

Rally for Tunbridge!

Notes from Community Listening Sessions held on July 23 and July 26, 2017

Questions

Can we stay the way we are?

-options remaining that appear the most viable:

stand alone district

revote/approve current Chelsea merger

(Confusion about alternatives to merger (2))

What will keep connection to place?

Can we still care about this place if we are joined with another place?

Will Tarrant Institute help no matter the path forward?

-YES (if we sign on)

What is missing in middle school? What will fix it?

-more numbers for sports has made them work better

-shop (different learning opportunities)

How can we keep our local institutions (school) strong?

How long is the state committing to sustaining the “Merger Grants?”

What is the timeline going forward?

- school board will decide to revote by July 29th
- if chosen to revote, 30/45 days before revote
- if chosen to stand alone, report to board by December 2017
- state chosen mergers will be decided in January 2018

Cost of not merging:

- small school's grant loss = \$100 on \$200,000 property
- increases coming down the road
- bill goes up to make up incentives to merging districts

Risk of not merging:

-state may decide to merge us with another district, with agreements written by state...these rules are not yet written

How can we think ahead 20-30 years?

How does merging or not merging affect risk of TCS closing?

Can there be a document that compares remaining options with information about financial, educational and community implications?

Can we hear from the elected merged board to give more of a vision?

Strengths of Tunbridge and Current Model

History of community coming together in collaborative spirit.

Possible relationship with Tarrant Institute, to develop middle school programming.

Small grade size.

Differentiating for levels within a small class is possible, has been done.

Parents will make sacrifices to get better for their kids.

Care for place. (3)

Love for the school (5)

Support for teachers (3)

School is getting better (2)

Strong work by school board

Focus on teachers

Successful collaboration with Chelsea already

(sports, exploratorium...)

K-8 in one building - mentoring, family-feel

Tunbridge has turned out some great kids!(2)

Community feeling at pick-up and drop-off

Strengths of Current Merger Proposal

Educational benefits for middle school merge

(could be there with change to 7-12 school choice too)

Half and half board in current merger proposal.

There is the chance to modify articles of agreement in response to citizens concerns.

More students in a grade for educational and social benefits(7)

Benefits to sports program when merging programming

Cost savings (protecting small schools grant) (staffing, not necessarily educational staff)

Chance to manage tax burden

Shop is available in Chelsea building(2)

Enhance extracurriculars (more music? more clubs?)

Opportunities to go ahead in subjects.(2)

New merged school board will be planning in the future

-consider running two middle school campuses

Can the staff do the commuting between buildings

Option to choose which building to send your children to

Choose our merger partner and we helped design the agreement

Sports merger was a success, showing ability to work together

Opportunities for improvement, no matter the path

Improve experience for kids lacking supports.

Improve experiences for struggling kids.

Make this a school that sustains caring staff.

Find more opportunities/challenges for 7&8th graders

Add diversity for our students

Combine grades within Tunbridge to try to free up opportunities and social/educational benefits

Reframe work of school to be: resilience, working with people, problem solving, growing children who will contribute to society and be happy in their own skins(2)

Take a close look at embedded structures that aren't serving kids

Be sensitive and responsive to growing socio-economic gap

Provide practice/experience with transitions(2)

Concerns with Merger

Transitions for students if we house middle school elsewhere

Possibility of bigger class size if we merge(2)

Will there be adequate individual attention if we merge?

Having fewer students here at TCS building

Fear it becomes easier to close TCS building?(2)

Logistics of transportation(3)

Will a merger water down parent/volunteer involvement?(3)

Specifically, school meeting, will people show up to meeting in other town in alternate years?

Possible negative effect on property value

Merged board is likely to create conflict, want both towns to remain strong, not have “winners” and “losers”

Worry about reducing TCS population to k-5 only

Would like to realize the benefits of focus on developing middle school already underway, before considering merger

Losing town-meeting style governance

Not sure what the costs of merging might be

What might the curriculum be?

Interest in more detailed budget information

-may be efficiencies, may be costs

Concerns with Not Merging

Current model financially inefficient

Inefficiencies with our small grade sizes

Our current small grade size too small-socially, academically

If not merging, we may lose collaboration that is already working well(2)

-specifically sports collaboration and exploratorium

Students are tuitioning out of middle school in Tunbridge

Forced-merger threat from state level if we don't do voluntary merger(3)

2016-2017	Chelsea	Tunbridge	TOTALS
PK	23	16	39
K	18	17	35
1	17	9	26
2	10	12	22
3	17	12	29
4	12	11	23
5	9	13	22
6	10	15	25
7	13	13	26
8	13	12	25
K+	119	114	233
PK+	142	130	272

