

TO: Board of Education Members

FROM: Kevin D. Case, Superintendent of Schools

RE: Space Utilization Study

DATE: October 30, 2008

### **Background**

To address the lack of space at Cherry Brook Primary School, the Board of Education retained the services of Drummey Rosane Anderson, Inc. to perform a space utilization study in the fall of 2007. The consultants met with staff members to discuss the space needs and held a series of community workshops with the public to discuss issues/concerns related to the space issues and possible options to address the needs. It was determined that there were possible buildable zones on the Cherry Brook site for potential permanent or temporary expansion. It was also determined after completing an inspection of the septic system, that the existing system has the capacity for the peak enrollment expected at the school.

In order to address the option of grade re-configuration, the Board retained DRA to conduct a space study at the Canton Middle/High School campus to determine if there was adequate space to house additional grade levels. DRA conducted their study and concluded that at the High School, the most heavy utilization occurs during Period F, with approximately 66% or 2/3 of the classroom seats filled. Rooms with 18 or fewer students were considered underutilized. The study determined the classroom seats available at the Middle School and High School during each period of the day. The study addressed the seats available, not educational programming. The next step in the study was to analyze the scheduling and educational programming at the Middle School and High School to determine if the current programming could continue with the space available if the sixth grade were to be housed there.

The administrative team met with consultants from DRA and met several times over the summer to discuss various options which are described below:

### **Consideration of a 6-12 High School**

To access the available space at the Middle School and High School a 6-12 Middle/High School could be created using a common bell schedule, with shared use of the interchangeable classroom space on all three floors. This would include sharing spaces for music, art, physical education, computers, cafeteria, and library, and includes sharing all available teachers. After exploring the advantages and disadvantages of this option, it was determined that a major disadvantage of this option would be that the Middle School

would lose its separate identity and its outstanding educational program. Teachers would become departmentalized by content area vs. grade-level. There would not be adequate gymnasium space for all students. Current sixth grade teachers are not certified to teach in the core content areas. The addition of .2-.4 Specials teachers and .2 of each content area would be required. This model would compromise the quality of the current Middle School educational program.

### **Consideration of a 6-8 Middle School**

Since it is the preference of the school community to preserve the existing, very successful Middle School model, the effects of creating a Grades 6-8 Middle School with a rotating schedule shared by the High School, but with a separate space for the staff and students of the Middle School was studied. Lack of gymnasium space was identified as a major issue along with extremely tight scheduling, students would not receive their first choices in academic or elective courses, particularly students who select singleton courses such as AP Physics. Inflexibility of the schedule would eliminate the teaming concept, a major component of the Middle School model. Current sixth grade teachers are not certified to teach the core content areas only. This model would also require the addition of part time specials teachers. Students would need to choose between academic courses and Band or Chorus, impacting the quality of our music program due to the schedule that would need to be in place for this model to be implemented.

### **Consideration of Grade 6 self-contained classes at the High School**

Moving the sixth grade classes intact from Canton Intermediate School to the High School was studied. There would need to be seven classrooms available. It was determined that there is not adequate classroom space to effectively implement this model. This model would also isolate the sixth grade teachers and staff in one wing of the building and on one floor. The sixth graders would also need to travel throughout the High School for music, library, and computer labs. In order to retain lower enrolled courses, such as AP Physics, the schedule would require higher enrollments in multi-section classes such as Social Studies and English to create interchangeable classrooms. There would be a lack of adequate gymnasium space. The scheduling of band, chorus, computers, and art for sixth graders in self-contained classrooms would require additional staffing.

### **Transportation**

Moving the sixth grade to Canton Middle School would require three additional buses. At a projected cost of \$39,173 per bus, this would be an additional cost of \$117,519. As a result of these additional buses, diesel fuel costs would increase by approximately \$22,500.

If the sixth graders were to be separated from the high school students, as requested, separate bus runs would be required for Canton Middle School and Canton High School. An additional 2-3 buses, in addition to the buses mentioned above, would be required. Essentially, 2 buses would travel each route at the same time, the first picking up CHS students only, the second picking up CMS students only.

### **Conclusion**

After considering the advantages and disadvantages of the above options studied, it was determined by the administrative team that each of the above options would significantly impact the quality of the educational experiences at the Middle School and High School that our students currently receive.

It is my recommendation that the Board of Education consider the addition of modular classrooms to Cherry Brook Primary School to meet the needs of the school based upon the growing enrollment and the need for spaces for support programs and tutoring services.