

The following document was presented to the Board of Education on January 22, 2019 in a Budget Workshop. The options listed below are part of a long-range budget plan. Please note that no decisions have been made and no recommendations were presented from administration to the Board. There will be ongoing discussions over the next few months while developing the 2019-20 budget. These options will assist the Board of Education in evaluating various programs, enrollment and course offerings to consider if there are alternative ways to offer classes in a more efficient way. The long-range plan also allows the Board to look at future needs and plan for any expansion of programs.

Staffing and Program Options
Presentation for the BOE Budget Workshop
January 22, 2019

Background and Summary:

The Ichabod Crane administrative team has been developing a long-range academic plan to enhance course offerings and expand high school credit into the Middle School while also containing cost whenever possible. The retirement incentive that the district offered for the 2017-18 school year resulted in five teachers retiring and an estimated savings of \$343,000 (salary and benefits) for the 2018-19 budget.

The second year of the retirement incentive is being offered for the 2018-19 school year. We have commitments from eight teachers to retire at the end of the school year. This will provide an estimated savings of \$409,000 (salary and benefits) if we replace each of the teachers with a new teacher starting on Step 6. We use this figure as an estimate to calculate potential cost savings.

We have developed various scenarios for the BOE to consider that we believe will strengthen our academic programs and save resources. We are focusing on expanding high school courses to the middle school and this will allow more academic freedom for our high school students to take high school and college electives or explore other academic opportunities.

In developing this project we have met with Department Chairs, committees and teacher leaders. The Department Chairs shared information with their departments in Foreign Language, Art and Music to get feedback. The feedback is shared in the benefits and challenges.

Scenarios:

I. Foreign Language Options:

- **Option 1 - Replace the retiring French teacher and continue 7-12 French program.**

1. *Rationale:* This will allow us to continue our current French program and provide students with a choice of two languages. French and Spanish I-V can be taught in-district.

2. *Potential Challenges:*

- a.** It is difficult to hire a Foreign Language teacher. We posted the French position on OLAS and received four applications, and two of the applicants are not certified. We are currently interviewing candidates and are working with the Clarkson Graduate program to consider May graduates they might have in their program.
- b.** We have reached out to several districts and found many in the same position as our district. There are multiple school districts looking to fill French vacancies on OLAS.
- c.** If the enrollment at the middle school continues to decline in French and the high school upper level classes are not filled, it could force us to reduce one of the French positions to part-time in the future. It should also be noted that the remaining French teacher is near retirement.
- d.** We are concerned with the low number of students entering 7th grade participating in French. With two full-time teachers, we may have to consider a lottery to balance the class loads so we have a 60% to 40% split to have the numbers to continue to offer upper level French classes. The 2012 cohort had 19 seventh grade students enroll in French, however only 13 of those students continued on to French III. This represents 68% continuing on. We have noticed these numbers continue to decrease and the cohort of 2016 had 25 students begin with French and only 10 remained in French III. This represents 40% continuing on with French. This year we did not run French V due to very low enrollment.

3. *Potential Benefits:* We continue to offer two languages to our students.

- 4. Potential Cost Savings or Cost Addition:** We could save money on the breakage in salary from the retiring teacher to the new teacher, but this is not guaranteed as the pool of applicants is so small that an experienced teacher will command a salary beyond what we typically offer when replacing a retired teacher.
- **Option 2 - Maintain French Program for High School only (or 7th-12th students) and gradually phase out French. This would mean not replacing the retiring French teacher, allowing currently enrolled French students to complete their studies and enhancing Spanish offerings.**

1. Rationale:

- a. Pending retirements in several subject areas combined with new flexibility allowed by SED this year for Middle School requirements, provides an ideal time to consider scheduling changes to maximize efficiency and provide new opportunities for students.
- b. There is low enrollment in French classes and hiring French teachers is difficult. The potential savings of one French position provides the district with flexibility to enhance other academic programs and budget needs.
- c. This plan will also allow us to expand the current Spanish offering in 6th grade and could eventually allow us to provide Spanish to 4th and 5th grade students as our French classes at the high school phase out. This transition plan also provides us with a long-term plan for the remaining French teacher who is eligible to teach both Spanish and French.

2. Scheduling Considerations:

- a. All 6th Grade students take 20 weeks of Spanish in place of Cultures (10 weeks) & FACS (10 weeks) thus starting a language one year earlier. FACS would be shifted to begin earlier in grade 5 instead of grade 6 (see *bullet e. below*). FACS would increase from 10 to 20 weeks in grade 7.
- b. All 7th graders take Spanish every other day opposite Art. This change from everyday to every other day allows the Middle School students to earn ½ High School Art credit at the end of 8th grade. *****The students will not be losing any foreign language classroom time. 20 weeks of language in 7th grade will be shifted into 6th grade (see bullet a. above).**

- c. Students who completed 7th grade French (18-19 school year) would transition to Spanish. They would complete Spanish I to earn High School credit in one year. These students will all be placed in a designated Spanish I class together, preferably in one class (2 small sections may be an option if needed).
- d. Current 8th graders in French going to High School would move into French II. The remaining French teacher will teach all High School French courses.
- e. FACS moves to grades 5 & 7 in order to expand ½ High School Art credit to the Middle School students.
- f. This plan would increase the number of Spanish sections at the Middle School. All 8th grade students will take Spanish every day and earn Spanish I credit.

3. Potential Challenges

- a. Students in French 7 may transition to Spanish I in grade 8 and complete Spanish I in one year in order to maintain the same pace with their peers. This is to guarantee they have the same opportunity to earn the sequence required for graduation and also to earn Spanish IV and Spanish V credit with their peers.
- b. Students in French 7 could possibly continue in French, but we would need to continue the French program for five years. We may potentially need to utilize Distance Learning if we continue the current 7th graders through until French V in order to cover all classes.

4. Potential Benefits

- a. All 6th Grade students take 20 weeks of Spanish in place of Cultures (10 weeks) & FACS (10 weeks) thus starting instruction in a language earlier (this is an increase from 10 weeks of cultures).
- b. We have the potential to consider starting languages in 4th or 5th grade in the future if we are teaching a single World Language.
- c. Provides cost saving with the attrition of the French position and allows us to expand art to Middle School to earn High School credit.

5. Potential Cost Savings or Cost Addition:

- a. Savings: Equates to \$134,000 for reducing 1 FTE.

- **Option 3 - Do not replace retiring French teacher and continue French program for grades 7-12.**

1. Rationale:

- a. Maintains our current French program but focuses on a three year cycle (Grades 6-8) to earn high school credit. Language instruction is expanded to begin in grade 6.
- b. This plan would require Distance Learning for upper level French courses which also could be utilized for other electives.

2. Scheduling Considerations:

- a. Grade 6 - Students will have a choice of Intro to French or Intro to Spanish (Increase from 10 weeks to 20 weeks). Remaining French teacher teaches French I, II, III & then Distance Learning is available for IV and V (Could be offered through Burnt-Hills with credit from Oswego).
- b. Grade 7 changes from everyday to every other day full year opposite of Art.
- c. Grade 8 continues every day full year to earn Spanish I High School credit.

3. Potential Challenges:

- a. Distance Learning for higher level French classes will likely be needed.
- b. We will not be able to reduce class sizes for the large class entering 7th grade next year. There will be language classes of 28 in grade 7 due to the bubble section.
- c. Students taking Earth Science (8th grade accelerated), and Band/Chorus, will be challenging to schedule into French as well.

4. Potential Benefits:

- a. Maintaining French and expanding language into grade 6.
- b. Flexibility of scheduling through Distance Learning. We have options to allow students to use Distance Learning for French and explore other electives.

5. Potential Cost Savings or Cost Addition:

- a. Savings: Equates to \$134,000 for reducing 1 FTE.
- b. Additional Expense: Distance Learning @ \$65,000 room setup for full service program. There is also an additional fee for limited service or a cost of \$75,000 for full service (both expenses are eligible for BOCES Aid at 50%).

II. Art Options:

A. Option 1 - Replace retiring Art teacher and continue 7-12 Art program with enhancements to the middle school program.

1. Rationale:

- a. We would offer Studio A in the Middle School. This would allow our Middle School students to earn ½ High School credit for Studio A, which allows them to take more electives and college level courses in High School.
- b. This also allows our middle school students to fulfill a graduation requirement prior to entering high school.

2. Plan with Potential Schedule:

- a. Grade 6 stays the same (10 weeks).
- b. Grade 7 and 8 will take 20 weeks of Studio Art (increase of 10 weeks per grade). Grade 7 will meet every other day and would be opposite of Foreign Language to maximize efficiency, space, and to best utilize the teaching staff in both departments.
- c. This would require an increase of art from 1.6 FTE to 2.0 FTE in the Middle School Grades 4-8 (a decrease in the High School by 0.4 FTE).

3. Potential Challenges:

- a. Significant changes to the current Middle School master schedule.

4. Potential Benefits:

- a. ½ credit of Studio A Art earned in the Middle School.
- b. High School will eventually not need to offer Studio A, or as many sections of Studio A; thus freeing up High School teachers to offer higher level electives.
- c. Overall enhancement of the Art program at Ichabod Crane, aligning with the direction of the upcoming capital project and STEAM (Science-Technology-Engineering-Art-Mathematics) initiative.

5. Potential Cost Savings or Cost Addition:

- a. Breakage on Retiring Art Teacher Salary

B. Option 2 - Replace the retiring Art teacher and continue current 7-12 program.

1. Rationale:

- a. This would be a continuation of current program. This will create the ability to develop some higher level elective courses and provides flexibility within the Art teachers' schedules

2. Plan with Potential Schedule:

- a. Same as current schedule however we will need to look for ways to maximize instructional impact of the teacher since some current schedules include courses with low enrollment.

3. Potential Challenges:

- a. Having a split position between buildings creates scheduling challenges.
- b. Some of the courses offered in the past have had low enrollment. Running classes below 10 students is a challenge.
- c. Current need to cover courses in both buildings only substantiates a part-time position. Finding and hiring a part-time teacher in Art is very difficult.

4. Potential Benefits:

- a. This provides flexibility to schedule higher level courses however they may be below 10 students enrolled.

5. Potential Cost Savings or Cost Addition:

- a. Salary breakage on the retiring Art Teacher Salary.

III. Music Options

A. Option 1 - Replace one of two retiring high school music teachers and increase current .5 FTE teacher to 1.0 FTE.

1. **Rationale:**

- a. A reconfiguration of the Middle School schedule would create flexibility to allow a teacher to teach 7-12 Chorus or 7-12 Band.
- b. Music Enrollment at the High School has decreased.

2. **Plan with Potential Schedule:**

- a. Students who take band and chorus no longer are required to take general music. Students who want to take general music with band/chorus may do so if it fits in their schedule.
- b. Music Theory taught by new hire (if possible), or may need to be taught every other year, or moved to Distance Learning. This course currently has low enrollment numbers.

3. **Potential Challenges:**

- a. Creating an effective schedule that works for both buildings and does not limit course offerings.

4. **Potential Benefits:**

- a. Flexibility to allow a teacher to teach 7-12 Chorus or 7-12 Band.
- b. Creates a more efficient schedule for Middle School/High School schedule.
- c. Increases a part-time employee to a FTE.

5. **Potential Cost Savings or Cost Additions:** The reduction of a .5 FTE

B. Option 2 - Replace both retiring high school teachers and continue program as is.

1. **Rationale:** Maintains current program

2. **Plan with Potential Schedule:**

- a. Continue to offer upper level courses with low enrollment.

- b. Possibility of expanding electives depending upon new hire and staff shifts.
- 3. **Potential Challenges:**
 - a. May have to reduce FTE to Part-time due to low enrollment numbers.
 - b. Offering low enrollment courses is difficult to sustain.
- 4. **Potential Benefits:**
 - a. Ability to offer small upper level courses/expanded electives.
 - b. Maintains general music for all Middle School students even those enrolled in band and chorus.
- 5. **Potential Cost Savings or Cost Addition:** No Savings.

IV. Distance Learning Options

A. Option 1 - Participate in the full Distance Learning program.

- 1. **Rationale:** Full participation expands offerings for students and provides the district with a seat at the planning table in the consortium. This program is being used by many neighboring school districts with great success.
- 2. **Plan with Potential Schedule and Courses:**
 - a. Survey students to determine interest in DL course offerings.
 - b. Offer electives currently not available such as Business Law, Accounting, etc. Students have expressed interest in a variety of courses that we are unable to offer currently but could do so through DL.
 - c. Work with block schedule group to partner with schools to meet our needs.
- 2. **Potential Challenges:** Maximizing a full schedule to justify initial start up costs.

3. **Potential Benefits:**

- a. Expands course offerings for students; provides a means to continue upper level French courses despite low enrollment.
- b. Full membership enables IC to broadcast courses and thus offset costs.
- c. Provides more flexibility to run courses with low enrollment as we can now broadcast out to other schools. Additionally, we may be able to offer students options for courses that we may only run at one specific time during the day due to staff scheduling.
- d. Allows us to offer new programs for students that we are unable to offer in-house. For example, students can take Business courses and this is more efficient than us hiring a teacher, especially if the enrollment is low. Over the years, students have expressed interest in courses that we currently do not have the ability to offer such as: ASL (American Sign Language), Agricultural Sciences, Business/Marketing, Criminal Justice, Vet Tech, additional World Languages, etc.
- e. There are also college level courses that students may be able to participate in that we are unable to offer.

4. **Potential Cost Savings or Cost Addition:** The estimated cost for a full renovation for a Distance Learning classroom is \$65,000. The cost can vary depending on the size of the classroom and the equipment. This project would be done through NERIC and is eligible for BOCES Aid. If we did this prior to the end of the current school year, we would be eligible for 50% reimbursement in BOCES Aid that would be paid in the 2019-20 school year. So the one time fee of \$65k for the room would net back \$32,500 for the district starting in July 2019. This money could be applied to offset the annual cost of the Distance Learning program. The annual cost for the full program is \$75,000 per year which is also aidable at the 50% rate. We would immediately offset the membership cost with the \$32,500 from the classroom set-up aid therefore the net cost in the budget for 2019-20 would be \$42,500. We could reduce this cost further by broadcasting out classes. Salary for staff who broadcast out or supervise a Distance Learning course, is also aidable on a prorated basis. We could also expand to have one or two smaller sites so that we could offer multiple courses each Block. The cost is reduced significantly for additional sites.

B. Option 2 - Participate in the limited Distance Learning program.

1. **Rationale:** This option minimizes costs and allows us to explore distance learning without making a full financial commitment. This program is being used by many neighboring school districts with great success.
2. **Plan with Potential Schedule and Courses:**
 - a. We can possibly utilize Distance Learning for upper level French courses with low enrollment.
 - b. We will survey students to determine interest in Distance Learning course offerings.
 - c. We can look to fill voids for individual students with scheduling difficulties for certain courses or programs they are interested in.
3. **Potential Challenges:** This plan only allows us limited membership and therefore we do not get first access to seats in courses being broadcast.
4. **Potential Benefits:** Because there is a small group of schools with the same schedule as us, we can work with them ahead to see if we can participate in some offerings that we do not have. We have already had conversations with Schodack about our interest in Business Education classes. We also had conversations with Averill Park, Gloversville and Burnt Hills about some of the courses they offer to see if we would be good partners with them. This group on the Block Schedule works very well together and looks to provide as many opportunities for students as possible.
5. **Potential Cost Savings or Cost Addition:** The cost of this program is much less and allows us to plan and grow into a larger program. The initial cost can range from \$11,000 to \$21,000. The setup can be done in a flexible space and the equipment is eligible for 50% BOCES Aid. This would have a minimal impact on our budget and allow us to grow into a larger program in the future.

V. Director of Physical Education Options:

A. *Option 1 - Combine the Director of Physical Education and Athletic Director position.*

1. **Rationale:** Create Position to be in compliance with SED regulations.
2. **Plan with Potential Schedule:** The teacher currently in the department chair position can now teach a full load of classes.
3. **Potential Challenges:** Potential resistance to eliminating the Department Chair Position. Currently exploring this with ICTA and the Teacher-Leader Restructuring Committee.
4. **Potential Benefits:** Compliance with SED Regulations. We would apply for a waiver and the Director would remain a member of the teaching staff until he/she completes the required administrative degree. This would be at least two budget cycles. The Board of Education can then decide down the road if the combined position should be a full-time administrative position or if it can stay in the ICTA bargaining unit.
5. **Potential Cost Savings or Cost Addition:** Possibly a cost saving of the current PE Department Chair stipend. Currently exploring this with ICTA and the Teacher-Leader Restructuring Committee. No additional cost for change as a result of the change in title unless the position becomes an administrative position sometime in the future.

VI. Potential Future Positions to Consider:

1. **Technology:**

- a. We would like to consider a change to our FACS program to increase Technology at the middle school upon the retirement of the FACS teacher. This may be several years from now, but the plan would be not to replace the FACS teacher (very few candidates to choose from) and increase Technology offerings to support our STEAM initiative and meet SED regulations.
- b. We would look to increase the Technology Department at the High School for the 2021-22 budget upon completion of the new Tech wing if needed. We anticipate the capacity for the program to increase and we could expand our course offerings with an additional teacher.
- c. We would also look to push the STEAM initiative in early grades if we add an additional staff member and have the capacity to do so.

2. Business Education:

- a. We feel the best way to address this need is to utilize Distance Learning for students so they can take Business courses and we do not need to hire a teacher. This is a cost effective and efficient way to expand our course offerings for students.
- b. Another option in the future to consider is when the FACS teacher retires, we could hire a Business Education teacher for the Middle School. Students would earn high school credit by taking Keyboarding in 7th grade and Business Analysis / Computer Applications in 8th grade. At the end of 8th grade, these students would earn one full high school credit in Business and have a strong foundation in Keyboarding and Computer skills. This will allow students to be proficient in programs such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint and other platforms. Students will use this skill after graduation and teachers can assign work and expect high quality work product in return.
- c. Starting a Business program in the Middle School will also help build interest in Business as students move to the High School. Students could take courses via Distance Learning or we could consider hiring a teacher if the program warranted us to do so.

3. Instructional Computer Technology:

- a. We have a .5 FTE for this position and would consider increasing this position to a 1.0 FTE in the 2020-21 budget. We are holding off on this recommendation this year so we can evaluate our current model and have the District Technology Committee review the proposal and make recommendations.
- b. This position is designed for someone working directly with our teaching staff on technology and is not the same role as that of our Director of Technology or Technicians.

4. Building Security:

- a. Based on the review of the building from the Columbia County Sheriff's Department and a review from Questar III BOCES, we are not recommending any additional coverage with staff members for the current budget proposal. We will revisit this topic each year to determine if there is a need to make a new recommendation. A full safety assessment report by the Columbia County Sheriff's Department will be provided separately.

5. Communication Service:

a. We currently participate in BOCES CoSer for the Communications Service. We previously had coverage 2 days a week, We feel that we can reduce this service by one day and replace the coverage with a stipend position and hire someone in-house to be a media specialist for us. This position would be for a teacher or employee of the district and they would work approximately an hour a day after school hours. This would equate to approximately 16 hours a month for 10 months. The person in this position would assist our Communication Specialist by attending evening activities and taking pictures to post on social media and on our website. This plan could provide us with better coverage for events and save us money.