



Considerations and Next Steps for Welcoming 6th Grade to the Onteora Middle School

January 24, 2023
BOE Presentation



2010 - 2011 Middle School Task Force

Reviewed the following configurations:

- » K-8 in all three elementary schools
- » 5-8 in MS/HS
- » 5-8 in Bennett
- » 6-8 in Bennett
- » 6-8 in MS/HS
- » 7-8 in MS/HS
- » 7-12 as Jr./Sr. HS
- » 7-9 MS in MS/HS

The recommendation of the Task Force was to create a 6-8 Middle School in the MS/HS



On February 28, 2012, the Board voted to restructure the elementary buildings from three K-6 buildings to two K -3 buildings and one 4 - 6 grade building. This restructure was completed for the opening of school in September of 2012.

No change was made to the structure of the middle school.

This action addressed some of the issues related to declining enrollment, but no action was taken on the recommendation to expand the middle school grade configuration.



The Board of Education adopted the following goal for the 2022-2023 school year:

Support the development of the District's long-term, district-wide plan that addresses current challenges and opportunities that have already been identified, including declining enrollment, staff shortages, facilities needs, budget, student achievement, community impact, and the expansion of the middle school to add sixth graders. The Board acknowledges that additional challenges and opportunities will likely be discovered throughout the exploration process. The Board aims to accomplish this through input from the Superintendent, a Board ad hoc committee, the Shared Decision-Making committee, PTA's as well as clear and consistent community outreach. In the next year, the Board plans to accomplish: Forming a Board ad hoc committee, holding at least one public meeting to discuss the District's long-term plan, reviewing the [Building Utilization and Grade Configuration Study by Dr. Kevin S. Baughman](#), and requesting at least one progress report from the Superintendent.



The goal contains multiple components:

1. Creation of a long-term plan
2. Expansion of the middle school to include 6th grade
3. Forming a Board Ad Hoc Committee
4. Holding at least one public meeting to discuss the long-term plan
5. Review of the Building Utilization and Grade Configuration Study by Dr. Kevin Baughman



Moving 6th grade is one component of the Board goal. It will have its own implementation process and will be unique to the students, staff and buildings most involved. The student, parent, and staff engagement will be separate and focused on the particular needs and opportunities inherent to the incorporation of the 6th grade into the middle school.

Once the specific cohort has been identified, collaboration and implementation will begin.



Benefits of incorporating sixth grade into the middle school:

- The 6-8 model allows students to develop a greater sense of affiliation with the school and staff. Students will have more time to build lasting relationships at a critical time in development. In addition, academically a 6-8 staff will have more time to identify, assess and implement supports and interventions.
- This model enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of curricular articulation and staff communication. NYS Standards are often grouped grades 6-8. Academically, 6th grade is generally seen as secondary content.
- The 6-8 model allows for the potential expansion of the PLC model and co-teaching models, working vertically and horizontally to discuss student success and challenges, reflect on professional practice, adapt instructional models, and work collaboratively by content area to strengthen our instructional models.



Benefits of incorporating sixth grade into the middle school (continued):

- For students with IEP's and those who have related services, there is great difficulty when they come to middle school to find opportunities for electives and required classes such as chorus or band. A move for 6th grade would allow more opportunities for students to earn these required course credits and give more flexibility in their schedule
- The middle school teaching model allows more flexibility and time in what and when students access required classes. NYS recognizes 6-8 configuration; languages, technology, home and careers, music, art, and health can be spread out over three years. Limited staff resources with certain certifications limit what can be provided at Bennett.
- *This is time sensitive in order to provide the necessary supports and services to our students as they deal with the effects of the pandemic. They deserve to have the additional time to access all the resources that can be made available during middle school with the additional year.*



Special Education Supports:

- » Continuum of support for sixth grade similar to current model
- » Continued Professional Development opportunities for Special Education teachers in the areas of multi-sensory reading, math, and co-teaching implementation
- » Close collaboration with related service providers
- » AIS and MTSS Support

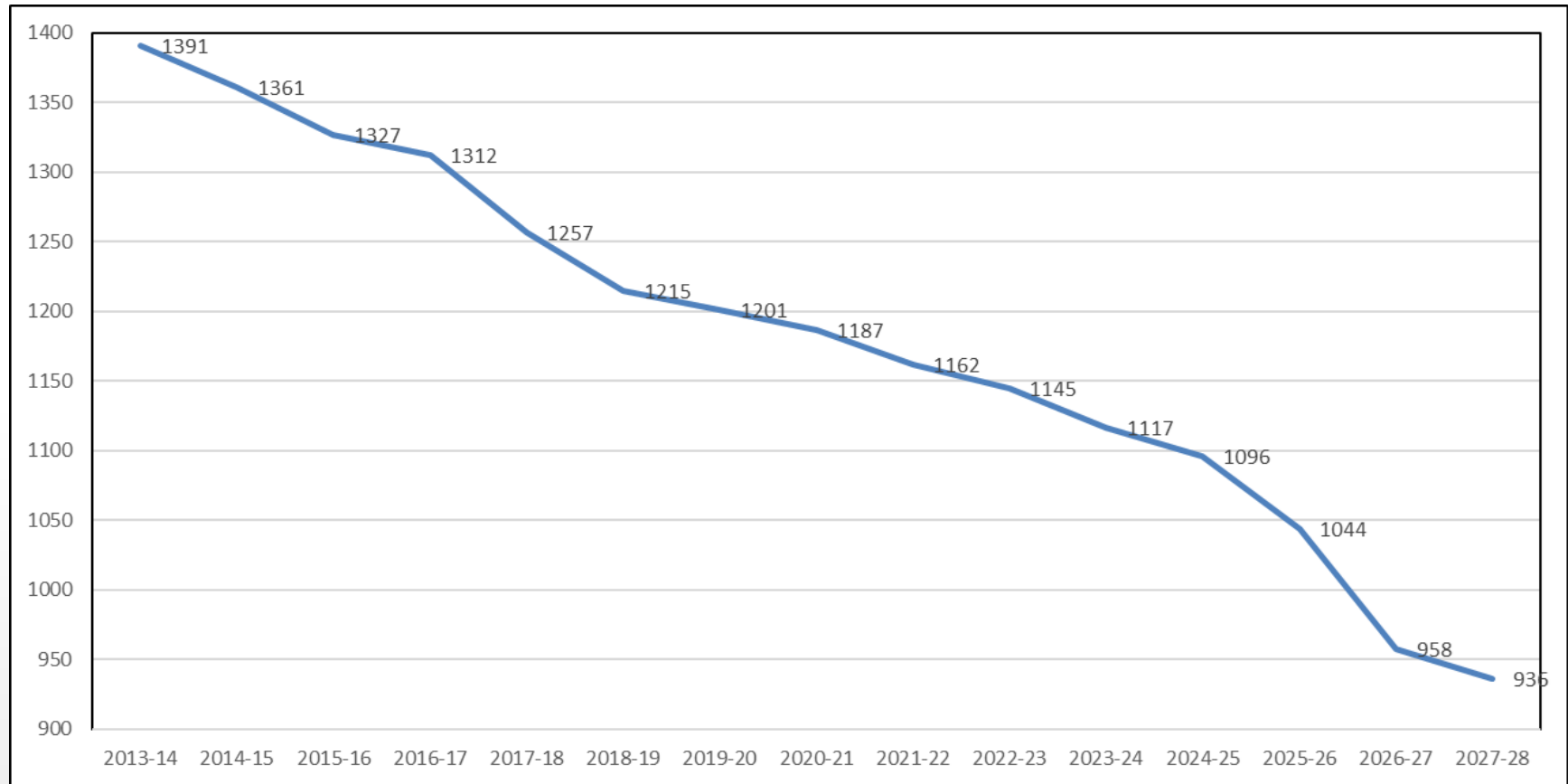


Mental Health and SEL Supports:

- » School Counselors
- » School Psychologists
- » School Social Workers
- » Morningside
- » Astor Services
- » LaSalle (Middle School only)

HISTORICAL ENROLLMENT								
	BENNETT	PHOENICIA	WEST HURLEY	WDSTK	TOTAL ELEM.	MS/HS	DISTRICT	K
2003/04	350	221	169	282	1022	1138	2,160	
2004/05	355	213	0	404	972	1139	2,111	
2005/06	345	217	0	354	916	1135	2,051	
2006/07	305	215	0	329	849	1100	1,949	
2007/08	282	226	0	301	809	1050	1,859	
2008/09	267	225	0	293	785	957	1,742	116
2009/10	263	211	0	296	770	885	1,655	107
2010/11	244	210	0	261	715	829	1,544	77
2011/12	236	213	0	254	703	759	1,462	88
2012/13*	358	142	0	211	711	695	1,406	122
2013/14	321	155	0	246	722	648	1,370	92
2014/15	321	160	0	237	718	632	1,350	86
2015/16	292	148	0	235	675	646	1,321	79
2016/17	310	126	0	219	655	645	1,300	71
2017/18	303	132	0	193	628	624	1,252	79
2018/19	301	137	0	177	615	594	1,209	85
2019/20	260	137	0	165	562	628	1,190	76
2020/21	238	163	0	148	549	626	1,175	64
2021/22	217	139	0	153	509	605	1,114	72
Current (12/31/22):	241	130	0	151	522	585	1,107	69
* Reconfigured to K-3 PH and WD, 4-6 BN for the 2012-2013 school year.								
Previously all were K-6								

Enrollment projections





Once a date is determined for the movement of 6th grade to the MS, we will begin to engage in the following actions as a staff:

- » engage with the 6th grade and middle school faculty on program design and implementation concerns
- » meet with the 5th grade (this year's cohort or next) parents to discuss plans for engaging students in a developmentally appropriate learning environment that offers robust learning and extracurricular opportunities and to address and incorporate concerns into our planning
- » utilize space and scheduling to enhance appropriate separation between 6th graders and high school students as recommended by Dr. Baughman
- » meet with 5th grade students (this year's cohort or next) to hear their suggestions and concerns, as well as to preview some things to be excited about as they transition to the middle school
- » refine structure and support for the social emotional transition for students and families

Potential Draft Implementation Timelines

September 2023	September 2024	Event
Feb 6	October 2023	Meetings with Mr. DiDona, Mr. Buono and 6th grade teachers
Feb 13	September 2023	Utilize the SEL structure, supported by Morningside, to support student transition
Feb 20-24	Nov 2023	Meeting with 5th grade parents to hear concerns
March 20-24	Jan 2024	Meeting with 5th grade parents to address concerns
March 20-24	Jan 2024	Assign rooms, work with faculty to discuss possibilities for after-school programs and intramurals
April	March 2024	Begin scheduling
May 1	May 2024	Communication with parents describing academic program and opportunities
June 1	June 1,2 - 2024	5 and 6th graders visit OMS for information sharing and discussion of extra-curricular interests.
End of Aug 2023	End of Aug 2024	Open house for parents/students
September 2023	September 2024	Students begin in September at OMS

Comparable District Configurations and Transportation

District (enrollment)	MS Configuration	Grouped Transportation
Ellenville (1462) Jr/Sr High School	7-12 (All students on one campus)	K-6/7-12 (all busses open to all students)
Highland (1573)	6-8	6-12
Kingston (6056)	5-8	5-8
New Paltz (1763)	6-8	6-12
Rondout (1786)	4-6 Intermediate school shares a building with Jr High grades 7&8	4-12
Saugerties (2334) Jr/Sr High School	7-8 (Formerly one Principal for 7-12, elementary reconfiguration in 2022-2023 to close a building)	7-12
Wallkill (2786)	7-8	7-12
Pawling (1114)	5-8	5-12
North Salem (1019)	6-8 - shared MS/HS building	6-12
Tuckahoe (1119)	6-8	K-5 and 6-12
Haldane (788)	6-8	K-5 and 6-12 transportation
Webutuck (Northeast CSD) (601)	4-8	Pre-K - 3, 4-12 (split a prior Pre-K -12 bus structure due to driver shortage)



Transportation Grouping:

MS students will continue to ride the bus with HS students. The late buses from the MS/HS also transport the Bennett Elementary students that stay for after school activities. Currently we transport students in grades 4-12 together and have been doing so for years.



Celebrations and moving up:

- » Bennett building staff have always insured a special experience for our students as they transition to the middle school. They will continue to work together to make sure that each grade level that moves to the middle school will be recognized and have a chance to participate in this important tradition.



District and building staff will work together to adjust the use of space in the MS/HS building to support the identity and developmental stages of grades six through eight (6-8) as per the recommendation by Dr. Baughman.

There is no expectation that class sizes will increase.



Potential extracurricular opportunities for 6th graders
(subject to change based on student interest and
faculty availability):

Current Clubs for MS students only:

MS Homework Help

MS Art Club

MS Battle of the Books Club

MS Coding/Robotics Club

MS Science Olympiad

MS Student Affairs Council

MS Teaming Up for Success (TUFS)

MS Yearbook



Intramural Opportunities:

Our Athletic Director will be analyzing the field and gymnasium schedules for opportunities for sixth grade students to participate in intramurals. We believe that the fall and spring seasons may accommodate intramurals, but winter likely will not.

Modified athletic teams cannot include sixth grade students.



Thank you!