

# PRESENTATION TO JOINT SCHOOL REORGANIZATION COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2010

## INTRODUCTION and OPENING COMMENTS:

**Presented by Paul Newton, Principal, Enrico Fermi High School**

- Thank you for inviting us to come and speak to you again about the topic of high school reorganization. We are distributing a full narrative report of this presentation to you at this time. This is a very exciting time for us as we think about the prospects of combining the schools and improving education for all of our students in a more cost efficient manner for the town.
- Frankly, we were a bit unclear in terms of exactly what you were looking for at this presentation. Tom and I have put together a presentation that will hopefully answer some of your questions but might also open up more questions, especially those of a philosophical nature. Tonight we will talk to you about some of the areas that will require some tough decisions as we move forward. We will also talk to you about how we see the educational program coming together as we move into a one site school.
- Likely, you will have more questions than we have answers for at this time. If you are like us, you have consistently been asked things like: what will the name of the school be, what will the mascot be, what are the school's colors, where will the school be located, and other such important but non-educational questions. Honestly, we don't have the answers to these questions nor do we feel that it will be our decision to make. We might have "opinions" but they are simply that, opinions. We understand and accept that these decisions won't be ours to make.
- Moving into this project, as a town, we need to answer one significant question right off the bat. It is more "philosophical" but it will serve to drive all of our decisions as we get deeper into the consolidation project. The question is: "What do we want this school to look like and at what cost"? Trust me, it would be marvelous to be able to sit down and plan out a state of the art, contemporary high school that would incorporate all the latest technologies including computers and smart boards, cutting edge science labs, and modern audio and video capabilities. It would be nice to design a high school that could have an auditorium that could fit the whole school and maybe even be large enough to hold our graduation. These things all would be nice, but can we afford it? I think that we probably know the answer. By the same token, I'm sure that this group isn't looking to just take one of our existing buildings and just put all the kids there and tell us to do our best. In order for Tom and I to properly handle the task of high school reorganization we will need some financial direction so that we can make optimum use of the resources we are given. We'd also hope that you will allow us to draw on the expertise and needs of our staff and engage them in helping to make decisions around space design.

- We see this project unfolding in three phases. First is the reorganizational planning phase. This phase is where we are at now. In this phase we take a look at the size of the school population and we try to construct an educational plan that meets the needs of that population. We would then hope that the facility will be designed to meet these educational needs. Tom is going to speak to you at length when I'm done about the educational plan.
- The second phase is construction. During this phase any new construction would occur. We would like this new construction to be targeted at a separate facility/wing that would be for the ninth graders only. The goal would be to have the ninth grade students occupy this facility as "one class" as soon as it is completed. We've looked at ways to group whole classes to help with the plans of going to a new, one-site school. We still have more planning to undertake to make this as seamless as possible.
- The third phase is renovation. This is the most unsettled of the three phases. While the newly constructed building is housing the ninth graders, we would close the rest of the campus for renovations to occur. We would house the other 3 grades in the building that will not be used as the "new school" while the renovations are taking place. During this time we would implement the transition concept by going to a 1 school, 2 site organization. This would allow us to begin the consolidation of staff a year before the new school site opens.
- Areas of Concern: As we move forward in these three phases there are some areas of concern that we know will need to be addressed before we can complete this project. I'll touch on a few and give a brief statement of each. Please understand that this is not an exhaustive list.
  - Co-Curricular Planning – How will the highly visible programs like music (band and chorus) look in the new school?
  - Athletic Program – We will likely need to remain in the CCC. We will be too big for the NCCC. We'd be looking for a full varsity, junior varsity, and freshman program (where applicable) for our teams. We will need to notify the respective leagues of our decision.
  - Extra-Curricular Activities – We will need to closely examine how some of our very viable programs, like drama for example, will look when combined. We will also need to look at how we can expand our current offerings to incorporate the needs of students in the large school setting.
  - Community Building Use – We know that currently both of our high schools are used for a variety of community events. We will need to carefully plan community building use of our remaining high school. We may need to use other school buildings in the district for community events that were previously held at the high schools.

- NEASC – Right around the time that the new school opens, both of the current schools will be beginning the accreditation process. We will need to work with representatives of the NEASC to postpone the accreditation process. We will require time to settle into the new large school setting.
- Booster Clubs and Parent Support Organizations – We will need to spend time working with these groups so that they can combine in a positive and collaborative way.
- Cafeteria Services – While the architects are looking at the physical space this consolidation allows us the opportunity to evaluate how we can most efficiently utilize space, facilities, and staff.
- Heating and Cooling – It doesn't matter which building is selected because both have issues here. When we consolidate we'll need to plan for the heating and cooling needs of that new school. Frankly put, we're adding a lot of bodies to an existing space.
- Technology – How we deploy technology, understandably, goes hand in hand with how we answer that question that I posed regarding what type of school we want. Modern schools have classrooms equipped with things like televisions, digital recording devices, smart boards, and mounted computer projectors, and banks of student use computers. We currently have little of this technology available as permanently fixed instructional tools in our classrooms. These things are essentials in a technologically modern classroom. We will also need to closely regard state-mandated STEM regulations as we move to renovate, create, and expand our science labs. From the outset of this project we will need to decide if we can afford these items or if we can afford not to have these items.
- Storage – I left this for last but it is a concern for both existing buildings. We simply don't have enough existing space for storage. We were cited on this by the NEASC and addressed it by eliminating old and broken items rather than by creating more storage. When the schools combine we'll have a wide variety of school materials, furniture, and supplies that will be coming out of one building with little or no space to put it in the other. We'll need to plan for that.
- I know that I have brought up a number of issues and didn't really give you answers for them. I know that Tom and I are both committed to work to find solutions to these issues to the level that we are permitted. I can speak for both Tom and I when I say that we are extremely supportive of this project. Our hope is that the physical plant does support the educational program and that it can be accomplished at a cost that is reasonable to the town. I will now turn over the program to Tom to speak about the educational program and how it will look.

## ACADEMIC PROGRAM DESIGN and STAFFING:

Presented by Thomas Duffy, Principal, Enfield High School

- The Consolidation of High Schools in Enfield is a unique opportunity to combine and improve our current comprehensive programs in academics, sports and extra-curricular areas. It is a time to look deeply and critically at the premises and assumptions we now have in our Mission Statements and plan to align a newly combined community of learners and teachers with the goals and expectations of our statements.
- In planning for an ultimate one-site/school design we are assuming a projected student population of 1850 for academics. Sports and extra-curricular programs, however, could function at two sites, depending on grade configurations and design during the transition from two schools (e.g., one school/two campuses, with 9<sup>th</sup> grade on one campus), bus availability and cost, and the numbers of student/athlete participants.
- Increased and improved capabilities in technology must be considered so that all disciplines will be afforded opportunities to keep pace with learning in a 21<sup>st</sup> century setting. The use of technology in our learning environment is evolving: it is becoming a part of the fabric of the entire school experience. Classrooms, labs, and all “shops” should be equipped with contemporary, consumer technologies and teaching tools such as *Smartboards and Interactive Whiteboards, In-focus projectors, full service video/audio classroom capabilities*, and, for students with physical or learning disabilities, a full array of *assistive technology capabilities*. A media center and library should be able to foster collaborative learning activities and projects that use technologies to support various sizes and configurations of groups of students and serve as the curriculum hub of the school. A full wireless environment must be considered for the entire learning environment.
- The design of connecting or common spaces will facilitate collaborative learning exercises and projects between departments: the Science-Technology-Engineering-Mathematics (STEM) design is a premier example of this approach. Presently, neither high school supports a learning environment for a true STEM program. Careful planning and design will result in an opportunity to offer a strong STEM curriculum that promotes an integrated working relationship between the disciplines and the culminating activities that will be used to assess student achievement. This program will provide for students in either academic or vocational pursuits.
- Understanding that in the current economic environment it is not easy to “live up to” emerging 21<sup>st</sup> century learning imperatives such as modular spaces, movable walls and expandable classrooms, the design of common/flexible use areas for labs, lecture areas, and world language programs is a viable answer. We advise, wherever possible, considering solutions allowing for flexible classrooms that will promote a re-defined and evolving teaching and learning environment while maximizing all resources.

- The current World Language Department has offered Spanish and French to the Advanced Placement level and Latin I-IV to our students. A decision to consider a “phase out” of Latin emerged during the 2010-2011 budget process. A consolidation of schools would then result in a large, single high school with two language offerings for students. However, in a large, single school environment it is safe to predict that 90-100 students will enroll in a Latin I-IV program. If Latin were not to be included most students would likely enroll in Spanish and some in French, with no net reduction in staff. The decision to offer the study of Latin in the program of studies of a single high school should be reviewed. The projected staffing on the World Language line below includes a Latin or Spanish position that would accommodate 100 students.
- The physical makeup of most of the departments will remain: the dynamic will be the curriculum and technology. Consolidation of resources means a larger number of sections in each department in a single schedule, thereby reducing the number of “singleton” (or one-section-only) offerings. Typically this can result in less conflicts and “close out” indicators in a schedule.
- A single high school on one campus also eliminates the shared or travel teacher that is common in our current structure. This leaves open the possibility of looking at different class schedule time block configurations that could include longer time blocks scattered throughout the week (to help schedule science labs, extended Physical Education, extended Music, extended SRBI assistance sections, etc.), rotating schedules, 8-block days, and other possible schedule configurations that could improve the use of our academic instructional time.
- The academic program of graduation requirements will consist of the following number of staff in each academic area, based upon a projected 1850 students and the current graduation requirements. The numbers of students and staff are based upon the percentages of students enrolled in subject areas each year. The classroom space/size determines the numbers of students in learning areas (i.e., technology education @ 15; music areas @ 100; English @ 23).

Subject	Projected #Staff
English:	19
Mathematics:	17
Social Studies:	16
Sciences:	17
Physical Education:	6
Health:	3
World Languages:	11
Reading:	4
Visual Arts:	4
Performing Arts:	2
Technology Education:	7
Business	6
Special Education:	15
Family & Consumer Sciences:	4
Guidance Counselors:	7.5
Pupil Services:	6
Career Center:	1
Computer Science (STEM)	2
ADMIN	Prin 1
	AP 10-12 3
	AP Gr.9 2

PROJECTED STAFFING – Single School/Campus	153.5
STAFFING 2009-2010	182.5
STAFFING 2010-2011	172.1

- NOTE: The numbers of staff and students will fluctuate based upon the changing requirements of the pending CSDE initiatives to redesign the high schools across the state. Changes/increases in credits required in certain disciplines will impact the numbers of students enrolled in departments in any newly required courses/credit increases.