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MEMORANDUM

DATE: **May 19, 2023**

TO: **Chair Hale and Joint Assembly Scholl District Facilities Committee**

FROM: **Katie Koester, Engineering & Public Works Director**

SUBJECT: **Draft Matrix Variables**

This memo has been drafted in consultation with the Juneau School District to help the committee establish a matrix that can inform decision making on the consolidation of schools. It is important to do this work now to signal to the community changes may be coming; putting off decisions means less time for preparation and communication. Establishing a matrix with different variables that can be used to analyze when and how the governing bodies consider consolidation is a first step; a successful strategy will involve a consolidation plan, consideration of local culture, community dialogue and open communication. We want to avoid yanking kids around as much as possible; changing schools and uncertainty about the future can be very traumatic for young people and we need to approach the conversation thoughtfully with ample time for planning and dialogue. Potential variables for a matrix are listed below. This list will evolve over time and the committee should not hesitate to add to it.

Quantitative

Enrollment versus capacity (as a percentage).
This category reflects how many students are enrolled in the school versus the capacity according to the Uniform Building Code. (The Uniform Building Code was replaced by I-code in the 2000s. The committee could request an updated building code review by CDD/ Fire Marshal.)

Capital Cost of Renovations: What renovations/deferred maintenance does the facility need to continue operating for 10, 20 and 30 years.

Maintenance and Operations: What would the savings be in M&O by consolidating schools.

School size and impact on funding formula: The per student allocation from the state varies according to the size of the school, favoring smaller schools. The committee needs to understand the impact of consolidation on state funding.

Qualitative

Operational Use: Schools serve programmatic and educational needs. School buildings are used for designated needs including regular education classroom space, special education classroom use, related services (OT/PT, SLP, School Psychologist) needs, small group instruction, etc. Some of these uses are determined by the Pupil Teacher Ratio set by the Board of Education each year, others are determined on the number of students identified with special needs and the federal regulations associated, and others are set by which special programs are housed at individual school sites. The use analysis for school buildings would need to be done by room rather than an overall square footage and enrollment count to determine available space.

Impact to the Neighborhood: School facilities are often used outside the school day and are key gathering spaces for community functions. What impact would repurposing a facility have on those uses?

Cultural Impact: Often a school has a strong identity and sense of place; students, faculty, teachers and community members develop a culture rooted in the facility and what it represents. Any changes need to consider the cultural impact.

Opportunities

Alternative Facility Needs? Are there other demands for the facility that would be beneficial to the community (e.g. childcare, administrative space).

Can the building be repurposed? (and at what cost): A closure of a school can be an opportunity for other facility uses that could be beneficial to the community, requiring varying levels of capital investment. However, an empty facility has operational costs and liabilities that need to be considered.

Recommendation: Discuss variables and add or recommend changes. Direct staff to do additional research/follow up.