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To: Dr. Kenneth Graham and the Board of Education  
From: Ken Hilton, for the Instructional Space Committee

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Re: 2004-05 Instructional Space Committee Annual Report  
January 14, 2005<sup>(r)</sup>

### **Our Charge**

The Instructional Space Committee is comprised of interested staff, teachers, administrators, parents, and community residents. Each year the committee examines the district's instructional facilities and its future student enrollment data. From this comparison grow recommendations necessary to meet future instructional needs. These recommendations are made to the Superintendent and the Board of Education to help them anticipate and plan for future instructional needs. This year's committee met three times over a three month period to review a variety of data and to address the annual charge: "Do we have sufficient room and adequate and appropriate facilities to meet current and future needs in our elementary, middle, and high schools?" In our effort to answer this general question we addressed these tasks and others:

- A review of pertinent enrollment data and future enrollment projections
- A review of residential growth patterns within our school district to assess their potential effect upon future enrollment and school facility needs
- An assessment of our annual enrollment projection methods and their accuracy
- Interviews with all principals

- An examination of the operation of the “balanced enrollment policy”
- As assessment of the “Burger Choice option”
- A study of all non-RH school student placements
- The annual class [section] size study
- An examination of Census Birth Rate data and kindergarten census data

The specific questions which we addressed and answered were these:

- 1) Will our elementary schools be able to successfully accommodate continued phasing in of our small class size initiative?
- 2) If we were to consider implementing full day kindergarten in the next several years, would we have sufficient room in our present five elementary schools?
- 3) What caused this year’s enrollment bulge at Roth Middle School?
- 4) What, if any, future enrollment balance challenges do we foresee for the middle schools?
- 5) How, if at all, have the space problems we saw last year at Burger changed? Should the district be planning the capital improvements that we endorsed in last year’s report?
- 6) Should families in the “Burger Choice” area be allowed to choose the middle school their children attend?
- 7) How effectively is the “balanced enrollment” policy working?
- 8) Will, as we predicted last year, new residential growth patterns continue to bring pressure on the Leary attendance area? If so, what changes, if any, should be made to our elementary attendance boundaries?

## **Findings and Recommendations**

### **1. Will our elementary schools be able to successfully accommodate continued phasing in of our small class size initiative?**

During the past five years our k-5 enrollment has declined over 17%. During the next five years we expect our elementary enrollment to continue to decline, though at a slower rate, perhaps no more than 4%. (In 1999 our k-5 enrollment was 2839; today it’s 2356; in 2009 we predict it will be 2260.) We are confident that with this rate of enrollment decline, RHCS D has – in the aggregate – enough room in our present five elementary schools to complete the phased-in small class size initiative through fourth grade. (not through fifth grade)

While, in the aggregate, we will have an adequate number of classrooms, we are convinced that at least one school – Leary – will be unable to accommodate the need for more classrooms which the small class size initiative requires. (We speak to this in detail in #8 below.) Working from the October 2004 future enrollment projections and phasing in the

small class size initiative, we worry that Leary will be over-enrolled as early as the 2006-07 school year. Here are our data:

Max # of classrooms: Crane 28, Fyle 28, Leary 29, Sherman 30, Winslow 32\* (These numbers were determined by taking each school’s total classroom space and subtracting four rooms – reserving their use for music, art, skills, SPED, etc.)

Today (classrooms)	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10
Crane 412 (22)	420 (22)	400 (25)	387 (24)	391 (22)	385
Fyle 461 (25)	477 (27)	472 (28)	456 (27)	445 (25)	452
Leary 477 (25)	508 (26)	517 (30)	519 (30)	513 (29)	510
Sherman 479 (26)	475 (26)	465 (28)	479 (28)	483 (28)	468
Winslow 487 (27)	466 (25)	448 (26)	451 (27)	444 (26)	445

(It should be noted that the above data do not include any in-district SPED self-contained or in-district BOCES classes. At present we have 38 SPED students in k-5 self-contained classrooms – 2 at Leary, 1 at Fyle, 1 at Crane.)

Recognizing the space shortage at Leary and the likelihood of future residential growth in the Leary attendance area, we propose a minor revision of elementary attendance boundaries. (This is detailed in section #8, below)

**2. If we were to consider implementing full day kindergarten in the next several years, would we have sufficient room in our present five elementary schools?**

No. We simply don’t have enough room to implement both the small class size initiative and full day kindergarten.

**3. What caused this year’s enrollment bulge at Roth Middle School?**

We’re not absolutely certain. Our analysis of the 68 students who moved into Roth during the summer of 2004 found few patterns. Some (9) moved in from parochial or private schools. Some (11) moved in from Rochester City Schools. Some (10) were Burger ESL and SPED students who were transferred to Roth for institutional reasons. Some (10) were Burger Choice students. Some (16) moved in from other Monroe County public schools. Some (9) moved in from outside the county, state, or country. Some (3) came to Roth from home schooling. None of these “patterns” is unexpected.

We are certain that our total middle school enrollment will drop significantly in the next several years. Neither Roth nor Burger will have anything like the number of students they have had in recent years. Here are some historic enrollment data and our enrollment projections for the next several years: (Note: Future projections include a 50:50 allocation of students living in the “Burger Choice” attendance area.)

1999 2001 2003 2004 2005 2007 2009

Burger	522	579	623	588	564	553	539
Roth	917	871	815	834	834	731	676

In short, we believe that the 2004 enrollment bulge at Roth was an aberration, not the beginning of a trend. Nonetheless, we will continue to monitor both Roth’s and Burger’s enrollment closely.

**4. What, if any future enrollment balance challenges do we foresee for the middle schools?**

As shown above, we expect to see some of the past enrollment imbalance between Roth and Burger resolved in the near future. In 1999 36% of our middle school students attended Burger and 64% attended Roth. Today 41% of our middle school students attend Burger and 59% attend Roth. In 2009 we expect that 44% of our middle schoolers will attend Burger and 56% will attend Roth.

Many factors may affect our projections. As noted above (and following in #8) we expect that residential growth will disproportionately affect the Leary attendance area. If this happens, it will also affect Roth, the school “fed” by Leary.

An additional contingency needs to be discussed which may affect our future middle school enrollment balance. If, as we expect, major residential growth continues in the southwestern section of Henrietta (south of Riverton), we will increasingly have the awkward situation of many middle school students being bused past Burger on their way to Roth. In this event we may want to consider redistricting our middle schools so that the growing numbers of students who live near to Burger can attend Burger. (Note that this would likely make impossible the maintenance of a “clean” school feeder pattern where all students from an elementary school attend the same middle school.)

**5. In last year’s Space Committee Report we recommended that the District consider a capital improvements project to expand and improve Burger’s instructional areas used for PE, library, technology, art, music, home and careers and other “special areas.” How, if at all, have these space problems changed? Do we believe that the Burger capital improvement project is still necessary?**

Yes. It is clear to us that Burger’s instructional areas for these specials are inadequate. They are far inferior to Roth’s facilities, and to similar facilities in middle schools elsewhere in Monroe County. Additionally, there are student safety considerations that need to be addressed. There are risks involved in overcrowding technology workshops or home & career classrooms. Sometimes, when the music areas are in total use, student exit routes (in the event of fire) are clogged with cellos and students. And the shortage of PE instructional stations has forced some students into regular classrooms. (Just recently Burger had to take two existing classrooms for use as a PE fitness center.) And the wear and tear of 50 years of

use at Burger have made the plumbing in the home & career classrooms unreliable – leaks and unpredictable hot water have plagued these classroom over the past year and longer.

The district needs to address Burger’s inadequate instructional facilities. Additionally, we recommend that at least 4-6 regular classrooms be added as part of the capital project. Even though we foresee a slight decline in Burger’s enrollment over the next several years, our concern about the residential growth in southern and western Henrietta and the possible student enrollment demands which may result, convinces us that adding 4-6 regular classrooms to Burger as part of the larger project would only be prudent.

**6. Should families in the “Burger Choice” area be allowed to choose the middle school their children attend?**

We recommend that we end the Burger Choice option at the end of this school year. We should allow all students presently “in the system” to remain in their schools through eighth grade, but send all present fifth graders to Roth. This would restore a “clean” school feeder pattern, sending all Leary students to Roth. Right now we have 81 middle-school-aged students living in the Burger Choice area. This is their present attendance pattern:

	Total	Burger	Roth	Other School Placement
Grade 8	33	27	2	4
Grade 7	24	14	8	2
Grade 6	24	11	10	3

There are presently 22 grade 5 students at Leary living in this area.

The students presently in grades 6 and 7 were given a choice. The eighth graders were not; they were assigned to Burger. If we send all 22 present fifth graders to Roth, it will increase Roth’s projected enrollment by about 11. (We projected a 50:50 split.) This would change Roth’s projected enrollment to 845 in 2005-06, to 815 in 2006-07, and to 764 in 2007-08. Clearly, we have enough room at Roth to discontinue the Burger Choice option.

**7. How effectively is the “balanced enrollment” policy working?**

The Board of Education revised Policy 5110 School Attendance Area and adopted Regulation 5110 in March 2003. These documents established the practice that “when student enrollment is unusually high at a grade level [k-8], with all sections filled to capacity, a child may be assigned to a different school which has available space...” This policy was established to provide us some “protection” for the small class size initiative and to give us greater staffing efficiency.

During the 2003-04 school year we did not need to use this policy. But in September 2004 we did. By late summer 2004 we found ourselves with six more first graders at Winslow than we could accommodate in the four class sections. At the same time, we found our first

grade section sizes at Crane averaging only 12. We moved the six Winslow first graders to Crane (along with a one kindergarten sibling).

As written, Regulation 5110 requires that any student moved to another school “will return to his or her home school in the successive school year.” We recommend that the Board of Education change this policy, allowing parents to choose whether to move their children back to the home school, or to allow them to remain with their classmates and teacher (often looping with the class). Once made, the decisions should stand, so that children continue at the school until moving on to middle school or the NGA. We feel that this would benefit both families and the District.

**8. Will, as we guessed last year, new residential growth patterns continue to bring pressure on the Leary attendance area? If so, what changes, if any, should be made to our elementary attendance boundaries?**

We are concerned about the residential growth patterns in our district and how they may affect our school enrollments. But as noted above, it’s not the total residential growth in the district which worries us, but the residential growth that is specific to individual school attendance areas.

Overall residential growth within the District continues at a modest pace. The following data from the Rochester Home Builders Association and the Rochester Association of Realtors show relatively little activity for a School District containing over 18,000 households.

Single Family Homes Built By Year

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Henrietta	154	135	146	160	107	119
Rush	16	18	19	13	8	0
Brighton						0

Sales of existing single-family homes, while greater than last year, still were only modest; about 400 for Henrietta and 35 for Rush. (It’s impossible to separate the portion of West Brighton that is within RHCS D from the town’s total sales.)

While the overall residential growth is modest, its impact upon one elementary school – Leary – concerns us. Here is a summary of residential development plans for the near future with their likely impact on our elementary and middle schools.

	Future Plans (units)	Schools Affected
Parkside/Nichols townhouses	77	Fyle / Burger
Jefferson Estates – Patio Homes	18	Winslow/Roth
Stone Hill Estates	25	Winslow/Roth
Riverton Parcel C – Meadows	?	Leary/Roth

Locust Hill Subdivision	64	Winslow/Roth
Erie Station Village – Apts	150	Sherman/Burger
Sutters Crossing	18	Leary/Roth
Shadow Ridge (Moore Rd)	60	Leary/Roth
Longleaf	60	Leary/Roth
Winter Garden	?	Sherman/Burger
Berkshire Park	484*	Leary/Roth

\* 126 patio homes; 177 starter single-family homes; 98 executive single-family homes; 83 luxury homes. 81 lots will be developed in 2005. The remainder will be built over the next ten years.

Several developments are of special interest – Riverton Meadows, Longleaf, and Berkshire Park. From past experience, we know that these builders are well financed and efficient. These houses will be built, and built relatively quickly.

This list and a careful study of the residential development patterns of our District convince us that major residential growth will occur in southern and southwestern Henrietta – disproportionately within the Leary attendance area. To address this and the likelihood that Leary will have inadequate space to accommodate the phased-in small class size initiative, we recommend the following adjustments to our elementary attendance boundaries:

- Whipple Park (31 students) Move from Winslow to Crane in 05-06.
- Attendance Area #32. This is the area bounded on the north by the thruway, on the west by Middle Road, on the south by Erie Station Road, on the east by East Henrietta Road. (35 students) Move from Leary to Winslow – phase in grade-by-grade
- Springblossom (6 students) Move from Leary to Winslow – phase in
- Pacer, Trotter, etc. (38 students) Move from Leary to Winslow – phase in

Making these changes, we predict these future enrollments: (Compare to the projections shown under question #1)

Today	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10
Crane 412	451	431	418	422	416
Fyle 461	477	472	456	445	452
Leary 477	495	491	480	461	445
Sherman 479	475	465	479	483	468
Winslow 487	448	443	459	465	479

These minor adjustments to the Leary, Winslow and Crane attendance areas should ensure that all elementary schools can accommodate the small class sizes as they are implemented into 3<sup>rd</sup> and then 4<sup>th</sup> grades, and also guarantee Leary School some “room to grow” if residential development and growing student enrollment occur.

## Summary and Conclusion

In summary, we respectfully report these findings and make these recommendations:

1. Though, in the aggregate, our elementary schools have enough space to accommodate the continued phasing in of the small class size initiative, we fear that one school, Leary, may not be able to because of residential growth in its attendance area.
2. Consequently, we recommend minor adjustments to the attendance areas of Winslow, Crane, and Leary in order to ensure that Leary has adequate room to accommodate the phased-in small class initiative.
3. Clearly, we will not have enough space in our elementary schools to implement full-day kindergarten.
4. We also doubt that we'll have enough space in our elementary schools to expand the small class size initiative into 5<sup>th</sup> grade.
5. We believe that this year's enrollment bulge at Roth Middle School was an anomaly. We do not believe that it was the front edge of a trend.
6. We expect that enrollment at both middle schools will fall significantly in the next five years. The decline will be greater at Roth.
7. Classroom space for "specials" instruction at Burger is woefully inadequate and must be both improved and expanded. We urge the Board to consider a capital improvement project to build an auditorium and stage and to improve and expand instructional areas for music, PE, library, home and careers, and technology, and to add 4-6 regular classrooms.
8. We recommend the discontinuance of the Burger Choice option for middle schoolers. This will allow us to reestablish a clean school feeder pattern with all students from each of our elementary schools moving on to common middle schools.
9. We recommend a revision in District Policy 5110, allowing parents of students who are moved by the district from their home schools to choose whether or not to move those students back to the home schools after one year.