

MEMO

BOARD OF EDUCATION WORKSHOP

OCTOBER 4, 2006

Board Members in Attendance: John Samaska, Steve Pulaski, Tom Kielty, John Howard, Sal Catalano, Charles Cosgriff, Monica Gotti and Debra Corsico.

Board Superintendent Robert Cronin was also present and presided over the meeting.

Dr. Cronin's initial comment was as follows: That if the K-5 configuration is maintained Dr. Cronin does not recommend moving BES students to the middle school, because there is really not enough space at the middle school for BES fifth graders. This statement followed his presentation concerning the reconfiguration of the K-5 in the region.

What followed were questions and comments by board members:

Catalano: Concerns of busing K-2 to Bethlehem.

Cronin: He's talked to the bus company; they currently have 10 buses and 5 of them drive 45 minutes or more to school. He said the furthest current street, from Bethlehem and Woodbury, is Heard Hill. Under the new plan, it would go up to 50 minutes. As for Bethlehem, Dr. Cronin said that there are buses running from Bethlehem to Woodbury and they have four (4) runs of 45 minutes or more at the current time. He said that they would need a total of 5-6 buses to keep all runs under an hour if the reconfiguration is carried out.

Howard: Can we use vans to shorten the drives or can we congregate stops?

Catalano: How do you respond to the concept that elementary schools are generally the center of town? We would then be segregating parents in each town from their children and the school.

Cronin: I do not see it that way.

Howard: We are a region it would be best for the students.

Corsico: It would give us all a chance to blend.

Gotti: We would become one educational community.

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Cosgriff: We can't worry about whether mom can get her kid to Cub Scouts.

Pulaski: I see a problem with parents and school activities.

Cosgriff: I see a problem with the way adults perceive this. What are the experiences of adults? I am from Waterbury and maybe we had neighborhood schools, but we really didn't notice it.

Corsico: If we can reconfigure, would you need to scale down the renovation?

Cronin: We wouldn't have to add as many new classrooms because there would be few students at Mitchell Elementary School.

Cronin: Grades 3-5 would be 461 and K-2 would be 430.

Cronin: MES 477 currently. That number would decline.

Gotti: Have you done any research on transition?

Cronin: Not sure about the research. I haven't done it. The part I like about this structure is second graders would relish the chance to go to a new building.

Cronin: No matter what board decides, renovation must move forward with renovation.

Cronin: Another consideration, if the reconfiguration is voted, can we renovate BES and MES.

Howard: Cost of building continues to go up. Seaside Walks in Bethlehem, Senior Center in Woodbury and the Southbury School.

Cronin: Reconfiguration would occur next year.

Cronin: Like educational opportunities that are afforded to district with reconfiguration.

END/elm