model are incomplete; many have not had the opportunity to share their viewpoint.

How does this change the educational structure of our district?

- In this model, the educational structure of the district is impacted by the closure of CMS and housing all middle school students at BMS. In this model, the elementary schools and high school would not be directly impacted.

Outstanding Questions:

- How sustainable is this model? While this model may provide a high degree of equity, and low impact on the lower and upper-level schools, will it sustain the pervasive feeling of 'an emergency' at BMS and what impact will this model have on students and staff social/emotional wellness over time?

Option V

All 6th and 7th-grade student attend BMS and a portion of the 8th-grade class attends BMS while another attend SHS.

Pros:

- No change to start and finish hours, no impact on elementary programs
- Transportation already in place
- No health concerns
- Collaboration with teaching colleagues

Cons:

- Space: teaching, working, office space for teachers, Encore (specials) not in an appropriate setting, library, and cafeteria being used for sometimes multiple classes at once, PE facilities very limited at BMS and SHS, counselor and psychologist space very limited
- Teachers: huge impact, traveling within BMS and to SHS, no privacy for phone calls or meetings, limited class prep space, WL and other teachers at SHS impacted
- Loss of sense school community
- Schedule impacts the behavior of students affecting instructional time, noise levels, disruption of instructional time
- Parity: 8th grade at SHS, not the same experience as at BMS

How does this change the educational structure of our district?

- Perpetuates crowding at MS level and disturbs HS programs

Outstanding Questions:

- When will modular classroom be online?
- Depending on final decision and timing might it make sense to locate them at a different school.

Option VIII a

Find a rental location to house Pre-K/K and make all elementary schools grades 1-6.

Pros:

- Could be a state of the art early childhood learning center
- Improves focus on young learners
- The potential for improved instruction to meet the developmental needs of early learners
- A new and improved facility could meet all state and licensing criteria

Cons:

- The community has expressed limited interest in this type of facility
- Removing K from the elementary solves our current problem, but has not been vetted to determine if it meets the educational needs of the community.
- To rent and rehab a facility for a special needs preschool and all of our kindergarteners could be very difficult
- Creates additional transitions for the youngest members of our community and increases logistical issues for families
- No information is currently available about any potential property

How does this change the educational structure of our district?

This creates a new vision for how we deliver education to our youngest learners. PreK/K, elementary 1-6, middle school 7- 8 and high school. This would be a big shift in structure.

Outstanding Questions:

- Is there a building that is currently available to create a space that would meet the specific needs of this population within Westport?
- Does the community want this?

Option VIII b

Find a rental location to house a 6th Grade Academy and keep all elementary schools K-5.

Pros:

- The feedback from the district team who visited Gideon Welles was extremely positive
- A 6th-grade academy has potential to best meet the social, emotional and academic need of these students
- No change to elementary schools
- 5th graders get to move on
- BMS houses an appropriate number of students

Cons:

- Removing 6th grade from the middle school solves our current problem, but has not been vetted to determine whether it meets the educational needs of the community
- To rent and rehab a facility for a 6th-grade academy could be very difficult, how will comparable programs, including extracurriculars, be delivered to 6th grade outside of the existing middle school
- Creates additional transitions for middle school students
- Increases logistical issues for families
- No information is currently available about any potential property

How does this change the educational structure of our district?

This creates a new vision for how we deliver education to our 6th graders. Elementary K-5, 6th-grade stand-alone, middle school grades 7- 8 and high school. This would be a big shift in structure.

Outstanding Questions:

- Is there a building that is currently available to create a space that would meet the specific needs of this population within Westport?
Does the community want this?

Option VIII c

Find a rental location to house CMS.

Pros:

- This restores us to our original configuration and buys the district time to get CMS reopened
- It restores two distinct communities
- Solves the actual problem

Cons:

- It will be a challenge to rent and rehab a facility to create a fully operational middle school
- No information is currently available about any potential property in Westport

How does this change the educational structure of our district?

- No change to the existing structure

Outstanding Questions:

- Is there a building that is currently available to create a space that would meet the specific needs of this population within Westport?

Option IX a

Redistrict to 4 Elementary schools and use the remaining elementary school to house CMS

Pros:

- Balances population at the elementary schools (which has been needed for some time) for more efficient use of existing facilities
- Maintains Westport's current model of 2 smaller middle schools
- There is strong community support to keep elementary schools as K-5
- No need to rent space for a middle school or Stepping Stones (space permitting)
- No one school bears the burden of redistricting since it is town-wide

Cons:

- May impact class sizes at elementary schools and stretch the space capacity at the elementary schools
- The cost to enhance vacated elementary school to be able to deliver the middle school curriculum
- Parents don't like redistricting
- Portables likely needed at some/ all elementary schools
- Requires an additional move of the current 6th and 7th grade CMS students

How does this change the educational structure of our district?

- The basic model of multiple elementary schools and 2 middle schools stay intact with this option. The educational structure is arguably changed because we reduce elementary schools from 5 to 4 which may impact (i.e. increase) class size across the 4 remaining schools.

Outstanding Questions:

- How quickly can redistricting be completed so, if chosen, parents can plan accordingly?
- Which school is best suited to be used as a middle school - location, facilities etc.?
- How would redistricting impact staffing?

Option IX b

Redistrict to 4 Elementary schools and use the remaining elementary school to house the 6th grade.

Pros:

- Lower cost of renting a space (if needed) for Pre K vs. 6th grade
- Balances elementary population / town-wide redistricting so no one school bears the burden
- Recognizes that the social/emotional needs of 6th-grade students are different than elementary school students or 7/8 grade students and allows the 6th-grade students an additional year to adjust to a middle school model (possibly modified)
- Leaves 7/8 at BMS which requires no transition for current CMS 6th and 7th graders who have already been moved once and eliminates the need for 8th graders at SHS
- May allow for programming changes at BMS as a junior high model - more electives, better prep for high school

Cons:

- Potential impact on class size and capacity at remaining elementary schools
- 6th-grade students lose the opportunity to participate in middle school activities - full chamber orchestra, band, plays, clubs etc.
- Need to enhance existing facilities to deliver 6th-grade curriculum
- Does not solve CMS building remediation
- If we redistrict to 4 elementary schools and If enrollment numbers do not decline as projected, we may not have the space to accommodate an increase in students.

How does this change the educational structure of our district?

- A separate 6th-grade school would be a big shift in the educational philosophy of our district. It does, however, allow Westport to be ahead of it's DRG in recognizing that 6th-grade students could benefit socially and emotionally - and thus, likely, educationally - from a transition year between 5th grade and 7th grade.
- We would lose an elementary school which changes the current model of 5 els, 2 middles and 1 high school

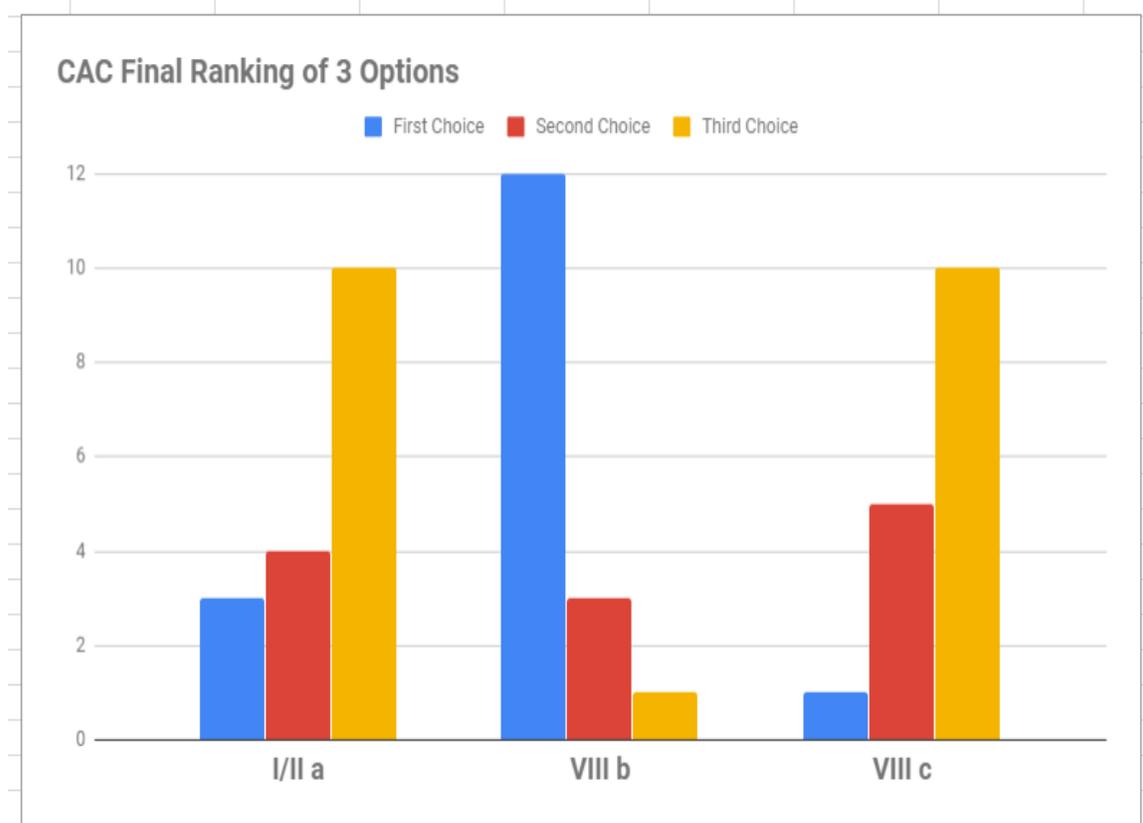
Outstanding Questions:

- Same redistricting questions as option putting CMS in vacated school.
- We have asked Dr. Mannarino if the test scores of the students at Gideon Welles declined between 5th and 6th. Dr. Palmer has said in the current model, Westport 6th grade students' test scores decline from 5th grade.

Final Vote

Option Number & CAC Descriptor	Yay	Nay	Abstained
I/II - All 5 Elementary schools become K-6. Stepping Stones is moved to a rental facility to allow LLS K or 6th to move to CES.	0	16	
I/II a - All Elementary schools become K-6 with the addition of flex space and/or portables until such time that CMS is reopened or new space is found for either.	15	1	
IV - All 6th, 7th, and 8th-grade students attend BMS with a 9-period schedule from 8 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.	1	14	1
V - All 6th and 7th-grade student attend BMS and a portion of the 8th-grade class attends BMS while another attend SHS.	0	16	
VIII a - Find a rental location to house Pre-K/K and make all elementary schools grades 1-6.	1	15	
VIII b - Find a rental location to house a 6th Grade Academy and keep all elementary schools K-5.	15	1	
VIII c - Find a rental location to house CMS.	14	2	
IX a - Redistrict to 4 Elementary schools and use the remaining elementary school to house CMS.	2	14	
IX b - Redistrict to 4 Elementary schools and use the remaining elementary school to house the 6th grade.	7	9	

Ranking of the three final options that the CAC recommends that the Board of Education continue to pursue at this time.



Recommendations:

1. The CAC recommends that the Board of Education continue to pursue the following options for the 2019-2020 school year:
 - a. **I/II a** - All Elementary schools become K-6 with the addition of flex space and/or portables until such time that CMS is reopened or new space is found for either.
 - b. **VIII b** - Find a rental location to house a 6th Grade Academy and keep all elementary schools K-5.
 - c. **VIII c** - Find a rental location to house CMS.
2. The CAC unanimously recommends that the Board of Education conduct a survey of the community to collect feedback on the final options the Board of Education will review in it's decision making process.
3. The CAC recommends that the Board of Education begin the process of rehabilitating CMS as soon as possible. (please see our attachment - Coleytown Middle School Plan for Reoccupancy)

Attachments:

November 18, 2018

Westport Town Hall

WESTPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP WORK SESSION

AGENDA*

(Agenda Subject to Modification in Accordance with Law)

PUBLIC SESSION

5:00 p.m., Westport Town Hall Auditorium

DISCUSSION

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Introduction of Group members | Mr. Mark Mathias |
| 2. Discussion of mission of Group | Ms. Elaine Whitney
Mr. Vik Muktavaram
Mr. Neil Phillips |
| 3. Presentation of 2018-19 facility plan for educational programs | Dr. Colleen Palmer |
| 4. Presentation and discussion of options for 2019-20 facility plan for educational programs | Dr. Colleen Palmer |
| 5. Set dates of future meetings and agenda for next meeting | Facilitator |

ADJOURNMENT



November 20, 2018

Bedford Middle School

**WESTPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP
WORK SESSION**

AGENDA*

(Agenda Subject to Modification in Accordance with Law)

PUBLIC SESSION

7:30 p.m., Bedford Middle School Library

DISCUSSION/ACTION

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Election of officers | Mr. Mark Mathias |
| 2. Discussion of scope of options for 2019-20 facility plan
for educational programs | Committee Chair |
| 3. Finalization of meeting schedules | Committee Chair |

ADJOURNMENT

**WESTPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
WORK SESSION**

AGENDA*

(Agenda Subject to Modification in Accordance with Law)

PUBLIC SESSION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

7:30 p.m., Staples High School Cafeteria

DISCUSSION/ACTION

1. Introduction of new committee members Jeanne Bowles, Chair
2. Selection of a secretary for the committee Jeanne Bowles

PUBLIC QUESTIONS/COMMENTS: (15 minutes)

PRESENTATIONS:

Presentations by sub committees (maximum 15 minutes per presentation/questions)

- Option 1 / 2
- Option 4
- Option 5
- Option 8
- Option 9

DISCUSSION:

1. Viability for each option for the 2019-2020 school year Jeanne Bowles
2. New Options
3. BoE presentation 12/3 
4. Next steps for the committee

PUBLIC QUESTIONS/COMMENTS: (30 minutes)

ADJOURNMENT

December 3, 2018

Westport Town Hall

**WESTPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE EMERGENCY MEETING**

AGENDA*

This meeting was classified as an emergency meeting due to the inability to provide 24 business hours public notice and the urgency of the work related to the educational program of the District.

PUBLIC SESSION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

7:30 a.m., Westport Town Hall Auditorium

DISCUSSION

1. Options for the 2019-2020 academic year

Jeanne Bowles, Chair

ACTION

1. Vote on options to present to the Board of Education

Jeanne Bowles, Chair

ADJOURNMENT

*The meeting will also be televised on channel 79 (Cablevision) and channel 6020 (Frontier).

Coleytown Middle School Plan for Reoccupancy

Goal for September, 2019-remediate sections of CMS and add modulars for 6 and 7 grade occupancy with Grade 8 going to BMS

12/20/2018 Select design team to evaluate which sections of CMS are habitable and which are not.

We are assuming that the lower level (rms 120-133) will be out of service.

1/30/2019 Prepare a plan to demise the areas in service to those that will require remediation.

1/30/2019 Prepare a plan to place modular classrooms/covered walkways on the soccer field at the rear of CMS.

2/28/2019 Seek approvals from an assembled Code Enforcement Committee as a response to an emergency situation.

3/15/2019 Prepare budgets for BOF emergency financing.

4/1/2019 Solicit bids for work necessary to demise the building and set up modulars.

5/1/2019 Begin construction.

9/1/2019 Occupy school.

Goal for September, 2021-grade 8 returns to CMS

12/20/2018 Select a design team to prepare remediation plan for those areas not suitable for service and any renovations to the remaining building that might be prudent.

4/1/2019 Prepare construction drawings for bidding. (Design, bid, build firm?)

5/1/2019 Solicit approvals/funding from town bodies still as an emergency situation.

7/1/2019 Solicit bids for construction.

9/1/2019 Begin construction/remediation.

9/1/2021 Occupy school.