



*Partners in Rural Innovative Models of Education*

*An Update Newsletter*

*February 22, 2017*

*Issue #3*

## Teacher Leaders Meet with Sean Thompson



On February 9, 2017 at the Berkshire Board of Education Teacher Leaders from Berkshire Middle School/High School, Burton Elementary and Ledgesmont Elementary met with Architect Sean Thompson to share input for planning for a new school building. Mr. Thompson is a Berkshire resident who has been volunteering his time as part of the PRIME Executive Board. He works for Stantec. The company motto for Stantec is “Design with community in mind.”

Teacher Leader representatives present included: Janice Bartosic, Jennifer Catanese, Superintendent Doug DeLong, Auburn Superintendent, Maggie Lynch, Matt Morbeto, Pamela Nguyen, Tracy Rea, Janet Sherman, and Catherine Zembower.

This group discussed the following topics: grade levels for the building, the finance percentages between the Ohio Facilities Commission and Berkshire voters, enrollment statistics; and how enrollment trends affect design input. The main question underlying all these concerns was ***what educationally would make the most***

*sense for the students?* Teacher Leaders were asked to go back to their buildings and present information for the March 9, 2017 meeting with their colleagues and getting their input. The next meeting of teacher leaders will be at 4:00 p.m. on March 9, 2017 at the Berkshire Board of Education.

## Many Questions Received ... FAQ Publication to be Posted on Website!



At the PRIME Executive Board meeting, Beth McCaffrey shared a list of questions she received. Questions will be answered by the Berkshire Board of Education. Critical questions discussed at the Executive Board meeting echoed the concerns expressed by teacher leaders in the meeting that will be covered in this newsletter.



Questions targeted how many buildings will there be? What grade levels would be in the building(s)? Is there a timeline that frames the decisions for this project? What is the final percentage of dollars coming from the state and then local tax payers. The FAQ publication will be forthcoming. In the meantime, if you still have questions, please send them to [beth.mccaffrey@berkshireschools.org](mailto:beth.mccaffrey@berkshireschools.org)



## Decision Factor: Enrollment



One of the first items of information needed for an OFCC Assessment is enrollment data. This number is the current enrollment and not the potential, capacity or projected enrollment. It is the number of students currently enrolled in the district. At the time of our meeting, Superintendent DeLong reported that there were 656 students in grades K-6, 260 students in grades 7 & 8, and 400 students in grades 9-12. This enrollment number has been declining over the years, but for the OFCC, it is the current enrollment numbers that are used. According to Sean Thompson, he said that there is a “350 Rule!” This rule means that there would not be a building built that would house less than 350 students. Keeping the enrollment numbers in mind, how Berkshire would configure their grade level assignments per building would become a key factor for design purposes.

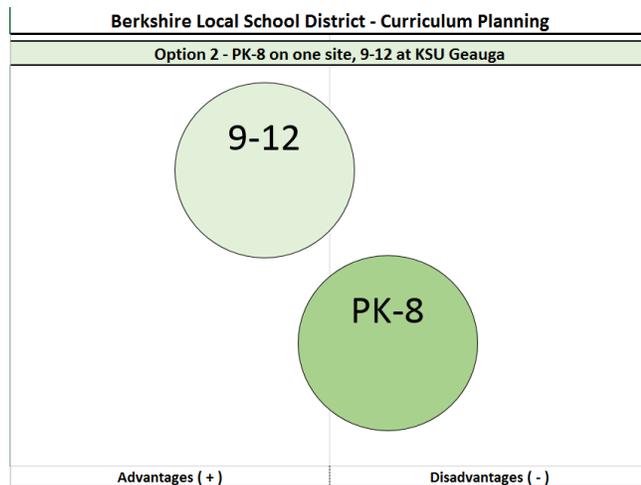
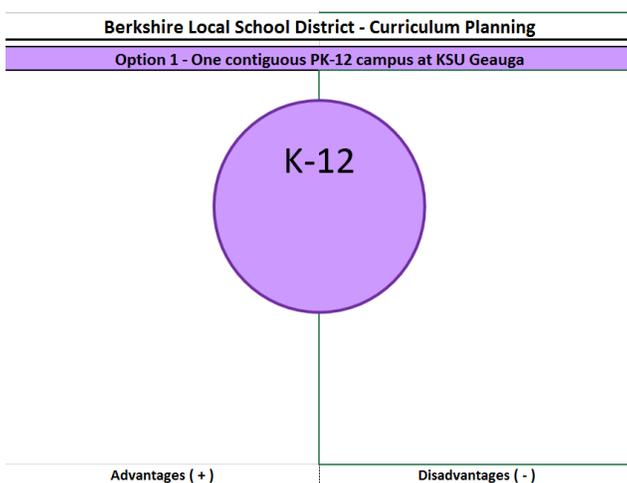


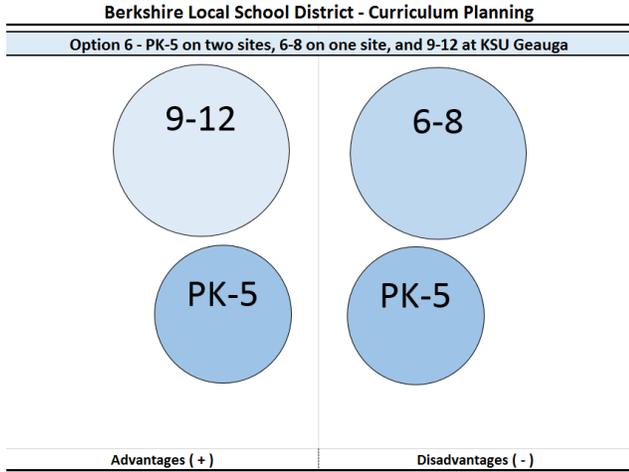
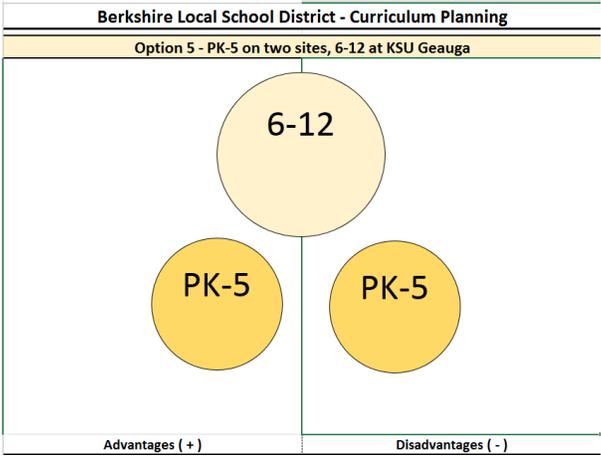
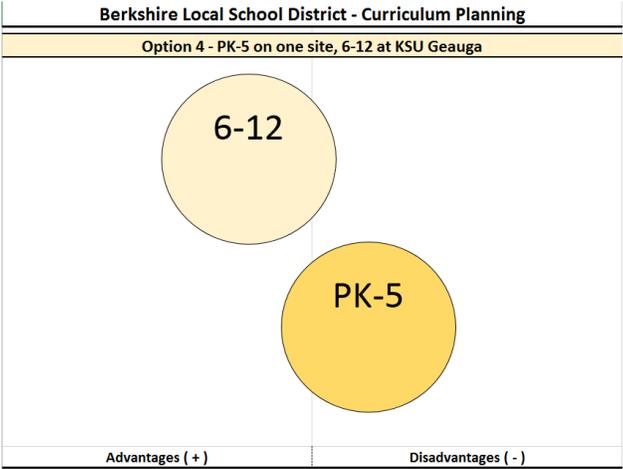
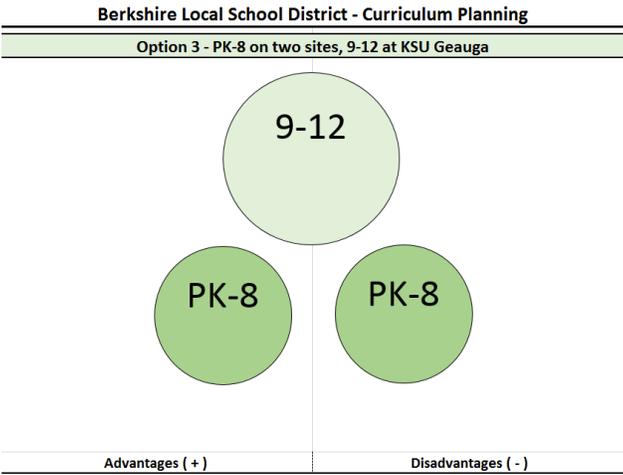
(Stanek website)

## Initial Design Questions Introduced to Teacher Leaders by Sean Thompson!

The common understanding during the discussion was that curriculum planning should be considered in order to design the new building. Planning would need to know how many buildings would there be? What grades should be in each building? Where should building(s) be located? What type of learning experiences should students have that would affect space allocation?

The following graphs shows the initial thoughts regarding the relationship between grade levels, general curriculum and buildings. Each of the teacher leaders would take the charts shown below, post them in the faculty room in their individual building and gain feedback from their colleagues. Input gathered from teachers and staff would list reasons for advantages and disadvantages to each option. Feedback from staff at Berkshire Middle/High School, Burton Elementary and Burton Ledgemont on the these design concepts will be shared at the March PRIME Executive Board meeting. Concepts are below.





# Project Timeline



At the PRIME Executive Board meeting, the concept of creating a timeline for this project was discussed. In a hypothetical example, should the Berkshire Local School Board proceed in an urgent manner, and if the issue was to be presented to the voters for a November, 2018 vote, all final building designs would need to be submitted to the OFCC no later than January, 2018. Beth McCaffrey shared the ten months lead time as part of the information gained from her meeting with the OFCC. The impact of this statement quickly provided a reality check as to how much time the planning phase would require and how coordination of all tasks placed on a timeline would be critical for planning and communicating with the Berkshire public. The Board of Education will be the lead governing agency to manage and make the necessary decisions. First step is establishing a firm and realistic timeline. Sean Thompson recommended that a Design Firm would be need to be hired as one of the initial steps on the timeline.

## Existing Models to Visit and Review:

At the last PRIME Executive Board meeting, the question was asked if there other models to look at or visit to help

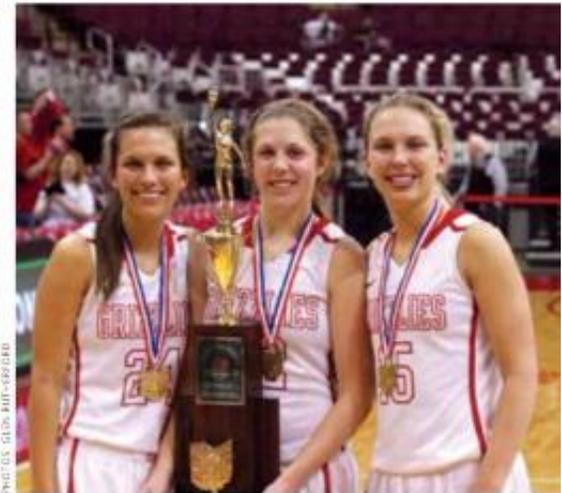
plan the new school. Tracy Jemison offered a visit to Wadsworth where the construction of a new high school spurred conversations with other city partnerships to collaborate, consolidate and to build facilities that met the needs of their community. Below is a short excerpt from their 2016 Chamber of Commerce publication. The entire publication can be found at:



# Wadsworth City Schools... a Partnership of Shared Services

Wadsworth City Schools is a triple-A school district, emphasizing Academics, Arts, and Athletics. The school district is comprised of eight school buildings, including five elementary schools, one intermediate school, one middle school, and one high school. The total enrollment is approximately 4,800 students.

The high school and community center complex allows the school to share community space with the City of Wadsworth, Summa Wadsworth-Rittman Health System, and Wadsworth Public Library, enhancing recreational opportunities for all age groups and serving as a satellite hub for wellness and library services. The complex includes the academic wings for grades 9-12, a performing arts center, competition gym, field house, YMCA, doctor offices, senior center, WCTV studio, and library kiosk.



This partnership allows cost savings through shared services.

The district offers a host of extracurricular activities in which students can participate, including

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**GAME ON!** STEM Camp (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) is held in the summer for grades K-8 (above); Grizzlies soccer (above, left) is just one of many sports available to boy and girl athletes in the school system; Wadsworth Girls' Basketball 2016 OHSAA Division 1 State Champions proudly show off their new trophy (above) after a 2015-16 24-1 season.

Next PRIME Teacher Leader Meeting: Thursday, March 9, 2017 @ 4:00 p.m. at Berkshire Board offices.

Next PRIME Executive Board meeting: Thursday, APRIL 13, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. at Geauga Growth Partnership.

*PRIME Executive Board includes:*



**BERKSHIRE SCHOOLS**

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