

***Durham, Freeport, & Pownal
Reorganization Planning Committee
Meeting Minutes
December 5, 2007
Pownal Elementary School~Pownal***

Members Present: Amber Snell, Allan Purinton, Fred Palmer, Marge Migliaccio, Rick White, Nelson Larkins, Jennifer Kaplan, Sherry Dietrich, Cliff Ruprecht, Rhonda O'Shea

Advisors Present: Elaine Tomaszewski, Superintendent of Schools, Freeport; Joe Feeney, Superintendent/Principal, Pownal

Also Present: Bob Kautz, Facilitator; and 7 members of the public

Not Present: Paul Schumann, Shannon Welsh, Superintendent of Schools, Durham; Cathy Messmer, Business Manager, Durham; Diane Boucher, Business Manager, Freeport/Pownal; Wesley Bennett, Tim Giddinge

- The meeting was called to order by at 7:03 pm by Bob Kautz, Facilitator. It was explained that we were being video taped and there would be microphones stationed in various locations.
- Minutes were reviewed and after one change (1 wording error) they were accepted by consensus from the committee.
- There were no previous questions to be answered. It was stated that the Freeport Families for Education website had questions stated from the public regarding finances and other items; however they were not directed to the RPC in procedural manner. One question responded to by Bob Kautz was regarding facilitation within the RPC. It was stated that extra facilitation would be provided by the DOE and it would be provided for on an as needed basis. Another question asked was whether or not Freeport students could have school choice. There was also clarification asked between commercial and resident finance information.
- There were no public comments or questions.
- It was explained that the Steering Committee had a meeting via teleconference and the discussion was regarding the process for this meeting. The agreement with the Steering Committee was the meeting regarding school choice would be for the RPC contingents to voice their opinions, feelings and concerns in a round table manner. It was also agreed that any public member could contribute comment during public comment and there may time afterwards for a few brief public comments.
- There was a comment made for RPC members that while they were discussing school choice to keep in mind the financial implications regarding students attending different schools.
- Bob Kautz explained the process agreed upon by the Steering Committee for the discussion of school choice. He asked members to respect the right of others to speak and that each member would receive a time to speak before speaking for a second time. Bob posted a two step process visually to help remind members of what exactly should drive the discussions. He stated the purpose of RPC is to do the best they can to create the strongest RSU possible. The 1st would be for members to state their feelings regarding the question: "How will choice affect the ability to create the strongest RSU possible?" The 2nd step would be to

- members to ask questions, request certain pieces of analysis to be provided to help the process, prospects. All thoughts will be written on chart paper. The consensus of the committee was this was an appropriate process.
- Fred palmer: is it fair for one part of the school community have choice when others don't I don't feel this is fair...we teach our kids fairness...complete community commitment...same vested interest within community....support the community financially...center of the community is the school system. Commitment to the overall union....need to be able to project the number of students in the schools...ability to plan and deal with influx or decrease in student population...adjustments financially...what happens to us and Brunswick changes it's mind and does not want other students....we retain choice there is a financial burden that falls on the RSU and may be disproportionately shared within the communities. Differential a town would receive...RSU raises budget and then portion of that budget goes to another receiving....per pupil cost increase to the RSU and does not off set the cost....clarify differential....not necessarily regarding just tuition. Does not have a similar reduction of cost. You will not save money by not having the student attend....not a direct reduction of your own cost...bob explained this should be discussed and clarified.in next steps we need further analysis on
 - Jim rier to do an EPS workshop Dec. 18 or 19 he would be willing to help clarify this information. This may be helpful to understand costsharing.
 - Nelson...follow up rsu funding a student to another school towns of choice pay now and under the rsu that would be a shared cost....in affect all the towns would be paying for these students...goes back to fairness.
 - Allan....historically it is good to know why towns are put into school choice situations....currently only town for durham is Brunswick....sent to many different areas....decision by other towns that their increase they would no longer take on student from durham....limited....lisbon has picked up transportation this year so students to attend...historically transportation has been the driving factor....if transportation is only provided to one area they will attend the transported school
 - John...one of the dilemmas....every year you do projects for future years....certainly understand transportation would be driving force and not knowing makes it challenging...we will not know year to year where students are going that have choice and makes it difficult to hire etc....community commitment....voter vote on budget...new consolidated district....voters ask are you responsibly spending money for new programs etc....anticipate voters asking are we spending money soley to this district....some people in freeport and not vested within the schoolsystem may look at this skeptically....challenge to areas who had choice....parents who were not commitment to rsu because they choose to have their students go elsewhere....could make things more fractured.
 - Marge...school choice could affect anticipated programs...could be a serious issue.
 - Nelson...project out communities....affect loyalties w....unintended impact by local communities....impacted by negative votes could negatively impact k-8 kids even though it is students who are at secondary....community shared vision...createing community atmosphere and combined at the high school within the end....impacts the long term vision if we continue to have issues with school choice.

- Joe...if all the students flow into Freeport...faze in over two or three years and knew they were coming....and have a plan to offer more programs etc. will Freeport have enough room
- Rick...directions...opinion and opinion of others within state....choice much like voucher system undermines the school process....not support or except voucher system and choice ahs the same affects on a public education...our mission...less concern with fairness at individual level...concerned unfairness to create a strong rsu....choice undermines that process...robs us of some of the brightest and best...adverse affect on test scores, lose athletes, diversity operating capital, student population, and other pieces that would affect the school system. Do not believe rsu should pay for a student to attend a private school...understand the reasons why pownal and durham are in the position they are....i would support grandfathering students at the date of implantation....grandfathering siblings....may consider those now attending private school but not siblings.
- Sherry feels faze in is a great possibility for those of communities who have choice.
- Rhonda...supports rick and faze in is something that should be discussed...we all want to support the rsu....personally choice was greely....siblings may not even want to go where brother or sister went....talking about fazing...concerned giving up school choice forced to send child to an under performing school if rsu is under performing....if we are all working on this together Freeport high will be a high performing school....everyone goes to high performing school...faze out but then faze in school choice....how do get our students to go...if not a great school do we want to force students to attend
- Amber...comment on Rhonda durham students do not choose bruns because of high performing...they choose because of transportation....overall consistently.
- Allan...important that we collect info MEA scores of all three towns especially 8th and 11th grade and breaking out durham students....when they progress durham students go down. Looking to get information to durham public
- Nelson...predict families...know how many students take the bus....how much of an impact on how many students drive?
- Fred...anything to prevent Brunswick sending buses to durham....appeal of having the ride shared between communities.
- Allan...partnering with Lisbon/Brunswick....request wanted durham to 80%.
- Bruns...sending
- Rsu could not prevent Brunswick from picking up students
- Brunswicks areas is changing losing roughly 1.2 million from durham students...Brunswick will be hungry for students from any community...fred's point is not far fetched...discussion about how market has changed...
- John Speaking for communities that have school choice....planning...Freeport is planning for students and the only projection is K basically know to aquetly staff....with choice you are planning all items without knowing how many students are coming in and to plan properly....philiosophically...choice understand why its' important and hard to give up but go back to own community...students do not have the choice unless the parents pay for private...all three towns will have to get the budget approved if two communities are allowed to choose
- Amber who does Freeport plan for pownal students...call get a feel for it....could say one and gotten budget passed and then 3 or 4 students decide to go

- somewhere else....used to be obvious and is now a hardship...advance planning. Assume the numbers and whether or not there are changes...once your budget is in it can affect either way.
- Accurate for two years...children in private schools would change scores and has robbed the school system on many levels...
 - Does durham have school choice k-8...Freeport does not have all students come to Freeport....20 in area do attend private...if pownal or durham would have the same number....it is still a difficulty....formula would make a difference....you are always make a guess to who will attend and who doesn't....do find reasons to change schools and choice will compound that issue and affect programming.
 - Choice three elements....staff, students and parents....wants them to stay and fight for their students education....wants the parent who is committed to education. All the other residents who do not have children but they are supporting the system as well....they will have the opportunity to support or not support the that at the polls...schools systems who do not have choice..don't believe a town/school board coming up with the recommendation to allow student to have choice.
 - Sherri Historically pownal choice....no representation on school boards...supporting rsu but we are getting representation of each community on the boards...a little more representation for secondary students....create the strongest....like to see faze in but in the end not to have choice
 - Joe this be the issue that stops the consolidation....the only choice the voters will have would choice or no choice....not a combined effort of all three communities and it will have the rpc lose the efforts.
 - Allan...agree on faze in and rsu that high performing unit...they will choose the rsu...
 - Freeport....public has moved in but not attend public school...there are people of affluence who have the ability to send their students to private school
 - Private schools are not all they are cracked up to be
 - Elaine 6 private schools within the community....public sees the changes within the rsu they will send their students....communities need to be convinced....faze in appropriate...transition and plan thoughtfully for students
 - John...importance of the parents....central element of the town especially at the elementary/middle...school choice retained...town energy at elementary but not the same energy from community within the secondary school....would you lose that energy after 8th grade if choice was retained.
 - Amber...parents still involved time and energies to different high schools...involvement doesn't decline.
 - Rhonda not sure how many parents support the secondary schools....excited about the idea of having a new rsu and a combined high school...would be a parent that would enjoy...
 - Rick...if this rsu comes to fruition...will Freeport families have a difficult time welcoming families from other communities. Sharing joint ownership
 - John...because Freeport and pownal had the connection does not feel there was ostrisism....it may be a challenge but it will be a new group without a history...
 - Jen...demographics in pownal have changed...choice issue is shrouding a class issue...durham has been railroaded in choice....pownal's demographics have increased and durham demographics are changing...and that honesty is important

- Freeport pownal...was more rural...thinking the class issue...people are better in one community than the other...whether communities will mesh but school choice is not part of that issue...must be a combined effort. Do they have the same goals and issues. Don't feel this is a factor
- Jen Fairness is an emotional argument...not the way to market their persuasive arguments...suggest that we need to look at our vision to our combined community school...to work everyone has to be a part of it.
- Fred Interested in doing the right thing for everyone if Freeport had choice I would feel the same way...be true to the principal for what's fair for one is fair for all.
- Jen...when someone brings up class it is a touchy subject...this is an unspoken topic...reflected within the reports online, paper
- Cliff...people of Freeport going with yarmouth...not being involved with durham...perceived in those comments a sense "class based or some other cultural factor" yarmouth is the community they inspire to be and durham is not what they want to be. Unfamiliarity within the communities...see who that would be an issue...does not mean that choice discussions are not valid issues...separate concerns that can be addressed by the rsu and then actual options to the
- Rick agreed with cliff...if I were a parent some of the things I have heard/read I would have to think about having my child attend a school with parents who...embarrassed by what has been put out there...not the thoughts of all Freeport members...
- Still not a school choice issue...Freeport receiveing a signal that other communities look down on Freeport...could be looked at both ways.
- John...merge...we need to talk about as a group...talk about the meaty issues...there are issues that each town need to raise with each others...devote session to openly discussed issues they feel and have been brought up...choice whether ornot there is equity within the students some being able to pick or not...this is not about class or demographics...made progress tonight on a issue that is fairly discret. Talk about a future meeting
- Bob Meeting for community visio...theme topic...each district present those pieces...opened up an important topic...school choice...different points of view. Think about next steps between now and the next time or the subcommittee..how does school choice would make for a stronger rsu...what information would you need to make those decisions
- Right direction...take a poll...fazing in/out is a possibility not expressed for everyone...straw invitation regarding fazing in....can rpc contingents go back and discuss...and then come back to present them
- Durham had a straw poll...school board is looking and it may disagree with the town straw poll view and you are saying something different...
- Short and long term view...let's just find out where people are.
- Bob...straw polls may invite people to believe this is the posisiton...go back to what does the rpc need to make this a stronger view....need information...not an intellectual discussion but an emotional one... what information is needed financially etc...
- Brainstorm benefits/
- Our role at this stage that our role is to educate.
- Convince others with financial information...how much does it cost

- If durham decided not to have school choice could Freeport absorb students that first year the answer was no
- What happens if durham or pownal decide to keep school choice...how does that effect the plan
- Do you feel that school choice is in the best interest in the rsu...amber personally may feel one way and the community feels differently...validity is being lost...allan in the best interest in rsu....we need to be fazed out...looking down the road...durham to keep choice...should go to durham
- Fred Choice can be solved in some way...set this aside....it will need to be revisited...need to continue visiting other issues....come back to issue.
- John sense from discussion where people are....not take a read straw poll tonight....uninformed...now next charge is to analyze other issues and then educate communities.
- Bob ask rpc members communicate with chair...information or questions of analysis that need to be available...chairs teleconference and review information purposes....information on cost savings...
- 18 or 19th on the workshop with Jim Rier....19th...5:30pm....durham
- thank you for raising issues....encouraged to raise any issues that were not raised to your chair...
- adjourned at 9:10pm
- Respectfully Submitted S.Brewer 12/6/2007