



Commonly Asked Reconfiguration Questions Regional School District No. 14

What will be the additional transportation costs?

At this phase in our planning, the only additional transportation costs will be those incurred if drivers are asked to increase their work hours because of the added “layer” of buses. This year, there are two “layers” of buses. The first picks up the middle and high school students and drops them off at either site by 7:30 AM. They then leave and begin picking up elementary students. All elementary students are brought to either of the elementary schools by 8:45 AM, thus making for two layers of buses: the middle/high layer and the elementary layer. Next year there will need to be a third pick-up at a time yet to be determined because Bethlehem and Mitchell will have different start times. Under the reconfiguration plan increased transportation costs will also be realized if gas prices increase.

I want to emphasize here that we are in the early stages of working with the bus company on transportation and transportation routes. I will certainly let you know immediately if the information I am sharing with you were to change.

What about the after school programs?

Parks and Rec. – I have spoken with Jennifer Miller from the Woodbury Parks and Rec. Department. She has indicated a willingness to adjust after school offerings depending on the configuration decided upon. She saw no problems as far as after school programs and the K-2; 3-5 configuration is concerned.

Religious Instruction – In Woodbury, religious education is offered on Sunday mornings. I will need to speak with the coordinator of the program in Bethlehem, along with the bus company, to see if students can be dropped off at their religion classes one day each week. There may be a problem with start times for the classes, as the primary and intermediate students would be arriving at different times. These are logistics that will need to be worked out.

Develop a plan to show how this plan is fiscally responsible.

There are a number of ways in which this plan affords the district some cost savings:

1. Reconfiguration balances class sizes across the district. When you bring all of your students of a particular grade level to one school, we can make the most of the teaching staff at that grade level. Currently, for example, there are second grades with 13 students. There are also small afternoon kindergarten classes. Were these smaller classes combined into one, the group would be too large. As there are only three second grades at Bethlehem, dividing one class between the remaining two teachers would make both second grades larger than the class size recommended by the Board of Education. This same approach could also be used in some of the other grades. The more classes there are of a particular grade, the

greater the chances of spreading a group of students out among them and not exceeding the recommended class size. This would allow us to consider possibly using a staff person in another capacity in the school, rather than as a classroom teacher.

2. The distribution of the students in a K-2, 3-5 format would lessen the need for an assistant principal at Mitchell School. If Mitchell were to remain a K-5 building there could be over 600 students attending. For safety purposes, and because of the work load, were Mitchell to remain a K-5 building with approximately 600 students, I would recommend that an assistant principal be appointed.
3. Library budgets at both Bethlehem and Mitchell can be used to purchase more materials for fewer grade levels. Currently we are purchasing materials for K-5 libraries in both schools. In the new configuration, one budget can be used only for primary grades, while the other will be used for grades 3-5.
4. There will be some savings when purchasing materials for special areas such as art, music, and physical education. Any special equipment purchased for a particular instructional unit of study will only have to be purchased once as opposed to twice as is the case when both buildings served students in grades K-5. Some units of instruction are only appropriate for primary grades, while others are intended for students in grade 3-4-5. With the same grades located in one place, only one set of materials for these units can be purchased as special area teachers only work with one classroom of students at a time.
5. If the district is able to offer a full day kindergarten program there could be some savings in transportation costs because there would be a reduction in the number of students transported during the middle of the day.

Please provide a better understanding of the capacity of each building.

A school's capacity is determined by how the available building is used. In the proposed reconfiguration plan, both Bethlehem and Mitchell will have an art room, a music room, a library, a cafeteria, a gym, and a computer lab. We will look into the feasibility of setting up a computer lab in the media center at Bethlehem. If that is not possible, we will work with the district's Technology Coordinator to locate an alternate site in the school. If this does not appear possible, a portable lab would be purchased for Bethlehem.

School	Current Grade Span	Number of Students	Reconfigured Grades	Number of Students
Bethlehem	K-5	336	K-2	430
Mitchell	K-4	474	3-5	459