

District 10 Information Session Questions and Answers March 2020

1. What was the reason behind the decision to put all students together?

The CCSD Board of Trustees decided to provide all students in District 10 access to a high-quality middle school program at a new state-of-the-art facility.

2. Where will my child go to school next year?

All District 10 students in grades 6-8 will attend school at C.E. Williams Middle School beginning in August 2020. Some 8th graders will start their day at West Ashley High School, located in close proximity to C.E. Williams, but all students will have lunch and afternoon classes on the C.E. Williams campus.

3. What is the current student count between C.E. Williams and West Ashley?

There are currently 1,265 students on both campuses. Projections for next year anticipate around 1,230 students combined. After the merger, C.E. Williams Middle (6-8) will be similar in size to Laing Middle (6-8) and Cario Middle (6-8) in Mt. Pleasant, and similar in size to Orange Grove Charter (K-8) and School of the Arts (6-12).

4. What is the long-term plan?

A separate D10 Middle School Facilities Task Force (made up of parents, school staff, and other stakeholders) will work with CCSD to provide alternatives to the Board of Trustees by June 2020.

5. Does the D10 task force include parents? Is the task force diverse? Will the task force take new members?

For the last couple of months, a task force of parents and community members has been meeting with district staff discussing aspects of the merger. Moving forward, Lead Principal Kevin Smith and Maite Porter, in collaboration with West Ashley High Principal Ryan Cumback, will take over coordinating the involvement of stakeholders as they move forward with detailed plans for opening the new C.E. Williams campus. Anita Huggins, an Executive Director for the school district, will be *temporarily* “on loan” to work alongside the principals to thoughtfully and meaningfully engage teacher, parent, and student representatives. Ms. Huggins will also work with Maggie Dangerfield to ensure continuous, two-way communication with the community and with various district leaders to ensure supports are provided as needed throughout the planning and implementation phases. Jeff Borowy, the district’s Chief Operating Officer, will lead a D10 Middle School facility group that will recommend to the Board of Trustees the long-term middle school plan it asked for as part of its January 27 motion.

6. What are the plans for the current West Ashley Middle School facility?

No decision has been made about the future use of the facility. Discussions are taking place about the possible use of the building as a Professional Development Center for training CCSD staff and as a meeting space. It may also house some CCSD programs currently scattered about the district.

7. What happens to the current properties if C.E. Williams and West Ashley Middle are no longer utilizing them? Will they be sold, leased, demolished?

There are state laws and district policies regarding the lease or sale of property, and ultimately those would be decisions made by the CCSD Board of Trustees. There are no current plans to lease, sell, or demolish either of the buildings.

8. Are there plans to build another middle school and high school in the area since it's growing?

Growth will drive that decision for all areas in the future construction plans. However, West Ashley High School is under capacity in terms of student enrollment, and the new Center for Advanced Studies opening in August 2021 will create significantly more classroom space for high school students in District 10. One of the major decisions of the D10 facility task force will be whether to recommend expanding C.E. Williams Middle School by adding classroom wings that were planned in the school's original design or building a second middle school in West Ashley and undergoing a major student rezoning process.

9. Will the new C.E. receive Title I status?

CCSD schools with 60% or more students in poverty are Title I schools. Together, C.E. Williams and West Ashley have 66% poverty for the current school year. The merged school's poverty will not be known until students are enrolled.

10. What is the timeline to finalize all the remaining details and communicate that to parents for the upcoming school year?

Details are being worked on daily, and we will share ongoing updates with parents as quickly as possible as decisions are made. Information will be given to parents in a timely manner as it relates to schedules, etc. (typically end of April) consistent with the normal timeframe.

11. What is the state's maximum student to teacher ratio?

The state sets a maximum ratio of 35:1 for regular classes, with 40:1 for PE, music, and band. However, CCSD provides funding to lower the average number of students per classroom teacher. The student-teacher ratio at C.E. Williams, based on teacher allocation, will be the same as other middle schools in CCSD.

12. Will teachers from both campuses all go over? What does "in good standing" mean?

All staff members from both schools will have the opportunity to go to the new C.E. Williams Middle next year if they would like to, as long as their most recent evaluation is satisfactory (or "in good standing").

13. How many instructional coaches will the new school have?

C.E. Williams Middle will have two allocated positions for instructional coaches, as each of the two middle schools currently has one position.

14. How will students coming into 6th grade be selected for the Honors program?

There will be no change from the current practice of selecting/scheduling sixth grade Honors, which is based on district criteria.

15. How will the honors classes work, especially for 8th graders?

Currently, there is a plan in place for all students that qualify to take honors and/or high school credit courses. High school credit courses will start in 7th grade with Algebra I, with additional high school credit courses in Geometry and English 1 being offered in 8th grade. Honors core classes (ELA, math science and social studies) will be offered in grades 6-8.

16. How is this merger affecting the teachers and their collective culture? How do we know when the kids are there in the fall that we will have a group of adults leading them that feel like a team?

Leaders and teachers at both C.E. Williams and West Ashley Middle School are highly trained professionals who will do whatever it takes to ensure the new school is ready to welcome all students into a collaborative learning environment. Plans are being made for a variety of team-building activities to ensure that adults and students build a positive culture. We understand that this is a critical component of the schools' merger. Student and parent engagement will continue throughout the school year and into the summer to ensure the transition goes well. A planning group is putting together community events to pull students together from both schools, and is actively seeking parents from both schools to get actively involved in the process.

17. Will there be orientations for students?

Yes; initially those orientation sessions may be held at West Ashley High School. Orientation sessions can occur at the new C.E. Williams when the school receives its certificate of occupancy.

18. What will be the start times for C.E. Williams Middle and West Ashley High next year?

The start times are not finalized. However, a proposal is being discussed that would start middle school grades at 7:15 a.m. and high school at 7:45 a.m. Middle school classes at West Ashley High are proposed to start at 7:15, allowing all middle school students on West Ashley High's campus to be in class before the first high school students arrive.

19. How does a 7:15 a.m. start time mesh with the extensive research on the importance of later start times for older children?

Start times must be staggered between levels in order to ensure that buses can run routes without requiring that all age students ride buses together. Every configuration of start times creates a different set of issues, depending on the grade. In the case of

C.E. Williams Middle and West Ashley High, the younger middle school students will start earlier than the older high school students.

20. What would be the earliest a student can be dropped off if the middle school has a 7:15 start time?

Dropoff times will depend on availability of programs for students before school starts, so the decision will be made later as the middle school schedule is finalized. West Ashley High currently opens its gate at 6:45 a.m. with staff members on duty to monitor students. Once bell times are finalized, the staff will communicate with parents and provide supervision before the start of school to monitor students.

21. What can you share with parents about the plans underway to hold some eighth graders' classes at West Ashley High School?

There are currently enough empty classrooms at West Ashley High to allow for a reconfiguration that will allow for a separate front wing just for 8th graders to use. It will be completely separate, to discourage and prevent interaction with high school students. There are restrooms at the end of both sides of the hall. There will be C.E. Williams 8th grade administration and support staff in place. Administrators will always be on campus with 8th graders.

22. How will students move between the middle school and high school campuses?

Eighth grade students who are scheduled to start their day at West Ashley High will be dropped off by the bus at the high school. Those eighth graders will be transported to the middle school mid-day using an activity bus with a short estimated travel time.

23. As far as extracurricular activities and sports, will students be able to use all the facilities at West Ashley High or will the middle school offer some things like basketball, football, tennis, etc.?

Middle school sports are administered through various municipality recreation departments and other local sports leagues. All district athletics are governed by the South Carolina High School League. C-Team, B-Team, Junior Varsity, or Varsity level high school athletics, including any eligible middle school students playing on those teams, are scheduled and administered at the high school level. The addition of C.E. Williams to the larger West Ashley High campus as it relates to current district athletics will not impact the shared use of facilities.

24. Will the new C.E. Williams have separate 6th, 7th, and 8th grade halls like is currently in place at the school?

The new building is built for team teaching, so there will not be hallways dedicated to just one grade. However, 6th and 8th graders will not have classes on the same hallway(s).

25. Is a 6th grade academy no longer on the table?

After receiving feedback, many parents felt that having a 6th grade academy and a separate 7th-8th grade middle school created "too many transitions" for their middle

school children. Responding to that feedback, the CCSD Board of Trustees voted to merge the two middle schools. Any alternate grade configuration would require a vote by the CCSD Board of Trustees.

26. Will AVID be offered at the new C.E. Williams?

AVID is one of the curricular offerings for which a decision has not yet been made.

27. Will there be more than one art, Spanish, health, etc. teacher for each grade level?

These courses will be offered, and administrators are working now to determine how many sections of each will be needed per grade level.

28. Will Sanders Road connect to Wildcat Blvd? What about the overall impact on traffic?

A section of Sanders Road connecting it to Wildcat Blvd. is currently closed to thru traffic, but it will be open when school starts. Prior to C.E. Williams being built, the school district reviewed the county's traffic study as part of the overall traffic impact in this area. It is the district's understanding that the City plans for Glenn McConnell Parkway to transition to smart lights (timed lights) and that there will be a 12 ft. sidewalk from Bees Ferry all the way down to Lowes.

29. Has any consideration been given to possible conflicts between different student bodies to ensure all students can coexist on this new campus due to these problems?

A D10 planning group, representing parents and teachers from both middle schools, has been meeting for the past couple of months. Principals are considering ways to bring the students from different neighborhoods together to address any issues. Community engagement events will include opportunities for stakeholders to provide input in ways to build the new C.E. Williams community.

30. Several years ago St. Andrews Middle and WAMS were combined. It was a failure. How can we expect different with the change in plans?

There have been other successful mergers in CCSD and other districts. This merger will be successful if all parties work hard over the next five months and beyond to ensure all stakeholders plan and prepare well, identifying and addressing challenges as they arise. If everyone unites and works together, we will create a strong, successful, unified middle school.

31. Will there be additional lighting in areas and access points with the early start for students?

The safety team will ensure lighting is sufficient to address safety concerns on campus.

32. Are sixth graders eating with just sixth graders?

The details related to lunch schedules have not been finalized, but the intent is to have students eating with their age level peers to the greatest extent possible.

33. Is the new school considered a special admission school?

The new C.E. Williams Middle will be a neighborhood school, and as such, all sixth through eighth graders in District 10 will be zoned to attend.

34. What is the program that will be offered for a special needs child at C.E. Williams?

All students in need of services outlined in their IEPs (individualized education program) will be served in accordance with state laws and IDEA at the new C.E. Williams.

35. Who will be the principal at the new C.E. Williams?

Kevin Smith, current C.E. Williams principal, will serve as lead principal, and Maite Porter, current West Ashley Middle principal, will serve as principal.

36. Will there be adequate support (i.e. school psychologists and mental health)?

The support positions currently assigned to both schools will be moving to the new C.E. Williams. This will provide at least the same level of support as students now have and will also mean the new school will have two or more of most allocated positions. The guidance to student ratio will remain as is which adequately supports the current student populations at both schools. Other student support positions (psychologists, mental health counselors, etc.) are allocated based on school and student needs.

37. Will eighth grade follow the high school or middle school schedule?

Eighth grade will follow the middle school schedule.

38. What classes will be in the portables? Will it just be resource, speech, etc.?

The details of classroom assignments for various classes and programs are nearing completion. There will be approximately 10 classes taught in portable classrooms. Those classrooms will not be used for all the same grade levels or all the same program.

39. Where does the money come from for portables?

Portables currently used to expand space at Camp Road Middle School will no longer be needed at the end of this school year. They will be moved to the C.E. Williams campus. Movement and set-up for the portables will be provided by Fixed Cost of Ownership (8%) which can only be used for capital expenditures.

40. Does this capital plan rely on Title I?

No. The capital construction projects are funded by the penny sales tax levied in Charleston County and by a limited amount of local property tax revenue determined by a state formula based on the assessed value of local property. Title I funds come from the federal government, based on the percentage of students in poverty in a particular district or school. These funds exist separately and are designated for totally different purposes.

41. Who will be housed at WAHS? How do you determine which students will start their day at WAHS?

Two teams of eighth-grade students will begin the day at West Ashley High. School

administrators are working on this decision now. Some of the factors that are being taken into consideration are student programming needs, team teacher arrangements, faculty that may be shared between West Ashley High School and C.E. Williams Middle, and projected arrival times for various buses.

42. How can you have one West Ashley if you aren't including OGCS middle school students?

C. E. Williams Middle School will have a defined attendance area as a regular public school. Orange Grove is a public charter school that is not required to have an attendance zone, and as such it can attract students who live in other CCSD districts. Students attending Orange Grove Charter who reside in District 10 (West Ashley) will be in the zone for the new C.E. Williams Middle, and they can register and enroll at C.E. Williams any time they choose to do so.

43. Would this model "ONE West Ashley" Middle School be a concept that is proposed for other areas in the district?

District 10 will be the fourth constituent district (out of nine in CCSD) to have one middle school serving all students.

44. What are you going to do if parents try to enroll students from other middle schools over the summer, which would increase the numbers even more?

The district will closely monitor registration and enrollment and will make adjustments to allocations and classes as necessary. Additionally, students from outside District 10 who are currently enrolled in C.E. Williams or West Ashley Middle School have been counted in the enrollment numbers and will be permitted to attend the new C.E. Williams.

45. Who will be responsible for the discipline of students?

C.E. Williams Middle school administration will be responsible for the discipline of middle school students using the district's middle school Progressive Discipline Plan (PDP).

46. Will there be an opportunity for rising 8th graders to tour WAHS before school starts?

Yes, parents and students will be informed once tours are scheduled.

47. Why not have more portables instead of having students go back and forth to and from the high school?

The district has recommended the number of portable classrooms needed without negatively impacting the playgrounds, fields, and normal traffic flow of the C.E. Williams Middle campus.

48. What inequities are there between the two middle schools? How will "One West Ashley" address these inequities?

C.E. Williams Middle is a new 2020 building. West Ashley Middle is much older without the amenities that go with a new building. As a magnet school, C.E. Williams offered

programs and courses not available at West Ashley Middle. There will be no inequities as all District 10 students will be in a brand new facility with access to all of the courses and programs that either school offered. The demographics of the two schools show West Ashley Middle with around 20 percentage points more minority students and students in poverty. The merged school will more accurately represent the demographics of District 10 middle school students.

49. Why was the new C.E. Williams not built with the merger in mind? Why was the decision to merge made after the school was built and set to open and not before construction began?

Early design and construction packages for CCSD schools began several years ago. The new C.E. Williams was designed with its common space areas such as the cafeteria and gym to accommodate 1,200 students. The rest of the facility was built to accommodate 900 students with the ability to expand to house 1,200 should the need arise. At the time of the design and construction package for the new school several years ago, the current C.E. Williams' enrollment was/still is around 600 students. Additionally, mission critical actions by the Board of Trustees had not occurred, and the decision to merge the schools was not an active discussion at the time. Similar to other middle schools in the district, the building was designed with the capability to be expanded should the student population grow in the future for any reason.