

West Genesee Central School District
Redistricting Transition Team

Meeting Minutes

Monday October 15, 2012

Initial Questions:

General questions about future class sizes (approximately 19-22 per class) and number of students being redistricted (328 students impacted).

Addressed Concerns/Worries:

- Life-long friendships.
- Perceptions of socio-economic "labels".
- Debunking rumors.
- Parent issues of concern for their child(ren).
- Anxiety.
- Parental influence both positive and negative.
- Separation from friends, sadness.
- Staff-close connections with some families.
- Need to be concerned with students leaving as well as those entering.
- Socialization.
- Not just a move to a new elementary – also a move to a new middle school.
- Welcoming/integrating parents.
- Combining traditions from each school that families value.
- More kids on Onondaga Road's playground.
- No cafeteria at Onondaga Road or East Hill.
- Changing schools (new people).
- New expectations (facilities, extra-curricular activities, "fun day").
- Sense of community.
- Bus ride - how long is my trip?
- Not knowing teachers and staff at new school (students and parents).
- Will my child be welcomed to the new school? How?
- How will each school rebuild the school community? Sense of belonging.
- Teachers are concerned that students will lose guard by switching schools. How will communication occur?

Common Themes:

Anxiety

- Student, staff and families relating to a new school.

Labels

- Socio-Economic Labels associated with changing school.

Socialization

- Social Integration of students – Importance of old friendships, and welcoming the new (entry and exit plans) – recognizing key players who have contributed to the community.

Communication

- New facilities, culture, routines and expectations.

Support

- For students, families, staff.

Brainstorm Activities/ideas to Meet Concerns and Provide a Positive Experience:

- Open house for new families.
- Invitation for families to attend activities at the new school.
- Transportation information (specifics).
- Pen pals between schools.
- PTA coordination.
- Use of redistricting research.
- Workshops for coping with change and anxiety.
- Student groups (ADAPEP) to get to know one another.
- Orientation packets to welcome new families.
- Advice column, "Dear Dr. Brown".
- Collaboration between PTA-PTO presidents and principals for how parents are involved/interested.
- Kids have a "shadow day" – spend the morning at their new school.
- Summer "locker day" to drop off school supplies, see their class, see their lockers.
- Invite students and families to school events this year to allow them the chance to participate.
- Receive newsletters/SSN.
- Summer transition group – modeled after WGMS 5-6, two half days.
- First few days of school - team building activities.
- OLWEUS classroom meetings.
- Parent only meetings (parent mentors).
- Welcome letters.
- PTO-PTA list of activities for all schools.
- Start inviting families now.
- Blend students going to Middle school/Elementary School before they go – district wide.
- Open house tours for parents in the evenings.

- Exit Social – Thank you to our parents from the previous years.
- Middle School transition activities.
- Open House, separate one for new families – meet and greet.
- Ice Cream Social.
- PTA meetings one dedicated toward end of the year to welcome new families.
- Building Tours (by student).
- Buddy Day – Visit your New School (during the day).
- School T-shirt's as gifts to students entering a new school.
- Video conferencing.
- Revisit any of the issues a month or two in.
- Survey the students – what things would help them to make that change?

Wrap-up and plan for the following meeting:

- Review ideas from the previous meeting.
- Create activities that address our common themes.
- Fine tune, finalize, and execute activities.