

Options Results from Community Forums

September 23, 24, 25 2014

Flanders School Forum

Flanders	15
Lillie B. Haynes	1
Niantic Center	1
None	5
Total	22

(Flanders Parents First Choice: 6 for Option 2 / 1 for Option 3 / 5 for Option 4 / 1 for Option 5)

	Ranking 1 Most Desirable	Ranking 2	Ranking 3	Ranking 4	Ranking 5
Option #1 Infrastructure with major renovation or construction	0	2	5	11	0
Option #2 Discontinue one building and renovate two buildings as new	9	7	0	3	0
Option #3 Discontinue all buildings and construct a new building on one site.	4	2	8	1	5
Option 4 Renovate all three existing buildings	7	6	4	0	1
Option #5 Do nothing	1	0	1	4	12

Flanders	0
Lillie B. Haynes	1
Niantic Center	20
None	8
Total	29

Niantic Center School Forum

(Niantic Center Parents First Choice: 1 for Option 1 / 2 for Option 2 / 1 for Option 3 / 16 for Option 4)

	Ranking 1 Most Desirable	Ranking 2	Ranking 3	Ranking 4	Ranking 5
Option #1 Infrastructure with major renovation or construction	1	12	8	5	0
Option #2 Discontinue one building and renovate two buildings as new	4	8	9	7	0
Option #3 Discontinue all buildings and construct a new building on one site.	2	2	3	6	13
Option 4 Renovate all three existing buildings	22	3	1	1	0
Option #5 Do nothing	0	0	5	3	18

Options Results from Community Forums

September 23, 24, 25 2014

Lillie B. Haynes Forum

(Lillie B. Haynes Parents First Choice: 6 for Option 2 / 1 for Option 3 / 2 for Option 4)

Flanders	4
Lillie B. Haynes	9
Niantic Center	3
None	3
Total	19

	Ranking 1 Most Desirable	Ranking 2	Ranking 3	Ranking 4	Ranking 5
Option #1 Infrastructure with major renovation or construction	0	0	3	13	0
Option #2 Discontinue one building and renovate two buildings as new	13	5	0	0	0
Option #3 Discontinue all buildings and construct a new building on one site.	1	3	8	3	1
Option 4 Renovate all three existing buildings	5	7	4	0	0
Option #5 Do nothing	0	0	0	1	15

Community Forum Option Totals

	Ranking 1 Most Desirable	Ranking 2	Ranking 3	Ranking 4	Ranking 5
Option #1 Infrastructure with major renovation or construction	1	14	16	29	0
Option #2 Discontinue one building and renovate two buildings as new	26	20	9	10	0
Option #3 Discontinue all buildings and construct a new building on one site.	7	8	19	10	19
Option 4 Renovate all three existing buildings	34	16	9	1	1
Option #5 Do nothing	1	0	6	8	45

Importance Levels Ranked at Community Forums

September 23, 24, 25, 2014

Flanders School Forum

Flanders	15
Lillie B. Haynes	1
Niantic Center	1
None	5
Total	22 (21 completed)

	Level 1 Lowest	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5 Highest
Item A Net cost of project to taxpayers	2	4	5	6	4
Item B Air quality of the elementary schools	0	2	3	10	6
Item C Flexibility of the educational design	0	0	1	9	11
Item D Effect on maintenance of the buildings for the future	0	2	2	12	5
Item E Number of students served in each building	1	0	7	4	9
Item F Enhancement of educational quality	0	0	1	2	18
Item G Energy efficiency of the final building design/improvement	0	1	1	7	12
Item H Safety and school security	0	1	1	4	15
Item I Community use of facility	2	3	5	7	4

Importance Levels Ranked at Community Forums

September 23, 24, 25, 2014

Lillie B. Haynes Forum

Flanders	4
Lillie B. Haynes	9
Niantic Center	3
None	3
Total	19

	Level 1 Lowest	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5 Highest	No Rating
Item A Net cost of project to taxpayers	2	2	7	4	4	0
Item B Air quality of the elementary schools	2	2	1	6	8	0
Item C Flexibility of the educational design	0	2	1	9	7	0
Item D Effect on maintenance of the buildings for the future	0	1	4	8	5	1
Item E Number of students served in each building	1	2	2	5	9	0
Item F Enhancement of educational quality	1	0	0	3	15	0
Item G Energy efficiency of the final building design/improvement	0	1	1	10	7	0
Item H Safety and school security	1	0	3	3	12	0
Item I Community use of facility	1	3	1	10	4	0

Importance Levels Ranked at Community Forums

September 23, 24, 25, 2014

Flanders	0
Lillie B. Haynes	1
Niantic Center	20
None	8
Total	29 (28 Completed)

Niantic Center Forum

	Level 1 Lowest	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5 Highest	No Rating
Item A Net cost of project to taxpayers	4	5	11	5	3	1
Item B Air quality of the elementary schools	0	1	3	13	12	0
Item C Flexibility of the educational design	0	0	12	8	8	1
Item D Effect on maintenance of the buildings for the future	0	2	6	11	10	0
Item E Number of students served in each building	2	2	4	3	18	0
Item F Enhancement of educational quality	1	0	1	5	22	0
Item G Energy efficiency of the final building design/improvement	0	1	6	11	11	0
Item H Safety and school security	0	0	2	5	22	0
Item I Community use of facility	3	4	7	11	4	0

Importance Levels Ranked at Community Forums

September 23, 24, 25, 2014

Community Forum Importance Level Totals

	Level 1 Lowest	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5 Highest	No Rating
Item A Net cost of project to taxpayers	8	11	23	15	11	1
Item B Air quality of the elementary schools	2	5	7	29	26	0
Item C Flexibility of the educational design	0	2	14	26	26	1
Item D Effect on maintenance of the buildings for the future	0	5	12	31	20	1
Item E Number of students served in each building	4	4	13	12	36	0
Item F Enhancement of educational quality	2	0	2	10	55	0
Item G Energy efficiency of the final building design/improvement	0	3	8	28	30	0
Item H Safety and school security	1	1	6	12	49	0
Item I Community use of facility	6	10	13	28	12	0

Elementary Schools Facilities Community Forum Questionnaire

Flanders School

September 23, 2014

What additional questions or concerns to you have?

- Could buses be relocated for additional parking?
- Small School – less than 300
- What will happen to current preschool?
- I strongly encourage preschool space to be a part of the considerations for any plan.
- Consider exterior spaces and facilities and the value of gardens, woods, solar panels, etc. as learning spaces.
- Special Education should have a larger collaborative space to include OT, PT, SLP, etc.
- Creating one large school, or even renovating two and removing one school, gives up the sense of community each school currently has. The sense of familiarity and closeness will be lost. There is a great chance of children to be “lost in the shuffle” with a larger school population.
- What would happen to community events if one or two schools were closed? Three or two gyms and cafeteria down to one, etc.
- Would an abandoned school(s) be used as a new community center for events to utilize the gyms and cafeterias?
- Extreme pressure on current gym facilities for Parks & Recreation activities should be strongly weighed.
- All three sites have terrific community connections.
- My preference would be to discontinue use of all three buildings given their age and build two new structures to disperse the congestion.
- Important to maintain small class sizes and the community feel that we currently have.
- What would happen to preschool and Creative Playschool?
- I think the one school option would be too overwhelming for the younger kids and traffic would be a problem.
- Concerned of what would happen to the preschool program at Flanders.
- Feel that one school is much to large for young children.
- If Niantic and LBH were renovated the bussing across town for too many students is an issue.
- There needs to be adequate parking.
- Would not like to see one centralized school.
- What is the advantage of keeping NCS? Flanders and LBH are both located near other academic facilities and share athletic facilities.
- Loss of preschool is an issue.
- What are the bus route length impacts of closing different schools?
- Have you considered “magnetizing” a school. Reimbursement would be far better and there would be an opportunity to diversify our town. This would be highly beneficial and serve the greater good. There are many grants available for this now. Perhaps an agriculture theme would work. There is already a knowledge base at Flanders School.
- Design schools so that they can be used by community groups outside school hours.
- Gym space needs to be increased.
- You should consider the impact of your decision on the rest of the Towns infrastructure.
- Having children at ELMS and ELHS is a good example of how the “community” of a small school is important. There are many teachers and staff in the buildings that we don’t know. The numbers of students and staff make having a community feeling not possible. This is not ideal for our youngest learners.
- We moved 5th graders to middle school because of space issues in the past, but 5th graders do not belong in the middle school.
- Closing a school should be an option as the number are cyclic and the population of elementary students could rise.

Elementary Schools Facilities Community Forum Questionnaire
Flanders School Continued
September 23, 2014

- The quality of our school district will directly affect the values of our homes. Keep three elementary schools with a sense of community they each have and give our youngsters the same quality of education that East Lyme has been known for.

Elementary Schools Facilities Community Forum Questionnaire

Niantic Center School

September 24, 2014

What additional questions or concerns to you have?

- Consider the value of preserving the older sections/buildings. School and Town pride grow from tradition and preservation.
- Would be helpful if the map shows three defined districts and include upcoming housing developments.
- If we go to larger schools, won't that make it harder for evaluation than it is now for administration?
- Sounds like a serious lockdown situation and very unrealistic with proposed security measures.
- If the town uses the abandoned buildings, what type of cost is there to the town to keep it viable for future use?
- Option 3 will require playground space much larger than what is pictured.
- I think the lady with the busses had a great comment that there is no one on the committee who seems to be concerned about the social health and well-being of our children.
- I think whatever option is decided upon, it should include pre-k because there is a huge lack of quality pre-k in town.
- These forums should be discussing the education of our kids and the impact of school size on K-4 aged. Students. The numbers and square footage costs should be discussed only after the BOE has made their recommendation on what's best educationally.
- I strongly disagree with one large school complex. It is not developmentally appropriate for kids 5-10 years old. The tangibles of smaller schools is invaluable.
- Closing NCS will be bad for the town. One large school, even the two school option, will be bad for the future of the town and the draw it has to those moving to the area.
- Has the committee considered renovating one of the elementary schools as a magnet school? The State is providing incentives for magnet schools.
- The town has not done enough to provide information and/or a forum to discuss the instructional value of small schools. Where is the discussion from the educators? Data?
- What to see the dollar figures to access the options.
- Three small schools and pre-K space.
- It is obvious from the community of parents that Option 4 is the most desirable. It is up to the BOE and committee to think outside of the box to generate the revenue necessary to get that project passes.
- Keep district boundaries the same. Ideas: (1) work with Project learn and regional towns to create programming that will generate money; (2) Magnet or STEM opportunities at NCS; (3) Use NCS as a Marine Science Academy in addition to the K-4 school.
- Concerned about the projected enrollment as I don't think it is going to be accurate.
- Bring 5th grades back to NCS/LBH/FL for reimbursement.
- Do not want to see our town lose the sense of community and intergenerational connection hat we have with NCS.
- Square footage information missing: Per student the State recommends total footage available, footage State will support for renovation, all other missing objective data.
- Student class size, IEP programs, student quality of education and experiences, travel in inclement weather with future distances.
- My concern is in regard to the fact that educational enhancement is not about being able to have SmartBoards in all classrooms. Money can be better spent than having that expensive equipment in lower elementary classrooms. Access to and use of the technology is important, but it definitely is not necessary in all classrooms.

Elementary Schools Facilities Community Forum Questionnaire

Niantic School Continued

September 23, 2014

- Another concern is that a price tag cannot be put on the fact that having one of the schools so close to town allows walking field trips (educational experiences) within the community: to the bank, fire/police stations, businesses as well as a multi-generational experience at Crescent Point. These experiences are not in the curriculum but allow “life lessons” and community building that cannot be recreated and does not add cost to any budget yet adds so much.
- What will happen with the teacher if one school closes and how will they be integrated?
- Redistrict first. Keep neighborhood experience.
- Discontinue LBH and keep NCS.
- Don’t bus all children to one school. No school size like ELMS – poor design.
- Smaller schools are best option.
- Cost projections should include cost of re-use for any school closed in order to see the whole picture.
- The amount of State reimbursement should not be a large factor in the ultimate decision.
- No matter what is decided, the town needs to commit to repair and maintenance cost so we are not faced with this again.
- Under no circumstances should the elementary space be shared with non-elementary organizations during the school day (Coastal Connections).
- Anything greater than 250-300 students is unacceptable.
- Did the number of students and square footage include LEARN, Creative, etc.?
- We have been hearing about these same options for years but I still see no research presented that shows no impact from larger elementary schools. In fact, research we have found show that smaller schools result in a better home/school connection and is better for elementary school age children. Why do we never get that kind of information from the presentations or from the BOE?
- While safety is certainly a concern, I feel that the best way to ensure safety is to provide a nurturing environment where everyone knows each other well, students come into contact with their past teachers, and the front office staff learns the faces of the children and parents in their schools. Safety is more about “culture” of the school, not the locking mechanisms and alarms available. I do not fear for my children’s safety ever at NCS. There are so many adults there who they feel connected to and who would help them in any situation.
- As for “flexibility of educational design”, teachers have new trends thrown at them almost annually. New standards, new teaching methods, new behavior methods – buildings do not change often. The teachers are the ones who need to be flexible, we are use to it. The shape of a building has rarely crumpled anyone’s educational dreams.

Comments from Parent at Niantic Center Forum

Questions:

Please clarify the facility options that the Board's Design Steering Committee is considering. A disconnect seems to exist between the options spelled out in the Request for Qualifications (September 20, 2013) and the Facilities Vision Task Force Findings Report to EL Board of Education (April 23, 2013) versus the recent hand-out that came home from school. The RFQ and Vision identifies the following three options:

1. Discontinue the use of Niantic Center School for elementary school purposes and renovate as new both Flanders and Haynes elementary schools.
2. Discontinue the use of all three elementary schools and build a new elementary school "complex" on either Haynes or Flanders site.
3. Renovate Niantic Center, Haynes, and Flanders elementary schools as new.

The hand-out recently sent home from school contains the following options:

1. Repair infrastructure and maintenance issues of three existing structures.
2. Discontinue use of one building and renovate two remaining buildings as new.
3. Discontinue use of all three buildings and construct a new elementary school campus on an existing site.
4. Renovate as new all three existing structures.

The RFQ calls for an evaluation of the three options. What is the evaluation criteria? Is the quality of education considered? Are published journal articles being reviewed (i.e. small school vs. large school system for early education)? Is there a scope of work?

I understand that facilities planning takes population projections into consideration. Does it take the town build-out scenario into consideration? Have the two affordable housing projects currently under construction and potential future projects been considered?

Will a responsiveness summary be prepared to inform the public how the information gathered at the forums was or was not incorporated into the selection process?

How will the recommended option be communicated to the public? Will there be a public review and comment period? Will a response to comments document be prepared?

Comments:

Facilities planning seems to have an emphasis on the immediate costs to renovate and/or build a new school. Little attention has been paid to the needs of elementary aged children in order to provide a safe, secure, and healthy environment that fosters the learning process. My observations have lead me to conclude that the small community school geared toward the elementary age group leads to accelerated learning and increases the chances of success in middle and high school years, and even beyond. In a small community school, most adults know the children and vice versa. This results in a safe and somewhat family environment for young children to thrive in. It is important to realize that educational achievements and successes go beyond immediate economic costs and should be a primary factor in considering the future of the elementary school facilities.

Comments from Parent at Niantic Center Forum Continued

Another consideration is the value of social factors, such as the ability of children to walk and bike to and from school. This provides exercise for kids and time together with a parent. In addition, a local community school that is highly visible brings school into everyday life. The children become familiar with the school even before starting their elementary experience, they are ready and willing to walk right in on their very first day. They see their school routinely during vacation and summer breaks. School is a regular part of the conversation when family and friends visit. In the case of NCS, visitors love to learn more about the “fish-school”. This creates a very positive home-school connection.

To give attention to the importance of the immediate economic considerations, I recommend that the costs savings due to improved energy efficiencies as a result of building renovations also be considered. Such cost savings may offset the initial economic expenditures and make the preservation of all three schools more palatable. The design steering committee and board of education should also consider the impact on property values and tax revenues in all options. For example, since many people have purchased homes specifically to be in the NCS district, closing NCS would likely ease the real estate pressure in this area and decrease property values, subsequently decreasing tax revenues. If the selected facility option results in a decline in the quality of education, decreased tax revenues may be realized town wide as families select other towns to reside in.

It is my understanding that the Town of East Lyme is considering accepting seventh and eighth grade students from Salem. If this is the case, should the fifth grade curriculum be maintained at the elementary schools? There’s a big difference between fifth and seventh graders. Many people have found it difficult for their fifth grader to adjust to the middle school program and felt that their child was just not ready for that move yet. Another option may be to locate all fifth and six graders to the Lillie B. Haynes and maintain Flanders and Niantic Center School as the prime elementary schools. Again, this seems like a relevant factor to consider during the facilities planning process.

Elementary Schools Facilities Community Forum Questionnaire

Lillie B. Haynes School

September 25, 2014

What additional questions or concerns to you have?

- Have you considered combining K-2 and 3-4 buildings? Would having only two grades in one building allow us to reduce new construction sites?
- Will there be additional forums to discuss green space use surrounding the buildings?
- Order of magnitude of cost of options: #2, #3, #4.
- Length of time of busing, job loss, and class size if consolidation of three schools?
- Have you considered a K-3 and 4-6 school?
- Keep community feel for small kids.
- Safety
- The location of NCS is great for walking field trips.
- If Option 2 is selected, would like to see NCS remain.
- Consider soliciting input from parents ages 1-5. Contact Ballestrinis, Niantic Community Center, Kiddie Kampus, Care-A-lot.
- Very nice presentation and informative.
- Thank you for providing these forums to the community.
- Information was well presented.
- Do not like the option of one school. The kids should be kept with their communities.
- Torn between Option 2 & 4. Moneywise I vote for Option 2 because most people will vote to save money. Personally, I would rather seen Option 4 as I like keeping it small and keeping kids within their community.

Elementary Schools Facilities Community Forum
Flanders School
September 23, 2014

Minutes from Forum Discussion

- Is there a recommended standard for square footage?
 - Based on our design, requirements of 155 to 175 square foot per student is the average.
- If the maintenance option is selected, how would the \$22 million be dispersed? Over time?
 - The \$22 million would be paid over time with a bond and completed over time.
- Give examples of community usage.
- If we add preschool, would the added numbers increase our reimbursement?
 - Reimbursement per student would not change because space standards would remain the same.
- How many preschool students do we currently have?
 - Approximately 90 students not including Creative Playschool.
- Will preschool be mandated by the State in future?
 - At present time, there is no legislative movement to mandate preschool in the future. The State would have to spend a considerable amount to fund preschool programs. The architect has assured us that additional space will be available to add preschool classrooms for any option that is picked. The Integrated Preschool program will not go away.
- What is the projected enrollment with the new developments projected for the town?
 - NESDEC has been hired to perform a demographic study which include all the pending developments for the next five to seven years. This data will be available in the beginning of October, but indications are that enrollment will be decreasing.
- Parking and traffic logistics?
 - Traffic on the access road between LBH and ELMS is a concern if a one school option is picked for the LBH site.
- What about considering building two new schools?
 - That option can be considered, but it would be more expensive. Would also have to incur site acquisition costs. Would have more vacant buildings to turn over to the town.
- What is the time frame to implement the changes?
 - If a referendum is passed in April and the necessary paperwork has been submitted to the State by June, construction would begin the summer of 2016 at the earliest.
- If the one school option is picked, how would you structure the grades?
 - That will be decided once the option has been selected.
- It would be possible to integrate environmental/green options that could become part of the curriculum.
- What happened to the building(s) that are not used?
 - They would be turned over to the Town and they would decide how to utilize them.

Elementary Schools Facilities Community Forum
Niantic Center School
September 24, 2014

Minutes from Forum Discussion

- Has year round school been considered?
 - No
- How do we determine future enrollment?
 - NESCEC Study
- Is there a recommended standard for square footage?
 - Based on our design, requirements of 155 to 175 square foot per student is the average.
- How do we make the decision which square footage option should be selected? State reimbursement?
 - Not aiming for square footage, but to have the space available for programs.
- Do reimbursement rates vary for each option?
- What is the cost of each option?
 - There is no more than a 5% difference between options 2A, 2B, and 2C
- Will you demolish space at LBH?
 - Yes
- What happened to the building(s) that are not used?
 - They would be turned over to the Town and they would decide how to utilize them.
- Has the parking been factored in?
 - Yes
- Are parking lots reimbursable?
 - Yes, but nothing off the property (traffic lights, etc.)
- If we purchase property for a new building site, is the property reimbursable?
- Increased transportation time and fewer bus stops are concerns.
- What happens if enrollment changes and we need to open another school for additional space?
- If the one school option is picked, don't you have to keep that school open during renovation?
 - LBH would be used as the swing site.
- Parents and students are more committed in smaller schools.
- Even though Waterford Schools are nice, the number of students in buildings absolutely matter. What about 120 preschoolers who are in buildings all day? They are not in enrollment count.
- Don't want students to get lost in process. Quality of education for each child is most important.
- Need each option costs and tax increase to make a informative decision.
- As the process mores forward, invite the public to go to the Board of Selectman and Board of Finance meetings.
- Enrollment projects dictate reimbursement rate.
- Where do we go from here?
 - The Design Committee makes a recommendation to the Board of Education.
- Why is Option 3 still on the table if committee is not recommending it?
- Have you considered bringing fifth grade back to elementary schools or enrolling Salem students?
- Options presented that the Design Committee didn't consider:
 - Build two new schools / Build NCS adjacent to LBH and renovate Flanders
- Has research been done on school size and academic performance?
 - Numerous studies are available.
- Senior Citizens and Parks and Recreation have need for extra space in schools.
- How will comments be processed?
 - The Design Committee will review all comments.
- Suggestion post comments on website.

Elementary Schools Facilities Community Forum

Lillie B. Haynes School

September 25, 2014

Minutes from Forum Discussion

- What is driving the decrease in enrollment for East Lyme?
 - Aging population, economic state of Connecticut
- What is the average life of school building?
 - Mechanical – 20 years / Structural – 50 years / Painting, etc. – 10-15 years
- What happened to the building(s) that are not used?
 - They would be turned over to the Town and they would decide how to utilize them.
- If the maintenance option is selected, how would the \$22 million be dispersed? Over time?
 - The \$22 million would be paid over time with a bond and completed over time.
- What is the background of Kaestle Boos?
 - They are a very well respected firm and did the ELHS renovations and the Waterford Schools buildings.
- Options 2, 3, and 4?
 - To renovate as new, would improve educational and teaching facilities, have flexible learning classrooms, improved safety and security features, be energy efficient, and community usage availability.
- Would the teacher/student ratio remain the same?
 - Yes, but the district lines may need to be revised.
- Can parents choose which school they want their children to attend?
 - No, but they can request an intra-district transfer if there is a need.
- A East Lyme parent and Waterford teacher stated that going from five to three schools was a great experience for staff and students.
- What is the time frame to implement the changes?
 - If a referendum is passed in April and the necessary paperwork has been submitted to the State by June, construction would begin the summer of 2016 at the earliest.
- Is there enough space at the LBH site for one school?
 - Yes, but traffic is a concern.
- If Flanders School is closed, can it be used for ELHS students?
 - That can be an option.
- What would happen to the students during construction?
 - Example: If NCS is closed, there is enough room at LBH for the students to be moved there doing renovations. Staff, students and administration would stay together.
- When and who will perform the cost analysis of a building being turned over the Town?
 - The Design Committee first needs to make a recommendation to the BOE who will then make the final decision for the referendum.
 - The Town has a 20/20 vision.
- Can the one school design have enough gym space for community usage?
 - That would be a concern.
- Have you considered a K-2 building and a 3-4 building?
 - It may be hard to even out the enrollment numbers.
- Consider reaching out to the preschools in town.
- What research has been done between one large school and small community schools?
 - Research has shown that for suburban areas, school size is not as big of a concern as in urban areas. It is the leadership and teaching staff that has the most impact.
- Has there been research done on the effect of school size and parent participation?
 - This is a very viable community with great parent involvement.