



Beal Building Project Grade Configuration Survey Data

Presented to the Shrewsbury School Committee

October 11, 2017

Survey Information

- Surveys sent out via email list serv and website on 9/20/17; reminder also sent via email list serv
- Surveys were active through 10/3/17
- Parent & Community Survey:
 - 922 respondents
 - 495 parents & caretakers – oldest child in preschool/elementary school
 - 186 parents & caretakers – oldest child in middle school
 - 103 parents & caretakers – oldest child in high school
 - 134 community members who are not parents or caretakers of current students
 - 4 unidentified
- Staff Survey:
 - 245 respondents
 - 89 classroom teachers
 - 68 support staff (paraprofessionals, secretaries, etc.)
 - 44 special educators
 - 23 special subject teachers
 - 19 administrators
 - 2 unidentified

Kindergarten & Grade 1 Configuration: Benefits & Drawbacks

All or almost all Kindergarten & Grade 1 students in town would attend Beal for those two years.

	Benefit or Significant Benefit	Neutral	Drawback or Significant Drawback
Parents & Community	39%	18%	42%
Staff	34%	21%	45%

Kindergarten & Grade 1 Configuration: Benefits & Drawbacks

Coolidge, Floral Street, Paton, & Spring Street would primarily house Grades 2, 3 & 4.

	Benefit or Significant Benefit	Neutral	Drawback or Significant Drawback
Parents & Community	38%	24%	38%
Staff	34%	26%	41%

Kindergarten & Grade 1 Configuration: Benefits & Drawbacks

Students would experience attending two different schools, one for Grades K and 1 and one for Grades 2 through 4.

	Benefit or Significant Benefit	Neutral	Drawback or Significant Drawback
Parents & Community	23%	25%	53%
Staff	16%	19%	66%

Kindergarten & Grade 1 Configuration: Benefits & Drawbacks

All or almost all families with a child in Grades K-1 and another child in Grades 2-4 would have the children attending two different schools.

	Benefit or Significant Benefit	Neutral	Drawback or Significant Drawback
Parents & Community	7%	24%	69%
Staff	4%	18%	79%

Kindergarten & Grade 1 Configuration: Benefits & Drawbacks

The span of curriculum will be focused on a smaller number of grade levels in the same school (Grades K-1 early childhood center for one school and a Grades 2, 3, & 4 elementary school for the other)

	Benefit or Significant Benefit	Neutral	Drawback or Significant Drawback
Parents & Community	52%	29%	19%
Staff	54%	23%	23%

Kindergarten & Grade 1 Configuration: Benefits & Drawbacks

Potential need to transport students from the same neighborhood on separate buses to two different schools (Grades K-1 and Grades 2, 3, & 4) at approximately the same time.

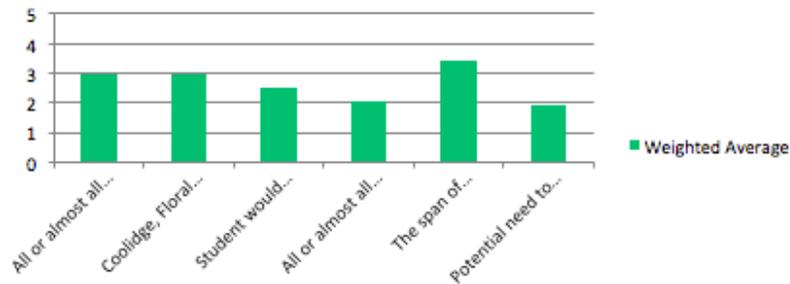
	Benefit or Significant Benefit	Neutral	Drawback or Significant Drawback
Parents & Community	6%	19%	76%
Staff	3%	14%	83%

Kindergarten & Grade 1 Configuration: Benefits & Drawbacks

Weighted averages of almost all K-1 considerations are in “drawbacks” category (<3)

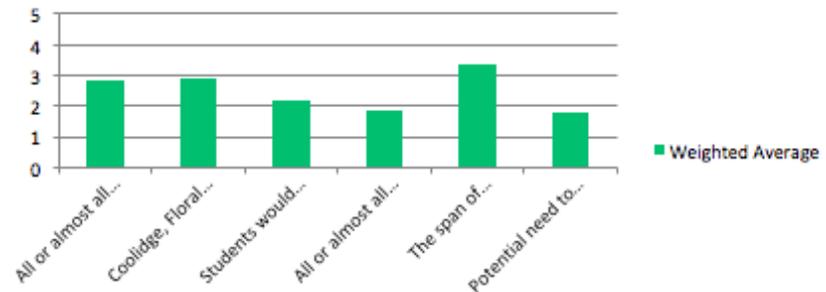
Parents & Community:

Please indicate whether you think the following considerations related to a Grades K & 1 configuration would be a drawback or a benefit:



Staff:

Please indicate whether you think the following considerations related to a Grades K & 1 configuration would be a drawback or a benefit:



5 = Significant Benefit 4 = Benefit 3 = Neutral 2 = Drawback 1 = Significant Drawback

Kindergarten – Grade 4 Configuration: Benefits & Drawbacks

All students in Grades K through 4 would attend a neighborhood elementary school.

	Benefit or Significant Benefit	Neutral	Drawback or Significant Drawback
Parents & Community	80%	13%	8%
Staff	83%	10%	7%

Kindergarten – Grade 4 Configuration: Benefits & Drawbacks

Kindergartens would be included in all neighborhood elementary schools rather than having an early childhood center model.

	Benefit or Significant Benefit	Neutral	Drawback or Significant Drawback
Parents & Community	65%	18%	17%
Staff	67%	15%	18%

Kindergarten – Grade 4 Configuration: Benefits & Drawbacks

Students would experience attending one school for the five years of Grades K through 4.

	Benefit or Significant Benefit	Neutral	Drawback or Significant Drawback
Parents & Community	79%	16%	6%
Staff	81%	13%	5%

Kindergarten – Grade 4 Configuration: Benefits & Drawbacks

Families with children in Grades K-4 would have their children attending the same school.

	Benefit or Significant Benefit	Neutral	Drawback or Significant Drawback
Parents & Community	90%	9%	2%
Staff	88%	11%	2%

Kindergarten – Grade 4 Configuration: Benefits & Drawbacks

The span of curriculum will be focused on a larger number of grade levels in the same school (Grades K-4 elementary school)

	Benefit or Significant Benefit	Neutral	Drawback or Significant Drawback
Parents & Community	38%	41%	22%
Staff	34%	39%	28%

Kindergarten – Grade 4 Configuration: Benefits & Drawbacks

Students in Grades K-4 from the same neighborhood would be transported to the same school.

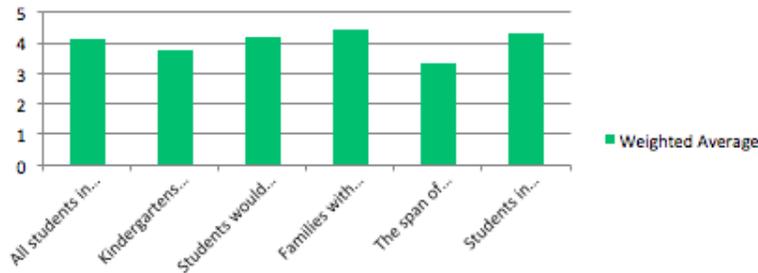
	Benefit or Significant Benefit	Neutral	Drawback or Significant Drawback
Parents & Community	87%	10%	3%
Staff	86%	12%	2%

Kindergarten – Grade 4 Configuration: Benefits & Drawbacks

Weighted averages of all K-4 considerations are in “benefits” category (>3)

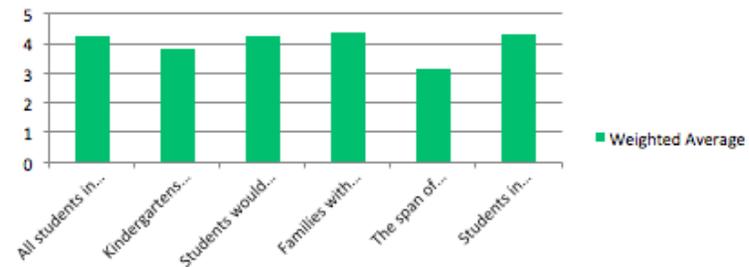
Parents & Community:

Please indicate whether you think the following considerations related to a Grades K through 4 configuration would be a drawback or a benefit:



Staff:

Please indicate whether you think the following considerations related to a Grades K through 4 configuration would be a drawback or a benefit:



5 = Significant Benefit 4 = Benefit 3 = Neutral 2 = Drawback 1 = Significant Drawback

Sample Parent Quotes in Support of K-1 Configuration

- Being an elementary school teacher and parent, I'm in favor of the K-1 model at Beal. Having all of the teachers planning curriculum together with unified goals and common assessment measures creates a solid foundation for future success as students continue on in their neighborhood schools for their grades 2-4 experience. The idea that they would all have a common experience is a significant benefit in my opinion.
- I loved Beal and feel it being an early childhood center feels like a safe, wonderful place for children to start their schooling! Those qualities make it worth the inconvenience of having kids in 2 different schools!
- I like the idea of kindergarten and grade one being in one school. All three of my kids went to Beal and I like that they can do things like sing along together as a grade. They don't do that in schools where there is one kindergarten. When looking back at their time in Beal going to sing along is still such a fun memory to look back on. Would more buses need to be added if the school is K-4? How would that affect the budget?

Sample Staff Quotes in Support of K-1 Configuration

- I hope that the committee will consider the importance of the early childhood building environment on the academic and social development of 5 and 6 year old students. Having an early childhood center does make a difference in the school's ability to focus on that particularly important beginning stage of learning. It also provides for a solid working environment for staff who are committed to the issues of developmental appropriateness in education. I cannot overstate the importance of developmental appropriateness for our youngest students. Including K/1 students in the elementary schools will water down developmentally appropriate practice as it does not provide the same experiences for either staff or students.
- I am very much in favor of a k-1 model for early childhood education. I believe this model would best provide our earliest learners with a strong educational and social/emotional foundation. Keeping K-1 students together as they start on their educational journey and having them reconnect years later when they come back together as middle-schoolers and high-schoolers just feels right. Professionals can provide a higher level of attention for curriculum in all areas when the grade-level focus of a school is smaller. As a parent in town, I have had several years with my three children being at 2 or 3 separate schools and on 2 or 3 different buses. It has not been an inconvenience and has allowed our children to claim their school as their own. Being pulled in multiple directions whether for school, sports or extra-curricular activities is something you sign on for when you have multiple children. We need to focus on doing what is right for our youngest learners rather than what is convenient.
- As a teacher at Beal, I strongly feel that a K to 1 model would have such a positive impact on our youngest learners! The children would be receiving support from teachers and staff that are truly specializing in their grade levels. We could provide learning spaces that are highly beneficial for such young learners - playground equipment, gym equipment, etc. Being part of a team that focuses their knowledge on our youngest learners will ensure that we're truly focusing on what is developmentally appropriate! Key points: - Eliminating half-day kindergarten would be essential in making sure each student is receiving the same educational experiences. - Fine tuning the bus situation will be a challenge; but it's imperative that we are thinking about what is best for their educational experience and not the convenience of busing.

Sample Parent Quotes in Support of K-4 Configuration

- I have been conflicted about the best option for our students and I see benefits to both models. While I love the benefits of having all K and 1 students in the same building as one focused Early Childhood Center, those benefits aren't as strong as having a consistent community and curriculum work for the first 5 years. There would be such greater continuity by having students in the same learning community for those 5 years. As a parent with children in K-4 this year (in 2 different schools), I would prefer to have my children have the experience of being in the same school for all five years for the common language, building culture and same teaching/learning expectations.
- My son currently attends Floral and I have a preschooler who will attend in a couple of years. The class sizes are large at Floral and with constant construction of apartments and housing in Shrewsbury, the amount of children is increasing. Shrewsbury is a wonderfully diverse town with a great community and wonderful schools, so naturally it is attractive to families. With Beal becoming a K-4 School, it could create the opportunity for reconfiguration in current schools which could decrease class sizes allowing for an optimal educational experience. This also allows for less transitions between schools for our children. They already transition from K to elementary, elementary to middle, middle to middle and finally to high school. That is a lot of shifting schools for our children as they grow. Please consider all of these extremely important issues as you make this decision. Thank you!!
- I think it would be best if a new building housing K-4 is created. There are already too many schools the children have to attend throughout their schooling in Shrewsbury- K school, 1-4, a 5-6 a 7-8 and then HS. It would be great if students could start in K in one building and continue through 4th grade, they would become more part of the community, more comfortable and settled and have similar friends throughout the 5 years rather than jumping from school to school so many times.

Sample Staff Quotes in Support of K-4 Configuration

- I think that having the consistency of going to one school from K-4 would help the students immensely. The students would learn school wide expectations that would transfer well year to year. I also think that this would allow teachers who loop to continue to do that work. As a first grade teacher, having a second grade class next door is a huge benefit to my students and myself. The children get to see role model students and it helps me to see the foundational skills I teach in action the next year.
- I think the fewer transitions students have between schools, the better it is for them. When at a school for several years, students are able to build relationships across grade levels and faculty get to know families more closely.
- I think that having younger children together with older students in the same school is a definite benefit. Not only does this provide the younger students with older role models, but it also provides more opportunities for cross grade level activities. From a teaching perspective, it is incredibly helpful to have the grade above you in the same building so that you can learn more about where your students need to be by the end of the year and tailor your instruction accordingly.

K & Grade 1 Configuration: Themes

Perceived Strengths	Perceived Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on early childhood and developmentally appropriate practices• Smaller range of ages (social aspect; school design)• Most K-1 students in town together in one place (equity)• Educators with similar focus/expertise• Horizontal alignment of curriculum• “Feel” of early childhood climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More transitions between schools• Most/all students in town together in one place, then dispersed to neighborhood schools• Less vertical curriculum alignment• Less time for school personnel to get to know students and families, and vice versa• Large population of young students (750 K & 1 students)• Logistics (siblings split across multiple schools; transportation; can't fit all K-1 students in new school; etc.)

K through Grade 4 Configuration: Themes

Perceived Strengths	Perceived Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fewer transitions, more stability and consistency over five year period• More time for school personnel to get to know students and families, and vice versa• Greater ability to even out population across schools (equity)• Vertical alignment of curriculum• “Feel” of neighborhood school climate (older kids models for younger kids)• Logistics for siblings, transportation, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less focus on early childhood developmental level• Curriculum focused on a wider range of grades• Students divided in separate schools across town rather than most at same grade levels in one place (equity)• Design of school not entirely focused on early childhood• Older kids could be intimidating to younger kids