

Middlebury Community Schools
Community Input Session
Summary of Comments From Speakers
January 4, 2005

Summary:

Meeting lasted 3 hours

38 people spoke.

13 (34%) said overcrowding is a problem we must address.

11 (29%) felt extracurricular activity space was as important as Classroom space.

8 (21%) said we must specifically build more Classrooms.

5 (13%) said we could not afford or should wait to build the extracurricular spaces, or they weren't important.

4 (10%) said un-clear communication was a problem the last time around.

3 (8%) said safety was a problem caused by overcrowding.

3 (8%) said urgency was important.

Each grouping represents a different speaker.

- It good that the project is not being tabled.
 - Family orientation in Middlebury is impressive.
 - Schools are good academically.
 - Good teaching staff.
 - Schools rank high on test scores.
 - We have a good foundation; now we need to improve.
 - #1 priority should be new HS building. School is cramped and classes are held in the hallways.
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- Northridge is doing well.
 - They are good at teaching time management.
 - Extracurricular is a big part of an education.
 - Going to school is difficult with Classroom size of 40 or classes held in hallways.
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- Build it right - don't cheapen quality and plan for future needs reasonably.
 - Swimming pool is a plus but the present one is not adequate.
 - Buses are overcrowded.
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- Extracurricular programs have contributed to students' success.
 - Extracurricular help to round out students and helps make them become more successful.
 - Lights at the soccer field have been a major improvement.
 - Music, Choir, etc. all crowded and successful.
 - Sound system in the HS Auditorium is not sufficient.
 - Swimming pool is not meeting the needs with new requirements and safety standards.
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- The school system does a good job of keeping up for the students.
 - Changes are done when needed.
 - Before some of the sports venues were built, our students were not as good.
 - The school system seems to be able to keep good teachers.
 - We are growing.
 - Size of Classrooms is too small
 - #1 priority is more Classrooms (Jefferson).
 - School Board has worked with us.
 - Extracurricular activities are very important, don't just tack on.
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- Extracurricular is defined as everything outside the Classroom.
 - No space for some of the extracurricular activities.
 - Education goes beyond the 3 R's
 - Are extracurricular activities widely held to be important? – No, or we wouldn't be here tonight.
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- Classes are held daily in extracurricular activities spaces.
 - We should not build a building without extracurricular spaces.
 - Extracurricular are used as Classrooms.
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- With finances the way they are: We need Classrooms, but not everything else.
 - You can't always have all you want.
 - #1 priority should be more Classrooms, smaller classes and more teachers.
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- This is one the best school systems I've seen.
 - Extracurricular opportunities have helped the most, and have made me a better person.
 - You become a good person through experiences.
 - Walk around the HS during the day and you'll see what it's like: HS is too small, HS is overcrowded.
 - Extracurricular activities is an outlet for stress, helps keep the student positive.
 - Extracurricular activities help you get through the day.
 - Extracurricular activities help build potential.
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- Do well at educating, but still can do better.
 - Focus on responsibility – students, parents, teachers, administration and community.
 - We have failed because we are now overcrowded.
 - Community's responsibility to educate all students!
 - #1 priority is education.
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- We must address overcrowding now, we should have done it already.
 - I think redistricting can solve some of the overcrowding in the Elementary.
 - I think the existing HS was built to enlarge to the east and south.
 - I think we can raise private money to build Extracurricular spaces, I've heard we can raise 5 million (opinion not documented).
 - We should investigate the use by the community of the extracurricular spaces, because I think we are missing opportunities by limiting use to school activities. Outdoor pool?
 - I think some Classrooms at York and Middlebury are not full.
 - I think at the HS we can add 8-10 Classrooms to the south and 4-5 Classrooms to the east, and turn the Cafeteria into Classrooms.
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- What's causing the growth in Middlebury?
 - Educational system Quality (need to continue & increase), Farmland, Community, Test Scores.
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- Before we moved here we were told you had an excellent school system and high test scores, and you do, but you only offer 2 foreign languages and only 4 AP classes.
- Does the lack of space equal lack of options to the student?
- Extracurricular activities offer benefits to the community.
- Extracurricular is just a different type of education.

- Recently moved from SC from a School System with 44 portables.
 - Many good things are done here.
 - Let's get together, plan, make the decisions and move on before we have to use portables.
 - Our family needs the extracurricular activities.
 - Relates quality to type of community- reflects in both directions.
 - Couldn't find classical music program and we offer only 2 foreign languages.
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Teacher at middle school.

- Safety of students should be a concern.
 - We have a great staff.
 - I'm afraid to do labs in Classroom because of safety due to class size and available resources.
 - Safety in hallways is a concern.
 - Overcrowding leads to safety concerns, then to academic concerns.
 - No place for equipment.
 - Science class sometimes meets in gym, which is great, but hard to share because of overcrowding.
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Principal at Middlebury:

- Safety is concern in how space is utilized.
 - Test scores are high because of great parents and great staff
 - Open Classrooms used as other functions and are out of space.
 - No conference room.
 - Class sizes are growing: K=24 & 25, 5th grade=28, 27 & 27 without Instructional Assistants. This will adversely affect test scores if not addressed.
 - The main entrance to school is a blind entrance and presents a safety issue. Safety is compensated for by staff and some technology.
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Principal at Orchard View:

- Only 1 Classroom is open.
 - 410 enrollment now.
 - We are loading up with primary grades.
 - Overcrowding will affect test scores.
 - Redistricting will not even make a dent in overcrowding situation.
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- Good education system.
 - Need better facilities for Extracurricular, Smaller class sizes, more Classrooms
 - #1 priority is adding Classrooms at HS and Elementaries.
 - Maybe need Classrooms now, other stuff in the future (because of finances).
 - We don't want another remonstrance.
 - Let's focus on what we need now.
 - Everyone agrees on the Classrooms part of the previous project.
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- School should offer opportunities, not state-of-the-art and not specialization.
 - Private community Sports Center specializes and draws participants from school activities. (5th grade basketball participants went from many to very few)
 - Pool is not state-of-the-art, but we don't need state-of-the-art.
 - Good schools are a drawing card to the area, but not the only one.
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- Evaluate how much Team Teaching and Block Scheduling add to cost and space needs and see if it's worth it.
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- The argument will always be space vs. money, and the two will never meet.
 - Some kids can only get the specialized opportunities at school.
 - Can't band aid everything.
 - Pool is too shallow for state approvals and has been grand fathered in.
 - We need numbers to come together, last time it was too confusing (so we couldn't get together.)
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- Can't we build up at the HS instead of out?
 - If pool is dangerous, drain it.
 - More courses in languages for global market place.
 - Our kids are not ready for college.
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- Kids should be required to speak English before they enter Kindergarten. (5 children cannot speak English in their child's class.)
 - Not against new building, but previous plan was not properly developed.
 - Remove kids who can't speak English to reduce class size and overcrowding.
 - Existing plan was not looked at thoroughly. Building is not efficient and wastes space.
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Teacher at Middlebury Elementary:

- HS is overcrowded.
 - Extracurricular and education spaces are both important.
 - Baseball field needs work.
 - Curriculum at HS should be looked at.
 - Middlebury is a piece of history and needs some work if want to keep it.
 - The existing plan doesn't cover a very long period, need to look longer term.
 - Walk in the HS corridors sometime to see the overcrowding.
 - We are so good because we are a community.
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- We urgently need a new HS.
 - Maybe we could put Classrooms around the outside of the building.
 - Walk the halls, see the safety problems, and see the mess.
 - #1 priority is education
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- #1 priority is Classroom space.
 - Must be done quickly.
 - Must address all items at all schools.
 - Needs vs. Wants is not necessarily a good way of looking at it.
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- Didn't vote either way, but see overcrowding in Classrooms.
 - Lots of excess in that plan (too decorative on outside)
 - We don't need a Cadillac.
 - Can get more but more affordably.
 - Focus on function, don't overdo beauty.
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- Should have an elected school board.
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- Programming drives everything; what is the programming at the HS, if we know, we will get a clearer vision.
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- What is the School Boards responsibility from the state?
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- Waiting isn't going to help.
- We can't decide, School Board should, they know.
- Let's let the School Board do it.

- Public input was given, but not used last time.
 - Elected school board would not eliminate a remonstrance.
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- I have faith in the School Board, but this will cost more than the last time.
 - The kid tonight learned to speak at extracurricular activities.
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- The information last time could've been clearer.
 - No educated decision was possible.
 - Information must be clear, concise and accessible.
 - Information should be in the newspaper, Internet site, and sent home with kids.
 - Information we wanted: extracurricular items included, increase in tax effect, cost, and layout of the building.
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- Do we trust the School Board?
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- You don't get good test scores without good teachers.
 - More Classrooms, more teachers.
 - Don't add space and eliminate opportunities.
 - What's going to happen in the future?
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- Get enough from both sides and you win.
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- Communicate.
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