

**Allen W Roberts School**  
**PTA Meeting**  
**Wednesday, Sept 14 - 2pm**  
**Agenda**

Board Members Present: Katie Mangel, Rebecca Coniglio, Amy Lepre, Alina Dager-Mera, Susan Sturdivant, Ruth Merriam

Total Parent Attendance: 60

Meeting called to order at: 2:06

**Katie Mangel - President**

- Welcome
  
- Pledge of Allegiance
  
- PTA Membership - forms are on the sign counter, you can pay by check or pay online through the PTA email link.
  
- Introduction of Dr. Miceli, Superintendent of Schools - Referendum  
Will open floor for Questions and Answers:

Q: Can you give a synopsis?

A: 2004/2005 was the last referendum. It has been 10 years since significant projects have been completed. Projects are based on the Long Range Facility Plan for each building. Sessions were held to determine the projects that would be approved. Roberts was evaluated for underutilization. The locker rooms were deemed to be underutilized and could be repurposed for enrollment increases and STEM programs. There is an advantage to renovating rather than constructing from the state funding. Two new classrooms will be added and a security vestibule will be added to each school. Interior and Exterior doors will be replaced so all can be locked from the inside.. Stage curtain will be replaced.

Q: What does the Vestibule Mean?

A; Multiple sets of doors and screenings

Q: Was relocation of 3rd grade discussed to where the office is now?

A: Was discussed with the architect, but it would have been very expensive to do. The benefit did not appear to outweigh the costs.

Q: Class Size is a concern - this is not being addressed with this referendum? Is there are reason this is not being addressed ?

A: Last summer enrollment data was collected to determine plans. So there was a cut off in time. We used the data we had at the time the decision needed to be made

Q: Has the high ranking of the high school exacerbated the overcrowding issue?

A: Usually demographic trends are very accurate. There are new families coming and going and its hard to identify. Because of the popularity of the schools, it has been hard to establish how many new families are arriving. High school projections and Middle School projections were very close to actual enrollment. Enrollment was higher than expected at the elementary schools. There was additional enrollment of over 30 kids after August 10. Due to demographics, enrollment will probably decline over time. This has already happened at the K level.

We are adding 2 classrooms, the space can be reallocated in Sept to be flexible with what the school needs. Specials like Speech, OT are now in classrooms rather than cafeteria. Those spaces are also available if needed. We can not change the project after the project has been approved, and at this point, it can't be changed.

Q: Would we have to show the state enrollment data that proves we need more space, and the demographics don't support that at this time?

A: As of August 10, we were under enrolled. 3 years ago the issue came up. There are certain grades that have more students than others, "bubble" grades. There are more bubble grades now. Instead of 22-23 children, it is more common to have 24-25 kids in each classroom. Both schools now have elevated numbers, and these kids are transitioning into the high school now.

Q: How many classrooms for Middle/School Highschool

A: 2 at AWR, 2 At AB, 2 in Middle and 2 in HS

Q: What steps have been taken to address the overcrowding immediately - like using art on the cart and using that space for classrooms. Its critical to have smaller class size, what is being done to reduce this now in light of how important class size is?

A: Due to Common Core and Standards, rigor has increased in the schools. The priority was not on class size but on enhancing reading opportunities for all the children. It was decided that student/teacher ratio was more important than class size, and that having Reading Specialist would insure everyone was on grade level at 3rd grade. Teachers felt the dynamic of the students in the class were more important than the raw numbers of kids in the class. The policy was changed to reduce class size in 2 grades. K-4 accepted number is 25, 5-6 has 27. If you were to change to 22-23, it would require more classroom space. What happens then if there is an enrollment decline and rooms are now underutilized. The board needs to decide on the balance of the community between taxes and value. The board needs to be fiscally responsible.

The board looks at a range of what is feasible and a need vs want range. There is a realistic number of how much taxes can be increased.

Q: What was the thought process in this year's first grade - some classes have 29, some have 25. Why weren't the classes evenly disbursed?

A: Board recognizes that things might change and if that happens, the Board will address that. This is not the final referendum. The issue can be revisited. There are ongoing conversations and projects. As for 1st grade, if there were space in the other school, new enrollees would be sent to a different school. This year, both schools were filled up simultaneously at the end of August, so overflow could not be addressed. The numbers were close enough, that SB was not an option. So a section at AWR was opened here and an aid was hired. It was decided that the class with the aid could accommodate more students. Teachers and Mrs. Hansen debated this and made the decision

Q: I feel strongly, you have worked hard on this, but as a parent, could this have been communicated to the first grade parents more effectively rather than waiting until school started?

A: If there was a moment that we could have ever given a final number, we would have, but students continue to enroll until Sept. Final decisions were not made until Friday before school started. We were not able to disseminate the information because of the circumstances. Budget decisions are made in the spring, but the overcrowding came in late August. Classes were not over enrolled when the placement letters came out.

Q: Would we consider Mobile Classrooms?

A: Nothing is off the table, if adjustments are needed, it would be considered. The community sentiment was that it did not want trailers.

Q: What is the maximum number in Withal's Class?

A: 29 is max, 28 is currently the number.

Q: How often and what metrics are used to maintain the class size?

A: Every month enrollment is reported at the Board Meeting. If teachers are concerned with progress or numbers, they will address this with Mrs Hansen. Students are making better growth in the classrooms with higher class size, but also an aid. This data guides the decision on class size.

Q: Is the certified reading specialist in only first grade?

A: No, each 1-3rd classroom has one during reading

Q: Development seems to be with families with children, how is this being addressed?

A: We are trying to understand the dynamic of empty nesters moving into Lantern Hill and young families with multiple children are moving in. There are ways to try to study the dynamics of change.

Q: At what point would the space be utilized?

A: There is only one grade and one class room oversized, every class is not over policy. Is there more sense to hire a teacher to reduce class size, and move something like art or music. If this happens at some point, kids

will have to move from teachers and classes. Is the disruption during the school year worth the extra class size?

We are very competitive for attracting excellent staff, this makes a difference?

Q: Is there a budget for hiring staff as needed?

A: Budget is accounted for at state and county level, so every dollar is accounted for prior to it being spent

Q; What was the criteria for placing aids?

A: Once you have over 25 kids. Some kids have disability aids, so some classes might have more aids.

- Introduction of New PTA Offerings this Year

## **Amy Lepre - Vice President**

- School Pictures
- Safe Routes to School
- Spring Fling Class Baskets

## **Rebecca Coniglio - Vice President**

- Kids Stuff Coupon Books
- Chair Positions Open - Fun Fair and Talent Show (5th and 6th grade)

## **Susan Sturdevant - Corresponding Secretary**

**Alina Dagnery-Mera - Treasurer**

**Mrs. Hansen - Principal**

**Mrs. Conover - Teacher Liaison**