

ELPS Community Forum Findings
October 3, 2012

10/13/12
(Updated)

Q1. What do you see as the GREATEST FACILITY NEEDS in our three elementary schools, both now and for the future?

Technology, Smart boards, computer facilities, bandwidth, equipment as well as teachers/specialists
Air quality, HVAC, heat and air
Design mechanical systems for easy upgrades – easily retrofitted
Plan ahead for long-term maintenance into whole plan
Flexibility to address needs and change
Collaborative work space
Developmentally appropriate materials
Better work areas for support
Storage
Specials spaces
Green energy
ADA/accessibility
Gym separate from cafeteria
Space for appropriate population needs/expansion
Maintain small class sizes
Security
Parking considerations
Opportunities for physical exercise/movement
Appropriate playground facilities
PLC needs for space
Awesome schools now, why change

Q2. In designing classroom and school spaces for any future renovation or construction project, what are the MOST IMPORTANT EDUCATIONAL AND WORKPLACE ELEMENTS to include in the project? (examples: excellent ventilation; natural lighting; collaborative workspaces; classroom clusters by grade level)

All examples above
Air quality
Energy efficient
Fresh air, windows that open
Adequate and natural light
Collaborative space for 3rd & 4th graders
Adequate playground space and equipment
School wide assembly area
Grade level classroom clusters
Segregation of grade levels

Flexibility within grade levels and across grade levels
"Intimate" appeal
Use of expensive resources collectively/shared utilization
Concern about too much isolation of children from mixing with others
Open classroom (space for diverse learners styles)
Areas for movement
"Green"
Better maintenance of facilities
Large flexible areas
Learning Center – Science, Technology
Storage
"outdoor Classroom"
Technology integration - adequate power, equitable
Adequate loud speaker system
Acoustics
Interactive/discovery centers

Q3. In designing school improvements, which COMMUNITY USES for our facilities are important TO PRESERVE AND/OR INCLUDE? (examples multiple gym spaces; outside play areas.)

Gym – basketball – recreation
Community groups – scouts, judo, recreation programs, boy/girl scouts, before/after school & organized events
Upgrade theatre for community use
Indoor/outdoor theater space/town green-like feels
Better multipurpose rooms divided into small gyms
Adequate space for wellness
Adequate parking
Enough outdoor space for all sport teams
Facility use for senior citizens
Playgrounds for families
Spaces that facilitate sense of community (inside and outside)
Emergency shelter area with adequate facilities
Auditorium
More adult learning space
Sponsorships
Revenue generating sources to offset costs

4. What are your reactions to the three options that the committee is now considering (the option numbers correspond to the option numbers on the attached template of options.)?

Option #2: RENOVATE ALL THREE EXISTING BUILDINGS AS "NEW CONSTRUCTION" (New construction means a complete renovation of the buildings, bringing them into compliance with all current codes and standards for lighting, ventilation, heating, accessibility, etc.)

Obvious choice – 1+1+1 = 3 at table and all agreed
Maintaining positive school community cultures
Location plays key role in community involvement
Smaller spaces easier to manage students
Redundancy in emergency – if something goes wrong with one building we have others
No matter what happens, need _____ in can _____ maintenance and what we do with offline buildings, location and proximity to population and do not lose the appeal culture of small community school
2 no 2 yes – Concern: Cost to town to close/renovate NCS.
Ability to walk to school, community programs (Crescent Point reading program, beach access, town green)
Concern for impact on Niantic w/closing
Why don't we redistrict
Best option because there is great uncertainty about cost
Younger students in a large school – What is the impact?
Transportation
2nd most expensive but leaning towards this
How would this be done
When would the student disruption begin
Answering our questions will determine whether we answer these questions as a taxpayer or as a parent

Option #3: DISCONTINUE USE OF NIANTIC CENTER SCHOOL AND RENOVATE HAYNES AND FLANDERS AS "NEW CONSTRUCTION." Make the necessary changes to Flanders and Haynes to accommodate full-day kindergarten and any other uses identified by the community.

Need a study regarding the pros/cons of small community schools vs. large school
5 people opted for this
Class sizes bigger
Maintains sense of community
How much annually do you actually save with this option?
If we give back to town, who pays? Money still needs to come somewhere either the BOE budget or towns
Bus route length time
Lack of playground space

Option #5: DISCONTINUE USE OF ALL THREE (3) ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND BUILD A NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COMPLEX ON A SINGLE SITE. The complex could include separate wings for primary and upper elementary, with shared common spaces such as recreation spaces, library-media, cafeteria, etc.

Don't have any redundancies
Lose small school feel
Lose buy-in
Demographically most risk – revenue could be hurt by economy.
Taxpayers will pay for building renovations.
New school if we know where the land could be
Financially sound option
Concern to have a central location – minimize long bus rides/distance from homes
Make available to the public the original Powerpoint slide show & info from the original studies to include Enrollment projections
Split LBH between Flanders and NCS, demolish LBH and build as new central location
Uncertainty about what occurs with any “retired” buildings
We need a study regarding the pros/cons of small community schools vs. large school
Where exactly is the potential property in the northern side of town?
If new is up in this area, need to take traffic congestion into consideration
That happens to the educational process?
No more town walking field trips
Large population makes assemblies and school gatherings difficult
Lack of land space

Q5: Any OTHER IDEAS you would like the Facilities Vision Task Force to consider in its deliberations?

Student/teacher ratio
Will it be possible to place all students/parents/teachers for assemblies
What will the maintenance plan be so we're not in the same situation again?
Why weren't all the educational disadvantages listed?
Cost to the town of renovating or demo to schools taken offline?
Base decision on \$, enrollment, student – family & community needs
Is there an option to build LBH as new and temporarily divide those students between NCS and FL?
Would like to see the breakdown of cost to upgrade to compliance, ventilation issues to update?
State permits – Magnet school?
Eminent domain – Where's the land?
Not concerned w/actual facility – don't lose student/teacher ratio and community feel
All need adequate parking space
Already consolidating 5th grade
Redistricting?
What happens when population increases again?
Layoffs?
How do changes affect the education we give our children?
What are the acreages of our current schools?