

WAYLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Elementary Building Use Task Force Final Report

December 12, 2013

Plus:

The Superintendent's Recommendation

Excerpted from the FY15 Budget Book: December, 2013

With:

Appendix: Elementary Building Use Options:

Comparison by Variable (September, 2013)

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I. The Context and the Needs

The Wayland Public Schools last changed its elementary grade configuration beginning the 2008-2009 School Year. At that point in time, the organization changed from a system in which there were three K-5 schools to the current configuration in with Claypit Hill and Happy Hollow each house Grades 1 through 5 and Loker houses all kindergarten students. This change was driven in response to projections of reduced enrollment and a call for cost efficiencies. Clearly, some in the community felt this was a necessary and wise decision, while others greeted the change and/or the decision-making process with a good deal of consternation. Four years ago, a full day tuition-based kindergarten pilot was introduced, which was subsequently adopted.

As time passed, the families with young children had an opportunity to experience the advantages and disadvantages of the new configuration, including what it was like to have a school with an early childhood focus that housed one grade in its entirety. In this context, four issues (in addition to the lingering feelings of a community that felt it lost its neighborhood school) emerged, which necessitated a renewed study of Wayland's elementary grade school configuration. They are as follows:

1. There was a concern that enrollment was significantly increasing, which would create a need for classroom space that could not be supported under the current configuration. This concern was supported by an unexpected increase in the kindergarten enrollment during the 2012-2013 School Year. As a result, questions were raised about the accuracy of past projections, especially in light of new construction in town.
2. There was a concern about the space needs at Happy Hollow in particular. TBA architects were employed first to conduct a study of the space utilization at Happy Hollow, Loker, and Claypit Hill. Employing the Massachusetts School Building Authority's recommendations for new construction, TBA reviewed the current use of each space in each building. Considering both time (in use) and space, the study described whether rooms were fully utilized to capacity, or whether they were under- or over-utilized. This included a review of the core academic classroom, special education, art, music, health, physical education, media center, dining and food service, medical, administration, guidance, custodial and maintenance areas. Although there were a few regular classrooms spaces that were over-utilized, the primary areas of concern involved specialist and common areas. Of the three schools, Happy Hollow was of greatest concern – particularly the cafeteria, gymnasium, art, music and nurse's rooms. A subsequent study charged TBA with coming up with construction proposals which would mitigate the space problems at Happy Hollow without any redistricting or grade reconfigurations. TBA proposed five projects that would collectively relocate and/or

expand the art room, cafeteria, the music room, the computer tech area, the specialist offices, special education classrooms, and the nurse's office.

3. There was concern about the size of the enrollment at the Claypit Hill School. With an enrollment of 577 students, Claypit Hill is large in comparison to elementary schools throughout the state. In general, smaller schools lend themselves to environments in which students feelings of belonging and being known are enhanced. In addition, given administrative staffing, resources can become stretched. Larger elementary schools often have more administrative support, such as an assistant principal, than is assigned to Claypit Hill currently.
4. There was a concern that the current model left little room for future flexible use of space, whether for enrollment or programmatic reasons. Currently, both Happy Hollow and Claypit Hill have little future flexibility for increased classrooms. To state the obvious, in spite of projections and current programmatic offerings, the future remains an unknown. We want to position Wayland to be able to adapt to any needed changes.

II. Elementary Building Use Task Force: Phase I

In order to analyze and address the issues listed above, the Superintendent formed the Elementary Building Use Task Force, which first met in the Fall of 2012. The charge of the Task Force was to identify options and priorities regarding the utilization of elementary space, and conduct a cost/benefit analysis for each option to ensure an equitable, high quality educational program for all students. Its composition was as follows:

- **3 Parents** – one current parent from each of the three elementary schools
- **3 Community Members** – one community member from each of the three elementary school districts as they were previously constituted
- **3 Teachers** – one teacher or counselor from each of the three elementary schools
- **3 Elementary Principals** – the three current elementary school principals
- **3 Central Office Administrators** – the Director of Student Services, the Assistant Superintendent, and the Superintendent
- **1 School Committee Member**

The membership, by name, is listed below.

Name	Representative
John Penrose	Claypit Hill Community
Moira Breen-Smith	Claypit Hill Parent
Debbie Bearse	Claypit Hill Principal
Bernadette Vanaria	Claypit Hill Teacher
Tracy Scheidemantel (replaced by Stephanie Leong during Phase 2)	Happy Hollow Community
Alexia Obar	Happy Hollow Parent
James Lee	Happy Hollow Principal
Kori Rogers	Happy Hollow Teacher
Kate MacDonald	Loker Community
Pam Cerne	Loker Parent
Brian Jones	Loker Principal
Eileen McManus	Loker Teacher
Ellen Grieco	School Committee
Brad Crozier	Assistant Superintendent
Marlene Dodyk	Student Services Director
Paul Stein	Superintendent

The Task Force held 10, approximately two-hour long, meetings over the Fall and Winter months. In order to better inform the Task Force, Don Kennedy from NESDEC conducted a new analysis of the enrollment projections. He noted a slight upward movement in the kindergarten enrollment, although the overall enrollment trends remained flat. In addition, a Wayland town staff member employed his expertise with the GIS system in order to develop new large-scale residency maps showing households with students, by grade level. In addition, the Task Force felt it was important to solicit community input, and it did so first by sending out a press release that yielded email correspondence from community members directly to the Task Force. It also sent out a progress update to the staff requesting similar feedback. Faculty meetings were held with the Superintendent to solicit additional comments. On October 24, an open forum was held at Wayland High School at which a presentation was made updating the public regarding the work to date.

At the outset, the Task Force worked to identify key variables that it felt would directly impact on their judgment of any options under consideration. These evolved over time, with certain categories being split in two while others were combined into one. They were, as follows:

- Impact on the whole child, along with specific implications for children, staff, families, and community
- Academic Impact
- Overall cost
- Class size
- Staffing needs
- Future flexibility
- Implications for implementation and roll out of any changes
- Educational equity
- Resulting use of existing space & any construction requirements
- Transportation
- Feasibility given enrollment
- Redistricting

Much debate ensued regarding the relative pros and cons of each option in relation to each variable, confounded by the fact that some elements were considered positive by certain Task Force members and negative by others. While this was being sorted out, the Task Force brainstormed various options, and each option was considered in light of the variables. By mid-October, prior to the first public forum, the Task Force narrowed its list and settled on six options. They were as follows:

- **Grade Level Schools** – Each of the three buildings would house two grade levels: K-1, 2-3, 4-5.
- **K -5 Schools** – Each building would house a K-5 school.
- **Current Configuration** – The current grade configuration would remain unchanged. Loker would house kindergarten students, while Claypit Hill and Happy Hollow would house Grades 1-5.

- **Current Plus a Grade 1 Split** – This would add to Loker’s kindergarten students the Grade 1 students in the Happy Hollow District. Happy Hollow would house Grades 2-5, and Claypit Hill would house Grades 1-5
- **Lower Elementary** – Loker would house all of kindergarten and Grade 1, while Claypit Hill and Happy Hollow would house Grades 2-5.
- **Upper Elementary** – One school would house Grades 4-5, the other two schools would house Grades K-3.

These options were presented to the faculty and the public in email correspondence, in faculty meetings, and at the October Forum. As a result of what they learned at the Forum, the Task Force members reviewed the Wayland Public Schools’ core value statements, the district’s mission and core value statements, and other documents to ensure that the variables aligned with the vision of elementary schooling in Wayland. In addition, it weighed each variable, assigning a percent value to each variable, which added together totaled 100 percent. These were averaged to arrive at a weighted value for each variable. The variables (above) are listed from greatest to least weight. Finally, the Task Force acknowledged that these were rough approximations of a scientific review and analysis, yet appropriate to the timetable at hand.

After further study, analysis, and debate of the options and weighted variables, the Task Force made two major decisions regarding the timetable and the list of options. It first determined that it was unwise and unnecessary to rush a decision – as there was no need to move to a new configuration by the 2013-14 School Year. Secondly, the options were narrowed to three:

- **K -5 Schools** – Each of the three buildings would house students in Grades K-5, within its geographic catchment area.
- **Lower Elementary** – Loker would house all K and Grade 1 students. Claypit Hill and Happy Hollow would each house Grades 2-5.
- **Upper Elementary** – Either Loker or Happy Hollow would house all the students in Grades 4-5. The remaining two buildings would each house students in Grades K-3.

III. Elementary Building Use Task Force: Phase Two

At the February 25, 2013 School Committee meeting, the Superintendent presented the recommendation of the Task Force, including the three top options, along with a recommendation to convene a “phase 2” of the Task Force to conduct a closer look at each option. The Committee supported this next step. The charge of the reconstituted Task Force was set as follows:

The Superintendent’s Elementary Building Task Force (Phase 2) will research the elementary space options recommended by the first Task Force, conduct a detailed cost/benefit analysis for each option and continue to solicit public and staff input.

Based on this information, the Task Force will recommend to the Superintendent the preferred option with a proposed implementation timeline in a written report which summarizes the reasons for its recommendation.

The underlying goal is to ensure an equitable, high quality educational program for all elementary students.

Thanks to the good will and sacrifice of the individual members of the Task Force, all but one member (due to a change in jobs) agreed to continue in Phase 2. A new parent from the Happy Hollow community agreed to join in her stead. The Task Force began its work in the Spring of the 2012-13 School Year. It quickly set about the following tasks:

- The Task Force reviewed the demographic enrollment information in relation to determine the number of regular education classrooms required per grade level town-wide.
 - Based on the revised projections, the Task Force determined that, for planning purposes, it needed to anticipate at least 9 classrooms at each grade level, or 54 elementary classrooms in all.

School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	Total
2014-15	164	172	212	206	196	201	1151
2014-15	9	9	10	9	8	9	54
2015-16	155	174	181	218	212	200	1140
2015-16	8	9	9	10	9	9	54
2016-17	172	165	184	187	226	217	1151
2016-17	9	9	9	9	10	9	55
2017-18	166	183	174	190	194	232	1139
2017-18	9	10	8	9	8	10	54
2018-19	163	177	193	180	197	199	1109
2018-19	9	9	9	9	8	8	52
2019-20	166	174	187	200	186	202	1115
2019-20	9	9	9	9	8	9	53
2020-21	165	177	184	194	207	191	1118
2020-21	9	9	9	9	9	8	53
2021-22	166	176	187	190	201	212	1132
2021-22	9	9	9	9	9	9	54
2022-23	165	177	186	194	197	206	1125
2022-23	9	9	9	9	8	9	53

- This information had a significant impact on the K-5 option under consideration. Essentially, the Task Force had learned that Wayland's demographics will not support a K-5 Model that has 3 classrooms per grade at Happy Hollow, 3 at Loker, and 4 at Claypit Hill. That would equal 60 classrooms.

- As a result, it was determined that if Wayland went to a K-5 model, there were essentially two options:
 - The 2,3,4 K-5 Option: In this option, Claypit Hill would have 4 classrooms per grade, or 24 classrooms total. Either Loker or Happy Hollow would have one school of 2 classrooms per grade, or 12 classrooms total. The remaining school would have 3 classrooms per grade or 18 total.
 - The 3,3,3 K-5 Option: In this option, all three schools would have 3 classrooms per grade, or 18 total.

	Happy Hollow	Loker	Claypit Hill
K-5 (3-3-3)	18	18	18
K-5 (2-3-4)	12	18	24
K-5 (3-2-4)	18	12	24
Upper Elementary	16	18	20
Lower Elementary	16	18	20
Status Quo	20	9	25

- A subset of Task Force members conducted a review of relevant research studies regarding the relative merits of various elementary grade school configurations. They drew the following impressions from their search:
 - The research indicated that decisions to change grade configurations at any level is typically driven by enrollment, building options, and budget, rather than as a means to improve student achievement.
 - The factors that a school district should consider during grade configuration changes include the demographics/population of community, preferred school size, site availability, impact on transportation costs, length of bus ride, desired number of transitions, and parent involvement.
 - There's relatively limited research on elementary school grade configurations in peer reviewed journals.
 - Existing research seems focused on the middle years, with a trend toward supporting a K-8 model.
 - Transitions have negative effects on student outcomes and parent involvement.
 - Narrower grade spans result in a larger school feel for the students in any particular grade.
 - School configurations such as the lower or upper elementary models are more successful if staff members work closely together, hold joint development sessions, and hold regular planning meetings.

There is a separate field of research on small schools or small learning communities which indicates that small schools have a positive impact on achievement. There is also research which correlates student achievement with parent involvement. However, the Task Force did not conduct a separate review of this literature.

With the noteworthy exception of the reference to the negative impact of transitions on achievement and on parent involvement, there was not a compelling argument based on the research we reviewed for choosing one configuration over another – especially because some of the research was conducted in communities quite different than Wayland. Clearly, if the Lower or Upper Elementary model was chosen, careful consideration would have to be made in planning transitions for students to mitigate those effects on achievement. If the K-5 model was chosen, careful attention would have to be paid to assure that the developmental needs of students at the upper and lower grade levels were met.

- The Task Force identified Massachusetts school districts which were similar to the Lower and Upper Elementary models under consideration. It subsequently sent visiting teams to Georgetown (which held a school with Pre-K, K and Grade 1 students, and another school with students in Grades 2-5) and Norton (which held two K-3 schools and one 4-5 school). At each school, the visiting team met separately with the principal, teachers, and parents, and it gathered information about the pros and cons of each model. Briefly:

Georgetown was in the initial stages of transitioning from an early elementary model to a K-6 model. Pros of the early education model presented to the delegation focused primarily on the developmental specialization of the PreK-1 school. Cons included the disconnect between the lower elementary and upper elementary schools regarding curriculum, placement and relationships with students and families along with the lack of opportunity for cross grade interactions.

In Norton, the district was once a K-5 model, but currently has two K-3 schools of very different sizes and one 4-5 school. Pros related to the Norton model include the opportunity for students to merge into one building at an earlier developmental point which may facilitate the formation of new peer relationships as well as the opportunity to ease students into the transition to middle school while still retaining an elementary model. Cons presented include logistical challenges to both vertical alignment as well as grade level alignment across the two K-3 schools, the relatively short time (two years) in the 4-5 school in which to build a cohesive group prior to the next transition, and the potential that the 4-5 school could prematurely feel like a middle school setting. Norton's two elementary schools are of very different sizes and have different start times, unique aspects of their district that exacerbate some the challenges in their model.

- The Task Force fine-tuned the pros and cons of each variable and created a chart that summarized these findings. (See Appendix.)

- The administration developed cost estimates for both the annual operating budget and for capital expenditures.

Options	Annual Additional Operating Costs ESTIMATED					
K – 5	Classroom Teachers	1	\$ 63,245	Principal	0.7	\$ 77,600
	Librarian	0.4	\$ 25,298	Building Sub	1.5	\$ 36,465
	Specialist	0.8	\$ 73,382	Secretary	1	\$ 24,310
	Special Education	3	\$ 189,735	Custodian	1	\$ 43,800
	Guidance	0.5	\$ 31,623			
	Speech	0.2	\$ 12,649			
	ELL	1	\$ 63,245			
	Busing	0	\$ -	TOTAL		\$641,352
Lower	Classroom Teachers	0	\$ -	Principal	0.7	\$ 77,600
	Librarian	0.4	\$ 25,298	Building Sub	1.5	\$ 36,465
	Specialist	0.4	\$ 36,691	Secretary	1	\$ 24,310
	Special Education	1.5	\$ 94,868	Custodian	1	\$ 43,800
	Guidance	0.3	\$ 18,974			
	Speech	0.2	\$ 12,649			
	ELL	0.3	\$ 18,974			
	Busing	1	\$ 50,000	TOTAL		\$439,628
Upper	Classroom Teachers	-2	\$ (126,490)	Principal	0.7	\$ 77,600
	Librarian	0.4	\$ 25,298	Building Sub	1.5	\$ 36,465
	Specialist	0.4	\$ 36,691	Secretary	1	\$ 24,310
	Special Education	2.5	\$ 158,113	Custodian	1	\$ 43,800
	Guidance	0.5	\$ 31,623			
	Speech	0.2	\$ 12,649			
	ELL	1	\$ 63,245			
	Busing	1	\$ 50,000	TOTAL		\$433,303

Additional one-time expenses and capital costs have been identified and estimated as follows:

Loker Kitchen and Cafeteria Renovation	\$211,400
Happy Hollow Cafeteria and Art Room Renovation	\$200,000
Happy Hollow Nurses Area (approved: Spring, 2013 Town Meeting)	\$85,000
Moving Expenses	\$37,500
<u>Library Upgrades</u>	<u>\$23,600</u>
TOTAL	\$557,500

In addition, there will be a need to upgrade the technology infrastructure at Loker – work already completed at Happy Hollow and Claypit Hill. This may cost up to \$85,000 depending on the final configuration. There will also be costs for classroom supplies, a computation which will also vary depending on the final configuration.

- In preparation for the public forum, the Task Force identified the key strengths and challenges of each model, as follows:

K-5 (3,3,3) Option

5 Strengths

1. No transitions Grades K through 5
2. Transportation efficiency for bus routes and parents.
3. Wide grade span keeps siblings together and eases vertical alignment (peer modeling, shared communication among staff, continuity in relationships)
4. Equal resource allocation and staffing
5. Strong sense of school community

2 Challenges

1. Redistricting will impact many families; need for ongoing buffer zones.
2. Limited long range flexibility for two of the schools.

K-5 (2,3,4) Option

5 Strengths

1. No transitions Grades K through 5
2. Strong vertical alignment (peer modeling, shared communication among staff, continuity in relationships)
3. Strong sense of school community
4. More students are closer to home
5. Flexibility for future changes in population in two schools.

2 Challenges

1. The “2” School will have fewer academic and social configurations.
2. Redistricting will impact many families; need for ongoing buffer zones.

Lower Elementary Option

5 Strengths

1. Efficient use of building space, flexibility in two schools
2. Fosters strong early childhood community culture
3. Most flexibility with full day kindergarten
4. Optimized class sizes and educational groupings in Grades K-1.
5. Easiest transition to implement

2 Challenges

1. Grades 1-2 Transition, Vertical Alignment
2. Longer bus rides for students in Grades K-1

Upper Elementary Option

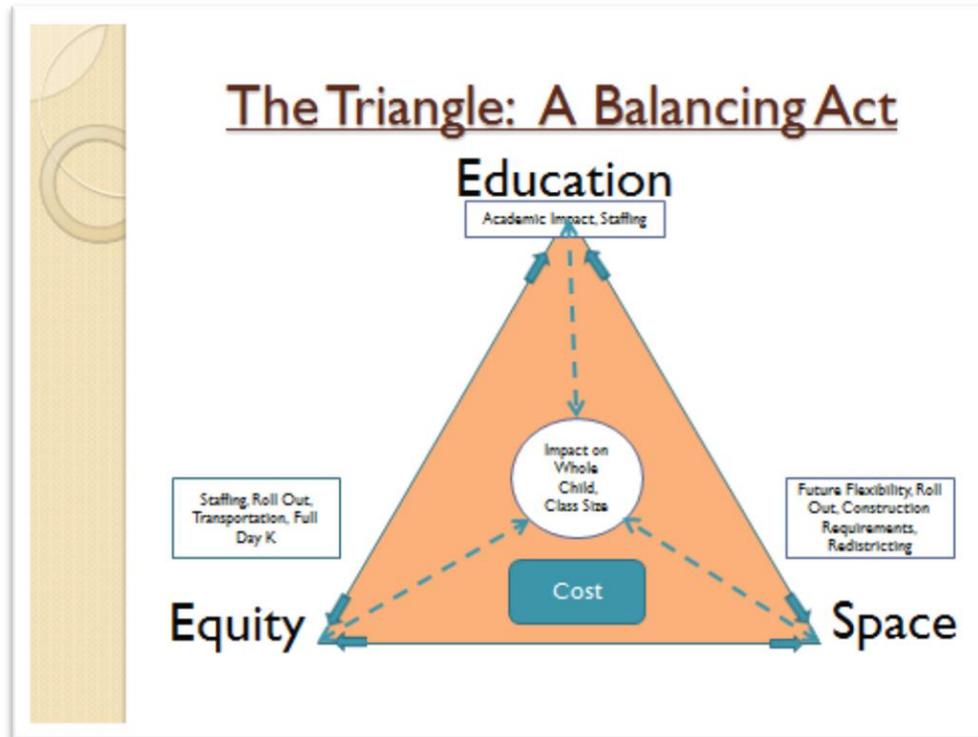
5 Strengths

1. Grade 4-5 School is better able to focus school on developmental needs of older elementary students
2. Strong teacher collaboration at Grades 4-5
3. Equitable resources for Grades 4-5.
4. K-3 provides for early childhood communities, with expanding community for students in Grades 4-5 prior to middle school
5. Optimized class sizes and educational groupings in Grades 4-5

2 Challenges

1. Grades 3 to 4 transition, vertical alignment
2. Longer bus rides for students in Grades 4-5

- The Task Force held a very well attended open forum for community members on September 30, 2013 at the Loker School. It conducted a similar forum for faculty members.
 - As individual Task Force members, as well as members of the community and the faculty, argued passionately for one option over the other, the Task Force developed the following graphic meant to help balance and keep all points of view in perspective. The following triangle depicts a need to balance issues of equity, education, and space.



- The Task Force subsequently received dozens of notes of email correspondence from both parents and faculty members, each weighing in on the options.

- The Task Force also discussed possible transition options should the recommendation turn out to be one of the K-5 options. The following chart presents a number of scenarios stretching from a one year to a five year transition:

	Loker	Happy Hollow	Claypit Hill
2014-15	All K Grade 1	Grade 1 (New) Grades 2-5 (Current)	Grade 1 (New) Grades 2-5 (Current)
# Classrooms 2,3,4	11	19	24
# Classrooms 3,2,4	12	18	24
2015-16	All K Grades 1,2	Grades 1,2 (New) Grades 3-5 (Current)	Grades 1,2 (New) Grades 3-5 (Current)
# Classrooms 2,3,4	13	18	23
# Classrooms 3,2,4	15	16	23
2016-17	All K Grades 1,2,3	Grades 1-3 (New) Grades 4-5 (Current)	Grades 1-3 (New) Grades 4-5 (Current)
# Classrooms 2,3,4	15	17	22
# Classrooms 3,2,4	18	14	22
2017-18	Grades K – 4 (New)	Grades K-4 (New) Grade 5 (Current)	Grades K-4 (New) Grade 5 (Current)
# Classrooms 2,3,4	10	19	25
# Classrooms 3,2,4	15	14	25
2018-19	Grades K-5 (New)	Grades K-5 (New)	Grades K-5 (New)
# Classrooms 2,3,4	12	18	24
# Classrooms 3,2,4	18	12	24

Although the Task Force remained torn between the options, it felt that one option could be eliminated from consideration. Specifically, it decided to eliminate the Upper Elementary Option. The key reasons for this decision were 1) its lack of community support, 2) concerns with the Grade 3 to 4 transition (even in contrast to a Grade 1 to 2 transition), 3) the general disruption to the entire community required by the move to this model, 4) longer bus rides, and 5) some discomfort with creating a “lower middle school” which clustered students in this age range.

IV. The Task Force’s Final Meeting

The Task Force met one final time on November 26. It, once again, reviewed the remaining three options: Lower Elementary, K-5 (2,3,4), and K-5 (3,3,3).

After some deliberation, it recommended the elimination of the K-5 (3,3,3) option from consideration. Essentially, this option would have resulted in Happy Hollow and Loker Schools both being filled to capacity while Claypit Hill was underutilized. In addition, it would have required a significant redistricting of Claypit Hill’s historic school community. It was felt that each of the remaining options was preferable.

The Task Force also discussed the pros and cons of the two K-5 (2,3,4) options. One option would make Loker the smaller school (12 classrooms, 2 per grade); the other option would make Happy Hollow the smaller school.

The Task Force could not reach consensus regarding a preferred option. There was more interest in the K-5 (2,3,4) option in which Loker would be the 12-classroom school than the Lower Elementary option. It is fair to say that the individual Task Force members appreciated the strengths and weaknesses of each option – regardless of where their preference lied. If an official vote were taken, it would have been close.

In the end, the Task Force can be proud of having crafted two strong options – each of which could serve Wayland well. The Superintendent accepted this outcome with great appreciation for all the time, effort, and deliberation that went into this effort. Each and every Task Force member is to be highly commended for their service to the Town of Wayland and its schools.

Addendum

The Superintendent's Recommendation

Excerpted from the FY15 Budget Book: December, 2013

K-5 Schools: A New Elementary Grade School Configuration

The Superintendent's Recommendation: The Elementary Building Use Task Force – a community group consisting of parents, community members, faculty, principals, and other administrators – worked diligently over the past 16 months. It held many meetings, identified variables, reviewed research, conducted site visits, held community and staff forums, and debated the pros and cons of each model. With careful consideration and thought, the Task Force brainstormed options for consideration and slowly narrowed these options down to a K-5 model and a Lower Elementary model (in which Loker would house all kindergarten and Grade 1 students). The journey and deliberations of the Task Force are detailed in its final report, which can be found on the district website in the Superintendent's section under "Administration." That report puts the superintendent's recommendation in context, and it shows the great lengths the Task Force members took to get this decision right. After weighing everything in that report, the superintendent is recommending the following:

1. **K-5 Schools:** The Wayland Public Schools move to a K-5 elementary grade school configuration beginning the 2014-2015 School Year.
2. **School Size:** The districting lines are drawn in such a way as to result in enrollments which support two classrooms per grade at Loker, three per grade at Happy Hollow, and four per grade at Claypit Hill. This will result in a total of 12 classrooms at Loker, 18 at Happy Hollow and 24 at Claypit Hill. Loker has been selected as the smaller school because in this scenario, staff will focus on the creation of *one* new school. (If Happy Hollow was reduced to a 12 classroom school it would essentially be like creating *two* new schools – one at Happy Hollow and one at Loker.) In addition, the geographic catchment areas would be more evenly distributed given differences in housing density. Finally, this scenario will result in catchment areas more closely aligned to those in Wayland when it last had K-5 school communities.
3. **Buffer Zones:** The redistricting plan will include buffer zones so that the enrollment is divided among the three K-5 schools in a way that minimizes the need to add classes. This approach helps level out class size, maintain class size guidelines, and reduce costs. (Note: A buffer zone is usually defined as an area for which individual addresses may be assigned to one of two elementary schools. Parents and guardians of students residing in a buffer zone would request either one of the two designated elementary schools in the zone. The requests would then be granted based on space availability. Students in these zones do not have a designated home school until such time as they are assigned a school. Any child beginning kindergarten who has a sibling who already attends an elementary school will be guaranteed the right to attend that same elementary school unless a parent requests otherwise.)
4. **Transition Plan:** The current Grade 4 students remain at Happy Hollow and Claypit Hill in Grade 5. This transition plan assures that no students will be required to move to a new school for one year only. All other grades will move to the new grade school configuration next year.

The Rationale: Choosing between two strong options is challenging – but it is a good problem to have. Here are the superintendent’s reasons for choosing the K-5 option:

- **Educational Achievement:** In the K-5 model, students have no transitions from school to school for six years. The research shows that transitions can have a negative impact on parent involvement and student achievement.
- **Sense of Community:** Since students remain in their school for six years, a sense of community is more readily formed and sustained. Stable long-term relationships are formed and maintained with grade-level peers, peers in other grades, and staff members. Families subsequently more readily identify with their elementary school as "our school."
- **Vertical Alignment:** Since students remain in the same building, staff can more easily facilitate the transition from grade to grade. Teachers can readily communicate and convey important understandings about their students not only at the point of transition, but as issues arise. They can also more easily collaborate on curricular transitions and expectations regarding content knowledge and standardized testing. Students are comforted by their familiarity with the school and with their previous teachers.
- **A Wide Grade Span:** A six year grade span creates more opportunities for inter-age interactions, peer modeling, and programs like reading buddies.
- **Improved Transportation:** The K-5 model, on average, reduces the distance between students’ homes and their schools. This, in turn, reduces the need for buses and the length of bus rides. It reduces mileage and increases opportunities for walking.
- **Future Flexibility:** This model provides some future flexibility, particularly at Loker and Claypit Hill. Happy Hollow will have little room for expansion, and Loker would absorb any unexpected enrollment increases in the southern sections of town.
- **Strong Parental Support:** There has been a call by many parents to return to K-5 schools. This model fosters parent involvement and investment, which is important to a successful school. In addition, this option limits the number of schools that a family sends its children to, therefore easing family logistics.

The Transition Issues: There are three key transition issues, named here to acknowledge the challenge that they present as well as to assure that they will be closely addressed. They are as follows:

1. **Remaining Attentive to the Developmental Needs in the Primary Grades:** One of the big advantages of the Lower Elementary model was that it would have created a school that could focus on (and tailor itself to) the developmental needs of early childhood. One of the goals of the transition to K-5 schools is to assure that time, thought, and programming be developed to make sure that these developmental needs are addressed within this model.
2. **Carefully Planning the Logistics of a Smooth Rollout:** The transition to a K-5 model will be disruptive to all three schools and to many children and families. Logistic tasks include determining the redistricted catchment areas, reassigning staff, developing specialist schedules, establishing an essentially brand new school at Loker, welcoming the kindergarten at Claypit Hill and Happy Hollow, redesigning bus routes, and generally redistributing resources. Given the timing of town meeting, all of this will need to be accomplished in a very short window of time.

In addition, a number of capital projects will need to be completed over time, including moving the Happy Hollow art room, redesigning the Happy Hollow cafeteria and nurse’s office, and expanding the Loker kitchen. One-time costs also include moving expenses and refitting the Loker library.

3. **Maximizing the Strengths and Addressing the Challenges of a Small School:** Although small schools are often beloved, they also present unique challenges since they don’t necessarily have the economy of scale available to larger schools. Great care will have to be made in grouping students, scheduling part-time specialists, and generally assuring equitable resources.

The Trade Offs: There are trade-offs in choosing a K-5 model. If a transition to this model is endorsed by this community, parents will need to understand what is at stake. Specifically, there are two trade-offs that will undoubtedly have significant impact on a limited number of families:

1. **Limitations in Full Day Kindergarten Slots:** There will be a marked increase in the number of children who may wish to enroll in Full Day Kindergarten (FDK), but may not be able to. This has to do with the decreased number of kindergarten classes at any particular school – making it less likely that the percentage of parents requesting FDK will match the percentage of FDK slots available.
2. **The Uncertainty Created by Buffer Zones:** Families who move into homes that are within a buffer zone will live with the uncertainty of not knowing to which elementary school their first child will be assigned.

The Costs of this Proposal: The following operating expenses are included in this recommended budget:

Operating Budget Costs		
Librarian	0.4	\$ 24,456
Specialists	0.8	\$ 73,382
Special Ed. Teachers	2	\$122,280
Special Ed. Teacher Assistants	2	\$ 47,482
Guidance	0.5	\$ 30,570
Speech/OT	0.4	\$ 24,456
Special Ed. Team Leader Stipend		\$ 3,636
ELL Teacher Assistant	1	\$ 23,741
Principal	0.7	\$ 77,600
Building Sub	1.5	\$ 36,465
Secretary	1	\$ 24,798
Custodian	1	\$ 44,679
Moving Expenses (one year only)		\$ 37,500
Library Upgrades (one year only)		\$ 23,600
TOTAL		\$594,645.00

Additional one-time capital costs, which will be spread over two years, have been identified and estimated as follows:

Loker Kitchen and Cafeteria Renovation	\$211,400
Happy Hollow Cafeteria and Art Room Renovation	\$200,000
<u>Happy Hollow Nurses Area (approved: Spring, 2013 Town Meeting)</u>	<u>\$85,000</u>
TOTAL	\$496,400

The Road Ahead: As one weighs his or her own feelings about the pros and cons of a decision of this magnitude, it is easy to get lost in the details. Wayland's students and its schools will continue to thrive under a renewed K-5 model. The community can anticipate this change with excitement for what lies ahead. As the district settles into this configuration and builds new school communities, it will undoubtedly open new opportunities throughout the district. In the process, the hope is that Wayland residents will justly feel proud and unified to step along this new path.

Appendix

Elementary Building Use Options: Comparison by Variable (September, 2013)

The Elementary Building Use Task Force has been reviewing each of the three proposed options for a new elementary grade school configuration in Wayland. These are:

- **K -5 Schools** – Each of the three buildings would house students in Grades K-5, within its geographic catchment area.
- **Lower Elementary** – Loker would house all K and Grade 1 students. Claypit Hill and Happy Hollow would each house Grades 2-5.
- **Upper Elementary** – Either Loker or Happy Hollow would house all the students in Grades 4-5. The remaining two buildings would each house students in Grades K-3.

This document takes a look at the pros and cons of the K-5, Lower Elementary, and Upper Elementary Models through the lens of each of the following variables:

- **Impact on the whole child**
- **Academic impact**
- **Staffing**
- **Class size**
- **Future flexibility**
- **Transportation**
- **Implications for transition to new model from current model**
- **Redistricting**
- **Space Use**
- **Annual additional costs ROUGHLY ESTIMATED (One-time costs still to be determined.)**

Options	Impact on the Whole Child
K - 5	<p><u>PRO</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This option limits the number of schools that a family could send its children to, therefore making it relatively easy for family logistics. Since students remain in the school for six years, a sense of community would be more readily formed and sustained, and families identify with their elementary school as "our school." Stable long-term relationships can be formed and maintained with peers, staff, and peers outside of grade level. • The wider grade span creates more opportunities for inter-age interactions, modeling, and programs like reading buddies. • This option requires the fewer transitions than the other two models, which research shows is more beneficial to students. <p><u>CON</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This option is more disruptive in terms of reorganization and redistricting than the Lower Elementary, but less disruptive than the Upper Elementary Option. • This model can result in larger differences in class size compared to the other two models. • This model may have the most negative impact on the district's ability to offer both Full Day Kindergarten and Traditional classes, creating waiting lists. • Relatively small grade level cohorts over six years may limit friendships more than the other models.
Lower	<p><u>PRO</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This option allows the building to be structured with a more targeted focus on the developmental aspects of early elementary aged students. • This option is the least disruptive in terms of reorganization and redistricting of the three models. • Class size in Grade K and 1 is optimized, resulting in more equal class sizes in these grades. • This model best supports the Full Day Kindergarten/Tradition Classroom split because all K classes are in the same building. <p><u>CON</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This option requires an additional transition to a new school in comparison to the K-5 model. • Students in this model are separated into two different schools between Grades 1 and 2, which may impact friendships negatively. • The narrow grade span creates few opportunities for inter-age interactions, modeling, and programs like reading buddies in the K-1 building, although opportunities remain in the 2-5 buildings. • Relative to the K-5 model, students are in each of the schools for fewer years, impacting the ability to build community.
Upper	<p><u>PRO</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This option allows the building to be structured with a more targeted focus on the developmental aspects of upper elementary aged students and be designed to assist in the transition to the middle school model. • Students in this model are brought together from two different schools in Grade 4, which may impact friendships positively. • Class size in Grades 4 and 5 is optimized, resulting in more equal class sizes in these grades. <p><u>CON</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The narrow grade span creates few opportunities for inter-age interactions, modeling, and programs like reading buddies in the 4-5 building, although opportunities remain in the K-3 buildings. • This option is the most disruptive in terms of reorganization and redistricting of the three models. • This option requires an additional transition to a new school in comparison to the K-5 model. • This model may have some negative impact on the district's ability to offer both Full Day Kindergarten and Traditional classes, creating waiting lists -- although less of an impact than the K-5 model. • Relative to the K-5 model, students are in each of the schools for fewer years, impacting the ability to build community.

Options	Academic Impact
K - 5	<p>The following variables may have an impact on academic achievement, each of which is rated in relation to the other two models as high (1), moderate (2), or low (3) :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> horizontal alignment (3) vertical alignment (1) standardized testing (1) location and type of special education and ELL services (2) number of faculty at a grade level for collaboration (RTI, professional development, PLC's...) (3) age span (1) <p>NOTE: We have not found research which helps determine which of the three models, as a whole, has the most positive impact on academic achievement.</p>
Lower	<p>The following variables may have an impact on academic achievement, each of which is rated in relation to the other two models as high (1), moderate (2), or low (3) :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> horizontal alignment (1) vertical alignment (3) standardized testing (3) location and type of special education and ELL services (2) number of faculty at a grade level for collaboration (RTI, professional development, PLC's...) (1) age span (3) <p>NOTE: We have not found research which helps determine which of the three models, as a whole, has the most positive impact on academic achievement.</p>
Upper	<p>The following variables may have an impact on academic achievement, each of which is rated in relation to the other two models as high (1), moderate (2), or low (3) :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> horizontal alignment (1) vertical alignment (3) standardized testing (2) location and type of special education and ELL services (2) number of faculty at a grade level for collaboration (RTI, professional development, PLC's...) (1) age span (3) <p>NOTE: We have not found research which helps determine which of the three models, as a whole, has the most positive impact on academic achievement.</p>

Options	Staffing
K - 5	<p>This model requires additional staff relative to the current staffing. These are ESTIMATED as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> .7 Principal 1.5 Building Subs 1.0 Secretary 1.0 Custodian 1.0 Classroom teacher .4 Librarian .8 specialist increase: .2 in PE, Music, Art, Technology 3.0 Special education .5 Guidance .2 Speech 1.0 ELL staff
Lower	<p>This model requires additional staff relative to the current staffing. These are ESTIMATED as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> .7 Principal 1.5 Building Subs 1.0 Secretary 1.0 Custodian 0 Classroom teachers .4 Librarian .4 specialist increase: .2 in PE, Music, Art, Technology 1.5 Special education .3 Guidance .2 Speech .3 ELL staff
Upper	<p>This model requires additional staff relative to the current staffing. These are ESTIMATED as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> .7 Principal 1.5 Building Subs 1.0 Secretary 1.0 Custodian -2 classroom teachers .4 Librarian .4 specialist increase: .2 in PE, Music, Art, Technology 2.5 Special education .5 Guidance .2 Speech 1.0 ELL staff

Options	Class Size
K - 5	<p>Class sizes will show the greatest variance amongst the schools.</p> <p>Class sizes will be contingent on the particular demographics of a catchment area each year. Relative to the other models, this may result in outlier grade levels at individual schools that have either relatively larger or smaller class sizes than their counterparts.</p>
Lower	<p>Class sizes will show less variance than the K-5 model.</p> <p>Class size in Grades K and 1 is optimized, resulting in more equal class sizes in these grades.</p> <p>Class sizes in Grades 3-5 will be contingent on the particular demographics of a catchment area each year. Relative to the K-5 model, this may result in fewer outlier in these grade levels.</p>
Upper	<p>Class sizes will show less variance than the K-5 model.</p> <p>Class size in Grades 4 and 5 is optimized, resulting in more equal class sizes in these grades.</p> <p>Class sizes in Grades K-3 will be contingent on the particular demographics of a catchment area each year. Relative to the K-5 model, this may result in fewer outlier in these grade levels.</p>

Options	Future Flexibility
K - 5	<p>Future flexibility is dependent on districting and planned school enrollment.</p> <p>Claypit Hill has the most flexibility in this model because with more sections, they can more readily absorb fluctuations in enrollment. They also have the ability to expand the number of classrooms by at least two sections while maintaining space for specialists and other programs. Loker and Happy Hollow have less flexibility when compared to Claypit Hill. Loker will have slightly more flexibility than Happy Hollow, especially if they are assigned fewer class sections per grade level.</p>
Lower	<p>Happy Hollow and Claypit Hill jointly have the most flexibility in this model, depending on districting and the number of sections per grade in each building. They also have the ability to expand the number of classrooms by at least two to four sections in each of these buildings while maintaining space for specialists and other programs. Loker will have less flexibility. (Loker is assumed to be the K-1 school in this model.)</p>
Upper	<p>Claypit Hill and the other K-3 building will jointly have the most flexibility in this model, depending on districting and the number of sections per grade in each building. They also have the ability to expand the number of classrooms by at least two to four sections in each of these buildings while maintaining space for specialists and other programs. The 4-5 building will have less flexibility.</p>

Options	Transportation
K - 5	<p>This option provides the most efficient transportation because it requires less busing, less driver time, and less mileage -- and more walking.</p>
Lower	<p>Long bus rides for younger students, resulting in a significant impact given twice as many students would be coming to Loker from North Wayland. There would be more buses, more mileage, and more driver time. This potentially would require 3-4 more buses at a cost of \$150,000 - \$200,000.</p>
Upper	<p>Long bus rides for older students, similar to the Lower Elementary option. This would potentially require 3-4 more buses, at a cost of \$150,000 - 200,000. This may change depending on which school houses Grades 4 and 5.</p>

Options	Implications for Transition to New Model from Current Model
K - 5	<p>Transition to this model, if done all at once, would be highly disruptive to incoming Grades 2 to 5, especially for students (and their families) in these grades who would attend Loker. Incoming Grades K and 1 would have minimal relative impact. This model would be highly disruptive to staff.</p> <p>There is no easy way to gradually phase in this model given space considerations, although we could work out a plan that would grandfather the incoming Grade 4 and/or 5 students.</p>
Lower	Transition to this model, if done all at once, would be least disruptive to all Grades. This model would be most disruptive to Grade 1 staff. This is no need to phase this transition given the ease of switching to a Lower Elementary model.
Upper	<p>Transition to this model, if done all at once, would be highly disruptive to incoming Grades 4 to 5 if Loker is the Upper Elementary School. It would be highly disruptive to Grades 1 to 5, except for 4th and 5th Graders at Happy Hollow (although it is disruptive to them in a different way) if the the Upper Elementary School is at Happy Hollow. This model would be highly disruptive to staff.</p> <p>A gradual transition to this model would require Grade 4 students to be alone in a building for a year, which is not ideal.</p>

Options	Redistricting
K - 5	This requires redistricting. However, to maximize future flexibility, district lines may be drawn differently than past catchment area lines. It is also dependent on the targeted school population size for each building. It may require the use of buffer zones.
Lower	Redistricting would be minimal in this model, and mostly be undertaken in order to balance school enrollment given targeted school population size.
Upper	If the Upper Elementary was Loker, there would not be any need for redistricting (beyond efforts to meet enrollment targets). If the Upper Elementary was Happy Hollow, redistricting would be required.

Options	Space Use
K - 5	<p>If enrollment necessitates having 9 sections amongst the buildings, there are two scenarios:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- A division of 4, 3, and 2 classes per grade level. -- A division of 3, 3, and 3 classes per grade level. <p>In this model, there is adequate space in each building. However, there will be underutilized space in either Loker or Claypit Hill, depending on the division.</p>
Lower	In this model, Loker will be at capacity. Happy Hollow will be able to gain space and resolve some of its common space issues. Claypit will be underutilized unless other programs/offices are brought into the building.
Upper	In this model, the Upper Elementary School will be at capacity. Happy Hollow will be able to gain space and resolve some of its common space issues if Loker would be the Upper Elementary School. Alternately, Loker would have adequate space if Happy Hollow were the Upper Elementary School. Claypit will be underutilized unless other programs/offices are brought into the building.

Options	Annual Additional Costs ROUGHLY ESTIMATED (One-time costs still to be determined.)					
K - 5	Classroom Teachers	1	\$ 63,245	Principal	0.7	\$ 77,600
	Librarian	0.4	\$ 25,298	Building Sub	1.5	\$ 36,465
	Specialist	0.8	\$ 73,382	Secretary	1	\$ 24,310
	Special Education	3	\$ 189,735	Custodian	1	\$ 43,800
	Guidance	0.5	\$ 31,623			
	Speech	0.2	\$ 12,649			
	ELL	1	\$ 63,245			
	Busing	0	\$ -			
				TOTAL		\$ 641,352
Lower	Classroom Teachers	0	\$ -	Principal	0.7	\$ 77,600
	Librarian	0.4	\$ 25,298	Building Sub	1.5	\$ 36,465
	Specialist	0.4	\$ 36,691	Secretary	1	\$ 24,310
	Special Education	1.5	\$ 94,868	Custodian	1	\$ 43,800
	Guidance	0.3	\$ 18,974			
	Speech	0.2	\$ 12,649			
	ELL	0.3	\$ 18,974			
	Busing	1	\$ 50,000			
				TOTAL		\$ 439,628
Upper	Classroom Teachers	-2	\$ (126,490)	Principal	0.7	\$ 77,600
	Librarian	0.4	\$ 25,298	Building Sub	1.5	\$ 36,465
	Specialist	0.4	\$ 36,691	Secretary	1	\$ 24,310
	Special Education	2.5	\$ 158,113	Custodian	1	\$ 43,800
	Guidance	0.5	\$ 31,623			
	Speech	0.2	\$ 12,649			
	ELL	1	\$ 63,245			
	Busing	1	\$ 50,000			
				TOTAL		\$ 433,303