

**OPTION No. 7. NORTH: SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION**

**Description:** The program will reassign elementary school students from one or more of the under-utilized schools in the northern part of the county to other elementary schools in the north. Possible options to consider include:

- 7.1 Reassignment of Friendsville Elementary School students to Grantsville and Accident Elementary Schools, with closure of Friendsville Elementary.
- 7.2 Reassignment of Route 40 Elementary School students to Grantsville and Accident Elementary Schools, with closure of Route 40 Elementary.
- 7.3 Reassignment of Grantsville Elementary School students to Accident, Friendsville and Route 40 Elementary Schools, with closure of Grantsville Elementary.
- 7.4 Reassignment of Accident Elementary School students to Grantsville, Friendsville and Route 40 Elementary Schools, with closure of Accident Elementary.
- 7.5 Reassignment of Friendsville and Route 40 Elementary School students to Grantsville and Accident Elementary Schools, with closure of Friendsville and Route 40 Elementary Schools and construction of capacity at the receiving schools, and/or reassignment of 5<sup>th</sup> graders to Northern Middle School.
- 7.6 Reassignment of Grantsville and Accident Elementary School students to Friendsville and Route 40 Elementary Schools, with closure of Grantsville and Accident Elementary Schools and construction of capacity at the receiving schools, and/or reassignment of 5<sup>th</sup> graders to Northern Middle School.

**Purpose:** To balance enrollments in order to provide more equitable opportunities for students, and to reduce the building inventory in order to improve operational and cost efficiencies.

**Planning Assumptions:**

- While the State Rated Capacity figures indicate that capacity is available to allow this approach to work (in some cases with construction of additional capacity), the architectural plans for all receiving schools and their schedules will need to be examined carefully to determine if the reassignments are possible. Some spaces may need to be re-purposed or re-designed. Particular attention needs to be given to core facilities like the cafeteria.
- Since closure of a community school is likely to be viewed negatively by the affected community, it is essential to inform the public on the educational benefits that will result from the program.

**Planning Goals Addressed:**

- *Address the largest number of the most critical facility deficiencies*  
The closure of one or more elementary schools will eliminate a number of facility deficiencies.
- *Improve the learning environment for the largest number of students*  
The total student population affected by the consolidations will be small.
- *Correct inequities in the quality of facilities*  
Facility inequities will be corrected by removing deficient facilities from service and through the renovations made at the receiving schools.
- *Improve the efficiency of operations*  
Concentrating bus services and maintenance in fewer facilities will improve the efficiency of operations.

**Planning Objectives Addressed:**

- *Educational excellence:* The relocations will increase the student population in certain schools, enhancing the delivery of the educational program and special programs.

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- *Equity*: Eliminating one or more under-utilized schools and balancing enrollments will enhance equity, both within the northern region and between the northern region and the southern region.
- *Community*: The changes will negatively affect communities by removing one or more community schools from their communities, and will affect both the attendance numbers and transportation routes for students at all of the affected schools.
- *Safety and Security*: Although the renovations required by this program will be secure in themselves, they will have marginal effect on overall building security.

### **Benefits:**

- Four of the options involve relatively little capital cost or operational cost, other than potentially for transportation.
- Relieves under-utilization in certain elementary schools, allowing for delivery of improved educational services, especially of special services (speech, vision, hearing, special education, behavioral, etc.).
- Makes better use of available capacity in the northern school facilities.

### **Detriments:**

- There may be community objections to closing community school facilities and removing students from their traditional attendance areas.
- Considerable study is needed to ensure that class sizes at the receiving schools and core functions such as use of the cafeteria remain within acceptable standards.
- The impact of the changes on average and maximum ride times for students must be assessed to determine if they are within acceptable standards.
- All of the options will require some modification of interior space at the receiving schools, but two of the options will also require construction of additions for capacity, and potentially reassignment of 5<sup>th</sup> grade students to Northern Middle School:
  - If only 5<sup>th</sup> graders from the receiving schools are reassigned to NMS, then the grade configurations will differ between the northern and southern elementary schools.
  - If all 5<sup>th</sup> graders from the northern elementary schools are reassigned to NMS, then the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at NMS will need to be reassigned to NHS, with the substantial impacts that are outlined in Planning Option 4.1.

### **Implementation:**

- Engage the principals and staff of both the leaving and the receiving schools, and central office staff, to fully discuss the educational, circulation, and schedule, as well as the special needs of students.
- Engage the community in decisions on the scope of the new work and the closure of existing schools.
- Define the scope of renovations and/or additions needed to accommodate the reassigned students:
  - Develop the designs either in-house or through engaged architectural/engineering services.
  - Implement during the summer months to prepare for the fall semester.
- Seek State and local funding approval, as appropriate:
  - State: FY 20\_\_
  - County:
    - Planning and design: FY 20\_\_
    - Construction: FY 20\_\_
  - Other: grants, donations, etc.
- Develop project designs:
  - Detailed architectural/engineering design

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- Detailed cost projection and schedule for design and construction
- Project delivery method.
- Special considerations (safety, special needs students, timing of grant funds, etc.)
- Suggested timeframe (initial round of projects):
  - Design: FY 20\_\_
  - Construction: FY 20\_\_

***Budgetary Implications:***

- Estimated cost of improvements: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Estimated cost of equipment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Estimated cost of training: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Misc. other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- **Total** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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