

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Massena Facilities Study Advisory Committee  
FROM: Alan Pole and Jessica Cohen  
RE: Meeting Notes-Meeting of April 11, 2018  
DATE: April 19, 2018

### **Attendance:**

Committee Members: Steven Booth, Laurel Czajkowski, Kerrie French, Adrienne Hartman, Deborah LaRose, AnneMarie Miller, Carmela Phelix, Duane Richards, and Jeff Stenlake

Consultants: Alan Pole and Jessica Cohen

Observers: Patrick Bronchetti, Patrick Brady, Kevin Perretta, Nick Brouillette, and Sarah Boyce

Location: Massena High School

1. Alan Pole began the meeting by thanking Sarah Boyce for being available to do a tour of the high school and for hosting the meeting. The agenda for the meeting was presented and reviewed.

2. Alan then reviewed the purpose of the study:

***In considering 2 – 3 prioritized 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? If so, how should the grades and facilities be arranged?***

3. The March 1 meeting notes were approved by the committee without any changes.

4. Alan reviewed the summary of the takeaways for the first five meetings regarding student enrollment, instructional program, facilities, transportation, and staffing. He indicated that this is the last meeting that will deal with new content; the next committee meeting on May 30 will focus on a review of the draft report.

5. The updated enrollment projections were used to determine projected class sizes in the 2022-23 school year. The total number of elementary sections is projected to go from 65 sections to 61 sections. This would allow for maintaining 3 sections at each grade level in each K – 6 building with the exception of 5<sup>th</sup> grade, that would have a total of 7 sections across the three buildings. The junior high building would go from 420 students to 373, and the high school would go from 832 students to 773 students. A question was asked about the number of sections if the elementary schools were stacked (using grade center approach). Also asked was what is the point at which the enrollment in the junior

high is small enough to allow the 6<sup>th</sup> grades to move in to that building. Alan indicated that we would provide information about those questions at the next meeting.

6. Alan reminded the advisory committee that the purpose of the study was to look at both the educational impact of facilities changes as well as the fiscal impact. To provide a financial overview, Alan began with a summary of the budget vote history indicating strong positive support for the school district for the past 10 or more years. Similar conclusions can be drawn from examining the history of the capital project votes. The picture is really one of a community that supports its schools.

7. To provide a full picture of the financial overview of the district, Alan shared information on the history of full value tax rates over the past five years as well as the history of the tax rates per \$1,000 of assessed value. He noted that the trend in the fiscal oversight of the district is to manage the budget so that there are small incremental increases every year. He emphasized the very competent fiscal management of the district in budgeting and in implementing the budget.

8. An important part of the fiscal picture of the district is the way that the district plans for future expenditures. He discussed the history of the restricted fund balance as well as the designated and undesignated fund balance. These are all similar to savings accounts that the district uses to plan for anticipated expenses (restricted fund balances) like unemployment insurance, accrued liability, retirement, workers' compensation, capital expenses, and tax certiorari as well as funds to help hold down future years' tax rates (designated fund balance). Also discussed was the undesignated fund balance that is used as a "rainy day" fund for those occasions when emergencies occur. Alan emphasized that the financial management of the Massena Central School District is excellent.

9. The 2017-18 budget for the district is \$52,640,975. The vast majority of the budget is spent on direct instruction. Revenue for the district comes from state aid (63%), federal aid (6%) and property taxes (31%). Reviewing the comments from the 2016-17 audit, Alan indicated that the audit pointed out the uncertainty of federal and state funding having a significant impact of the financial health of the district. As expenses continue to rise, the uncertainties of state aid and the property tax cap will pressure the district to consider changes in facilities and in other areas as well.

10. Alan reviewed the staffing savings by option for maintaining the status quo and for the grade center plan. He indicated that moving to the grade center option immediately will allow a reduction of six sections and savings of approximately \$433,831.

11. Alan asked the committee and the audience for comments and/or questions.

12. The next advisory committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 30, 2018 in the high school beginning at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will focus on a review of the report.

We believe this covers the essence of the discussions at our meeting on April 12. If you have questions with these notes, please feel free to contact me. We will also review these notes as the first agenda item at our next meeting.

Looking forward to seeing you again on May 30 at the high school.

C: Pat Brady