

**Belmont Public Schools  
District Configuration Presentation and Public Forum**

1

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
JANUARY 9, 2018**

# AGENDA

2

- **Process and Purpose of Meetings**
  - December 12
  - January 9
  - January 23
- **Context of Building Project and Configuration Options**
- **Options for Corresponding Grades (preK-6, 7, or 8)**
- **Principals' Perspective**
- **Public Forum – community questions and comments**

# Process

3

- **December 12, 2017**
  - Presentation of Pros and Cons of Configuration Options
  - School Committee Discussion
- **January 9, 2018**
  - Presentation of Grade Configuration Options
  - Presentation of Corresponding options for grades not directly impacted by selected option of building project
  - Public Forum for community questions and comments
- **January 23, 2018**
  - School Committee vote on Grade Configuration Option
  - Building Committee vote on Design Selection

# *Context of Configuration K-12*

4

The district has viewed this work through the lens of:

- Education Vision for teacher/ student engagement that will increase our students' academic and social emotional outcomes
- Space, enrollment, and the operational needs of the district – short term and long term
- Financial costs to the Town and district – short term and long term
- Timeline of needs and solutions for district challenges

# Belmont Public Schools Visioning Work

5

**December 19, 2016 and January 4, 2017 - Two days of Educator Planning**

(20 BPS Educators)

**April 3, 2017 - One day of Educator Visioning**

(31 BPS Educators)

**May 4-5, 2017 - Two days of Community Members, Students and Educator Visioning**

(44 students, educators and parents)

**September 2017 – Two days of Vision with Community**

(68 students, educators and parents)

This in addition to the many presentations on the subject at:  
PTO's, School Committee Meetings, BHSBC Community Meetings,  
League of Women Voters etc... over the past 6-12 months

# BHSBC/ MSBA: Grade Configurations



MSBA Configuration Options	Elementary	Middle School	Notes
<u>9-12</u> *	<input type="checkbox"/> K-4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-8	MS and Elementary enrollment / space issues not addressed.
<u>8-12</u> * 8/9...10-12 8... 9-12	<input type="checkbox"/> K-4	✓ 5-7	HS and MS levels would have space – Elementary level issues not addressed.
<u>7-12</u> * 7/8...9-12 7-9 ... 10-12	✓ K-3	✓ 4-6	All levels would be provided space to accommodate increased enrollment.
* MSBA / BHSBC	<input type="checkbox"/> Space Issues Still to be Resolved by Town		

## BHSBC/ MSBA: Grade Configurations

7

- The good news is that all three configuration options presented to the Town by our Design Team fit on the current high school site location.
- After discussions, visioning sessions, and informal surveys community members and staff here are their thoughts and opinions.....

# Grade Configuration Preferences

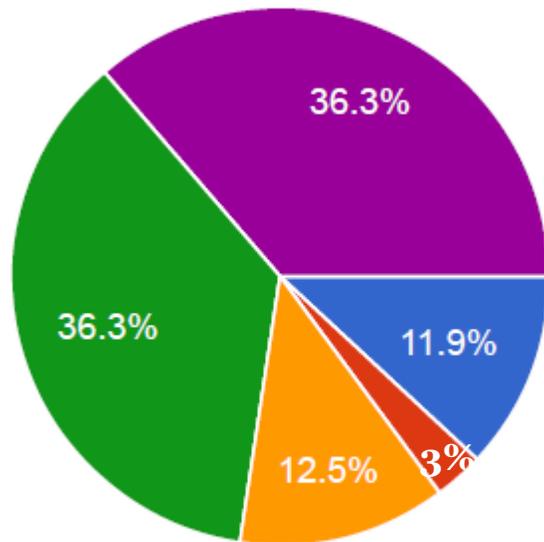
8

- **Visioning Workshop, May 4-5**
  - 7-12 → 26 votes
  - 8-12 → 4 votes
  - 9-12 → 0 votes
  - *3 abstentions*
- **Visioning Workshop, September 19-20**
  - 7-12 → 58 votes
  - 8-12 → 2 votes
  - 9-12 → 6 votes
- **Leadership Council, November 9**
  - 7-12 → 20 votes
  - 8-12 → 1 vote
  - 9-12 → 0 votes

# Educator Survey Results on Preferred Choice

## 168 Responses

9



- Option 1: K-4 – 5-8 – 9-12
- Option 2: K-4 – 5-7 – 8-12 (grade 8 in one section of the building, grades 9-12 in another)
- Option 3: K-4 – 5-7 – 8-12 (grades 8-9 in one section of the building, grades 10-12 in another)
- Option 4: K-3 – 4-6 – 7-12 (grades 7-8 in one section of the building, grades 9-12 in another)
- Option 5: K-3 – 4-6 – 7-12 (grades 7-9 in one section of the building, grades 10-12 in another)

# BHSBC/ MSBA: Grade Configurations

10

After many community meetings and School Committee meetings on the subject and the following visioning meetings with parents, students and staff :

- ✓ **December 19, 2016 and January 4, 2017 - Two days of Educator Planning**  
(20 BPS Educators)
  - ✓ **April 3, 2017 - 1day of Educator Visioning** (31 BPS Educators)
  - ✓ **May 4-5, 2017 - 2 days of Community Members, Students and Educator Visioning**  
(44 students, educators and parents)
  - ✓ **September 2017 – Two days of Vision with Community** (68 students, educators and parents)
  - ✓ **October 2017 Belmont Public School Leadership Council**
- 
- At this point in time the preferred configuration has consistently been grades 7-12.

# What Did the Research Say

11

- The research has been scarce on the subject and does not fully match up with the circumstances in Belmont.
- However, there are themes that we took from the research data that we feel relate to our situation.

# Grade Configuration Research

12

- “In Connecticut, 6<sup>th</sup>-grade student achievement was higher in schools that configured grade 6 with lower grade levels (K-6, K-8, etc.) versus those that placed grade 6 with secondary school levels (Howley).
- “In a study of 15 schools in Missouri with grade spans 7-12, 9-12, and 10-12, Alspaugh (2000) found that the higher grade at which a student transitions to high school the more likely the student would drop out of high school” (Wren).
- “Importantly, once student and school characteristics are considered, school grade configuration does not significantly contribute to students’ academic achievement trajectories before or after the middle grade school transition” (Schwartz).
- “Despite constituting a lower-risk population along several observable dimensions, students who attend middle school in 6<sup>th</sup> grade are more than twice as likely to be disciplined relative to their counterparts in elementary school” (Cook).

# Grade Configuration Research

13

“Of the studies that exist, only a few have statistically controlled variables: Most are case or correlational studies and rely on data self-reported by school districts” (Klump).

“No particular sequence of grade spans is perfect or in itself guarantees student achievement and social adjustment. With thought and effort effective practices can be implemented in a variety of grade configurations” (Paglin).

# Grade Configuration Research

14

“..found few studies that used statistical procedures in an effort to yield a clearer picture of the cause-and- effect between grade-span configuration and student achievement.”

*Coladarci and Hancock*

*District Administration March 2005*

Nine Factors to Consider:

Fiscal constraints, projected enrollments, political tensions, school size, school and community goals, and geographic realities also come into play.

*District Administration March 2005*

# Grade Configuration Research

15

“Effective programs and practices, not grade configurations, determine the quality of schools.”

*Coladarci and Hancock*

*District Administration March 2005*

When making wise decisions about grade configurations means: “finding a balance between the needs of the students, the needs of the school system, and the expectations of the community.”

*Seller, Wayne*

*District Administration March 2005*

# Corresponding Grade Configuration Options

16

- The Belmont Public Schools hired SMMA to conduct a review of the building options for the corresponding grades and buildings in the district.
- This goal of this work was to see what the districts options were related to each MSBA configuration option.
- We asked SMMA to review the remaining spaces with “right sizing” the schools to fit the districts current and future needs.

*As we look at the next presentation...*

17

The district has viewed this work through the lens of:

- Education Vision for teacher/ student engagement that will increase our students' academic and social emotional outcomes
- Space, enrollment, and the operational needs of the district – short term and long term
- Financial costs to the Town and district – short term and long term
- Timeline of needs and solutions for district challenges