

Thank you for your participation in last week's meeting! Your questions have been very helpful in determining a focus for the meeting on Monday, April 18. We have grouped like questions together and have answered them below. Many will be addressed in more detail at our next meeting.

Community Forum Questions and Answers

Purpose for these meetings

These community forums are the current step in a lengthy process of gathering information to provide direction to the Board of Education in determining how to solve the district's most pressing problem - more space. The purpose of the first community forum was to provide information to build a common foundation of understanding so that you can help answer the questions immediately following. We look forward to learning your perspectives to these questions and others on Monday, April 18!

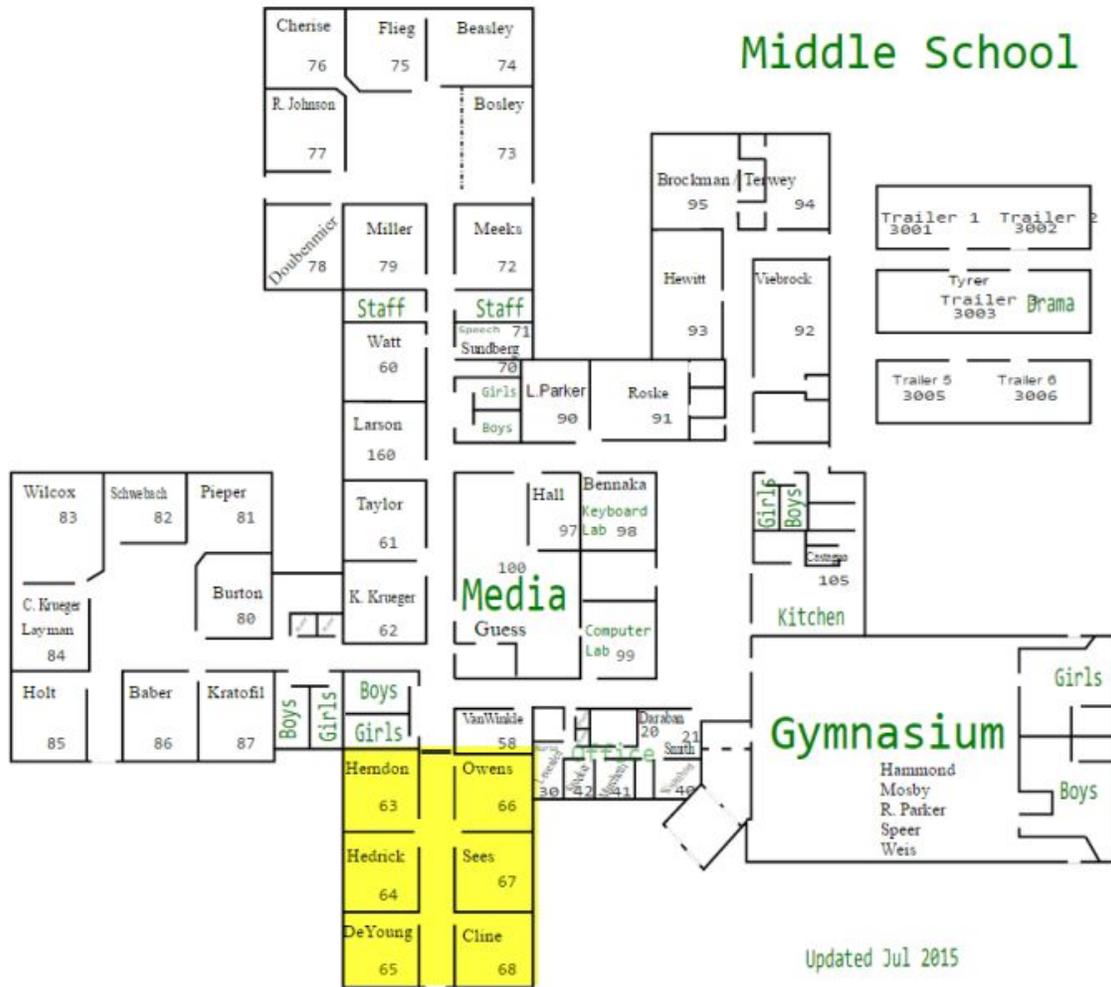
1. When will we put this on the ballot?
2. I would like this group to recommend when to run a levy. How much should the levy question be for and what grade level configuration be?
3. Which plan we are going to move forward with?
4. What are we doing to address & emphasize the long-term benefits that the community will realize with the improvements in the school district? Residents that don't have children in the district need to see how the levy will benefit them and the community as a whole.
5. Letting more people decide what's best for the community. How do we come up with the plan?
6. How are we going to get to the right levy amount?

Concerns about 5th and 8th grade students in the same building

1. If a K-4, 5-8 was to pass, how would you keep the student separated at all times? How will it be possible during mornings when kids arrive, etc.
2. If the 5-8 configuration is on the ballot how will you configure the buildings to keep the 5th graders separate from 8th graders.

If we were to have two 5-8 buildings, we would partition one section of the building to house our 5th grade students. An example of how this could be done has been provided using our current middle school as an example. Because the start time in the building would be the same

for all students, however, the students would be on the bus together. This would also be the case under the attendance center model that will also be presented on Monday.



A security entrance could be added at the end of the hallway to separate the 5th grade wing from the rest of the school. Restrooms are easily accessible and the wing has its own entrance so that 5th graders would not have to enter and exit with older students.

Pros and cons of models presented

1. Why were no concerns of the K-4, 5-8 buildings presented?

Two concerns were presented. In this grade configuration model, each grade level would be split until grade 9 when they come together for the first time. Also, to adequately run all of our current academic programs, we would need to hire at least 8 new teachers which is an inefficient use of staff. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education provide the following guidance on class sizes for districts:

R-4—Class Size and Assigned Enrollments—Enrollments will be consistent with both class-size and program standards and total enrollment requirements.

1. Student enrollment in individual classes will be consistent with the following guidelines:

<i>GRADES</i>	<i>STANDARD</i>	<i>DESIRABLE STANDARD</i>
K-2	25	17
3-4	27	20
5-6	30	22
7-12	33	25

We build our schedules in grades 6-12 for an average of 25 students per class. The average class size initially in the K-4, 5-8 model had an average class size of 22 for these grade levels. We will provide a more comprehensive list of pros and cons for all models presented at the meeting on Monday. We will also provide our current average class sizes in each grade level.

Additional Staff/Reduced Class Size

1. Will we add more staff to reduce class sizes? How will we pay for this when our teachers are already underpaid?
2. Staffing? Class sizes could be reduced with either of the proposals. Additional staff would be hired in either model.
3. Additional staffing requirements with either options any tax increase both capital and operational needs to include funding a bout staffing.

More staff continues to be required to accommodate our growing student population. All three options that will be presented on Monday would include a levy increase for operations which will be necessary to add the staff required to serve our students' needs.

Placement of Early Childhood

1. Why is it appropriate to put our EC students in the MS? Are we considering the research and the rooms for the grade configuration? I know it's not intentional, but it would appear that our special education students at the PES are "suffering" (so to speak) the most. (i.e. OT/PT closet, changing closet, split special education classroom)
2. Why is early childhood being considered being housed in middle school.
3. Incorporating EC into the MS??... Right now we don't like 6th grade w/8th graders, but we would consider putting 4 year olds w/8th graders.

We would partition the building in such a way as to separate the two populations (see “concerns about 5th and 8th grade students in the same building”). The Early Childhood program would have a different start and end time than the secondary program. In addition, we serve our Early Childhood students with separate bus routes to accommodate our morning and afternoon programs. Early Childhood students would not ride the bus with middle school students.

Opposition to Neighborhood Schools

1. We did not take into consideration the #1 fail of neighborhood schools?
2. What % of voters turned us down due to the configuration? The question at my table was why do we keep putting out there something the community doesn't want?
3. Boundary lines for elementary.

In addition to providing guidance on the “what” and “when” of the next ballot issue, we needed this forum to help us determine the extent of opposition to moving away from attendance centers. In September of 2012, Patron Insight conducted a survey of over 400 randomly selected head-of-household, registered voter patrons of the Smithville School District. The participants were asked about neighborhood schools:

28. Would knowing that the construction of this additional elementary school would lead to the conversion of the district's elementary schools to neighborhood schools – meaning the additional school, and Smithville Primary Elementary and Smithville Upper Elementary schools would all shift to a Kindergarten through sixth-grade format – make you more likely to vote in favor, more likely to vote against, or would it make no difference to you?

Response	Percentage
More likely to vote in favor	44%
More likely to vote against	9%
It would make no difference	36%
Don't know (not read)	10%

After the first failed levy, the district had Patron Insight conduct another survey of re with these results on the question of neighborhood schools:

If the district did construct a new elementary school, the plan would be to change the elementary schools to neighborhood schools – all of them having students from kindergarten through sixth grade. The idea behind this switch is to cut down on the number of times a student has to transition to a new school while they are a student in the district. But it would be a change from what the community has been used to. Which of the following best describes how you feel about this idea?

Response	Percentage/ Patron telephone survey (n=400)	Percentage/ Patron online survey (n=209)	Percentage/ Staff online survey (n=108)
I like switching to neighborhood elementary schools	42%	40%	63%
I like things the way they are now	20%	22%	16%
I don't have a strong feeling one way or the other	38%	35%	19%
Don't know (not read to telephone respondents, but available to online respondents)	1%	4%	3%

After the most recent failed levy, which was defeated by only 215 votes, focus groups were conducted to gather patron feedback on the cause of the failure. The participants were invited; they were not randomly selected. Resistance to neighborhood schools and a highly public personnel issue were cited as likely reasons for the failure.

We need you to help us determine the extent to which moving from attendance centers is THE issue that is keeping our patrons from supporting our request to fund an additional school.

Comparisons to high performing Missouri districts

1. Would like to look at case studies or best in class examples that reflect the recommendation.
2. Whether or not the proposed options will do enough to address all of the issues for today and the future. Whether we are modeling ourselves against all schools in the state or the best schools in state.
3. More on the configurations comparisons in other districts to prove their value to the voting patrons.
4. Why we are not evaluating other successful attendance centers and asking why we can't grow that way?

Grade configurations of the top performing Missouri schools will be presented at Monday's meeting.

Finances

1. More info on bonding capacity. How many bonds school has? Timeline of when each bond will be paid off? Sunset date on levy increase?
2. Lease-purchase? Not ideal, but is it an option.
3. Can we split repairs and new schools with two different levies?

Information on school finance in general and our district finances specifically will be provided at the meeting on Monday. We will also discuss funding options.

Student Involvement

1. Student participation in the district. If we discuss students opportunity, how come we don't have more student representation?
2. What are we doing to inform and invite those interested kids in the district?

We are very grateful to have Nick Hartman, the high school student body president, join us for these meetings! We welcome any participants to bring a student to Monday's meeting if you can.

Miscellaneous

Is the school district required by law to provide bus transportation for all students? Or is it simply a school policy?

We are required by law to offer transportation for those students that live outside a one mile radius of their school. The Smithville School District, however, offers transportation to all students due to lack of sidewalks and safe walkways around our campus.

Why this seems to be the only solution. This forum, I thought was to provide information on making decisions but appears to be already decided. I find it interesting that school board members can take all the time they need to make a case or sale an idea....but a citizen is cut short.

Our first meeting was informational to lay a foundation for our continued work together. On April 18, three options will be presented to the forum. Two options include the neighborhood schools concept, but the third does not. Participants will work individually and in small groups to provide feedback on this and other pressing issues. All voices will be heard, recorded and shared with forum participants and the community.

Why was Wayne Krueger quoted in local paper after vote failure as saying the following spring that kindergarten class – was smaller so additional space was not needed?

During the 2013-2014 school year, we had a kindergarten class of over 200 students which pushed the Primary to capacity. Although we are fairly accurate in predicting class size from year to year in grades 1-12, it is impossible for us to accurately predict the size of our incoming kindergarten classes. In 2014-2015 and in 2015-2016, our kindergarten numbers have been well below 200 which has given us some “breathing room” at the Primary. That is not the case for 2016-2017, however, as we are adding mobile units to provide additional classroom space. In addition, our numbers in other grade levels have continued to grow, pushing the middle school over capacity and leaving only one classroom in the district that is not used for classroom space on a daily basis (the science lab at the Upper).

Growth projections – next 1-2 years.

2016-2017 -- 2595

2017-2018 -- 2648

Please refer to the Cohort Enrollment Projection on the Phase VI webpage for the projected growth for additional years. The Cohort Enrollment Projection was also the front page of the packet provided at the first meeting.

Projections based on 100 yr or 50 yr building

These projections are based on a new building meant to serve our community for generations. In the long run, the district believes it is more economical to erect “brick & mortar” buildings rather than less permanent structures which are less expensive to build but very costly to maintain over a long period of time.

What else will be put on the ballot besides a new school?

The district keeps an ongoing list of capital projects that need to be completed. This will be used to determine additional ballot issues. A firm decision has not been made yet.

What is the best configuration to retain quality teachers?

That depends entirely on the teacher! Two options under consideration would require splitting up our “building families” which would be hard on everyone. Collaboration time with grade level and content area teachers is critical to teacher retention. Depending on the grade level,

there are positive and negative impacts on collaboration with each option under consideration. Bottom line, our teachers want what is best for our kids and our community.

The mobile unit at the Primary. What would an emergency plan look like? Are those students going to be at greater risk in the event of an emergency?

The district is required to have a comprehensive emergency plan for each and every classroom including those in our mobile units, which we also use at the MS and UES. The mobile units will be positioned very close to a building entrance so that students can easily take shelter in the building if necessary. In addition, the mobile units will be within the playground fence.

How the district plans to “campaign” the next ballot issue to ensure that it passes.

This has not been determined yet.

Are we looking at growth to the south? And are we confident that the 10 acres to the north is the right location?

Our current population concentration is on the north side of the district. Economic development is planned to our south but when development will actually occur and how it will impact student growth is still unknown.

What we can do to restore community faith in the board & admin as a whole. This is another issue that will hinder getting anything passed in the near future.

We are actively working to strengthen trust with our patrons through improved communication. About this time last year, we conducted a review of our five-year strategic plan. At that time, we added a strategy and detailed action plans to improve communication in the district. These forums and Key Communicators meetings are a product of that work.

How can we appeal to emotion—kids #1. Growth vs. fixed mindset. Status quo.

Our community’s greatest resource is our young people. Although made by adults, this request for more space is all about our community’s kids.

If kids attend one elementary school and we move - can our child remain at the school until 6th grade? If we provide transportation?

At this point, we do not have an answer to this question. If we move to neighborhood schools, we will develop policy and procedures for families who move within the district.

10 year Master Roofing Plan

On Monday, April 11th, several individuals expressed concerned that roofing was being included in the discussion for capital improvements supported by a levy rather than just including in the annual operational budget. General roofing maintenance and repair are included in the annual budget. Replacement of roofing is not, the current industry cost are \$18.50 per sq. ft. for roofing replacement on a built roof system like the district uses. The district has approximately 351,000 sq. ft. of built up roofing. Just to replace the roof at the PES would cost in excess of 1.2 million. Currently, the district spends about \$505,000 on capital improvements annually. A built up roof has a life-span of 20 years - we have roofs over 30 years old. When a leak occurs, we do repair it, unfortunately, another leak always occurs.

[10 year Master Roofing Plan](#)

Two additional questions to ponder....

Platte County received an 80 acre donation How do we get this at Smithville?

If you had all the space you need, what would each building say is their #2 need?