

To: Oneida School Community Advisory Committee

From: Steve Bociolatt

Re: Meeting Notes – Meeting of January 26, 2023

Date: February 14, 2023

In Attendance:

Committee Members: Helen Acker, Jennifer Armlin, Erin Belanger, Karen Brouillette, Alex Cafalone, Holly Cafalone, Hannah Cleveland, Eric Coriale, Michele Farwell, Megan Kelly, Michelle Kinville, Drew Laube, Nicole LaVeck, Adam Litwak, Kate Plunkett, Gary Reisman, Megan Rice, Jim Rowley, Matt Shene, Cindy Smith, Stacey Tice, Kathy Zangrilli

Consultant: Stephen Bociolatt

Resource: Matthew Carpenter

Location: Costello Training Center

1. Introductions

- Superintendent Matt Carpenter welcomed committee members and introduced Steve Bociolatt, Consultant, Castallo and Silky LLC.
- Mr. Bociolatt shared his background with the committee and then asked each member to introduce themselves and share a point of pride about the district.
 - Positive atmosphere or feeling of school
 - Happiness in the schools
 - Pride in coming back to Oneida as a parent
 - Involvement in clubs
 - Student transportation safety
 - People in the District
 - Anti-bullying campaign
 - Connections with students
 - Teachers showing genuine interest in students
 - Sense of pride and community
 - Feeling of safety at school
 - Trusting adults that students are with all day
 - Commitment to students to grow good humans
 - Working in the district creates interest in more people becoming educators
 - An eye on the goal of the future for the students
 - Kids, families, teachers, staff members....make it a wonderful place to work
 - Sense of community, small community feel
 - Moved back from out-of-state to be in the community
 - Great sense of community

- Oneida is a destination school district
 - People and opportunities for students (music, AP classes)
 - Elementary students are nurtured and supported
 - Focus on students
 - Athletic programs
 - Great staff
 - This is the only place that we want to be
 - Multi generations of teachers and families
- Mr. Bocciolatt shared that the Oneida Board of Education is supportive of the work of the committee and has not had pre-planned expectations in any findings or recommendations

2. Mr. Bocciolatt reviewed the following agenda for the meeting.

- Introductions
- Background Information
- General Overview of the Study Process
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Student Enrollment Trends and Projections
- Comments/Questions
- Next Meeting Date/Location/Topics

As part of the background information, Mr. Bocciolatt reviewed the logistics for each meeting.

- Meetings will begin at 6:30 pm and last no more than two hours. Optional tours at each building will proceed the business meeting and will begin at 5:45 pm. These tours are for committee members and for anyone that will be observing the business meeting that follows.
- Committee members were given a contact list with each person's email for reference.
- Following each meeting, notes of the meeting will be posted on the district website along with the PowerPoint presentation.
- All advisory committee meetings will be open to the community. At the conclusion of each meeting, observers will have the opportunity to offer comments or ask questions

3. Mr. Bocciolatt gave a PowerPoint presentation reviewing the following items

- The purpose of the study is to answer the following question:
 - **“In considering a number of options, is there a better way educationally and fiscally to reconfigure the grades and facilities to provide a sound instructional program for students?”**
 - Feasibility Options: Is it possible?
 - Desirable Options: Is it a good idea?
 - The Change Process-understanding that any new process can be a bit messy at times to get to the end goal.

- Study Process
 - A project timeline was reviewed: 2022-23 school year and 2023 -24 school year. Target date for committee work to be completed by November/December 2023.
 - Collection of data will be done in the following areas:
 - Student enrollment
 - Instructional programs
 - Facilities
 - Transportation
 - Staffing
 - Financial
 - Miscellaneous
 - Individual meetings/group meetings will be held
 - Board of Education
 - District Level
 - Building Administrators
 - Faculty/Staff
 - School/Community Advisory Committee
 - School visits

- Develop and Communicate the “Why”
 - Declining enrollment
 - Age and condition of facilities
 - Educational space utilization
 - Fiscal considerations

- Enrollment History
 - Review of enrollment history and live births in the Oneida City School District from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2022-2023 school year.

- Age and Condition of Facilities
 - Review of age and square footage of each building with the current enrollment by building

- Educational Space Utilization
 - General classrooms
 - Special services
 - Building specific areas
 - Program specific areas
 - Land/site
 - Miscellaneous Areas

- Finance
 - Capital reserve
 - Retiring debt-review timelines
 - Debt service fund-uncommitted funds from any previous capital projects
 - Tax levy-net local cost
- The School/Community Advisory Committee
 - Members represent a broad spectrum of the school/community
 - Superintendent services as a resource to the committee
 - Function is to advise the consultant and communicate with the various stakeholder groups
 - 28-30 committee members
 - Expectations
 - Attend all meetings
 - Freely express their points of view
 - Keep community updated on the process
 - Informing the public
- Role of the Consultant
 - Bring an outside unbiased perspective
 - Has no local stake in the outcome
 - Will conduct the study in a fair manner
 - Will ensure that the process is open/transparent
 - Will produce meeting notes after each committee meeting
 - Will be responsible for the final report
- Criteria for Final Report Recommendations
 - Will benefit student learning
 - Will be sensitive to the unique cultural context of the school district
 - Will be independent of special interest groups
 - Will update 2018 study
- Meeting Focus: Enrollment History and Projections
 - Reviewed total population in Oneida City School District 2010 to 2021(10% decline). During this time period, the percentage of population that is child-bearing age (25-44) decreased significantly (28% decrease) while the population over 65 increased (16% increase).
 - Review of student enrollment history in the Oneida City School District from 2012-2013 school year to the 2022-2023 school year.
 - In grades K-12, student enrollment declined from 2211 to 1689 (24% enrollment decrease). Similar decreases occurred in grades K-5 and in grades 6-8.
 - In grades K-5, student enrollment declined from 980 to 733 students
 - In grades 6-8, student enrollment declined from 520 to 391
 - In grades 9-12, student enrollment declined from 711-565 (21% decline)

- Reviewed student enrollment history and projections from 2017-2018 to 2029-2030.

To predict future enrollment, the consultant employs the Cohort Survival Projection method that uses information on the number of births in the school district over a period of years and calculates patterns of enrollment. A cohort survival ratio is developed that tracks how each cohort of students changes as it moves through the grade levels. This ratio, used with the live birth information, predicts what the enrollment will be for a period of years given consistent and predictable conditions. It does not take into account significant economic development changes such as a major employer leaving or entering the area and other similar changes.

Using this method, the K-12 student enrollment for the school district is predicted to decrease from 1689 in 2022-2023 school year to 1445 in the 2029-2030 school year.

Note: Because live births are only available up to 2019, the last 3-4 years of the enrollment projection in the early grades are quite speculative. The birth rates for 2020 and 2021 will be collected when available and a future enrollment update will be given next fall. It is important that a district conduct an enrollment study annually.

- Other factors in projecting enrollment included enrollment trends from the 2017-2018 school year to the 2022-2023 school year of the number of resident students being home schooled, enrolled in non-public schools or enrolled in other public schools. It does not appear that any of these factors will significantly influence the enrollment projections that were made for the Oneida City School district.
 - Reviewed student enrollment trends of other local school districts. Most of these school districts had similar decreases in enrollment
- Take Aways: Mr. Bocciolatt ended the presentation with some general take aways from the meeting.
 - The purpose of the study is to answer the question, “In considering a number of options, is there a better way educationally and fiscally to reconfigure the grades and facilities to provide a sound instructional program now and in the future”?
 - The study process will be open to ensure there is not a perception it is being conducted behind closed doors.
 - The School Community Advisory Committee was formed to assist the consultant throughout the process, but the final recommendation(s) will be the consultant’s.
 - The district has seen declining student enrollment and will likely continue to see enrollments drop.

- Upcoming School Community Advisory Committee meetings
 - Thursday, February 16, 2023 at Durhamville Elementary School in the gym.
 - Monday, March 13, 2023 at Willard Prior Elementary School in the gym.

Note: Optional tours will precede each meeting and will begin at 5:45 pm. Meetings will begin at 6:30 pm and last no longer than two hours.

- Questions:
 - How do you factor in local businesses that move into the community?
 - Enrollment projections do not consider business growth
 - What impact does the Oneida City grant have on this process?
 - Was real estate data looked at when considering projections?

Mr. Boccia will follow-up on these questions at a future meeting.

Note: The meeting notes will be reviewed at the beginning of the next meeting and any changes can be made at that time.

C: Matt Carpenter