

# District Structure Meeting Questions

October 20, 2016 – 1R School

1. Will busing be considered if schools are closed?  
Would busing be added for transportation of young? As Chapman, St. Libory, and Lockwood  
Preschool have?  
Have you looked at providing bus service to District kids being picked up at their residence?

Bussing is definitely something that has been considered. I believe the board's intent would be to provide bussing from any school site which has been closed to wherever those students are now attending. Sites might be adjusted based on where it is most convenient for parents to get children to. We have not discussed residential pickup as this would add considerable cost to the district.

2. Should there be an option where St Libory and Chapman are PK-5 and 1R becomes a middle school? Cedar Hollow remains the same. This would eliminate finding viable building locations on the High school property. Look at how many students come into 1R from Grand Island. The only renovation required would be a gym and classrooms to 1R which there is plenty of room for. Much better middle school experience and should bring in more options for middle school students.

The problem with this option would be that we would still be operating the same number of buildings. We would gain some in the area of middle school education. However, we would still be inefficient as we would be duplicating the programs we would be providing in two sites. While this model moves us in the right direction as far as middle school opportunities it does not address the efficiency issue.

3. When will the State Aid come into effect to our District?

Until there is a considerable drop in ag land values or until there is a change in the state aid formula we will not receive any more aid than we are currently getting. The way the formula is set up currently it bases the qualification for equalization aide on the assumption that every district will have a general fund levy of at least \$1.00 per \$100 of valuation. Our current valuation is \$1,014,479,634. This means that the state expects us to pay \$10,144,796 in taxes before the equalization formula kicks in. That is a simplified version of how this process works. The state aid formula is very complicated and considers a number of factors. However, in our case the reality is that until there is a pretty significant decrease in property values there will be no state aid other than the 7M+ we are getting for option students.

4. Would GI Public Schools be able to take over one or more buildings?

What happens to Cedar Hollow when the new hospital is built and Cedar Hollow possible gets annexed into the GIPS system?

Is there an option that allows GIPS to annex Cedar Hollow? Then discuss whether to maintain 1 or 2 K-5 or K-8, Middle School, etc.

While the ground around a school can be annexed the annexing district has no authority to close school buildings in the area they annex. Northwest High School continues to operate while the ground around it has been annexed into the GIPS district. In this same manner, any of our elementary schools could remain open and operated by us if the ground around them was annexed. I would fully expect that if the ground around Cedar Hollow were annexed that the parents in that area would still want to continue to send their children to Cedar Hollow. More of them might be option students but I would expect that the demand to get into that school would be even greater.

5. What happens to the buildings that are closed? Will the NW district retain the buildings? Would the district still have to pay to maintain the buildings? What would be the point of closing buildings if the District still has to pay to maintain them?

It is difficult to say what might happen to the buildings without knowing what buildings might be closed. Depending on where the building is located the building could be retained if there was a purpose for keeping it. It might be donated to a community to serve as a public building. Or, it could be sold. While the school retained ownership of the building there would be a cost to maintain it. However, the cost to maintain an empty building would be minimal when compared to the cost to staff the building and operate it. Whereas our lowest cost elementary building currently costs us in excess of 1M annually to operate we would be able to maintain an empty building for less than \$50,000 a year.

6. Did the farmers have kids that went to school? If so did they worry about previous resident's tax levies when their kids were in school?

7. If a middle school is built on site by the high school what becomes of all the traffic on North Road? Does the school propose to the city to widen North Road? Do they tie in from the roads on the south side?

If a middle school were to be built at the Northwest High School site there would certainly need to be measures taken to address the flow of traffic. Certainly part of that could be an effort to work with the city to widen north road. With the increased traffic that would exist this might very well happen. When this has been proposed in the past the city has argued that the overall traffic in the area does not warrant an expansion of North road. A middle school in this area could very possibly create enough traffic to cause this change to happen. We would also have to explore routing traffic to the south of the school property.

8. No one has talked about the academics. Where do the individual schools fall academically? Has anyone considered infrastructure, roads and highways to these schools? Growth of areas where existing schools are currently?

Certainly as the board considers the information that comes out of these public meetings they will also be considering factors such as infrastructure and potential growth of resident population as they develop a plan that they will implement. In terms of academics it is difficult to compare one school with another. Because the population is different in each of our school settings we do not compare one school with another. We do look at how we perform in comparison to other schools in the area and with other schools with like demographics. We do very well in both of these arenas. We are providing quality education for our students our challenge is to identify ways that education can be even better and at the same time how can we provide that education in the most cost effective manner possible.

9. If they get rid of all option kids then GI will take over and no more Northwest correct?

Without the option students we currently have we would be a much smaller district and therefore much more vulnerable to reaching a point where we could struggle to provide quality programs. If this happens then many students would choose to go to the other schools in the area that offer what they are looking for. If this kind of out migration would happen then the school could be forced to close.

10. Other factors not related to option enrollment- six buildings housing options?

As the board explores options and makes decisions about where to operate schools certainly housing has to be a consideration. If we have areas in the district where there is housing or housing is being developed that has to be a consideration when making decisions about what schools to leave open.

11. Can the District absorb the resident District students that have optioned out but may want to come back if a Middle School system is provided?

With over 200 of our resident students choosing to opt out of the Northwest district this is a very good question. Part of any planning we do should allow for some growth in student population at every level. While we probably not be able to accommodate all 200+ students who are currently opting out we should be planning to accommodate some of them. As resident students they will always have the right to return to their home district and we would be obligated to accept them. In whatever plans are made there will always be a need to allow for some variance of our student population.