



Taunton Public Schools School Consolidation Plan

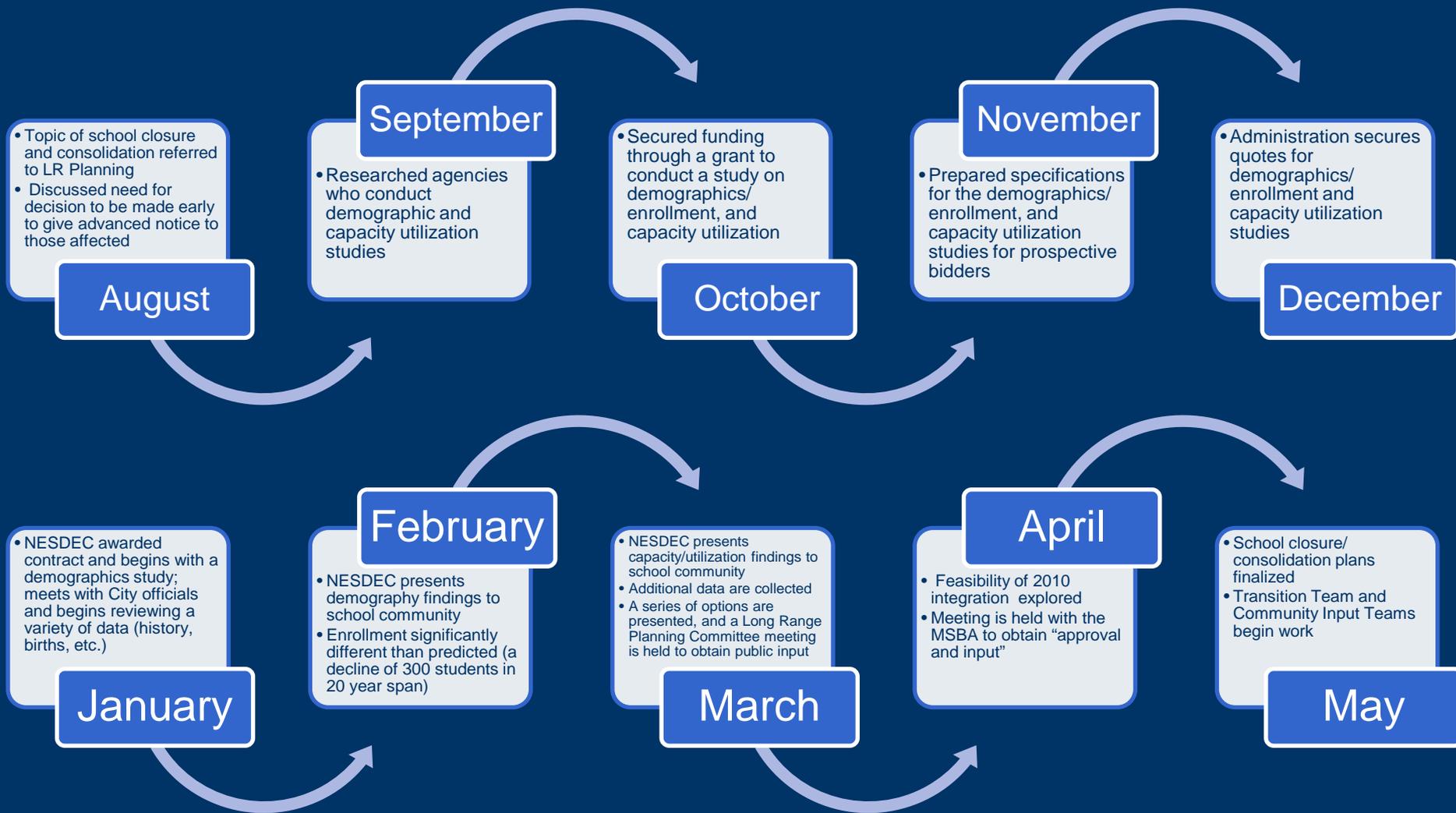
Julie Hackett, Ed.D.
April 26, 2010

Overview

Original Charge: Is it feasible for school consolidations to take place in 2010?

1. To review decision-making timeline and clarify common misconceptions
2. To summarize MSBA “approval and input” and discuss recommendations for 2010
3. To outline Transition and Community Input Team process

Decision-Making Timeline (2009 – 2010)



Important Facts for Consideration



Claim #1: The plan is to fully integrate Grade 8 students with THS students, and mixing Grade 8 students with high school students is developmentally inappropriate.

Fact: We are exploring all options from full integration to isolating Grade 8 students from the rest of the population. A Community Input Team will develop a comprehensive plan to be considered and approved by the Transition Team. Community members will have an opportunity to weigh in on the options.

Claim #2: No one has looked at finances to see how much could be saved with school closures.

Fact: Completing a cost-analysis was one of the first tasks undertaken, which was how we arrived at the \$1.6 million projected savings. The cost-analysis was conservative and includes savings from positions such as administrators, guidance counselors, nurses, custodians, etc.

Important Facts for Consideration



Claim #3: The school closure and consolidation plan is all about money.

Fact: Finances are only part of the equation. The current school closure and consolidation plan is about two things: (1) finances; and (2) educational equity. Students in some of our schools do not have access to the same programs and facilities that other students do. Safety issues and handicapped accessibility are also major concerns. The school closure and consolidation plan currently under consideration provides a cost-savings and a comprehensive PK-12 solution that is fair and equitable and upgrades the educational experiences of the students of Walker, Maxham and Mulcahey.

Claim #4: There will be a significant increase in transportation expenses and significant overcrowding on high school buses.

Fact: Our current busing contract is not based upon mileage; rather, it is based upon the number of students riding the bus. Busing routes are being reconfigured, tiers are being examined, and plans are in the works to keep transportation costs at a minimum and to address issues of overcrowding.

Important Facts for Consideration



Claim #5: We are going to lose the middle school teaming concept if we send Grade 8 to THS.

Fact: No changes have been made to the Grade 8 teaming concept. A Curriculum and Professional Development Community Input Team will be assembled to examine the curriculum and explore the most effective and developmentally appropriate instructional strategies for students in Grade 8.

Claim #6: We were told there was overcrowding at THS, which is why we voted for the Parker/THS project. Now we're being told that there's too much space. What happened?

Fact: The enrollment projections from an earlier study in 2003 did not materialize. That study indicated a projected increase of 1,400 students. It was further anticipated that THS would be well over 2,300 students by 2010. These projections have not come to fruition, and 1,810 students are currently enrolled at THS. The NESDEC study found that we lost approximately 150 Students during the past decade, and we are expected to lose 150 more in the next decade. The capacity of THS is 2,600 students, which means that there is room for approximately 800 more students.

Important Facts for Consideration



Claim #7: Consideration should be given to closing a school other than Walker School, since it is the only school in that part of the City.

Fact: Consideration has been given to closing other schools, and detailed data are included in the Capacity and Utilization Study. The reason that Walker School is being considered for closure is because it is no longer eligible for school construction and renovation funds, and upgrades that are needed include a \$1 million roof, \$50,000 in immediate temporary roof repairs, and extensive work to resolve issues of moisture, ventilation, windows, insulation, heating, cooling, electrical service, and sewer.

In addition, there are safety and handicapped accessibility issues that are of concern. The needs of the other schools considered for closure were not as extensive and costly as those at Walker School.

Important Facts for Consideration



Claim #8: There is enough room at Elizabeth Pole School to accommodate all of the students from one of the schools closing, thereby limiting the need to redistrict.

Fact: There is not enough room to accommodate an entire school at Elizabeth Pole School. Space that used to exist is now being used for programs for students who were formerly placed out-of district, and for Title I students and those with special needs. Redistricting will need to occur to accommodate students and address issues of equity in the system.

Rm. #	Parker Grade 5 Use	Current Use
208	Special Education	TLC Gr 4
210	Classroom	TLC Counseling
216	Classroom	Gr 3 SpEd Inclusion
218	Classroom	Grade 3
221	Classroom	Grade 3
223	Classroom	Gr 4 SpEd Inclusion

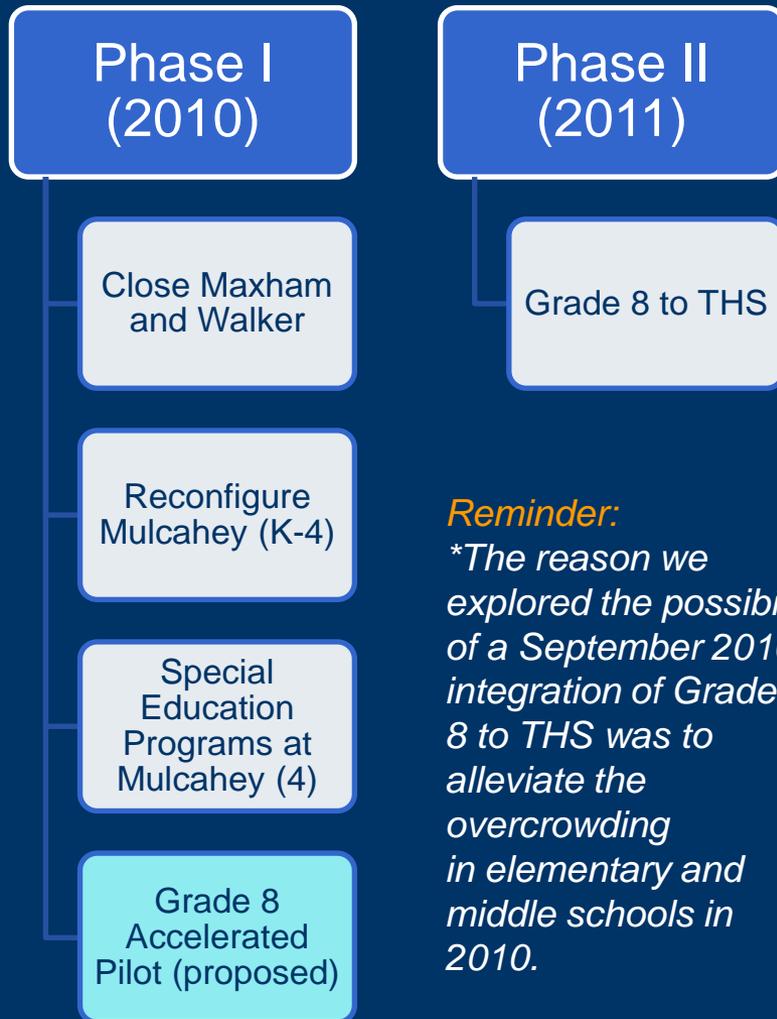
Rm. #	Parker Grade 6 Use	Current Use
201	Special Education	Project Images
203	Classroom	Empty
205	Classroom	Music
207	Classroom	TLC Gr. 2/3
209	Classroom	TLC Gr. K/1
213	Parker Office	TLC Office
217	Special Education & Remedial Rdg	Title I Rdg
219	Special Education	Title I Rdg

MSBA “Approval and Input” Summary

Highlights from the MSBA Meeting on April 15, 2010:

1. MSBA does not typically get involved in school closure/consolidation decisions
2. MSBA does not exercise authority over schools not receiving assistance (e.g. Walker or Maxham)
3. MSBA has an interest in filling up space and protecting their investments
4. MSBA would have prevented the Kindergarten option due to retrofitting requirements (e.g. 1,000 sf, installation of sinks, etc.)
5. Offer from MSBA to have architect offer a second look at no cost
6. Gilbane Feasibility Study (approximately \$600,000 to accelerate construction schedule)
7. Voluntary accelerated program for 2010 (Grade 8 to THS)

Proposed School Closure/Consolidation Status



Recommendation:

Do not take final vote until after the MSBA architect's visit. This will provide one more source of data and conclude "approval and input" from the MSBA.

Recommended Date: May 12, 2010

Do consider establishing a time limit to obtain input from the MSBA architect so that decisions can be finalized in a timely manner.

Recommended Date: May 10, 2010

Reminder:

**The reason we explored the possibility of a September 2010 integration of Grade 8 to THS was to alleviate the overcrowding in elementary and middle schools in 2010.*

Transition Team & Community Input Teams



Did You Know?

Over three dozen parents and school community members have expressed an interest in being part of a Transition/ Community Input Group.

Interested individuals should contact the Superintendent's Office and/or the Community Input Team Leader to volunteer.

Transition Team Charge & Meeting Dates

Transition Team Meetings

The Transition Team will be chaired by the Superintendent and will include: Community Input Team Leaders and two (2) School Committee members who will review and give final approval to all plans submitted by Community Input Teams.

CIT Leaders and their members (including members of the school community) will present findings and recommendations to the Transition Team for final approval. CIT Leaders may be asked to revisit issues and resubmit plans based on certain recommendations from Transition Team members.

- May 3, 2010
- May 10, 2010
 - Redistricting/Transportation Plan
 - Moving/Logistics Plan
- June 15, 2010
- September 15, 2010
- November 15, 2010
- January 17, 2011
- March 15, 2011
- May 15, 2011

The Charge of the Community Input Teams

#	Community Input Teams	Charge
1	Athletics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Using existing resources, examine athletic opportunities, MIAA requirements, logistics (including the availability of space for practices/contests) for Grade 8 students moving to THS (Phase I - Gr 8 Accelerated Pilot and Phase II)
2	Curriculum/PD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Inventory all schools to ensure that appropriate instructional materials exist to accommodate students in new buildings (Phase I) ➤ Work with teachers to ensure that curriculum for Grade 8 students is engaging, developmentally appropriate, and teachers have the appropriate support and professional development (Phase II)
3	Mulcahey Transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Using materials providing by the Redistricting/Transportation Team, work with students and families to acclimate them to their new middle school (Phase I)
4	Gr 8 Transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work closely with Logistics CIT and school principals to develop a Gr 8 Transition CIT for the district and for the Gr 8 students who will be affected (Friedman, Martin, Parker). ➤ Explore topics of interest for students and parents, including: graduation, class trips, student council, etc. ➤ Organize Grade 8 tours of THS for students and parents from all schools.

The Charge of the Community Input Teams

#	Community Input Teams	Charge
5	Moving/Logistics <i>*Plan to be presented on 5/10/10</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work with staff on the physical moves associated with the closures and consolidations of Walker, Maxham and Mulcahey (Phase I) ➤ Work with staff on the physical moves associated with relocation of Grade 8 staff to THS (Phase II)
6	THS Logistics/ Accelerated Pilot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Explore staffing needs, recommendations for placement of Grade 8 students, participation in various clubs/activities, social events, etc. and integrate plans from other Community Input Teams (Phase II)
7	Redistricting/ Transportation <i>*Plan to be presented on 5/10/10</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop a redistricting plan and bus routes for students relocating from Walker, Maxham and Mulcahey (Phase I) ➤ Work with THS Logistics Community Input Team to develop bus routes for Grade 8 students to THS.
8	Scheduling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop a schedule that meets the needs of Grade 8 and THS students (Phase II)
9	Special Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identify four (4) district Special Education classes for placement at Mulcahey (K-4) School (Phase I) ➤ Examine programmatic needs and changes necessary for successful Grade 8 to THS transition (Phase II)

Guidelines for Community Input Groups

- ❖ Membership will be varied and include students, parents, and School Committee members
- ❖ Whenever possible, leaders will begin with a thorough review of existing literature and other sources of data, including school community surveys/interviews, site visits, interviews with other schools, etc.
- ❖ Plans must be submitted in writing and include specific sets of recommendations, clearly stating the pros and cons of each
- ❖ A Communication Plan must be part of the plan submitted to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of approved plans
- ❖ Chairperson will be responsible for agendas, minutes, research, finding cost-efficient solutions, assembling groups, plans that answer the given charge, meeting on a regular basis, and implementing approved components

Superintendent's Recommendations

1. Hold on finalizing vote on school closures and consolidation until we consider input from MSBA architect. Recommend finalizing vote on May 12, 2010.
2. Vote to consider input from the MSBA architect up until May 10, 2010.
3. Vote to approve an Accelerated Program Pilot for Grade 8 students at THS effective September, 2010 contingent upon interest from school community.
4. Vote to approve Transition Team and Community Input model as presented.