

FUTURE NEEDS COMMITTEE

Responses from the 6/7/2017 Meeting

1. How important are financial factors when you consider maintaining our current prek-8 system.

Group 1 Kathy Tolsdorf , Facilitator Lol Fearon, Recorder	Group 2 Karin Vertefeuille, Facilitator Jim Chakulski, Recorder	Group 3 Lisa Napolitano, Facilitator Chris Lent, Recorder
Very important. Without financials we won't be able to meet our needs.	With children in the system – willing to pay more taxes if justifiable (and also with no children in the system)	Very important
Not as important. Per pupil cost vs. academic achievement – what is realistic? There is a fine line between what we spend and success. If we spend more will we get better results?	Depends on other pressing issues within the Town	Basics more important than extras
Other factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parent involvement • how do we manage the funds? • can we spend the money differently • how we use general funds • do we use equipment effectively, ex. iPads 	Education is a top priority - up to a point	Find alternative for extras
Need to research innovations and the impact. Are we just investing in the latest “fad”.	School system is a reason some move into Town	Can't be everything to everyone
We need to look at the whole picture. We can't look to only one approach – diversity.	Must remain affordable	Creative – out of the box integrate extras into basic
Don't limit funding but ensure that funds are being used effectively and efficiently	Tolerance of community for high taxes/mill rate when compared to other towns	No time for teachers
Money is not the answer	Improve economic development to offset increased education costs	Pay for play?
Non-public options have limited services. Money didn't equate with better education	partnerships	Proactive – list programs and prioritize
Parent involvement – Key factor	Better utilization of Town's resources	Use untapped assets (i.e. seniors mentors/programs)
Focus too on morals, involvement, community support	Improve overall town communication (publicize town events)	Transfer some programs through rec sponsored
Some of the past high school options may not have been “the best”	Do not have budget referendums like other towns. (Community support)	
Parental involvement needs to be present		

2. Should Columbia maintain 2 high school choices beyond 2022 when our current contracts end?

Group 1 Kathy Tolsdorf , Facilitator Lol Fearon, Recorder	Group 2 Karin Vertefeuille, Facilitator Jim Chakulski, Recorder	Group 3 Lisa Napolitano, Facilitator Chris Lent, Recorder
Dependent on choices	School program offerings are important (more choice in high school allows for this)	A reason some buy houses in Town
People move to Columbia for the choice	Proximity of parents' employment impacts high school choice	Great opportunity
If it is E.O. Smith, yes. Others may not be so attractive. Tech Ed still an option. One choice with high quality and some efficiencies (ex. transportation costs)	allows for change if unhappy/not satisfied	Choice is a burden on taxpayer
Pros/cons with being a thigh community. Are there issues from being with the same peer group Diversity is a good thing	1 high school allows better streamlining of curriculum from pre-k to 8	Is money better spent on academics or transportation
Choice of school can be stressful for students and families	Length of bus ride – 1 high school eliminates hub	Most towns have no choice and students still thrived
H.W. Porter is a small school, singular demographics, there is a need for greater diversity	East of logistics (1 high school)	Choice is good for property values
If there is one choice it must be quality academics/extracurricular activities	Ease of decision (peer pressure/friends)	Transportation costs are mandated to designated schools

Like the idea of 2 quality high schools. How would a decision on one high school impact the community? Would it divide?	Voting influence/having a say on the high school board of education – regionalization (shinier penny)	Regionalization per student costs maybe higher, special ed costs are shared and not
What would be the savings? Transportation? Can you guarantee “quality over time”? (Windham as an example)	Meet with realtors (high school choice reason for move in/out?)	Aligning curriculum with 2 schools
		Need more information about real costs
		Students already have choice (magnets, technical, voag, etc./
		Yes but need more information about costs

3. What factors would you consider to be important if we were to send middle school students to another district?

Group 1 Kathy Tolsdorf , Facilitator Lol Fearon, Recorder	Group 2 Karin Vertefeuille, Facilitator Jim Chakulski, Recorder	Group 3 Lisa Napolitano, Facilitator Chris Lent, Recorder
Opportunity – what would be the offerings or options for middle school? Acceleration for example – but I like my children being here.	Quality education – better elsewhere	distance
Can H.W. Porter provide more options within the current structure?	Good for increased diversity/new environment	Quality of programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • broad curriculum • choice of programs • test scores • values • evaluations (Teachers by teachers – teachers by parents) • size gets too small
Against a middle school (5-8) shift – grade 5 is too young	If enough lead time/planning time allowed (not an immediate switch)	State funding (lack thereof)
Transportation factors in – earlier start maybe later finish	Stuck in elementary school mode (good for students to transition)	Consider individualized learning
If our numbers are to the point of not being cost effective – option to bring others in?	Adjust middle school curriculum	Electronic programs
How would middle school choice impact high school choice?	If bus schedules overlap, could be additional cost, if better for students willing to bear cost	partnerships
Factor of accountability – need to have a middle school that holds students accountable		IXL online
Extracurricular – not as important a factor		
Currently we have plenty to offer		
If we were at 1 high school - then could consider 7-8 middle school option for continuity		