

***Tilghman Elementary School***  
***Facility Utilization Committee Meeting***  
**Talbot County Education Center**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
November 20, 2017

**I- Call to order**

The facilitator, Rob Levit of Annapolis MD, called to order the meeting of the Tilghman Elementary School Facility Utilization Committee at 8:35am on November 20, 2017 at the Talbot County Education Center.

**II- Roll call**

Rob Levit conducted a roll call. The following persons were present:

**Erin Spurry-** Bozman/ St. Michaels Elementary/ St. Michaels Middle/High School School Parent  
**Dr. Indra Bullock-** St. Michaels Elementary School Principal  
**LuAnn McKelvey-** Tilghman Elementary School Teacher  
**April Motovidiak-** Tilghman Elementary School/St. Michaels Middle/High School Parent  
**Joyce Crow-** Tilghman Elementary School Principal  
**Marlene Thomas-** Critchlow Adkins Childrens Centers- Afterschool Program  
**Christy Morrell-** Critchlow Adkins Childrens Centers Executive Director  
**Dr. Jay Shotel-** Community Rep/Tilghman resident/Vice President TAYA  
**Sandra Kleppinger-** Talbot County Board of Education Member

Also present were the following employees of Talbot County Public Schools: Kevin Shafer (Plant Operations and Maintenance Manager), Lynne Duncan (Assistant Superintendent for Administrative and Support Services), and Angelina Khlok (Administrative Assistant- Human Resources.)

The following persons were not in attendance:

**Megan McDaniel-** Easton/St. Michaels Elementary School Parent

**III- Topics of Discussion**

Mr. Levit guided the committee members to follow a SMART goal format when working towards a recommendation:

**S= Specific**  
**M= Measurable**  
**A= Attainable**  
**R= Realistic**  
**T= Timely/Time bound**

**Mr. Levit asked the committee if they had any questions they would like to ask:**

- 1. “Is utilization number only the enrollment of students or are after school programs and summer programs included?”**

No it is FTE (Full time enrollment)

- 2. “When do we start looking at the test scores that Tilghman Elementary School produces?”**

There is not another school in the county to compare the class sizes to.

**Mr. Levit- “I want to make sure that everyone’s thirst is satisfied for the questions you had. Lets go around the room, from what you’re hearing this morning, what is standing out for you?”**

- It seems that utilization is the main issue.
- There’s numbers and emotions
  - o Number wise, St. Michael’s Elementary School would have smaller class sizes
  - o Do not discount the emotional aspect
- If the school remains open, it will not function the way that it has
  - o It will not be the quality school that it has been in the past, with a smaller staff.
- Both schools need to function correctly
  - o There has never been a case of an elementary school being closed on one variable.
- Aftercare- Tilghman Area Youth Association is supported by the community
  - o Funders support all of these organizations
    - Will need to come together and reimagine what needs to be done for the students.

**Mr. Levit- “Before we move on a do few exercises, as an impartial outside person from the community, this topic is emotionally difficult for people. Change is not easy for people. As your facilitator I do understand the emotional side, I think we are going to get the best**

**result for everybody, behind every number is a person. Does one person want to address that?**

- Some children will benefit greatly from smaller class sizes

**Mr. Levit asked the committee to respond to the following question, “If we did nothing, what is our default future?”**

**The committee wrote the following responses on a sticky note, and placed it on the dry erase board:**

1. Tilghman Elementary School closes
2. Close the school if it is left as is
3. We will be back next year to close Tilghman Elementary School
4. Tilghman Elementary School and St. Michaels Elementary School will both lose teaching positions- not good for kids at either building
5. Tilghman Elementary School would lose staff and St. Michaels Elementary School would possibly lose staff- increase in student to teacher ratio
6. Tilghman loses teachers and classes will need to be combined, St. Michaels Elementary loses teacher and larger class sizes
7. Staff would leave for other positions- kids will not receive quality instruction- Staff cannot do triple teaching of grades
8. Quality education will not be provided.

**Mr. Levit asked the committee to respond to the following question, “Who would be affected and how?”**

**The committee responded out loud:**

1. The children
  - Quality of education
  - Loss of teachers
  - Services- programs

If things stay the way they are, St. Michaels Elementary School is going to lose two teacher positions, and they lost two teaching positions last summer.

**Mr. Levit asked the committee to respond to the following question, “Given the ideals given to us, going forward, what is your preferred future? This needs to be specific.”**

**The committee wrote the following responses on a sticky note, and placed it on the dry erase board:**

1. Double enrollment at Tilghman Elementary School, and a stable environment at St. Michaels Elementary School. Keep St. Michaels Elementary School and St. Michaels Middle/High School separate.

2. Redistrict Area B to St. Michaels Elementary School and Area A to Tilghman Elementary School- raise utilization at both schools- raise open enrollment awareness- keep Tilghman Elementary School open.
3. What's best for the students! The option that lowers class sizes for all and keeps staffing for all students.
4. Bring students from surrounding areas to utilize Tilghman Elementary School and lower exiting class sizes at St. Michaels Elementary School
5. Have both schools be able to function effectively and efficiently in educating the students with adequate staff
6. Collaboration- keeping what's best for the children in mind- a plan for the school if consolidated.
7. Consider possible re-zoning options. If that doesn't pan out, close the school.
8. Consolidate with specific resources/recommendations to address concerns of committee.
  - a. Teacher numbers
  - b. Class manage
  - c. Transition activities

**Mr. Levit asked the committee to list the risks/assumptions/issues and dependencies of the following three preferred futures:**

1. *Double enrollment at Tilghman Elementary School, and a stable environment at St. Michaels Elementary School. Keep St. Michaels Elementary School and St. Michaels Middle/High School separate*
  - a. **Risk-** school will close in 2019-2020 if we don't get to 60% utilization
  - b. **Assumptions-** that we can build the enrollment at Tilghman Elementary School, and that people will want their children to go to Tilghman Elementary School
  - c. **Issues-** transportation, and it could hurt St. Michaels Elementary School (they will lose two more teachers next year)
  - d. **Dependencies-** kids coming, parent buy in, Board would have to agree to it, costs, and school system collaboration and buy in.

*Committee Member - "This is not an easy decision to have."*
2. *Redistricting- Area B to St. Michaels Elementary School and Area A to Tilghman Elementary School*
  - a. **Risk-** domino effect on other schools, parents opt out, we may not get to percentage of utilization.
  - b. **Assumptions-** that the numbers will work out, that people will be okay with change, that people will opt in
  - c. **Issues-** they may opt out, no matter what St. Michaels Elementary School will be affected.

d. **Dependencies-** parent buy in

3. *Consolidation-*

- a. **Risk-** bigger class sizes
- b. **Assumptions-** St. Michaels Elementary School will get 3 teaching positions, some parents may opt for sending their kids to private school
- c. **Issues-** separation of ages at St. Michaels campus, parking and pick up/drop off at St. Michaels campus, community will be altered
- d. **Dependencies-** not reaching capacity

**IV- Additional Remarks made by the committee members:**

- *Committee Member* - “If we continue this process for another year we would still be left with the same scenario we are now, at both buildings, education will suffer. And we’re educators. That’s what we’re all about. I live on Tilghman. I’m a resident. My heart is there. But I’m all about what’s best for kids and it will not be the status quo at Tilghman Elementary. And I would prefer that kids get the best education, and that may not be with us (at Tilghman Elementary School).”
- *Committee Member* - “If that’s going to happen, and they’re going to lose staff at Tilghman, then my recommendation is to close the school, but I didn’t come here with that in mind, I came here to keep the school open. But if staff is reduced, then the school can’t continue to operate.”
- *Committee Member* - “I just want everyone to know that this was truly in the best interests of the students. It’s all for the kids”
- *Committee Member* - “I don’t know that we have the luxury of another year. Because if you’re really concerned about the quality education, essentially you couldn’t make all these kids take a hit for another year while we figure this out.”

**V- Final Vote:**

A final vote was conducted by a show of hands. Six committee members voted in favor of consolidation, one committee member voted against consolidation. Ms. Spurry left the meeting at 11:00am and did not vote. Ms. Motovidiak left the meeting at 11:55am, but did cast in her vote prior to leaving. Ms. McDaniel was not present to this meeting.

**VI- Final Recommendation**

Based on much deliberation and consideration of all factors including student to teacher ratio, building capacity/utilization, equitable distribution of school resources, and the quality education of all Talbot County Public School students, we recommend consolidating Tilghman Elementary School with St. Michaels Elementary School for the 2018-2019 school year.

We recommend that TAYA (Tilghman Area Youth Association) stays intact and that students have access to transportation and school facility for after school programs.

We recommend that through the time period 2018-2020 that no substantial change be made to the building so that the school could be re-opened. This time period will give the community the ability to analyze all options to increase utilization at Tilghman Elementary School including but not limited to:

- Redistricting
- Magnet and/or charter school initiative
- Open enrollment marketing initiative.

If consolidation occurs, we recommend the following actions to the Board of Education:

- Place teachers from Tilghman Elementary School in an available position of their preference
- Plan a variety of well planned transition activities funded by Talbot County Public Schools, targeting the needs of students and families
  - Open house
  - Forum
  - Visitation/School tour during school hours
  - Community gathering with food and fun
- Address the need for an Assistant Principal at St. Michaels Elementary School

## **VII- Adjournment**

The facilitator, Rob Levit of Annapolis MD, adjourned the meeting at 12:55 pm.

Minutes submitted by: Angelina Khlok

Minutes approved by: Lynne Duncan