

Amherst Elementary School Building Project: Parent/Guardian Survey

All Open-Ended Comments and Questions Received

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This document contains the 224 open-ended comments and questions submitted by respondents to the Parent/Guardian Survey on the Amherst Elementary School Building Project, administered January 4, 2016, to January 11, 2016.

Approximately 50 percent of all respondents to the Parent/Guardian Survey submitted comments/questions. Supporters of some building options were more likely to have submitted comments/questions, while supporters of some other options were more likely to leave the open-ended field blank.

To help ensure respondent anonymity, no additional identifying information is included with the comments/questions.

Comment numbers were added for reference purposes. They were assigned randomly and thus do not reflect any other factors (such as date submitted, school, grade level, or building option preferences).

Paragraph breaks were manually added to longer responses in order to improve readability. Aside from that change, there were no other edits made to the comments; they are included verbatim in this document.

Comment Number	Comment/Question
1	Please keep in mind the importance of each schools unique community and traditions that have been formed over the years. These communities are important to each school. Both wildwood and fort river should have a new building with classrooms that have walls and doors to promote a better learning environment. Quads are noisy environments and make it difficult for students to cosintrate and learn.
2	Which of these options will result in the smallest class sizes?
3	Please keep our 3 elementary schools. Fort river is a wonderful school with a wonderful community. We would prefer you fix any building issues here but the main thing is to keep it!
4	As both an educator and parent, small schools are best. We picked our current home because we wanted our kids to attend Marks Meadow, and will likely leave the district if one huge school is built. In this survey, there was no option to pick renovation...with Wildwood receiving some state funds and town funds and Fort River receiving town funds exclusively.

I've worked in schools that needed major updating and had a better experience than in a new, huge school that lacked both vision and community. I currently work in South Hadley at the middle school, where kids are forming their identities. In my opinion, it is hard for them to leave their peer group as they have been together, with the same 150-170 kids since kindergarten. Developmentally, I think children in the early grades should be with a small cohort of other students that they know well, rather than a huge group where they might not even know every student's name in a grade level. However, by middle school, kids are more secure in who they are and ready to practice making new friends. This is when I think it makes sense for several schools to merge and for the student body to grow.

Mainly, however, I've heard no educational rationale for one big school with 7-9 classes per grade. Elementary education is so important and losing a nurturing environment would be devastating. My older son is in grade one...what I've loved most about his elementary school experience is how kindergarten screening was so welcoming with Principal Nick greeting every family and older siblings coming to say hello. I also love the reading buddies program where older students read to younger ones. Furthermore, my son raves about assemblies, which I cannot even envision in a k-1 school.

I hope that the school committee will put the breaks on this project and continue to listen to feedback from a wide swath of people. I hope the district can be more successful in putting forth educational motivations for the changes being proposed...I've heard lots about construction and little about philosophy, academic vision, and community building.

Comment Number	Comment/Question
5	<p>To our family the most important consideration is having a school where Wildwood is located. We value a community where we can walk to schools and town. We moved to Amherst and bought a home in the neighborhood so we would be close to all three schools. Please build the new school where Wildwood currently is so that students have access to the middle and high schools, to downtown and to all of the resources at UMass Amherst.</p>
6	<p>There has been enough disputes in Amherst over its elementary schools. This is due to unnecessary districts that divide the community and place people from different parts of town in nonsensical battles over resources for their local schools. The best solution is the one where no kid goes to a better building or to a school with higher exam scores. This town is small enough so we can all send our children to the same school and we all work to make it better.</p>
7	<p>1. Our kindergarten-age daughter's favorite time of the week - the time she looks forward to more than any other part of the week - is Book Buddy time, when the 3rd graders come to her classroom to read with her. Having a range of ages in the elementary school is important, I think, rather than a PK-1 preschool setting.</p> <p>2. I feel STRONGLY that whatever decision is made needs to be focused on the following: What choice will have the most positive impact on our children's education? If the physical environment at FR or WW is detracting from our children's learning, or is causing quality teachers to bypass or leave our district, then we need to make the change, for both schools, as quickly as possible.</p> <p>3. Building two K-6 schools side-by-side seems like the most common-sense choice. We will be able to subsidize the upgrade of both Fort River and Wildwood at the same time while still retaining 'neighborhood school' identities. If it seems in the future, after further consideration, that a Grade 2-6 school is something we want to pursue, I suspect we could re-configure the newly built building into such a facility. Currently, however, I do not see the wisdom in such a radical restructuring. At least, no one has made a clear educational argument to me why that would be preferable to a K-6 set up in each school. We are committed to Amherst schools and trust that our daughter will be served well by the school committee and all involved in this decision.</p>
8	<p>It seems as though the town is more interested in saving money than the quality of education. I do not want my son to be put into a "super school" and get less individualized attention in a class of 40 or so peers. If you were not so ignorant you would see that studies have shown that larger schools = less quality education.</p>

Comment Number	Comment/Question
9	I have two children in preschool and had been looking forward to sending them to the Amherst schools, in fact the strong district was a big part of our decision to stay in Amherst. That being said, I have been quite concerned with the way everything has been handled regarding the reconfiguration. As a preschool parent I have received no information, except for what I have pursued myself. I have concerns as both a parent and teacher, especially regarding plan C, as it creates a big transition for children at a time where developmentally it won't serve them well. I am additionally concerned that under plan C teachers would not have a chance to collaborate across grades, particularly between 2nd and 3rd grade. The proposed large school sizes of 750+ is also a concern. I have taught in both small and large schools and there is no comparison, especially at the elementary level. There are other concerns, including transportation issues among other things, that I worry about, but the above mentioned are my main concerns. I hope that as the school committee moves forward with these important decisions that they look beyond financial and budgetary consideration, and focus on what's best for students and teachers.
10	I think it is important to think about the students and not solely base decision based on budget and the bottom line. Right now it appears that decisions are being made because it would help the district financially but it is not taking into consideration the impact to the students.
11	Why can't we fund two new schools with levees?
12	Do you really want kindergarten kids on busses for 45 minutes or more going from N. Amherst to Crocker Farm? It is additional "seat time" for kids who need more time learning through play NOT more time sitting down.
13	The funding was approved to replace Wildwood. This is what should be happening. There should not be other "options". The consensus is that the school committee is doing what they want rather than what the people of this town want for their children and for the town as a whole. Unless the original plan is followed, I hope the plans are not approved and the town loses the funding.
14	I received this survey very last minute. I am disappointed with the process the way the public discussion has been organized.
15	We strongly disagree with anything that is NOT a K-6 or PreK-6 school.

Comment Number	Comment/Question
16	<p>I am strongly in favor of smaller, K-6 schools because they offer the following benefits: maximizing teacher-staff-student relationships over time, minimizing school transitions (known to be disruptive and detrimental to many students), minimizing transportation costs and environmental impact, maximizing family engagement by making it logistically easier and more approachable, limiting the number of students per grade per school so that the children will know their class- and grade-mates on a deeper level over time, maximizing extended intergrade peer mentoring, maintaining siblings/families within one elementary school.</p> <p>I deeply oppose the proposed grade reconfiguration. There is no pedagogical evidence that it is a good option, certainly none that it is superior to K-6. Having every student attend the same school is not the same thing as equity. The proposed grade configuration may actually cause potential harm to some students, particularly those who might be more disadvantaged in the first place. While eliminating the need for redistricting to ensure socioeconomic balance among schools means fewer headaches for the administration, it does not directly benefit students.</p> <p>I also worry about kids tending to segregate themselves into familiar groups in a larger school whereas, in my experience, they seem to bond as a class, grade, and school in the current system where there are enough kids to be a diverse community but not so many that there are unfamiliar faces. Not asking for demographic information like socioeconomic status is a problem of the survey as it will be unable to assess whether it reached and got responses from all groups. Having it available solely via Internet certainly makes it more difficult for people with fewer resources to participate.</p> <p>Finally, not explicitly including the option of renovation was problematic. The way Option A was described also implied that there is no possible way to address Fort River (rather than stating that Fort River would need to be addressed as a separate project). I believe that renovating both Wildwood and Fort River is the best way to fix the building problems and maintain the type of school system I want (small, neighborhood, K-6 elementary schools).</p>
17	I prefer community schools, K-6 for consistency and neighborhood feel.
18	<p>We have a child about to enter Amherst schools in 1.5 years. Therefore, the timing of these events makes a large difference in how we answer. If the proposed timeline for any of these building projects is overly optimistic or unrealistic (which I suspect to be the case), then it is difficult for a family in our situation to give meaningful, informed feedback.</p>
19	<p>The poor learning environments and health concerns for both Wildwood and Fort River seem equal. It would be a shame to leave Fort River out of future plans and see those students continue to suffer with an outdated building. If keeping Crocker Farm as-is would avoid redistricting hassles, seems best to leave that school as it stands now. Transitioning to another school after Kindergarten seems like a big change for young kids to face.</p>

Comment Number	Comment/Question
20	While I understand the need to cut costs and I am familiar with all three buildings and know the difficulties of the "quad", I absolutely do not think going to a "bigger is better" system is the answer.
21	<p>Thank you for taking the time to work on this process and to ensure a better future for our schools. I hope that you will strongly consider the option of simply renovating both Wildwood and Fort River in an affordable fashion. I believe that there is much that works about the current neighborhood schools system and although we need to invest in our infrastructure and our teachers and staff, I do not feel that my kids need to go to a fancy architect-driven expensive project mega-school. That will not improve their educational outcomes!</p> <p>If we must put Wildwood and FortRiver in one school because the town will not pay to renovate them separately, then I feel strongly that we should keep each one as close to its existing structure as possible (e.g. K-6 x 3 schools). I have two kids who are two years apart and both my spouse and I work full time. It is very hard on working parents to have to pick up and drop off kids at multiple locations across town or to coordinate activities at multiple locations across town. If you split up the system into grade levels and combine all students, we are looking at additional years of multiple locations, rather than having siblings be at the same school.</p> <p>Finally, I am very worried by the slick nature of the promotional materials that seem to go with the vision of the new school. It feels as though we are letting architects and builders drive our educational process! I hope that is not the case. Once again, our kids do not need a fancy new building. They need a decent building (e.g. Crocker Farm) and the best teachers and staff we can afford as a town! I hope that you will help us to invest in the things that really matter for education.</p>
22	Amherst does a great job in education, my concerns are more on the social side - which does in turn effect learning. I would prefer the that grade configurations be as small as possible to allow for small classrooms and consistency in peer groups.
23	<p>What will the administration look like in all of the different options? Will there be multiple aesthetics teachers to accommodate the much larger number of students or will there be aesthetics teachers for each "team" (each K-6 wing, or each 2-6 wing, or each 2-4 and 5-6 wing)? Will the shared spaces (cafeteria, gym, library) be large enough to accommodate many students or will the schedule change so to accommodate the increased number (e.g. much larger classes occupying the space or shorter class times because there are many more classes to fit into a daily schedule, really early lunches to accommodate more students eating in the cafeteria)? These figures aren't including in any of the presented design options.</p>
24	Students in the district will benefit from the opportunity to attend school in an innovative, clean, updated building that ensures learning for all. Equity among all three schools is important for the morale of the community and the success of our students.

Comment Number	Comment/Question
25	<p>We have had the current school buildings for 40 years - I believe it is ok to replace Wildwood now and continue with FR as is for several years until we can secure additional funding to replace FR. The strong community of parents, teachers, administrators, and kids developed at the three schools is very important to me. I can understand the administrative ease of one centralized school but don't think that should be the driving force for the ultimate outcome. It can be difficult to send your elementary age kid off to school - a large school will feel more like a lion's den than the smaller-size current 3-school system. Kids will feel more like a number or body to move as needed for admin purposes. There will be fewer adults with detailed longitudinal connection with that kid to keep an eye on them over their elementary years. Studies have shown, and efforts underway at ARMS and ARHS are trying to expose students to more adults to act as mentors for their entire time at each of those schools - a centralized elementary school seems to counter this effort. Thanks for your work - really appreciate the effort you are putting into this important decision.</p>
26	<p>The Superintendent and SC made a grave and unprofessional error in not engaging stakeholders in undertaking a major and impactful initiative. Had they made a genuine effort to do so, there would undoubtedly more buy in to support any of these efforts (all of which have general merit, though some more than others).</p>
27	<p>I appreciate the time you are taking to include parent/community feedback. While I do not doubt that finance and sustainability factor greatly in the District's decision, know that the benefits of a small school greatly outweigh savings.</p>
28	<p>I don't want my elementary age child go to a huge school. Educationally I value neighborhood schools.</p>
29	<p>Without more evidence regarding how redistricting will affect student learning outcomes and financial considerations, I find it impossible to support any kind of redistricting. The one page summary seems extremely biased, with no citations or places to find more information. For example, is "acoustic privacy" really the #1 consideration, or does it just look good to have option A at 62% and the other options at 100%? And the fact that zoning issues are unaddressed is a place where the administration has not done their homework, not a checkmark in the "con" department for option A. In addition, the financial numbers seem pretty speculative without any kind of support. Where is the certainty that these redistricting plans will double the savings compared to the costs? The most important issue remains unaddressed: how will reducing the diversity of ages in a school building affect learning? how will greatly increasing school size affect learning? Finally, with only 4 days between being told of the survey until it closes, you've left me no time to do any kind of additional research. The district proposed renovation of Wildwood and the state approved a grant for its renovation. I am having a hard time understanding the motivation for any option other than option A.</p>

Comment Number	Comment/Question
30	I appreciate all the hard work the district administration and the school committee members are doing to handle this difficult decision.
31	I think ALL of these projections are premature until the final projected budgets are transparently available to the public. What would be the cost to renovate/replace Wildwood on site? What would be the cost to renovate/replace Fort River on site? Also, very annoyed that the list of priorities did not include the SIZE (# of students) in the proposed schools.
32	My concern relates to having a huge elementary school environment, which may be good or bad for student learning, especially students who need more challenging work (something that seems to get short shrift in every one of these discussions). I also am worried about the implications of turning the middle school into a community college annex, which would have many young and older adults in (too) close proximity to the town's elementary school students.
33	Both Wildwood and Fort River Schools need to be replaced and ALL the children need to be taken care of. To address one school's problems and not the other would send the message to the kids who are left out that Amherst does not care about them as much as they care about the other children. Do the right thing. Build a new school that will house all the kids.
34	What I hear around town is "nothing will get done- this town will never vote to spend any money on schools". How do we have some of the highest taxes in the state and two run down elementary schools? I'm baffled by the situation and feel defeated by how negative most people seem to feel about it.
35	The district should consider closing Fort River, remodeling Wildwood and having two K-5 schools (Ww and CF) the middle school could then be a true MS with 6-8 grades. Leverett and Shutesbury, and even Pelham if they wished could send students to the MS in 7th grade.
36	Thank you for all of the work the School Committee is doing to improve our schools for our children. This isn't an easy job and I am confident you are taking as much of the community's input in to consideration as possible. Thank you!
37	Why can't the district learn how to, or pay someone who actually knows how to design a survey ? So much bias presented here- a lost opportunity to use a really good data source.

Comment Number	Comment/Question
38	<p>1. I believe you should have included an option to renovate/rebuild Fort River and Wildwood, possibly with MSBA funding only for Wildwood. The district has not provided the cost estimates of this option yet and this may be a cost-effective (as compared to a large new building) and is definitely the more educationally-sound option. Therefore, when I said my first preference is for rebuilding Wildwood and keeping Fort River and Crocker Farm K-6, I would like to see the needed building changes made to Fort River as well, even without MSBA funding.</p> <p>2. Research shows that small schools are better for student learning, especially for students with special learning needs and from disadvantaged backgrounds. I strongly support Amherst keeping small schools.</p> <p>3. I found the long list of choices quite unhelpful for the survey. I could prioritize my choices, but it didn't allow the reasons for my preferences to be clear. Therefore, I believe the information collected from this is not very illustrative to the School Committee.</p> <p>4. I'm concerned at the rushed nature of this survey and that the survey did not get out to preschool families throughout the town. Most preschools did not receive the info about the survey. The survey is also not very smart-phone conducive, and therefore not as accessible to families without computers. I do not feel this survey represents an adequate effort to fully receive feedback from the community.</p>
39	<p>I worry less about "mega schools" and worry more about kids having (positive) better exposure to older kids (book buddies are really a positive thing for the younger kids). And for kids to feel unified with their cohort of kids for as long as possible. (K-6 or 2-6). Too many transitions is a bad idea however, best case scenario they are with their cohort as long as possible. And not shifted from K-2, 2-4, 4-6. Not a good idea.</p>
40	<p>Think about the problems of having a huge school where everyone has to travel instead of the local schools. One school cannot accommodate shifts in population.</p>
41	<p>I recently watched the 12/22/15 Amherst School Committee meeting and I was most persuaded by comments made by Superintendent Geryk and Crocker Farm Principal Derek Shea, especially Principal Shea. He made a very moving and compelling argument for what has been characterized as Option D in this survey. If we are truly looking for the option that most benefits the kids then Option D is a no brainer. It will eliminate the need for redistricting going forward. It will allow all teachers to be able to collaborate with all their grade level peers. It will allow the creation of a new ELL program. It will allow us to be able to have more pre-school class rooms. It will make the schools and the education of all of our ES kids more equitable. And on and on and on. This decision really seems like a no brainer to me. I am sure there are benefits we have not even thought of yet. Please vote for Option D.</p>
42	<p>Keep as many small schools open as possible. Be patient. We'll fix Fort River Next.</p>
43	<p>I dislike the idea of eliminating community schools.</p>

Comment Number	Comment/Question
44	<p>All the research suggests that small schools where students are known and loved, and where the school is embedded in its community and nimble enough to respond to its community serve children far better than mega schools. Smaller schools are far better especially for children with special needs and from disadvantaged backgrounds, so don't be bamboozled by spurious arguments about equity. Don't be talked into this slick deal put together by your architectural firm that is riding roughshod over what this community wants and needs; and I don't believe the numbers on this at all; the mega school costs you cite will grow considerably beyond this (just ask Amherst College about its erstwhile Science Center!), and in no way are any of the three options for rebuilding the schools together financially responsible. Rebuild Wildwood now; in a few years apply for a new grant to rebuild, or renovate, Fort River. I say this as a Fort River parent who can be patient about our physical plant to keep the school community we want.</p>
45	<p>I've been an instructional coach and a school teacher for over 15 years in multiple districts and I've been through two MSBA school building projects. SMALLER SCHOOLS are the best option. I've witnessed multiple "school-within-a-school" attempts (options B, C, and D) that COMPLETELY FAILED to replicate the benefits that come with a smaller learning environment. The relationships and the sense of community that only can happen in small schools are too valuable to sacrifice for the amount of money that it is claimed we will save. There are many purported benefits that could come if all the dreams in the Wildwood building committee documents are realized, but I've worked in education too long and helped to write too many similar documents myself to truly believe that all that is envisioned will be realized. We can rebuild Wildwood, and aim all of our district's efforts at fixing Fort River - be it through waiting a few more years for MSBA funding or through Town Meeting. It might not be the easiest political decision for Ms. Geryk to make, but it is the most educationally sound decision. We've already let Mark's Meadow go. Please don't let us lose another school.</p>
46	<p>The feeling of community in a school is important in regards to their learning environment, social skills development, and civic education. In the early years of education, allowing the students to have consistency in their peers, active participation in a consistent 'whole', and limiting unnecessary transitions during this critical time facilitates learning in a variety of areas including academic, social, and emotional skill development.</p>
47	<p>Through this entire process, I have been struck by the poor citizenship on display from my fellow residents of Amherst. I understand that we live in a "me and mine first!" society, but maybe we could all take a deep breath and attempt to actually build something resembling a community that will help *all* of the kids in this town, not just those who happen to live near Wildwood.</p>

Comment Number	Comment/Question
48	I value the community a school creates by having my kids in the same school for a long stretch of time. Minimizing transitions and long bus rides while fostering a sense of community, familiarity and belonging is important. Shared experiences with teachers, assemblies, first/last day celebrations, etc. are all very important to me. I have no problem mixing the Fort River and Wildwood communities, but sincerely hope Nick Yaffe remains principal. He is such an asset to Wildwood and Amherst schools.
49	I feel very unsafe sending my kids to school in Amherst due to recent cover ups of incidents such as the sexual acting out at the high school and the race based attack at the middle school and several weapons incidents
50	<p>I have two comments. 1. None of the choices here reflect any sense about how the location of the school fits into the town planning priorities. Wildwood is currently the school that is closest to the downtown and the vast majority of the people in the town, so aligning the location of the school with the town's goal of having a vibrant downtown would seem like an important priority, which is not currently available as an option. I would like to see the Wildwood Campus retained as the location of a school so that the school can be in line with the town goal to have a vibrant downtown. Incidentally, when you look at the power point presentations about school size, it is obvious that because of school choice and because of where the population of Amherst is, Wildwood is the campus that people are choosing to send their kids to and thus the campus that is least likely to experience enrollment drop-offs over time.</p> <p>2. I have been to a few meetings, and it seems like nearly every parent does not like your options (but the school teachers do). So I wonder how you plan to get enough people behind your plan to sell it to the town meeting. I would suggest for purely practical reasons that you must find a constituency that your plan appeals to that is of considerable size so they can support you in whatever choice you decide to make. As it is, it seems like you have a bunch of good and honorable reasons for the plans you are proposing, but no support from any sizable group of people for any of the proposed options. If you allow me to return to the point number 1 above, if you pursue a plan which guarantees a school at the Wildwood location, and if you pursue an option which doesn't jostle people around in some weird Pre-K through 1 and 2-6 model or Pre-K through 1, 2-4 and 5-6 model, but just keeps a community of students together for their entire school years, then you would be proposing a plan that a sizable constituency could get behind and support. If in the end for financial reasons, you need to propose the idea of a two school campus on the Wildwood site (such as in Option B), that constituency will probably roll their eyes, but still support you. But if you don't guarantee the Wildwood community their continuity, then you will have lost your one obvious constituency, and not have any obvious other one to replace it with. This sounds like a recipe for failure at Town Meeting.</p>

Comment Number	Comment/Question
51	You have not included in your summary chart or in your prioritization list some of the key things informing my choice, including community considerations - which option will best support thriving neighborhood communities for students and families, strong sense of community within schools, and a strong sense of community in the town of Amherst? It was bizarre that I had to list this basically as a transportation choice. It's much more fundamental than this.
52	The focus needs to be maintained on the students. The whole child needs to be considered with attention to both academic and social development. The question, "Who and I and where do I belong?" is at the core of childhood development in element school. Our students need safe and healthy schools that foster strong learning combined with a sense of belonging. This is why I believe we need a model that allows kids to grow within smaller K-6 school communities with fewer transitions.
53	I think it is in the best interest of the community to have some consolidation. Overall, I will be comfortable with any decision made.
54	One choice of reasons that was not listed is overall cost for the projects. It would have been helpful to know these costs in addition to the operational cost savings.
55	I like the smaller neighborhood grade school system we have now and would be sorry to switch to fewer and larger schools.
56	You simply cannot propose an option (as "A" appears to be) that excludes Fort River in the rebuild/renovate equation. Wildwood and Fort River are identical schools, and to say otherwise just because of state funding indicates a bias in favor of Wildwood district residents.
57	I am concerned about the process that the administration has used to determine these options. I really feel as though parent and guardian concerns have been largely ignored or granted lip service. We chose Amherst for community schools, and place an importance on continuity and community.
58	Students currently know and are known by all teachers, staff, and administrators in their school. This translates to a safe, happy, and a more individualized learning environment that would be lost in a larger school setting as students get lost in the shuffle. Students overall outlook and education would be compromised.
59	My first grader, my spouse, and I really feel part of a special community at Crocker Farm. I feel welcomed and recognized by staff when I walk through the door. I feel my child is getting an excellent education and the school is meeting the individual needs of my child. I look forward to my child continuing to grow through 6th grade at CF. However, I feel every child deserves a high quality working environment as well as a neighborhood school community. Therefore, option B appeals most to me because all three schools can benefit from a neighborhood school K-6 environment, whether in CF or one of the 2 wings of the new school.

Comment Number	Comment/Question
60	Being that both Wildwood and Fort River are in very similar states of disrepair, to choose one school and not the other to replace would be wrong and seem to open the town to legal liabilities for willful negligence of any children who become sick or injured because of the school that was ignored. Replacing both schools is clearly the right thing to do but if that isn't enough for you, please be aware that there can be serious consequences to ignoring the safety and health of an entire group of children and teachers.
61	Option A would only be an option for me if Fort River can be replaced as well so that we could have Wildwood, Fort River AND Crocker Farm as PreK-6 schools. Maybe more PreK could be arranged for Wildwood and Fort River to alleviate CF as well as closing the radius a bit to reduce CF numbers if at all needed.
62	Thank you for your thoughtful work. Change is hard but the Fort River and Wildwood Schools need to be replaced in order to best serve all of the children.
63	i am torn between options A and B as my top choice. Option A is best for my family personally but doesn't seem fair to families that attend Fort River. Option B is more equitable but will probably result in less feeling of neighborhood community and more transportation issues.
64	I feel strongly that schools should not be combined. Especially at the elementary level, schools should feel like safe small learning environments. Larger schools are not conducive to a neighborhood school. 600-750 students in a building is too many no matter how you structure it. We moved to Amherst for many reasons but one main reason was because of the schools. My children had been in private schools in the area. I have felt not only confident having my children move into the ARPS but I have been utterly impressed. If I had known this restructuring was seriously on the horizon I may have not moved them. I am certain if this restricting happens many families will pull there children and enroll them elsewhere. The prediction for the middle school and high school is that enrollment will be going down, therefore consolidation is being considered. With this horrible change at the elementary level we are guaranteeing low enrollment for the higher grades.

Comment Number	Comment/Question
65	<p>There are MANY problems with this survey, with the result that the data will be very hard to interpret meaningfully. Here's one major problem: There is no clear way for respondents to indicate their preferences among the options ABSENT imagined differences in costs. For example, if someone assumes that retaining a three-school system means leaving Fort River in disrepair (NOT necessarily true) then they likely will ignore Option A, though in fact they may prefer a three-school system. Another problem: Many of the "priority factors" listed are completely interdependent - of course people want quality pedagogy for all students, but that is tightly linked to school size (not even one of the priorities listed!), to age groupings, to # of transitions, to transportation issues, etc. How is one expected to express accurately one's priorities given this interdependence? Similarly, this problem exists with equity concerns - obviously, this is a priority for MANY people, but again, closely linked to school size, # of transitions, etc. In short, how the SC chooses to interpret the results from this survey likely will depend on what they want to "find" in the results. At least some - hopefully not a majority - of the SC want the evidence to support the district's desire to reconfigure and consolidate. And that is exactly what they will "find" using this poorly designed survey's results. Very troubling...</p>

Comment Number	Comment/Question
66	<p>I am writing in support of any of the options that restructure the Amherst elementary schools, and build a new school that would include Wildwood and Fort River, or Wildwood, Fort River and Crocker Farm. The building grant offers a unique opportunity to create a state of the art elementary school that is designed to meet the educational goals supported by the Amherst community, and the learning needs of our students. It is an opportunity to create something really thoughtful and wonderful that will give all of our elementary students the world-class education that one would expect from Amherst. It seems impossible that the school board, which is supposed to represent ALL of the students in Amherst, would support creating a school which would offer this high standard of education and opportunity to excel, to only 1/3 of the students in our town. The concept of Equity is thrown around a lot in terms of the educational goals in Amherst. But how can we speak of Equity, while creating better learning opportunities for only 1/3 of the students? How equitable is it to give one school district the opportunity to design a state of the art school, while the kids at the other two elementary schools have to learn in sub-optimal conditions, which (in the case of Fort River) include building maintenance issues, air quality issues and the ill-designed quad system which hinders learning for most of it's students. This is NOT creating a good learning environment or supporting excellence in our school! We all want the best possible education for our kids! And the school committee should be here to advocate for the educational needs for ALL of the kids in Amherst, because it is the right thing to do – even if it's not necessarily the easiest, or the most popular.</p> <p>This school committee has an opportunity to create a legacy that shows it's thinking about the long-term needs of all Amherst students. You have the chance to create something extraordinary, which will support the learning opportunities of our kids for the next 50 years! The other option is to create a legacy of hypocrisy, where 'Equity' is just a buzz-word, which means nothing when the chips are down. Where one school district gets the opportunity for excellence, while the other two school districts are told to wait years, or decades for their chance to catch-up. In the end, I really hope that you will support equity, and excellence for ALL the students in Amherst.</p>
67	<p>Crocker Farm is an amazing elementary school. It would be a tragedy to take apart the working model at Crocker Farm to address issues in the other schools. The excellent team at Crocker Farm should not be undervalued or dismissed. Reassigning teachers and administrators to a new configuration runs a high risk damaging that team.</p>
68	<p>I DID NOT UNDERSTAND MANY ASPECTS OF THIS SURVEY. IT IS THEREFORE POINTLESS.</p>
69	<p>I do not like any of the large school options. My children are very young, and I want them to be in a single, consistent school, that they can adjust to and be comfortable with. I don't want them with a hundred other kids of the same age -- they will never get to know that many kids. If I wanted big schools I would live in a big city. This feels more like a prison.</p>

Comment Number	Comment/Question
70	Based on my experience, I believe it is very important to focus on solving the most pressing problems in the simplest, most direct way, without creating additional problems in the process. If the problem is the physical state of Wildwood and Fort River, then the simplest solution would be to rebuild Wildwood and Fort River and leave everything else as is. Since that is impossible (due to funding considerations), the second simplest solution is to build a single building with a Wildwood wing and a Fort River wing. The other proposed solutions involve large amounts of reconfiguration that will entail definite costs and have only speculative benefits.
71	I LOVE the idea of my child (who will no longer be in elementary school by this time, so this has no impact on our family) going to school with ALL children in his age group in Amherst. I think it will have a huge impact on the crazy transition into the MS. And I like that issues of equity will be addressed. OPTION D all the way!
72	When applying for the WW Building project, why didn't the district consider what would happen to Fort River? At the same time, if Fort River had been chosen, why not consider ahead of time what to do with WW? It seems to me these issues could have been predicted and thought out more in advance.
73	I am concerned that this process is moving too quickly and is funding-led. It's great to receive funding and Wildwood is certainly in need of renovation, but this dizzying series of proposed changes doesn't make sense. If these proposals (to consolidate elementary schools, replacing community-schools) were made on pedagogical grounds, I'd be more persuaded. But they are not. There are HUGE implications for all of these proposed shifts (quality of learning, destabilizing community ties and the sense of community connection to the schools, not to mention other issues that will affect the town more broadly - traffic flow, for ex). For these reasons, I support option A.
74	We are a Crocker Farm family, and we absolutely love the school just the way it is, from the administration, to the teachers, to the staff, to the families and students involved. Crocker Farm is a gem for many, many reasons, including the collaborations between grade levels. If it were to be dismantled and redistributed it would be a real trauma for a lot of families and students, and a great loss to the community. It has been very valuable to many students, families, and teachers to have PK - 6 together in one building and strongly oppose the reorganization of grade levels. PLEASE leave Crocker Farm just the way it is. Thank you.
75	Option B gives us the best of what our schools currently provide while creating a healthy environment at all 3 schools. Unless there's a guarantee that Ft. River can be renovated on the same timeline, Option A isn't a real option. Nothing I have seen has convinced me that the k-1 and 2-6 benefits learning and socially, there are many negatives. Lets go with B!

Comment Number	Comment/Question
76	<p>I have a child who will soon be out of Fort River into the middle school, so these changes don't impact my family directly. However, what seems clear is this:</p> <p>-Any solution which only addresses Wildwood and not Fort River (i.e. solution A) is very short-sighted. We love the school, but the physical facility has maintenance issues and the open floor plan represents a model of teaching which turned out to not be the best approach. There are a lot of good things about having neighborhood-based schools, but unless we imagine that sometime in the next decade we'll be able to build ANOTHER whole school to replace it, option A should be off the table. I don't expect that this decision will be arrived at smoothly as I know there are plenty of Fort River parents who believe the answer is to spend more money and build two smaller schools. Even if I felt that was a good use of funds - and mostly I don't - what I've seen of publicized numbers suggests to me that this more expensive option has no chance of passing town meeting given the other options available.</p> <p>-I picked option B as my first choice. I honestly don't think that having PreK through first all together in one place and 2-6 all together in another place is a big enough advantage as far as teaching goes. Possibly staff disagree with me on this and I am open to hearing really detailed justification for this if so - I have not seen that anywhere as of yet. And the very big reason not to do this is that it makes it much harder for parents and transportation if they have kids in both Crocker and the new school. For students who always take the bus, it may not be a big deal. But for students with a lot of extracurriculars, it could make things much trickier for parents with kids at both age levels having to juggle two different locations.</p> <p>-I chose D over C as my second choice because I can't think of a good reason to have the same grades in two different wings and in the absence of that reason it doesn't seem like the right approach.</p> <p>-Which leads to my final observation. Which of the B, C and D options is best will largely depend on the educational model chosen and how the physical breakdown is utilized. I have read in the paper that some of these options include some major changes to the educational approach and in fact can't easily be separated from them. I'm talking about beyond special needs and ELL. But I haven't really seen enough details to evaluate them. If this is indeed the case, then this survey is really missing key information to be able to answer it. I know that the first pass through the survey answers will be a quantitative summary and I have done my best to give that based on the available data. But I would hope that after eliminating either one or two of the four options based on this in initial survey, you do a follow-up survey with the remaining options and more details on the educational changes.</p>
77	<p>I value having a neighborhood school so that community ties can be strengthened both through the neighborhood and school. Also I care about keeping the elementary schools smaller than 400 students in size so it's less overwhelming in the halls, at recess, at lunch, etc.</p>

Comment Number	Comment/Question
78	I want equity between schools. I also have experienced massive town-wide elem schools; they lose the community feel. I will mourn the ability of my kids to walk/bike to school
79	I feel very strongly that only one option (D) is favorable. The others just don't make sense to me. I would worry about 2 K-6 wings or 2 2-6 wings and divisiveness and inequity and rivalry emerging. Also, the opportunity to go back and change answers would be good.
80	Since last May, I have attended many of the forums that have been offered. My child attends Fort River and I have another one in a private pre-K. I simply do not want them (or any of OUR kids) to have to make even more transitions than they already do. They need the security and stability of remaining in the same place for their entire elementary education. While attending these numerous meetings, I have not been shown any empirical (or otherwise) evidence that has convinced me that there are any pedagogical or social benefits for children to be split into a lower elementary and upper elementary. Options A and B are truly the only that make sense when considering the wellbeing of our children. Option C is extremely undesirable. But, Option D is an absolutely repulsive option!!! Putting grade 5 & 6 together sets the children up for a junior-junior high experience. When talking to friends in other parts of the country who have had this forced upon their children, it has been a social nightmare. My kindergartener definitely benefits from being mentored by older kids, but even more importantly, it is crucial for 5th and 6th graders to be around younger kids. Also, just because they would have fancy new classrooms, does NOT mean that the instruction will be any better than my daughter (and her very lucky classmates) already receives at Fort River from her absolutely wonderful teachers.
81	Over the past 16 years I have seen my property taxes double. Long term neighbors have had to move because of this ever increasing burden, a burden which has risen faster in Amherst than the surrounding towns. Amherst is quickly becoming a have and have not society. Yes, i do feel that cost savings is an important factor. The quality of education has always been, and hopefully always will be, a priority for Amherst. Unity between the residents of Amherst and "the schools" is just as important. I feel it is important to unify the town by having one new elementary school building with two wings. One wing being 2-4 the other being 5-6. Crocker farm for pre-k thru 1. This would create the "Amherst District". Equality for all. I do not like the implications of 'bussing' or redistricting certain segments of our society. In my district Fort River their has already been a loss of children to competing schools. Crocker Farm is a wonderful "new school", but it is now considered "the school". People with young children and "the means" have moved into that district, already maximizing it's capacity. Having to repetitively redraw the school boundaries will just create animosity between the town government and it's residence. I feel unity is the best option for our town. Thank you for your time.

Comment Number	Comment/Question
82	I believe Option B is the best for balancing the desire of some to maintain a community school while also ensuring that all students are in modern buildings that provide access to healthy and quiet classrooms.
83	Are we really going to re district every 10 years. Please make long range effective planning and stop wasting tax payers money.
84	<p>We moved to Amherst about a decade ago from Franklin Country because we liked the Amherst community, and were impressed with the school district's reputation. We believe the current model, of three small elementary schools, is ideal and that every effort should be made to preserve it. In these busy times, when community is often a "virtual" concept, Amherst still benefits from small schools where children, families, teachers and staff can get to know one another well over time. Our children's past teachers at Crocker Farm have continued to take a friendly and supportive interest in them, even as they move from grade to grade. Such communities create an important sense of security for children and strong platform for learning. We are concerned that the already-large class sizes we experience at Crocker Farm would merely increase, at a bigger, cross-town school for grades 2 through 6.</p> <p>We question the proposed expenditure for a new building, at a time when the town has little money to spare and the district must periodically cut teaching hours or positions in order to reduce costs. We find that despite high property taxes in Amherst, and high per-pupil spending, students often lack basic supplies to facilitate learning - for example, individual workbooks and textbooks, rather than xeroxed homework sheets. The lack of basic supplies often requires that homework be done in a void, without supporting materials.</p> <p>We think the district would be better served by researching, in depth, cost-effective ways to improve the Fort River and Wildwood buildings. If money is available to make substantial changes within the district, we believe those funds should go towards development of innovative educational programs which will help reduce attrition. For example, the district could consider Spanish/English language immersion and expeditionary learning models. Above all, we believe that a larger, long-range master plan for the district must be developed, setting out goals and plans for the district and incorporating long-term projections for the region. We think that a highly detailed planning process should precede any school construction in the district.</p>
85	I think smaller classrooms are better for kids to learn in. Too big, kids get lost and left behind.
86	I believe strongly that an elementary school should be grades 1-6 and capped at around 360 students so that the experience is unified for the student with minimal building transitions. I believe this greatly enhances the student's experience as well as the student's relationships with fellow students, teachers, and administrators. At the same time, I understand the financial needs of the district, but I believe with some creativity, both needs can be met.

Comment Number	Comment/Question
87	Drop off and pick up for parents will be very difficult with larger numbers of kids (750) in a school.
88	<p>Every study they have read, every educator I have heard from, says that elementary schools with 400 students or fewer are better schools all around--socially, academically, socioeconomically, community-wise. It is also my personal experience that this is so. I volunteer in the schools and have for four and a half years now. Our school is a very happy one, in spite of its problems. Yes, we want our teachers to have the school buildings they want/deserve. It is very important that we put the students FIRST though. The cost-benefit analysis must be viewed from a child's perspective and reflect the demographics of Amherst. A child would want to be in the same school as his sibling for all 7 grades. A child and her brother, in Amherst from another country for one year or while her parents earn a degree at UMass, will both fare much better if the school is small-ish AND they can be in the same school. Any given child would thrive in a smaller school (3 classes per grade rather than 7) because although one class per grade has the drawback of not offering enough potential friends to choose from, it is difficult to make meaningful connections with *anyone* when there are too many kids in the cohort. This may seem like I think friendships are more important than academics, but it is more that I believe a strong familial environment is extremely conducive to learning.</p> <p>If we cannot have everything, we must prioritize. The fact is, in the absence of MSBA, naturally the town would be responsible for updating the elementary schools. What a *gift* that we can do one of the schools NOW at a discount! That means the town has more money to spend on Fort River! I would love to have Fort River done at the same time, but those who cry that fixing only Wildwood is "not equitable" ignore the fact that Fort River did receive funding for renovations within the past few years. Yes, I agree that Fort River needs to be taken care of. I just don't think it should be taken care of in a way that serves the financial aims of an institution and pleases the adults at the expense of the security and comfort (in which atmosphere learning is best served) of the students it was supposedly made for. Just because MSBA will only fund a school large enough to fit 360 students does not mean that the new/renovated Wildwood can NOT be made large enough to accommodate Wildwood's current students. The school can be made to spec for the current Wildwood population (what, two more classrooms?) at little cost to the town and with no need to re-district students from Wildwood.</p> <p>I'm no economist, but I've heard the argument that fixing Wildwood and not Fort River will decrease Fort River district house values. To which I say: 1) unlikely--it is more likely that Wildwood values would increase, along with their tax bills (are Fort River parents asking for higher tax bills?); and 2) even if that were true, is that a valid reason to compromise the children's education? I am dubious that the costs of renovation are more expensive than new construction. I am suspicious of the sales pitch put up by the architects. All the parents I've spoken with just want a quality, simple school that maintains the small community that we already have. That means, give us a sturdy, clean school with a design that has acoustic separation, natural light, heat when it's</p>

Comment Number	Comment/Question
	cold, cooling when it's very hot, updated electrical panels, energy efficiency... We like Wildwood, but we acknowledge that those who work there need updated facilities (we're not sure what "state-of-the-art" really means, but we want our children raised and educated by people, not technology). Thank you for your consideration.
89	1: I originally thought combining WW & FR into a winged bigger school makes the most sense. But my friend and veteran teacher who has been thru this process has influenced my opinion by advocating for keeping smaller schools. He thinks its better to rebuild WW now, and rebuild FR when possible. 2: My wife attended an audit session about capital budgets for schools, and wonders if it would be possible to rebuild FR as well. In summary: I vote for option A. I don't like the inequity this would create between WW & FR, but it's better than reconfiguration. Let's rebuild WW now, and rebuild FR asap. But if this isn't feasible, then I vote for option B. Let's have future kids be in one school for K-6 -- this would keep CF as it is, avoiding transitioning after K/1, and not separate siblings. I thought option C sounded good, but keeping CF as a independent school wins via the small community school factor.
90	Despite projections for smaller school populations is consideration being given to the fact that at some point in time populations will move up. Amherst is desirable for is emphasis on quality education. New buildings will only enhance this. If we build it, they will come! I have first hand experience with this in the new high school that I teach. Despite projections that said the population was stable and even potentially decreasing, within 10 years of building an incredible new high school the facility is now at max capacity.
91	A heartfelt thank you to the School Committee and administration for all the time and care you've taken with this project. A new elementary school largely funded by the state is a great opportunity for Amherst. I hope we don't lose sight of that fact, even as we all have different preferences regarding the details of how the school and district should best be configured.
92	I would like to know what models or data each of these options are based on that provide support for the benefits and possible disadvantages on the children in these schools. I think it's important to keep the grade levels together, however, if there is evidence that suggest that dividing the schools into PreK-1 and 2-6 would be in some way beneficial I would be more open to the idea.

Comment Number	Comment/Question
93	I am sad to see so many people (parents) only being interested in their own childrens personal preference rather than recognizing the big picture and what would be best for the community and all the children in Amherst. Looking at the three elementary schools now we already have a seperation between who can effort to live where to get their kids in the 'best' school. I am excited about this new oppportunity for our town to grow together as a strong community with children hopefully staying together with their friends over many grade transitions and not being send off to different schools. I am excited about the opportunity this will open up to the children and to the teachers. Thank you for all your hard work and extra time you are investing to find the best possible solution for EVERYONE in this town!
94	The Unified District seems to make the most sense. However, what happens inside the building once it is built should be left up to the school and district leadership. Though decidedly better and more equitable for all involved, there are still unique disadvantages to both Options C & D. If this is the direction that we go (and I believe it should be), then I will look to our very capable school personnel to make the best decision for our children.
95	If option c and d cost \$20,000 more in transportation, I wonder how much more CO2 the school district would emit.
96	I oppose grade reconfiguration. I want to maintain three small K-6 schools in our community. I do not understand why we are not considering ways to improve/rebuild both Wildwood and Fort River individually. I don't think an elementary school of 750 students is necessary or beneficial for our small community. I think we should use the MBSA funds to rebuild Wildwood now and concurrently develop a plan to rebuild Fort River within the next 4-7 years. Funding the rebuilding of Fort River would occur through either future MBSA approval or through the town. This is such an important issue. Let's not lock ourselves into many decades of a 750 student elementary school. Let's figure out how to continue to have three great small elementary schools with close knit communities of students, teachers, and parents in each building.
97	Equity of the choices are very important to me, in terms of ensuring that all students, regardless of background or needs, have access to the best learning environment possible. I also value neighborhood contacts that support friendships and really like the neighborhood model of schools.
98	It is important to chose Option D as it meets the needs of every child in this town despite their demographic factors including special education services. Instill "Amherst" community in our elementary schools instead of defining ourselves by three separate zones.

Comment Number	Comment/Question
99	<p>honestly, the factors question is totally confusing and I am not sure how you will interpret the results. In addition the 1 pager is full of jargon and biased. there really should have been an option for people to add additional factors in. For me, the capacity for families to build long term relationships with faculty and staff and other families in the school, so children have a strong sense of belonging and safety and family engagement is strengthened across the K-6 years, is very important. That is an important reason to keep the K-6 or preK-6 model.</p>
100	<p>Thank you, I found the summary sheet extremely helpful. I think the school committee has handled this process very professionally and with the best interests of the town, the students, and the teachers in mind. Option C or D would create a major transportation concern for our family, would split our siblings among multiple schools, and would force one of our children to undergo 4 school transitions in the same town in 4 consecutive years. Therefore, our family would respectfully oppose those options, though we would certainly be understanding if they were better for other families. I was, however, quite surprised by the relative advantages of Option B upon comparing among options on the summary sheet. Option B allows many of the student learning and health advantages of Options C and D--acoustic privacy, ADA-compliance, peer mentoring, teacher collaboration--along with similar financial advantages for the town, while having far less impact in terms of number of transitions, additional kids on long bus trips, and putting families in the situation of having multiple kids at multiple schools (thereby separating siblings, making daily family logistics harder, etc.). It seems that while Option B is not perfect, it accomplishes the most important educational, health, safety, and financial goals while having the lowest impact and disruption for the town and individual families. It allows the most families to continue to have modern, healthy, safe, and--importantly--local schools. So I would urge the town to strongly consider Option B. Thank you.</p>

Comment Number	Comment/Question
101	<p>It is always difficult to answer these kinds of surveys when you're asked to rank options, but your truly preferred choice is not on the list. So I hope the district is careful when interpreting the answers. For instance if an option to have two new, separate schools to be built to replace each of Wildwood and Fort River, was included on the ranking options, you may have received completely different answers here. My FIRST choice would be to build two separate schools to replace Wildwood and Fort River. I think it remains confusing to many parents, why if Fort River has severe mold and health issues, the board of health has not been brought in. If there are truly severe health issues arising from that school, then the town should seriously consider addressing that. It is a very simple to test for mold and fungus and such...It's as if the town is not wanting to do that for fear some scary truth be discovered.</p> <p>So I lean here today towards a new joint school, not because I want that option as my first choice, but because I want Fort River to be addressed. I hear from staff there, the conditions are scary. That's wrong and truly an embarrassment that the town has not dealt with that. Please be clear to the community how you will deal with the health issues at Fort River. If you have had testing done, then please clear up the stories with evidence. If you have not done testing then do it. Otherwise, please communicate clearly to the town WHEN Fort River will be addressed.</p> <p>Finally, years ago there was discussion about multiple zoned schools K-1,2-6, etc. I didn't like it then either, because with 3 children, our family knew that we would struggle to get children to all 3 school, have 3 administrations, principals, PGOs, events, lack of family unity at the smaller-feeling schools, etc. All reasons mentioned by others before. The combined curricular opportunities/benefits are not convincing for me to drive students all over town for multiple zoned school. Think of the poor 5 year old who lives way up north riding all the way to Crocker each day. That's ridiculous. I think the students are fine right where they are.</p>
102	<p>In good conscience, we need to replace both Fort River and Wildwood for health and educational reasons. Fort River air quality, building quality and sound quality are major issues that affect the health and well-being of students and teachers.</p>
103	<p>Please listen to your constituents and don't "fix" what isn't broken. Keep the three elementary schools in their present locations, each of which is embedded in a small and intimate community that people deeply cherish. A "community" of 750 students is not a community. The money saved in the next few years from following this (actually more fiscally responsible) option, together with another (hopefully successful) application to the state in a year or two, can be used for rebuilding Fort River in due course.</p>
104	<p>My children have attended mixed grade schools. We have noticed that was the mix was a burden on both sides and a planning nightmare for administrators</p>

Comment Number	Comment/Question
105	Why is parent feedback only being sought now? And why is our elected School Committee so hesitant to question the frequently ill-considered and reactive policy making and planning that has characterized the Amherst school administration over the past 3+ years? Building a mega-school for all of Amherst and Pelham's elementary-aged school students would result in a logistical nightmare, wouldn't improve learning outcomes at all, and would destroy the entire notion of neighborhood-based schooling.
106	I think the ideal would obviously be to replace both Wildwood and Fort River since they are both old and flawed buildings. But since that's not an option, I think it is critical that ALL children in Amherst benefit from this once in a generation investment. I don't know all the benefits/drawbacks of having kids of diverse ages together, but I do think there are benefits to having children of broad age ranges working together, especially if the older kids can help mentor the younger kids.
107	I see pros and cons in both Options B and D which I ranked first and second. For Option B, I am concerned about there being rivalry between the two schools in one building and talk of one wing being "better" than the other. For Option D, I am concerned about not having K-1 in the same school as the other grades.
108	I strongly favor option D so that the greatest number of students have the opportunity to be in a new school that is a healthier and better-planned learning environment, and to have the wings organized by age-level. While my primary concern as an Amherst citizen is the overall planning for the future of the schools, I also (of course) think about the impact on our family, in particular a child of ours who will be very affected by the transitions in 2018-2020. Notably, he will be at CF for pre-k in 2017, then FR for K in 2018, then with the new model he would go back to CF for G1 in 2019, then at the new school for G2 in 2020. I imagine there are a few, but probably not a lot, of families in this situation. I would like to make a plea for considering districting exceptions for a year or two during the transition. For instance, if our child could stay at CF for Kindergarten rather than switching CF-FR-CF, he would only experience one transition, from CF to the new school as he starts grade 2, as opposed to 3 different schools in 4 years. I urge you to strongly consider these kinds of exceptions during the transition to the new model, if you do end up deciding on options C or D. Thank you very much for all your efforts and planning.
109	One concern I have about a shared building is the use of shared spaces, such as a cafeteria. I heard that it would save money to share spaces such as a cafeteria etc but I am wondering how that would work out logistically. My experience has been there is never enough time for everyone to have lunch in one space- let alone sharing it amongst 650+ students. Would the room be extra large? Has this been considered in the large school options? Would kids be eating lunch extremely early or late because it is a shared space. Thanks.

Comment Number	Comment/Question
110	<p>1. The survey's ranking of top three priorities includes such items as "Healthy" environment for students and teachers. This strikes me as fundamental, not optional.</p> <p>2. This set of options seems a bit biased toward options C & D. The info regarding projected savings of unified options and the impossibility of providing equity across the district outside the unified proposals. My preference is for smaller separate schools, since they foster a better sense of community and ultimately serve students and teachers better.</p> <p>3. My concern with "unified" school options is that, although such scenarios promise to yield economic and administrative benefits by consolidating resources, there are very real dangers of overloading or overextending workloads and of future restrictions on resources. E.g., a number of staff members perform a particular function in the school, and they are able to do so with robust, flexible, and complete service. Then, due to budget constraints down the road, staff positions are cut, leaving a greater load on fewer staff members, whose performance will necessarily be limited as a result. This is the trend with many consolidation plans of this kind, and it would hurt education in Amherst.</p>
111	<p>These schools exist for 30-40 years - the decision should keep in mind the long-term lasting impact it will have on the community. If the ideal situation is to keep three schools, but that means Fort River has to wait another 5-10 years for their school to be rebuilt, in the long-run, that seems worth the wait.</p>
112	<p>I think it's important to consider what is best for students, NOT merely what is best for the budget or for the administration or for the district.</p>
113	<p>good luck trying to please every1</p>
114	<p>Comment: At some point our district needs to come to terms with LONG TERM vision building that includes funding to repair out of date building maintenance costs. There is no reason why a community needs to build a 10-20-50 million dollar building after 40-50 years. The tax burden on fixed income community members are going to be hard pressed to approve any plan that doesn't have long term vision casting that includes items such as a NEW boiler, ventilation or electrical grid systems. ALSO, why not open up the classrooms to be single classrooms? allowing light and simplifying the layout of Wildwood and Fort River? build on the foot print we already have rather than reconfiguring the entire system.</p>
115	<p>Why is there no option for creating a renovation budget and gradually improving both schools? Where is there evidence that this "21st century learning" is an improvement? Isn't this what was said in 1970 with "open classrooms" when Wildwood was built? We already have very high achieving schools with an extremely high per student cost is there evidence that we are slipping or that this will greatly improve our already high standing in achievement? I could see a marginal school district looking to make a large jump but an already excellent school system should be examining less expensive ways to boost performance levels when the gains are so minor. This is asking too much of townspeople to pay for this, with very little potential gain.</p>

Comment Number	Comment/Question
116	<p>I took this survey to express one idea: No schools should be combined. Each school should remain with the current grades and we should keep our neighborhood communities at the current size so we actually know our neighbors and feel we are part of a neighborhood school which promotes community far beyond the school itself.</p> <p>The last question of the survey is, in my view, an inappropriate question in that it implies that all plans may be liked in varying degrees. Many of us are filling out this survey just to say that we do not like plans B, C, or D; however, the survey will not allow us to submit any responses at all without providing a ranking. I do not want my ranking of the plans to be used in any way to support the idea that Plan B (or any other plan) was the second vote getter and therefore should be implemented. It is like asking people to rank whether they would like to A) live; B) die by hanging; C) die by cyanide; D) die by lethal injection. Many of us do not support options B-D in any way, shape or manner. (I recognize this is not the same as the death penalty, but this illustrates my point.) When choosing factors that influence our decision, I would have liked to have the option of "other" where I could have written that I care about maintaining our neighborhood communities with our neighborhood schools. I care about maintaining a school building that has a comfortably-sized number of children going in and out of its doors every day so our children do not feel like they are entering a city of students, but rather their smaller neighborhood school.</p> <p>The cost savings question is also misleading. It implies that anyone who cares about fiscal responsibility should choose plans B, C or D. But what if plans B, C, and D result in a 10-20% loss of students from the public school system, then what is the cost? What are the other hidden costs for our community? There is much literature about how maintaining neighborhood schools is one of the most important factors for maintaining healthy neighborhoods. Healthy communities are part of why many of us live here. Eroding our neighborhood school system would have a significant detrimental effect on our quality of life and our neighborhoods. If one is interested in concrete statistics, I read one article that said disruption of neighborhood schools reduced property values in that community by 9%. I think your cost savings' question is short-sighted and, if you implement plans B, C or D, in 10 years the cost of children leaving the public schools will show the error of your current financial analysis. As one parent told me today, if these changes are implemented, it will mean more children will leave the public school system going to Hartsbrook, the Common School, the Chinese Charter School, etc. (If my child were younger, he might well be one of those children if you consolidate the schools.) That will mean larger class sizes for those who remain in the public schools which is one of the biggest indicators for undermining quality education, not to mention undermining teachers' working conditions. These are real costs for our children's learning environment.</p> <p>I would have liked the survey to have offered a clearer and simpler Option A such as "Maintain the current system (and maybe even renovate Wildwood as needed without replacing it in its entirety, though I can accept that it may be in such disrepair that it makes more sense to replace it). There was a Random Survey conducted of more than</p>

Comment Number	Comment/Question
	<p>600 Amherst households as part of the lead up to the Master Plan several years ago. It can be found at this link: https://www.amherstma.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/1648 The bottom line of the survey was this: "Overall, these random survey results indicate citizen satisfaction with the town as it is." This is the will of our community. What you are proposing in B, C and D is contrary to the will of the Amherst people as gleaned from the random survey which is the largest neutral poll I know of from our community in recent years.</p> <p>My great fear is that a small group of people is pushing this major change in our children's education system against the will of the vast majority (many of whom won't take the time to fill out this survey). In talking about this issue to other parents, not one parent has said they like the idea of combining schools. The administrators and the small group pushing these big changes should listen to the large number of parents who are vehemently opposed to these changes. My sense is that those opposed would include at least a majority of parents and probably a supermajority. Please do not push through any consolidation of schools since that would undermine our neighborhoods, leave some feeling like they have no healthy choice other than to leave the public school system and cause great division in our community. Please keep the current schools as they are.</p> <p>Thank you for asking our opinion and for giving us this space to speak in our own words.</p>
117	<p>If Option D can be put into place, it will resolve equity, provide quality learning environments, reduce district expenses, aid teacher collaboration, provide peer groups that remain intact throughout student education, allow Special Services to support students as needed and update our whole system. It modifies the community school model but feels warm and inclusive because everyone gains equally in the end. While there may be some difficulty in people adjusting their thinking, I think this choice would ultimately benefit the most people once it is in place.</p>
118	<p>I received this through my child's daycare newsletter, but I almost overlooked it. I wish I would have been sent the info about the survey earlier and more directly from the School Committee.</p>
119	<p>As someone who conducts surveys professionally, I am certain this implement was not well prepared to accurately poll the public. This appears more to be an exercise placate critics rather than solicit objective opinions.</p>
120	<p>I am a parent with children in the Amherst system but I also teach in the public schools (not in APRS). I know that things can look very different from the parents perspective than the teachers and admin. Please consider the input of the teachers currently in the district. The issue not addressed in this survey: I want a system that can attract and retain quality teachers and principals. Thank you for the chance to give input.</p>

Comment Number	Comment/Question
121	All students, faculty, staff, families, community members deserve safe, healthy, equitable, successful learning environments and institutions - grades K-12. Amherst deserves that, future generations deserve that. How do we prevent these shortcomings (in terms of finances, facilities, and educational vision) from happening again going forward?
122	I am not in favor of Option B or C at all because of the implication of separation of 2 distinct wings for either k-6 or for grades 2-6. Why does their need to be a separation? This is why I put them as my third or last choice. If I had had the option I would not have included them at all on my list of preferences.
123	The administration has done nothing to explain why having one school (instead of two) is beneficial in terms of the quality of their education. How does one school help ALL the students in the district? Also, they haven't addressed the implications of sharing a gym, cafeteria, library, theater space, playground in terms of TIME allowed in each space. Making one big school limits communal space. How will our children be affected? Will the six graders have to have lunch at 2 PM? Will there be enough space for theater programs for all the grades? Where is the benefit to this layout?
124	I am somewhat neutral on options B and C - I prefer D because it seems to make the most sense as it balances the learning environment (specifically like the separation of grades 5/6) and financial considerations. Option A is really a non-starter as it will be significant negative implications - particularly for families in the Fort River district.
125	It is important for all students to go to a school that is in a healthy environment where they are able to attend to instruction with the least amount of distractions. There are so few children that walk to school that the idea of a neighborhood school is not a reality in Amherst. It would be unjust to leave Ft. River out of getting a new school because some people feel like the ability of their child to walk to school is more important than the health and welfare of students at Ft. River.
126	I think it is very important to limit the number of transitions and to bolster a sense of community for young children. We need to keep in mind the factors that enhance learning for our children and not be blinded by potential cost savings. Amherst is a community known for its strong schools. Let's keep it that way. Options C and D seem appalling to me, and could be quite detrimental to the sense of community (splitting up siblings, splitting up neighborhood and community friends, etc.). Transitions usually slow down the learning process. The latter options do not strike me as beneficial for our children.

Comment Number	Comment/Question
127	-What research has been done about the impact on learning and well-being of one large school? How do we know this will be OK? -I will strongly consider a private or charter school if the school Committee approves the mega school option. -How is it feasible for one large school to share common areas such as a cafeteria and auditorium, or will each wing have its own cafeteria, auditorium, gym, recess area? - Where will students go while construction takes place? -Where will such a large school be located? -What about replacing Fort River as well, within the next few years? Why is this not being discussed as an option?
128	We love the small, neighborhood elementary schools in Amherst. These schools build community and help children adjust to their new and changing social settings. The office staff, paraprofessionals, teachers, administrators know the children by name. We hope that you'll maintain these small schools even if re-districting is required. Thank you.
129	I'm not sure it is clear to everyone reading the survey that the implication of option A would be to leave F.River students in an aging building without hope of help! (but I couldn't open up the one page pdf due to technological challenges!)
130	I believe the school committee should proceed with the original Wildwood building plan that was submitted and approved.
131	The only option that is truly equitable is option 3 or 4. Any other choice is not consistent with our dedication to making decisions in the best interest of all.
132	This survey is an unfortunate hasty attempt to gather supporting data for bad decision making. No one is fooled by the lack of educational merit in any of the proposals to eliminate neighborhood schools and the communities forged by having separate K-6 elementary schools. The last redistricting and closure of an elementary school resulted in families leaving the district. Proposals to eliminate current separate k-6 elementary schools will result in more family departures. You need to ask why families are fleeing Amherst public schools for charter and private schools and address that instead of just quoting a diminishing budget which will continue to diminish as further bad decisions are pushed through. These proposals present a very sorry and short sighted picture of what is possible. Replace Wildwood and continue to work toward finding ways of updating Fort River . Do not reconfigure the elementary schools. Stop pretending to include the community in decisions. It is irresponsible to act so hastily when the consequences are so significant. Many families are not even aware of this post-holiday survey. Proceed in a thoughtful way with integrity and do not ram these unfortunate options down the throats of families who have such a huge stake in their children's education.

Comment Number	Comment/Question
133	I would like to strongly urge the committee to actually listen to the feedback. There is a strong sense among the community that a pretense is being made of soliciting lot of feedback and then ignoring all of it to vote for what the higher-ups want to do. I have listened carefully and read a lot of documents, but remain unconvinced that creating gigantic schools with "multiple wings" is the right approach for a good elementary education. Rather than keeping what works well (i.e., small neighborhood schools) and fixing only what needs to be fixed, the school system has embarked on yet another misconceived project. This started as a project to "fix" wildwood and should remain as such. Only option A is really the right one to consider in my humble opinion. Sincerely, A very concerned parent.
134	If the "big" new building is built, it is important that the same amount of resources continue to be directed to it (as Wildwood and Fort River currently receive). When consolidating there is a tendency to slowly erode support...for example think that we can get away with one less janitor or administrator. Thank you for doing this survey. Much appreciated. Good luck with the rest of this process.
135	I am terribly upset about all of this. I don't want my children transitioning so many times. I will be moving my children to another school if this happens. What a terrible idea. The less of all of the evils is JUST replacing Wildwood, but I do not want my children in a large school that includes kids from other schools. Disappointed in Amherst.
136	Please keep the school size small, we do not need a mega-school.
137	It has always been inequitable that Ft River houses the AIMS program and Building Blocks. All students (special education and those not receiving services) should have a similar experience in regards to setting, community, and education. I have heard from too many Wildwood parents that they do not want the schools merged because they do not want their children in school with the Building Block and AIMS programs. For too long, property values have been tied in to what has been considered the "strongest elementary school (without the heavy special needs programs). This would even out and create less competition among elementary schools and families. One school is no better than the others, and it has been unfair, and unjust for each elementary school to carry a negative reputation. The air quality in both Ft River and Wildwood are poor, and both buildings need to be repaired due to health reasons. Ft. River is literally falling apart (buckets in class under leaky ceilings, etc). Combining schools would also give the teachers a chance to share their experiences and collaborate on various teaching methods. It has been unfair for way too long, for Ft River to be the school with the most complex special education programs. Due to the quad set up at Ft River, there is a sub-optimal environment for special education students due to sensory issues (sight-some rooms have no window, sound-noise carryover from room partitions, as well as a constant mildew/mold smell that can really effect kids who are sensitive to external stimuli). Please vote to fix Ft River as well as Wildwood. All children deserve an equal chance, and a clean environment in which to learn.

Comment Number	Comment/Question
138	<p>What other school district models has Amherst used in order to make these decisions? What outside consultants have been used? Are there studies that back up these plans as the best options? On another note, I am a little concerned about gun violence and safety if all kids are in one school. I do not want school to feel overly large and impersonal for my kids. I fear losing the intimacy of the three smaller schools but recognize the problems in the design of these buildings for learning and teaching effectively.</p>
139	<p>My vote will be NO to all</p>
140	<p>As a parent with a pre-k child in a local private program who would be slated to go to Fort River, the state of the school building is a deal breaker to us. If that isn't remedied, we would have our child continue in private school (likely moving out of Amherst) or attend a charter school to avoid the current situation. Amherst does not have a classic neighborhood school model - students cannot walk to their local school. Given this, I don't have an issue with consolidation to a larger building, but it must be a healthy teaching/learning environment that enables students and staff to do their job to the best of their ability.</p>
141	<p>My children will be out of elementary school before any new school is built, but I feel strongly that the town must make the best choice that balances financial considerations, equity of educational offerings to all students in the town, and reasonable time spent getting to/from school on the bus. Is the Wildwood site really the only feasible option for where a new school will be located (as I heard Mike Morris say at a recent meeting)? If so, that really disfavors residents from the most southern part of town.</p>
142	<p>1) Reconfiguration is the best option to stem the distressing tide of families choosing the private school/charter school option on a town-wide basis. A brand new elementary school for all Amherst residents will become a magnet for families moving to the area to consider purchasing or renting in all areas of Amherst, and encourage them to stick with the Amherst system. If the town moves forward with a plan to refurbish or rebuild Wildwood alone, then (i) the trend of families in the Fort River district seeking alternatives will continue at the current pace or even rise; (ii) less families will seek to move into the Fort River district; (iii) the families currently in Wildwood and Crocker Farm that will assuredly be redistricted into Fort River will opt out of the Amherst system at a higher rate. The impact on the entire Amherst system, both due to the loss of money that accompanies a family choosing out of district or opting into a charter school and, more importantly, the loss of families within the school system who are actively engaged in the school community and with their children's education, will be very harmful to the system as a whole and every one of the elementary schools.</p> <p>2) My family has spent multiple years in two of the three elementary schools. We have been active members of the community at each of those schools, developed friendships, and have enjoyed getting to know and become close with a great number of teachers, administrators, and families. And from that perspective, I have concluded</p>

Comment Number	Comment/Question
	<p>that I am unconcerned about any harm that reconfiguration will cause to a sense of community in the elementary school system. Reconfiguration will actually have the effect of further fostering of ties among children throughout town. Having had my children in 2 of the 3 elementary schools in town, and having them involved in activities throughout town with children from all over Amherst and its surrounding towns, they have developed friendships with kids in many different schools. I view Amherst as my community, not a specific elementary school or area of town. The quote-unquote "mega-school" (which will be smaller than many successful elementary schools) will lose little of the community feel. Children (and their families) will develop strong friendships with kids (and their families) from all over Amherst, as they do currently through scouting, religious institutions, arts activities and sports. Families will continue to have educational and fun events to attend with other families. Class sizes will hopefully be smaller (and certainly will be more consistent, given the greater flexibility to equalize the effects of currently unequal cohort sizes amongst the schools), meaning parents should have the same access to their children's teachers and support staff.</p>
	<p>3) Expanding on one of the points above, the ability to better regulate and equalize class size within the grades will mean a better educational experience for many of our children. When my children were at Crocker Farm, we experienced the deleterious effects of a larger than desirable class size due to a cohort that was too big to be split into two classes and too small to be split into three. The administration made the perhaps understandable (from a cost perspective) but disappointing decision to maintain the larger classes and use the extra teacher somewhere else in the district. I have no doubt that my children had a worse educational experience being in a larger than average class. Reconfiguration will ensure that all children in the district will enjoy equivalent class sizes, avoiding cohorts that year over year receive less individualized instruction from their teachers.</p>
	<p>4) The potential for operational cost savings by combing 3 schools into 2 that will (hopefully) find its way into the classroom. Reconfiguration will, extra transportation costs notwithstanding, mean more money at the district's disposal. That cost savings must be poured directly into the new elementary school. That money should not go back to general town coffers. That money should not go for more employees in the central administration. It should go toward feet-on-the-ground teachers and counselors that will mean extra services for children, smaller class sizes, and better individualized instruction.</p>
143	<p>Children at the elementary school level learn better in a smaller environment. They love having a neighborhood school nearby. They dont need all the fancy updates that the building projects may have that resemble a modern high school.</p>

Comment Number	Comment/Question
144	<p>This survey is very confusing and the factors are very biased toward the reconfiguration options. And without more detailed information provided about the options it is difficult to decide between them--how does each impact the educational curriculum? Will doing one of these change the curriculum--providing more time for music, art, languages? What are the more detailed financial differences among the models? How will they impact the classroom experience for students from those who are struggling to those who are more advanced? Big schools are presumably the worst in terms of equity as students will be more lost in a bigger school, and it is easier to build cross-cultural understanding in small settings as they do at Wildwood now. I would have liked to see additional factors about protecting the ability to walk to school, ensuring that all of elementary age kids in a family can be in the same school, environmental considerations from energy efficiency to rebuilding versus new construction costs, how do the options affect town planning, such as traffic flow, housing, other uses for the empty school? What about the hugely popular mentoring by 4-6 graders of K-3 students? Or coordination among teachers who follow kids from year to year? How will these programs affect that? What about cafeteria lines, staffing, gym times, recess time, school start and end time, teacher lay offs? How will each of these options affect these?</p>
145	<p>In addition to the wonderful academic experiences my children had at Fort River, some of the many factors that made my children's experience at Fort River exceptional included: every adult in the school knew who they were, from the front office staff to the specials teachers to every teacher in every grade, regardless of whether the teacher had specifically taught my children; my children's excitement and anticipation about doing what the older kids were doing; teachers who knew each other well and could collaborate with each other and advise about placement for students; knowing all the kids in the school. Fort River is not a small school but it feels like a small school because of the community that develops when people are with each other every day. My kids knew everyone in their grade, which was immensely important during transition times and the start of the new school year. The specials teachers knew taught my children from kindergarten until they retired or my kids graduated. A huge school with 7-8 classrooms per grade will simply not allow for this kind of community feel. There is no reason why, in a small town like Amherst, we should be building a megaschool. The administration has not made a case for why. There is no data supporting the idea. The financials don't even support it. Please find another "solution".</p>
146	<p>I would suggest when designing a survey that you allow the respondent to go back to future questions. I realized partway through I did not fully understand one of the four options and was unable to change a response. Thank you for eliciting input. This process has been more than a bit frustrating.</p>

Comment Number	Comment/Question
147	Between the Five Colleges, we have some of the best minds in education in the country. Please ask them what works before rushing in. A shiny new building will not educate our children: good teachers and community support will.
148	I would have selected "very favorable" to option C or D, if the grade cut off were K-2, as Crocker Farm's early child education center, and the new town wide building being 3-6. I find it tough to cut off at grade 1, when I see preK-2, as fundamental, crucial learning to read years. Also, with such a cut-off, the schools in town would each have a min. of 4 years, which allows for a higher level of community building, and more time for teachers and staff to get to know the student body and their families; something I always thought was difficult and missing with a 7th-8th grade school. It'd be great to have a preK-2, 3-6, and then 7-12 (with different wings for the older students). As a caring member of our community, I found Option A to be a bandaid solution, leaving 38% of our families in an awful situation. As far as Option B, as a Crocker Farm parent, I'm concerned that the socio-economic balance and equity might be a concern for the Crocker Farm Community. Additionally, it's important for teacher and staff collaboration opportunities, and this is another area where CF would not benefit in Option B. When building the new school, whichever option, PLEASE don't forget about the importance of the outside activities- athletic fields, play structures, open space!! Thank you for all of the hard work everyone is doing. I'm confident that the administration and town members will make this important decision based on my number one priority, having a positive impact on the students' learning!
149	I am concerned about the short response period being given for this survey & how it may impact the survey results & limit the number of responses that are received for the survey. It feels as though the main reason the surveys are being rushed now is because the administration had been hesitant to conduct staff & parent surveys when the suggestion to do so was raised by community members earlier this fall. I am also concerned that no demographic or socioeconomic questions regarding the survey respondents are included other than which school(s) respondents' children attend & which grades they are even. Without collecting data related to race, income, English fluency, it will be impossible to know if the survey respondents are representative of the elementary school & community population as a whole. A third concern is that because of the short time frame, this survey is being conducted online with few (no?) alternative formats. For some of the schools there are significant number of families without email addresses & with limited internet access. How will these families be reached & given the opportunity to participate in this survey, if at all?
150	I'm committed to neighborhood, small K-6 schools. I don't see an option to renovate both Fort River and Wildwood. That would seem the best way to both keep the community local schools, and make all three elementary schools the most equitable.

Comment Number	Comment/Question
151	<p>Keeping small K-6 schools is the most important factor to me. Our children do better when a community is able to be built. 2 years in a large school is not enough time to build relationships with teachers, staff and parents. I appreciate the need to replace or renovate Fort River and Wildwood and so, though not ideal, I think the twin k-6 option is a reasonable compromise. Many children with special needs do not do well at all with transitions and research shows that children from underprivileged families do better in smaller k-6 schools than in large schools with large grade numbers. Such children can get lost and fall through the cracks.</p>
152	<p>I had to have this link referred by another parent because I do not receive ARPS e-mails. I sought the work of responding because I am engaged in this issue. This won't be a representative survey if all segments of parent population do not respond proportionately.</p>
153	<p>What is the district's perspective on pros and cons of the various grade reconfigurations for students' learning and academics? So much attention has been given to the financial and other aspects, yet what is best for students' academic and social learning should be driving these decisions.</p>
154	<p>Regardless of the number of potential wings of any building, I have concerns about the logistics of having as many as 750 students in one large building. We are not talking about older children, high school age children, we are talking about 6 through 12-year-olds! In this day and age, it seems to me to be potentially harmful to have all of our children in one place for school. Both with the politics in our country, as well as the potential chaos that it could bring simply in and around the school building. My other concern is that by attempting to bring our students together we actually push people to remove their children from Amherst schools in favor of smaller, more personal school settings.</p>
155	<p>This is a terrible survey. It was rushed and the result is that it is flawed. There should be an option to go back if one wants to change a previous answer but that option doesn't exist. A survey like this should ask for optional demographic info relevant to the discussion at hand - in this case at a minimum income level or whether your children receive free/reduced lunch, ELL status, and race/ethnicity. It is very troubling that the district and school committee are using constantly mentioning so-called "equity considerations" as arguments for why grade reconfiguration is the best option yet are totally inept at actually discussing what exactly "equity" refers to in this context and are "uncomfortable" asking about socioeconomic status. How can you be comfortable making determinations about what is best for people from certain economic backgrounds but unwilling to actively engage those people or attempt to represent them. It's disheartening. At this point I honestly don't care what happens with the schools I am just so disgusted and fed up with the process so far that I am considering moving.</p>

Comment Number	Comment/Question
156	As a Fort River parent with two children that will be affected by this building project, I strongly urge our School Committee and Council Members to consider what is best for ALL children and teachers across the district, and not be swayed by vocal detractors who are vehemently protecting their self-interests. Amherst's children need a healthy learning environment that will produce minimal interruption to their social, emotional and cognitive development. Period. Our family supports Option B, but thinks that Option D can also help meet the same objectives. We look forward to hearing about your decision soon.
157	I think that considering option D does not really make for a 2nd transition that counts. Even though kids will be transitioning from one wing to another, the school grounds and playground are familiar, the bus ride is familiar, possibly some specialty rooms like music, art, library, computer, cafeteria might be shared between the two wings and therefore familiar. And there are ample opportunities to familiarize younger students with the 5/6 wing over the years, so in reality option D really only has 1 transition, and many many other benefits over the other three options.
158	I am strongly against grade reconfiguration for many reasons as I feel it will negatively impact our children. There is no research to suggest that the prek-1 and 2-6 models will benefit our children in any way shape or form. Please do not make this irrational decision in order to save money and prevent future redistricting, etc. The Negative impacts of the mega school model strongly outweigh any benefits. I moved to this town for the great school system in place and will not hesitate leaving the Amherst school system if reconfiguration is passed.
159	Leaving Fort River behind would be unacceptable.
160	This district needs to put the needs of the students first. Young students do better in an environment in which they know their peers and teachers by name. This becomes impossible when the grade size becomes too large. The kids who struggle the most with personal and learning difficulties will be subject to the greatest challenges in this environment. Additionally, kids coming from less privileged groups will have few options, while families with greater resources will leave the district for private schools at an even greater rate than they already do, creating even greater inequity for the district's poor.
161	Community input is critical - difficult to obtain in substantive and meaningful ways, but crucial to have. Thus far, it has seemed that the district is making it's own choices and just giving lip service to community input. That is a serious problem that must be remedied. I want to support the district's choices but it can't feel like (or be!) a foregone conclusion or there will be long-term problems. Do community members truly have any say on any of these choices?
162	Thank you for your commitment to making the right choices for our children.

Comment Number	Comment/Question
163	I will not vote to support any tax override required for Option A, and may not support Option B either. The mid to long term capital budget implications for Option A (Wildwood only) are significantly higher than the other options, each of which address Fort River building issues in this project. I will not vote to support any plan that is not financially responsible from a capital budget perspective.
164	Crocker Farm has made great progress in the last five years and is a thriving place. Options A, C and D could have drastic implications on CF and may negate the excellent progress made.
165	It appears that monumental changes that will affect Amherst education are being made in great haste. The guiding criteria seems to be finances and not what is best for our children or community. Intuitively it is hard to believe that grouping children into larger numbers is better for learning or teaching. Amherst currently has a wonderful culture of individual elementary schools that would be destroyed by huge changes driven by (perceived?) cost savings. Please slow down this process before mistakes are made.
166	This reconfiguration project has the potential to address two issues at the same time. The first one has to do with the physical spaces at Wildwood and Fort River; both buildings are in very poor shape and are not appropriate learning environments for the children in our district. It would be a huge disservice to the town and to our kids to choose an option where only Wildwood is renovated, leaving Fort River as is. For that reason I'm strongly against adopting Option A. The second issue is the one of equity. As a town we are proud to say we care about equal opportunity and social justice. Option D is the only one that promotes 100 % equity among all kids who attend school in Amherst, no matter where they live or what their socioeconomic status is. Every kid will attend the same schools from K-6, and will have similar educational experiences. I urge the School Committee to vote for Option D, so that Amherst can have modern and healthy school buildings that serve every child in town equally.

Comment Number	Comment/Question
167	<p>First off, I'd like to thank to school committee for creating a survey to let the community members provide feedback on this important decision about the elementary school reconfiguration. That being said, I feel this survey will produce the result of supporting the grade reconfiguration, which the superintendent has made clear she prefers. I feel the survey is not very objective, and is tailored to create a desired answer. This feeling is supported when a person who provided feedback on the survey speaks out and says that none of her comments were used to make the survey more objective. Also rushing to create a survey at the last minute and then pushing it through in a week, seems to limit the number of responses that would be received, thus limiting community involvement.</p> <p>Second, I question why now (only ten days before the reconfiguration decision is to be made) are teachers being allowed to anomalously provide feedback. I'd think the teachers should have the most say in this decision, given that they are the ones who work daily with the students and will be greatly affected by whatever decision is made. While teachers were involved in the different focus groups, I question if they were able to provide honest feedback, or if they are required to support the administration's ideas or fear retribution if they did not support the superintendent's vision.</p> <p>Lastly, I question the recent push by the administration that this reconfiguration is about equity for all students. If that is the main reason behind the reconfiguration, why would that have not been the banner under which to unite people in this school reconfiguration from the beginning? To bring up this point and push it at the last minute, seems disingenuous. Thank you for your service to the town, especially when making difficult decisions.</p>
168	<p>There are many problems with the new proposals, but the idea of bussing kindergartners from all over Amherst to a single school is, for me, the most spectacularly nutty. CF is a great school and is serving its local community very well, just leave it alone.</p>
169	<p>Examples of other towns and their solutions would be helpful in imagining these scenarios. I haven't attended a forum yet, though, so you may have already shared this.</p>
170	<p>The most important factor to me in this decision is school size. I have a strong preference for any solution that keeps schools at 350 students, rather than larger schools.</p>
171	<p>It would be helpful to share the financial impact on all Amherst taxpayers in all options. The cost-savings is not a real figure since it will cost millions for any of the options.</p>

Comment Number	Comment/Question
172	<p>I prefer options that unify the district because they should allow us to focus on providing the best education for all ARPS students--particularly when it comes to equal access to the best our district has to offer in specialized programs. I would like to see the students divided by grade rather than by where they live in town, although the challenges that raises for transportation logistics and cost are undeniable. Crocker Farm School can serve well as either PreK-1 or PreK-6 assuming it stays under capacity. One of my primary concerns is this: it does not make sense to me to have one new building that contains duplicate grades--if there are two wings, why not separate those students and staff by grade level rather than by some other factor? One new, modern, energy-efficient, well-organized building where staff can collaborate with each other and where everyone can enjoy a healthy and comfortable learning environment would be ideal. However, I understand that the funds need to be available for this dream to come true.</p>
173	<p>I think we need to take full advantage of the funds available for a new school and maximize their impact by allowing all Amherst students to attend a modern, safe and fully accessible school. People in Amherst are going to complain no matter what but I think the school committee is doing a great job.</p>
174	<p>I'm extremely frustrated with this survey and struggled to fill it out because it did not fully represent all the issues and options involved. Specifically, I fail to understand why renovation of both WW and FR is still off the table, since no solid numbers have been presented and will only be disclosed on January 13th. All the other options I had to rank but they are distasteful to me for so many reasons, all of which have been explained numerous times by parents. In addition, there were many factors left out such as importance of school size, importance of peer mentorship across the widest grade span, community involvement. There are serious flaws in this survey.</p>
175	<p>This past year has been a very challenging one for my children (1st, 4th, and 6th) with difficult health issues and the break-down of their parents' marriage. The community and support they have at Crocker Farm has been integral to their resilience this year in the face of these hardships. My children see each other during the day and can comfort one another. And both the size of the school and the years they spend in it means there are many adults -- teachers and staff alike -- who know them, check in with them, and support them. These benefits would be lost entirely with the adoption of Option D , as none of my children would be in the same building, and the teachers' and staffs' relationships with each child would be limited to the two or three years each would be in the building. The challenges of this past year are not unique to my family. The substantial emotional aid and community support my children enjoyed this year in facing the troubles they have are benefits every child should have in the school they attend. For this reason I am strongly opposed to Option D and am in strongest support of Option B.</p>

Comment Number	Comment/Question
176	<p>Really, seriously? This is the survey? Front loaded multiple choice questions that don't represent my concerns? I'm sorry, but this is a joke of a survey. Why must I choose from among YOUR ideas of concern priorities. MY concerns are: 1) School size 2) Local school community 3) Preserving the existing historical buildings and pursuing the truly green option of not tearing down two functional buildings. Why isn't renovating the existing schools an option? That is MY choice. NO MEGA SCHOOL.</p>
177	<p>With a great deal experience watching my children and many other families' children, and a good deal of knowledge around education and effectiveness, I have very strong reasons to believe that retaining the small-school, neighborhood-feel, K-6 model for Amherst is essential. Option A is really the only one that I find reasonable, therefore, and I am quite opposed to Options C and D. I do not see any benefit to pushing students into a larger units in which they have less of an esprit de corps around their school, they lose their interactions with children of different age groups and they are forced into more transitions, which are disruptive.</p> <p>While I appreciate the School Committee members' hard work on this issue and concerns around equity, setting up the prospects of retaining the current separate school structure as at odds with equity seems, with all due respect, like a false dichotomy. We need to do all that we can to preserve smaller, well-functioning schools that provide individual attention and manageable, diverse environments to all students. Many of us would certainly be willing to pay a bit more to retain the excellence we have seen our children experience in smaller schools, if this were presented as a possibility. The finding challenge to rebuild both Wildwood and Fort River should not be the driver of the outcome; rather, the best outcome to maintain our schools as supportive, manageable environments to nurture individuality and excellence in our students should dictate our needs and we should band together to work creatively to meet them.</p> <p>Like many parents I know with children in the system who are opposed to taking our kids out to charter or private schools, I would be willing both to devote some time and money to ensuring that children continue to experience a local school where teachers and staff truly know them over a long period of time, as my children have enjoyed. Thank you for your consideration, and, I hope, for a solution that retains what many of us have valued highly in our children's elementary school experience.</p>
178	<p>This survey does not address the additional option that was supposed to have addressed renovating Wildwood and Fort River</p>

Comment Number	Comment/Question
179	<p data-bbox="350 279 1382 415">Dear School Committee: Originally I wrote in to say I did not want to support any option that left Fort River out. As a Wildwood parent I still feel this way. But I was not aware that other options existed, and I did not fully grasp that by including Fort River, I was feeling pressured to agree to change the entire K-6 model into a K-1/2-6 model.</p> <p data-bbox="350 457 1382 804">Any time spent in Wildwood would demonstrate how valuable the K-6 model is particularly for positive peer modeling. Just take programs like Reading Buddies which place 5-6 grade kids with K-1 children, and the benefits of having siblings together in the school. The recent assembly showcasing 5-6 grade chorus as well as recognition of Star behaviors (daily actions that demonstrate helping others)...it was amazing, and you could feel the energy from the younger children looking up to the older children. I still feel strongly that Fort River should be renovated or rebuilt because their data show the most detrimental learning environment. If the money can only be used for Wildwood OR a Wildwood "Plus", then please choose something that keeps a K-6 model in place.</p> <p data-bbox="350 846 1382 1087">As an educational psychologist by training, I haven't seen any compelling pedagogical reasons to dismantle the K-6 school model. Please be careful not to break a schooling model because one of the school building is in bad physical shape. Be sure that whatever you do, you actually address the problem, and do not create new ones. My children would personally thrive anywhere, and so I am thinking more about what kind of schooling benefits many children particularly in Amherst where there are many children with different backgrounds coming together in powerful ways.</p> <p data-bbox="350 1129 1382 1339">For this reason I support either building one new building for one K-6 (and waiting till we can renovate or rebuild a second school for Fort River in its location) or building the very large K-6 to accommodate both elementary schools. Crocker farm data show the teachers and students are happy there, and so no need to dismantle their education. Please do pause and reflect on why the K-1 is on the table right now and if this model has adequate rationale for its implementation. Thank you!</p>
180	<p data-bbox="350 1350 1365 1665">Originally we got the grant for the Wildwood rebuilding project so I think we should use the money for which we got the grant for. It is very unfortunate that both Fort River and Wildwood applied for it but only Wildwood got chosen when both buildings are pretty much the same in terms of age, building layout. Personally, I would be very sad that my children won't be able to enjoy the brand new building if only Wildwood gets rebuilt as we live in FR district. However, I would much prefer that option to creating a mega-size school. We can find other ways to raise the fund to rebuild Fort River later. Having a huge school building for all the elementary students in Amherst does not mean that equity is well-served.</p>
181	<p data-bbox="350 1707 1300 1885">Over the past several years we have watched students leave the district for both charter and private schools. The MSBA is providing us an with opportunity to drastically improve student learning and student equity while proving a healthy learning environment. The fear of change by parents should not be the reason Amherst squanders this opportunity.</p>

Comment Number	Comment/Question
182	Community and the continuity of community are high priorities for our family. Children thrive when they feel secure and connected to their peers and the adults they interact with, especially children who are introverted, have various special needs, are easily overwhelmed or take a longer time to develop bonds. The K - sixth grade communities that overlap neighborhood communities create opportunities for strong and lasting relationships, including relationships between students of different ages, such as the relationship my first grade daughter has with her fourth grade "reading buddy" or the relationship my fourth grade son has with the sixth grade girl who taught him to play four square.
183	We can't assess without knowing costs of renovation! - Also, I know many people who have said they would want to leave the District altogether if reconfigured or large school.
184	I would like to see the school committee select option A and propose to the Town that Fort River be rebuilt with town funds directly following the Wildwood project.
185	You are losing students because of what occurs inside the schools. Build a new building for Wildwood and put the energy and time into really being an inclusive school district (all ARPS) that values children of all abilities, races, socioeconomic statuses and their cultures.
186	I believe very strongly in the importance of preserving the strong school community that has been established at Crocker Farm Elementary. I also value equity in the district, and want the students and staff at the other two schools to have a viable and healthy learning/work environment. I support a plan which preserves Crocker Farm as it while providing a new facility for the other schools.
187	Option A.1 really should be replace Wildwood now, and then replace Fort River later (raise our taxes and apply for more grants). Small neighborhood schools are important to us.
188	I think interactions between older and younger students, such as the reading buddies program and mixed assemblies are very important and that is why I am against separating preK to grade 2 from the other grades or the other option which segregates the grades into three schools. Also I feel that a long period in a small, stable community is very beneficial. I am against a transition in the middle of elementary school. My child attends crocker farm which has lots of sunlight and windows and lovely class rooms and I think the kids at the other schools should have the same priveleges. When she attended a summer camp program at another school, I really noticed the difference in quality. That is why I voted for plan B, which gives everyone a new building but preserves a smaller k-6 structure.
189	Can I take the survey more than once?

Comment Number	Comment/Question
190	<p>This survey was designed to generate favorable responses to building options C and D. The information provided in the attached table "Implications of Enrollment Options" is insufficient and misleading. To consider one example, while the massively increased transportation costs under options C and D (and B) appear to be offset by hypothetical operational savings, no accommodation is made for potentially mitigating factors - one of which is the affect of a large, centralized school on the flow of traffic in the town. The town and the schools are not unconnected. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that wider access to high-quality classrooms and specialized programs will more positively affect the education of children. Excellent education is entirely dependent on the quality and expertise of the teachers, and it is their opinion which should be most seriously considered. A larger, centralized school brings with it a larger, more cumbersome administration which will both obstruct and distract the teachers from the intensive focus and flexibility required to provide children with an excellent education.</p>
191	<p>I feel it is important that whatever configuration is chosen at this time, that the building be built with the ability to change configurations (especially if options B, C, or D are chosen). It is possible that in the future, elementary enrollment will continue to decrease, possibly necessitating consolidating into 1 or 2 elementary schools (from either 2 or 3). If that is the case, it will be important than any Option C or D building be able to house pre-K to 1 students in the future, in case enrollments decreased such that a decision was made to close Crocker Farm. This is also important in case the District finds that a two-wing 2-6 school and separate early education school either isn't working or is no longer feasible, such that the District desires to change to an Option B (or the opposite: Option B is no longer desired and the District wished to change to option C or D). It is also important that an Option D design allow for a change to an Option C design in the future (so that grades 2-4 or grades 5-6 can function in either "wing" of the building), for similar reasons.</p>
192	<p>This seems like a good time to update facilities, and eliminate the issues (ADA compliance, lack of acoustic privacy, air quality) related to the design of Wildwood and Fort River.</p>
193	<p>I really appreciate all the ways in which you've tried to solicit community input. Also that this survey allowed respondents to remain anonymous.</p>

Comment Number	Comment/Question
194	<p>I find the choices and the way that the factors are grouped in this survey to be biased towards the idea of reconfiguration. For example, the two 5th grade teachers at Crocker Farm last year were able to collaborate very closely because there were only two of them and both knew all the children. The way that teacher collaboration is worded here implies that having several 5th grade classes together would necessarily improve existing collaborations. Isn't it possible that it might, instead, provide a much less flexible, more unified, model for the teachers?</p> <p>Similarly, as a parent whose child arrived at Crocker Farm with special education needs, I would argue that the multi-grade school set up with less transitions was a large benefit to her growth in confidence as a learner. I have heard similar arguments for ELL students not having to navigate different schools every 2 years. This perspective is not reflected in the survey. Programs such as the "reading buddies" and the relationships that the students (and their parents) are able to forge over several years with the same librarians, school administrators and support staff are vital to young children's sense of stability and citizenship.</p> <p>Having had a child at Wildwood, I am very aware of that building's dire need (as well as Fort Rivers), I am in full support of the refurbishment of these buildings. However Crocker Farm as a building and community is working well. Attendance numbers fluctuate in an academic town and are not good enough of a reason to disband a working school. Every time Crocker Farm parents have raised their voices in support of their school as it stands, they are made to feel selfish because of the needs of the other schools.</p> <p>Finally, I would like to state that I have yet to hear a pedagogical reason for children having to move school after first grade. All the teachers I have spoken to about this stress the arc of learning and development as stretching from kindergarten to the end of second grade. This cut off seems to me to be arbitrary and based on financial needs and at the expense of the needs of the six year olds.</p>
195	<p>it is important to me that Crocker Farm remain K-6.</p>
196	<p>I don't like the options for most important issues for me. I don't think they represent some of my concerns and I think they present some false choices. I didn't like the Health and Safety one. Of course we all want a healthy and safe building. Is this implying that one or more of the schools aren't safe or healthy? This is not clear to me. Also, I care deeply about equity in education. But this survey is set up to provide one large school as the answer to this problem, rather than solving this problem with any of the options by redistricting or other means. The list also didn't include things I care about, like having a small school, having a school in our community/neighborhood. I also feel like the one page pdf presents a biased explanation favoring large schools since it presents a large school as the only solution to equity, which many residents of Amherst care about.</p>

Comment Number	Comment/Question
197	If a new building is built I would like to see smaller more sensory friendly places for kids to eat lunch. Also extra spaces for indoor physical activity on days it is too cold for outdoor recess. Enough space outside for more than 1 daily recess at all grades (read the research on outcomes from more frequent daily active play!)
198	This survey was poorly designed, and the bias from the School Committee is evident. There should be an option to replace both Wildwood and Fort River. All of the research suggests that equity is BEST at small schools. By creating a large schools, equity by both race and class will deteriorate. Does this school committee really want to damage class and race equity by insisting on building a large expensive school, rather than using state monies to replace Wildwood and Amherst monies to replace Fort River, with both buildings smaller and less expensive than their planned behemoth? Please consult this document, and researchers in education who study elementary outcomes, school size, and inequality. http://www.aps.edu/re/documents/2005-2006-publications/ES_School_Size.pdf
199	I think there are other unexplored options. As with all problems, collaboration with members from diverse corners of the community can illuminate the most pros and cons allowing for the most viable solutions. This far my impression is that I have been told what the options are and what is possible. I believe opening the conversation to consider the opinions of people who will be impacted is critical at this juncture.
200	I think Wildwood and Fort River should be addressed separately. By trying to accomplish restructure of the school system, redistricting, and construction this project will become too large to properly manage resulting in budget overruns and adversely impacting on students, education and Amherst School Department professional staff. Careful consideration must be given to the impact of all this change on the students of ARPS.
201	The phrasing in this survey is very limited. Frustrating to take. Why isn't it open to larger community?
202	I really like the community that forms in a K-6 school at the current school size. Moving to K-1, 2-4, 5-6 schools seems to increase the difference to the Pelham, Leverett and Shutesbury schools. What does that mean for K-6 regionalization? Fort River and Wildwood schools were both built with an experimental model which quickly proved problematic but we've had to live with for 40 years. It would be terrible to build a huge school on an experimental model and have to live with it again.
203	Fort River would have to be renovated separately from this project but would have to be done immediately after.
204	What is the most likely site for a new building? On the Wildwood property? Fort River property? A different property entirely?

Comment Number	Comment/Question
205	Splitting siblings in different grades into different elementary schools is not ideal. Smaller K-6 units reflects more local community building.
206	This will not affect my own kids. But I am very against the further grade splitting, thinking of future families with more than one kid. It would have been a NIGHTMARE to have the K-1, 2-4, 5-6 split for my own three kids, and only a slightly less horrible NIGHTMARE to have a K-1, 2-6 split. In the years when we had kids at three different schools (elem, ARMS, and ARHS), we had NO personal investment in any of the schools and rarely got involved. But when our kids were in the same elementary school for several years in a row, we got very involved and invested.
207	The one outcome of this process that is totally unacceptable is that Wildwood be renovated and Fort River left as it is. I would seriously consider filing a lawsuit against the town, school district, and school committee if such a plan were pursued. I don't understand why an option was not listed that entails renovating both Wildwood and Fort River. While it is true that the state will only pay for one building renovation, there is no reason the town could not, on its own, decide to renovate Fort River. Finally, many of the district's move seem to be contradictory, proposing to unify MS and HS in one building and arguing that will be beneficial partly because of a greater range of grades while at the same time proposing more transitions and separation of grade levels at the lower school level.
208	Regardless of the final grade configuration, I think it is vital that we choose the larger school option. It is the only equitable choice for all students in Amherst to be on equal footing - and for Fort River not to be left behind with issues of health and noise for an undetermined length of time.
209	Please do what's possible to keep the small community k-6 schools. I want to limit the amount of transitions for my kids, keep them in the same school with their siblings and allow the older kids to act as role models for the younger kids. I am appalled about how little my friends and acquaintances with young kids know about this project even though they will be the families impacted the most. Families chose to move to Amherst for the great schools and I'm pretty confident that will end if a mega school is built. I also think many families will opt out or move to a different town for a small community school.
210	It's important to me to keep an environment where all the children of different ages and grades remain in the same building.
211	Thank you for your efforts to obtain our opinions. Please consider them carefully. Our school district is one of the main reasons my family lives in Amherst. Fort River has been a blessing to our family, and I want the Amherst Schools to continue to benefit ALL families in our community.

Comment Number	Comment/Question
212	This survey was poorly created, follows very poor form, and reeks of bias with a capital B throughout. Was it pretested? Consider there is no back button for each question to go back and change an answer. Each question should have an other option and a place to comment and that is missing in all of the questions asked. Nowhere in the school option questions is there a choice for renovating both Wildwood and Fort River which is a major blunder of whomever created this survey. That is the option that I favor for both questions, but I cannot state my opinion in the survey itself. The top three considerations question was phrased in a shallow way and should have had a 5 point likert scale representing importance for ALL of the options as well as an Other option and Comment field. This survey is flawed throughout and should be re-sent with the suggestions I have made. Our students deserve a survey that accurately and completely reflects their parents' opinions. This instrument fails to do that on so many levels and its results cannot be taken seriously.
213	I don't think it's fair that some kids are bused out of their neighborhoods because of their families income.
214	Small is beautiful.
215	Thanks for all your hard work on this immense and important project. Please choose the option that makes the most sense for all students in the district!
216	I am concerned that this survey does not ask any demographic questions. It seems that if one of the concerns central to a respondent's choosing one option over another is equity (socioeconomic. etc.) issues, then it is odd that there are no questions that gather this information from respondents.
217	I believe neighborhood schools are such an important part of families feeling included and welcome in their communities. The larger the school, the more distant from a family's neighborhood, the less it provides an anchor for a neighborhood.
218	Simply take the state's generous gift to replace wildwood. Nothing else. Fort River parents purchased homes there with every expectation of the status quo. They have no reason to complain about the State's decision. Fort river can wait their turn, perhaps school design will be even more modernized in a few years. Appy and the Super have fallen for what WE fell for when some city people convinced us years ago to go OPEN CLASSROOM with Wildwood and Fort River. They'd just love to sit atop our decades of indebtedness, toasting themselves at the launching of the New Titanic School. P.S. Sick building syndrome is a fabrication.
219	The survey is biased in that it contains the built-in assumption that we should expect to be able to solve all of our problems with a single stroke, and doesn't allow for a larger, multi-year timeframe. How realistic is that? How responsible is that?
220	No

Comment Number	Comment/Question
221	<p>In Option C, I want to know how teachers would be assigned to each Grade 1-6 wing. Will senior and junior teachers partner? I don't know much about current operations at the schools. If one new school is created, does it have to be built at Wildwood site? If it is built there, what will happen to Fort River? Will it be razed? Could it become a bigger and better public park and playground? If one big school is built at Fort River instead, how will traffic be handled there? South East St. is already a logjam in the afternoons (especially Fridays) in front of the school. I do not necessarily prefer one big town school although I understand and am sympathetic to the points about equity and economy in the models presented. Still, I like small neighborhood schools to which we can walk or bike. I loathe car lines. I just want Fort River to be renovated. The building is down-at-heels, to put it mildly.</p>
222	<p>In a perfect world, yes, each of these schools would have their makeover. But in reality, I have zero confidence that the town would approve a massive Wildwood-only makeover, then turn around and do the same for Fort River. Plus, this is a small town. I like living within walking distance of Fort River, but I can also accept that a single well-designed, modern facility for our town's elementary students could make a lot of sense and be superior for our children's education.</p>
223	<p>I really don't like the idea of a separate K-1 building. I think that elementary schools should run the full span, K-6.</p>
224	<p>The central administration continues to obscure critical information, rendering even a survey such as this useless. How will the pedagogical disadvantages of a larger school be addressed? How will the disadvantages minorities and special needs children face in a larger school environment be addressed? How will redistricting affect travel time? What is the actual line item cost of each option? Why is closing the highest performing school in the district advantageous? Without this information, parents are forced to answer this survey based on the one-sided and biased information that has been made public.</p>



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