

June 23, 2008

TO: Lebanon School Board

FROM: Long Range Planning Committee

Re: Long Range Plan

The Long Range Planning Committee began meeting in December of 2007 and has continued through until June 17, 2008, when we reached a final recommendation to be submitted to the Board. The Committee included three board members, three administrators, three teachers and six parents/community members. This very diverse group had lively discussions and reviewed and discussed a lot of information and data including enrollments, building capacities, building budgets, etc.

The Committee worked on the telephone survey questions and reviewed the final report of the survey that gave us some direction although nothing overwhelming. We held a public forum which was well attended and also gave us some additional direction. The telephone survey and the public forum indicated to us that the voters want a long range plan that addresses the elementary school students as well as building inadequacies at the junior high.

On June 17<sup>th</sup>, 12 members of the Committee agreed unanimously to present the following recommendation to the Board:

- 1) Construct a new building on property to be purchased (perhaps the Route 4 property) for grades 6, 7 & 8. We realize West Lebanon parents may not be ready to send their 6<sup>th</sup> graders to a middle school outside West Lebanon. It is the hope of the committee that West Lebanon parents will understand that when they are ready to send their sixth graders to the new facility, it would have been constructed to accommodate all of the city's middle schoolers.
- 2) Construct a new elementary school at the Bank Street site for pre K – 5<sup>th</sup> grade. This new facility would consolidate personnel and services now provided by the three elementary schools in downtown Lebanon. It would continue the tradition of a downtown elementary school and would finally make it possible to provide educational programs suitable for a new century.

Why did the committee reject renovation of the current junior high school for continued use?

Based on information received from architects and the State and discussed by the committee, renovation of the current junior high building was considered to be not cost efficient for either the current junior high or for elementary students. The current facility would require cost prohibitive renovations just to bring it up to code. It would also be impossible to craft in the old structure a facility that would serve 21<sup>st</sup> century educational needs – for either middle school or elementary age students.

Why did the committee reject moving junior high school students to Hanover Street School? We heard and read that many voters assumed that such a move would be cost effective. The committee discussed at length renovation of the Hanover Street School for junior high students. We invited Dave Laurin, the architect working with the District, to help us determine the advisability of renovation of Hanover Street School. It was determined that adding a second story to that building would not be possible because of structural inadequacies and to expand the building otherwise would take up valuable green space, parking, athletic fields, etc. Also the number of students in a combined junior – senior high at the Hanover Street location would put too many students on too few acres according to State standards. The Committee strongly believes this location would seriously hinder programming for the junior high students and limit athletic opportunities.

Benefits of this two phase plan: This recommendation is a true long range plan. Moving the Hanover Street students to Bank Street would allow for the high school to expand into much needed space. It would provide an opportunity for the SAU offices to move to Hanover Street thus freeing up the SAU

office, Sacred Heart and School Street to be sold. Putting these properties on the Lebanon tax rolls would also be beneficial for residents and voters. Moving 6<sup>th</sup> graders could also allow for all-day kindergarten should the District want to consider it.

The committee recommends a two phase building schedule and two phase voting scheduling. The junior high would be first and the elementary building second. One important reason for this approach is the possible offset of costs of the second building through cost savings from efficiencies in the junior high building and then proceeds from the sale of properties. In 2012 most of our current debt will terminate at a significant savings to the District, estimated to be approximately 45 cents on the tax rate. Cost savings from efficiencies in a new building could be as much as 30 cents for a total of .75 cents of the projected \$1.00 tax cost for the second building phase. A second reason for doing the work in two phases, in this particular order, is that it would allow education at present sites to continue until each new facility is ready to welcome students.

The Administration provided us with a possible time schedule beginning with a public meeting and vote for the purchase of land in September or October of 2008. The Committee recommends asking for a vote for the purchase of land as well as for the junior high building project at the same time (allowing time for re-assessment of the long-range plan should the vote fail).

With a new site available, it is estimated that completion of a new middle school building would be January 2011. Preparation would begin immediately for the construction of a new elementary school on the Bank Street site with a vote in March 2012 followed by immediate construction in the summer of 2012 with completion by August 2013.