

Community Night – April 1, 2015 (No Joke) – Feedback

Question #1: What do you see as the top challenges for us to keep in mind as we go through the facility transition:

- To make sure there is adequate, learning environment spaces for all programs at Mendon Elem. If not, have.
- What happens if we have another large kindergarten class? Maybe 55+ students? Keep 4th grade by themselves as much as possible.
- Classroom size and student to teacher ratio. Intervention of children at different ages. Re-training staff to handle changes in duties.
- 4th grade at MS. Overcrowding in classrooms. ECE across street – no opportunity to interact with other kids. Allowing 4th grade recess and activities (ex. Holiday parties).
- Classroom space at all buildings. Storage facilities for teachers' materials. How to keep 4th grade separate from HS and older MS. Amount of paraprofessional support at Elem.
- Teachers with larger amounts of students to teach.
- Younger kids being in the MS. How would you pick the 14 kids for the ECE program?
- Teachers will need help with larger class sizes. K – most will not have PreK; Large classes in K are scary! Let 4th graders be kids! Parties!!
- Keeping the younger separated at the MS level. Payroll reduction.
- Mendon and Unity facility needs that might be at GE. Playground moved to Unity.
- Age of building. Budget of State. Parental concerns of change.
- How teachers are going to handle bigger class sizes.
- Utilize everything from GE before you sell building.
- Everyone getting used to having one facility.
- Open communication.
- Keeping costs down. Putting students first. Using all equipment etc. that is currently not being used. Move items to other schools; Don't sell with school.

- Student confusion—feel welcome when transition into MS.
- Space for 4th grade. Plans for larger classes. Playground.
- Space for classrooms. Lunch times-with having more students to serve at each building, lunch times may need to be extended to give the students plenty of time to get their lunch and eat.
- Classroom/facility large enough to handle the former GE students. Future budget reductions from the State.

Question #2: Should we change the name of Mendon Elementary to Unity Elementary?

- Yes, I think it would be less confusing for the students when they transition from elementary to middle school. We are one district united.
- I like the idea of Unity Elementary or Unit 4 Elementary. It makes the names consistent within the district schools. Not a big issue.
- Yes, it should be Unity Elementary as it is Unit 4 and it is a blended community.
- I like the idea of changing it to Unity Elementary. Reason why – it would give the Greenfield kids a sense of a new beginning.
- Yes – a lot of people are involved besides just Mendon.
- Yes, change it. Schools should have uniformity in their names.
- If it's going to be changed now is a good time to do it. I think Unity Elementary would be fine!
- Yes, there is enough at Unity being called Mendon Unity, if we leave it as ME, it will only increase. Unity Elementary School would be good.
- Whichever works best for the majority.
- Yes, show continuity, less confusion.
- Guess I had never thought about it. Probably a good idea to make the district name represented across the district.
- Yes, make the students feel like they are the Unity family. Cost effective??
- If it doesn't cost anything, yes; if it cost more money and money is the issue, then no.
- Yes! Makes for more inclusion of kids not living in Mendon.
- I don't care.
- Doesn't make a difference to me.
- Neutral.
- I don't really care either way.
- Names don't bother me (inserted smiley face).
- More pressing issues than this.

Question #3: What thoughts do you have about how we are meeting the current financial challenges of the district? What suggestions do you have on how we could do better?

- I think the Board is being very proactive in keeping the expenses under control.
- I think the Board and superintendent are going a good job of being fiscally responsible. I feel they have made tough cuts.
- Appears several options have been thoroughly explored. It is a very sad situation that's hard to deal with.
- I think the bonds are a good idea, need to have a plan. I would try to let the public know what the breaking point is as to when they would be issued. Pay to play sports as last resort.
- Doing a good job, especially with the State continually changing the game. Pay to play sports are not a necessity. Booster clubs, etc. might be able to help cover the cost. Possibly cut all extra school activities.
- What would the tech/book fees look like if State does not come through?
- I appreciate the open communication about the lack of State funds. I think we are taking a conservative approach and doing the best with what we have to use.
- Hold the line on administrative salaries and benefits. Some are on a steep learning curve at our school district's expense.

Question #4: What do you believe are the most important things to address in order to improve student learning in our district?

- Open communication. Curriculum flow from grade to grade. Ditch common core! Establish a curriculum committee. Teachers develop own curriculum. Do the teachers know what each is doing?
- Get rid of common core math!!! It's causing more frustration in an already frustrating subject and kids are giving up! Move away from Moby Max and Istation type stuff, they are not learning from it! The utilization of assessments to measure and monitor student growth and give directions towards curriculum, RtI and new common core standards. Current grade scale.
- Science, math, and technology.
- Use the staff and resources in the best possible way to insure success and a variety of classes. Offer more classes and electives so there aren't so many seniors with free time or TA time.
- Macbooks – ways to block gaming. PE – going over the rules of sports, increasing participation.
- As a district, I think we are handling our financial difficulties well. I don't believe there is anywhere else to cut. I think that our district operates on a pretty tight budget without the students' education falling behind.
- Sounds like you are doing the best you can considering the State isn't paying what they owe you. Glad you keep cutting and keep up with them.
- What about generating income? Suggestions-kids pay \$ per year for parking spots.
- Tutor program. In class "homework."
- Don't let them fall behind in the lower grades.
- Social work/counseling services.
- Individualized learning to challenge kids to learn. Possibility of having tutors when needed.
- Keeping up with changes in technology, making sure our students are not just relying on their laptops to teach them. Make sure we have the right programs to see the material to the students.

- I am excited about the blended early childhood program being started in the fall. Are we co-oping with other school districts on classes that are hard to get teachers...Spanish?
- With increased class size need to insure teachers still have time for student interaction.
- Teachers who care. Fairness by teachers. Don't think some of them grade fairly on high school level. Dual credit courses – earning college credit on high school level. Continue dual program with JWCC. Quality control with teachers.

Question #5: When we mention the potential for a building referendum to maintain the current tax rate and build some additions onto district facilities, what are your initial reactions?

- No tax increase in 15+ years. Thing w/taxes – many rent who have kids in school so they're...(sentence isn't finished).
- Updates are very necessary. I think maintaining the tax rate is a good idea if we don't have to revise it to pay for bonds if issued.
- Adding onto Unity Elementary. High School gym—knock out NW wall—add seating under baskets (like QHS).
- Maintain current tax rate for facilities repair and upgrades.
- Educate people that same rate you're paying currently won't cost anymore to get benefits of additional funding.
- Promote dual credit. False statements on Spanish program—need to publicize offerings.
- I think the community might be okay with using the tax money for building since there would be no increase. – after 2018-2019.
- If the tax rate doesn't go up and more space is needed, I think we should do it.
- Repair bleachers.
- Mendon Elementary needs more classrooms and add. gym. Remodel/add onto UHS gym.
- I see any growth as a positive. Being able to house a bigger student population brings in more \$\$.
- Student education is more important than facilities. Students in one-room school got a great education. Are we educating our students as well today?
- Yes, we need new bleachers. I would support a new school or addition onto elementary school with a bigger gym; Similar to what Central did several years ago.