Potential Restructuring for Greenfield-Central Schools

November 4, 2025
Greenfield-Central High School
Performing Arts Center
7 PM

2025-26 Corporation Leadership Team

Dr. Lori Wean, *District 4 (SE)*
Mrs. Hillary Close, *District 1 (NW)*
Mr. Dan Brown, *At-Large*
Mr. Clark Smith, *District 2 (NE)*
Mr. John Rihm, *District 3 (SW)*

Mr. Jason Cary, *Assistant Superintendent*
Mrs. Robin LeClaire, *Student Services*
Mr. Devon Marine, *Elementary Education*
Mr. Nate Day, *Business Manager*
Mr. Greg Thompson, *Technology*
Dr. Harold Olin, *Superintendent*
Mr. Dan Jack, *Human Resources*

Presentation Outline

HISTORY

What led us to consider the proposed changes?

CURRENT SNAPSHOT

What is the status of our school corporation right now?

FINANCES

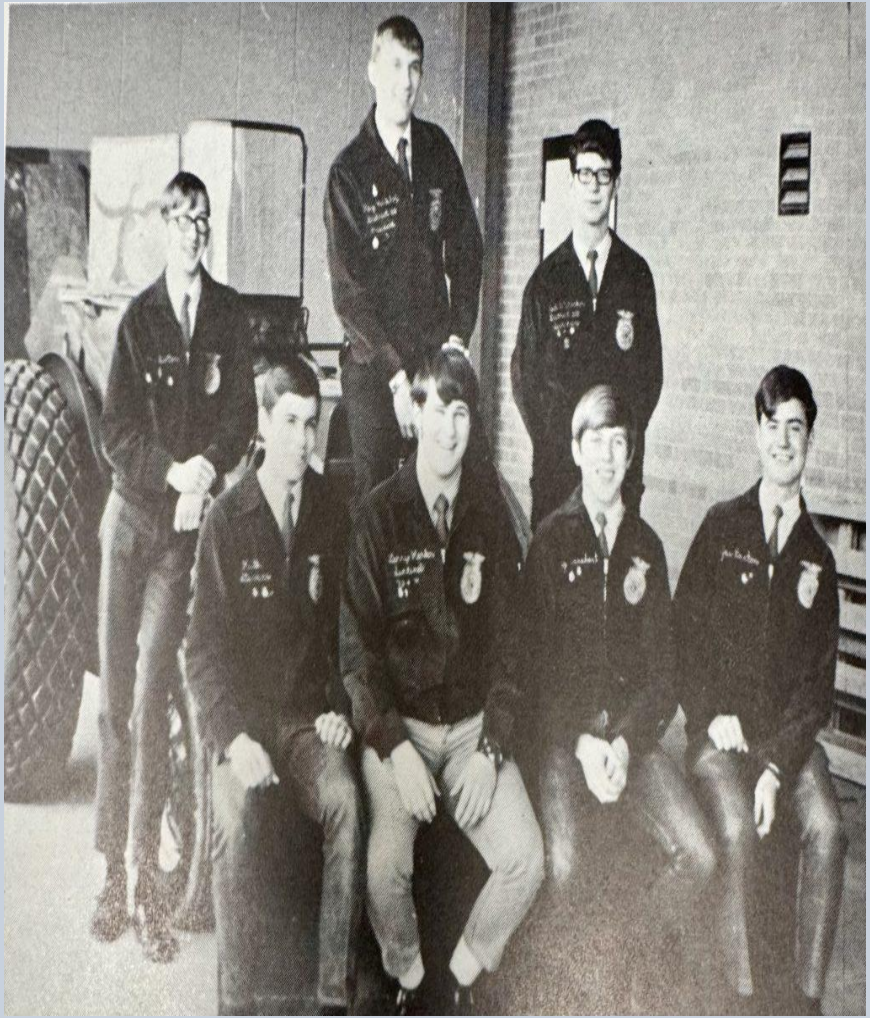
What is the state of school finance? What is the impact of SEA 1 (2025) for GC?

OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

What options have we considered to help us achieve our goals related to increased achievement, opportunities and efficiency?

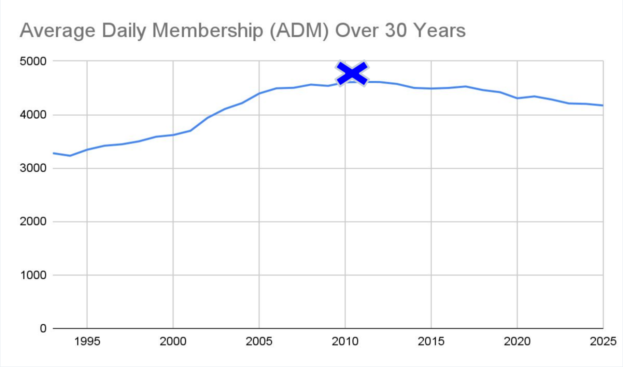
1

HISTORY



GREENFIELD & HANCOCK COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS

- Hancock County and the city of Greenfield have seen rapid growth in the last 25 years.
  - Hancock County has seen nearly 60% population growth during this time.
  - Greenfield has experienced similar growth during this time.
- Much of this growth was forecasted at the turn of the century, and Greenfield-Central Schools planned for this growth by opening two new school facilities: JB Stephens (2001) and Greenfield Central Junior High (2010).
- The impact on GC's student enrollment: We saw a peak of student enrollment in 2011, and we have seen a subtle, steady ***decline*** in enrollment most years since that point.
  - 1993: 3278 students
  - 2000: 3618 students
  - **2011: 4611 students**
  - 2021: 4341 students
  - 2025: 4181 students



Greenfield-Central Enrollment Among the Eight Schools...(2025-26 School Year)

	Class of 2038					Class of 2033				Class of 2029			Class of 2026		
	Kindergarten	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	Full Enrollment	Partial Count ADM
Eden	30	44	37	48	33									192	192
Harris	56	57	83	57	62									315	315
JBS	90	100	107	121	115									533	533
Weston	58	76	79	89	76									378	378
GIS						149	159							308	308
MIS						162	149							311	311
GCJHS								332	355					687	687
GCHS										362	342	375	378	1457	1,442
Total by Grade	234	277	306	315	286	311	308	332	355	362	342	375	378	4,181	4,166
														Corporation Total	

Averages for Student Cohort Groups:

K-4 283 Students Per Class

5-8 326 Students Per Class

9-12 364 Students Per Class

How is the city (and county) growing, yet student enrollment is shrinking?

- Demographics: Many school districts around the state are seeing record low enrollment in their kindergarten classes the last few years.
- Population trends: Greenfield's population is growing, yet many homebuyers do not have school-aged children.
- Open enrollment: Since 2009, parents have had the option to send their children to (almost) any school they choose - regardless of where they reside.
- Online and home school options: Parents have many more virtual and home school options for their children than they had in the past, and some GC families choose these alternatives today for a variety of reasons.
- Vouchers: Indiana has expanded the voucher program to allow families to receive tuition support to send their children to private schools - making this option much more affordable than it was in the past.

<u>Open Enrollment and Voucher Touch Points</u>

- Here are some peer comparisons when we focus on Open Enrollment and Vouchers
  - Peer Group #1 - County Seat Schools
    - **84 of 92 county seat school corporations are net negative on school transfers.** Removing IPS/Marion County, the average loss is 805 students.
  - Peer Group #2 - County Seat Schools of similar size
    - All 18 schools are net negative with an average loss of 762 or 18% of enrollment.

2

CURRENT SNAPSHOT

GC'S CURRENT STRUCTURE

- Since we opened the junior high in 2010, we have incorporated a four-tier structure in Greenfield-Central. Therefore, we have the current structure in place:
  - Tier 1: Students in Kindergarten through *4th* grade
    - Eden 192 students
    - JB Stephens 533 students
    - Harris 315 students
    - Weston 378 students
  - Tier 2: Students in 5th and 6th grade
    - Maxwell Intermediate School 311 students
    - Greenfield Intermediate School 308 students
  - Tier 3: Students in 7th and 8th grade
    - Greenfield-Central Junior High 687 students
  - Tier 4: Students in 9th through 12th grade
    - Greenfield-Central High School 1457 students

CORPORATION COMPARISONS

- Currently, Greenfield-Central operates (8) school buildings for our K-12 students. For some context, we've shared the details for neighboring Indiana school corporations.
  - **Greenfield-Central:**
    - 4,181 students in **8** schools
  - **South Madison (Pendleton):**
    - 4,555 students in **5** schools
  - **Mt Vernon**:
    - 5,050 students in **6** schools
  - **Shelbyville**:
    - 3,595 students in **5** schools
  - **New Palestine:**
    - 3,785 students in **6** schools

PRESCHOOL AND CHILDCARE

- We currently have (**10**) preschool classrooms in our school corporation located in three different buildings. We serve approximately **200** students.
  - Ideally, we would like to house all preschool classroom in one facility.
  - It would also allow us to expand the preschool program to better meet the needs of our community that is now looking for more Pre-K options. It has become increasingly important for kindergarten readiness. We currently have an extensive waitlist.
- In July of 2025, we opened a staff childcare facility.
  - We received a sizeable grant from the state of Indiana to help us open this facility on Green Meadows Drive.
  - We believe this option allows us to keep highly qualified staff members employed.

CORPORATION EFFICIENCY

- School corporations are charged with **balancing the educational needs of their community with the responsibility to be financially sound**.
- Most school corporations that are similar in size to GC operate fewer schools/buildings. This allows them to save money while increasing their offerings for their students.
  - They are able to save money on staffing (mostly administrative and classified employees).
  - They are able to maximize their teaching staffs to balance class sizes and offer more support to their students and staff.
  - They save money on utilities, custodial service, and building maintenance.
  - Transportation costs are reduced with fewer school sites.

3

FINANCES

School Funding 101

Education Fund

Schools receive funding from the state that is directly correlated with student enrollment. Therefore, as student enrollment increases, so does tuition support from the state. Conversely, as student enrollment decreases, so does tuition support.
Note: <u>This fund is used to pay for classroom teachers and expenses that directly impact the classroom.</u>

School corporations <u>may</u> transfer 15% from the EF to OF.

Operations Fund

<u>Schools receive funding to support staffing not directly related to the classroom (custodians, transportation, and some clerical and administrative staff)</u>. This fund also pays for school buses, utilities, insurance, technology, maintenance, capital improvements, etc.
Note: This funding is directly related to Net Assessed Valuation. SEA1 (2025) made major changes to this calculation with large implications for school corporations.

Debt Service

Indiana public school corporations use this fund to make principal and interest payments on bonded indebtedness and other long-term debt, which are <u>primarily used for capital projects like new building construction, facility renovations, and equipment purchases</u>. SEA1 (2025) affects this fund as well, particularly as it relates to our ability to borrow money and our overall tax revenue collections.

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NEW LEGISLATION SURROUNDING SCHOOL FINANCE

- SEA 1 (Property Tax Reform) in Indiana was passed July 1, 2025, and many financial experts that work in public finance suggest that it is the most impactful change to school finance in the last 50 years.
- Essentially, the bill aims to provide property tax relief to Hoosiers by overhauling the system.
  - The estimates indicate a statewide reduction of approximately $744 million in property tax revenue for public school districts over the next 3 years.
  - Local Income Taxes (LIT) that were previously available to public schools will no longer be passed on to the school districts. (This creates an annual loss for GC>$600K.)
- As we look to the next five years (through 2031), public schools will have to “do more with less” as they prepare their budgets.

Greenfield-Central Finances at a Glance

Education Fund

- The state has indicated that at least 65% of this fund should support teacher compensation. GC spent 72.27% of this fund toward teacher compensation in FY2024. (Gateway report)
- The state allows school corporations to transfer up to 15% of the education fund to help cover operational expenses. Note: GC transfers < 7%.

Rainy Day Fund

- Standards and Poor encourage public entities to have such a fund available in the event of an emergency. GC has a responsible balance, which has earned our corporation an AA+ credit rating.

Operations Fund

- This is funded primarily via property tax and will bear the brunt of the changes in SEA1.

  The current projections from Policy Analytics show that GC will receive ~$8M less in total revenue over the next 5 years.

Debt Service Fund

- GC has balanced the use of cash on hand and new borrowing as we have upgraded infrastructure, renovated existing facilities and addresses programming needs.

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Greenfield-Central Finances at a Glance

Debt Service Tax Rate

- GC has reduced its total tax rate considerably from 2012 to 2025. The rate has been reduced from $1.02 to $.61 in this time frame.

Operations Fund Tax Rate

- GC has reduced the Operations Fund Tax Rate from $.47 to $.33 since 2019.

Total Tax Rate

- GC has a tax rate of $.9386
- This is nearly 10 cents below the Indiana state average
- This is the lowest in Hancock County by 6 cents
- This is nearly 13 cents below the average of our HHC conference peers.

Non-Traditional Revenue Sources

- GC aggressively seeks competitive grants and alternative funds to enhance curricular programs, student service supports, and safety improvements. Examples: School Safety Grant, Mental Health Grant, Cultural Arts Partnership, and Medicaid

Unlike many school communities in central Indiana, GC has not burdened its tax base with a referendum to support operational costs.

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WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN FOR GC TODAY ?

- We have low class sizes compared to our peers. ✓
- We have the highest average teacher pay in Hancock County and in our Conference. ✓
- Our buildings are well maintained and have limited major infrastructure needs to be addressed in the near future. ✓
- Over the last 5 years, we have experienced some of our most successful academic, co-curricular and extracurricular results in our 56-year history as a school corporation. ✓

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR GC IN THE FUTURE?

- We know that our corporation is experiencing **declining enrollment,** which directly affects the tuition support we receive in our Education Fund.
- We know that the state is **cutting hundreds of millions of dollars** in the operations fund that public schools will receive in the next several years.
- We know that our current structure (8 schools for 4,180 students) is **inefficient and financially unsustainable** in the new era of public unit finance.
- Unless we make some adjustments to our structure soon, some of these realities are imminent: class sizes will increase, employee salaries will freeze, cash balance will be depleted, programs will be eliminated, and/or we will need to pass a referendum.

To avoid these consequences, the corporation leadership team has been exploring options over the last few years to create efficiencies while positively impacting the student experience.

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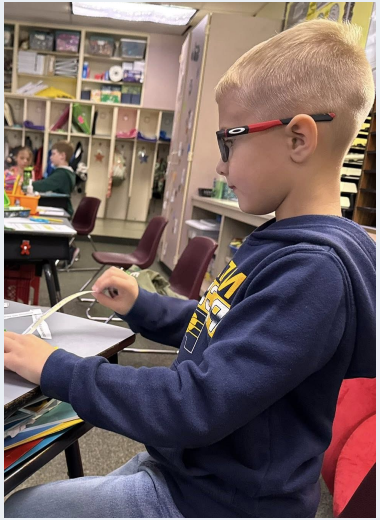
OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

SOME BACKSTORY

Initial Goals Shared with Educational Consultants in Nov. 2023:



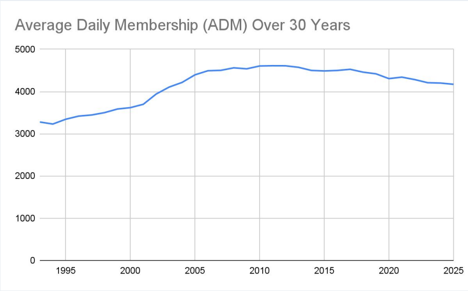
1. How do we create more effective and efficient space for preschool students in our school corporation?
2. Is there a better way to serve all our students, particularly as we look at students in grades 4 through 6?
3. Are there operational efficiencies that can be achieved while also meeting our educational goals identified in questions 1 and 2?

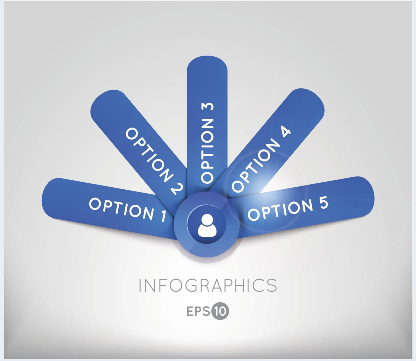
First Consultant Input

- Consultants from Administrator Assistance to completed a Facilities Utilization Study in February 2024. They presented their findings in the spring of 2024. You can see that report on our corporation website.
    - Their conclusion: "The team feels that Greenfield-Central is a 'hidden gem' in Hancock County: stable finances, great buildings, very small class sizes, friendly and committed staff, and has won many awards. It has the potential to be a magnet and attract students from the surrounding area."
    - Their recommendations included restructuring and reorganizing the school corporation. Suggestions included changing grade level configuration, combining schools, repurposing schools and/or closing a school.

ADDITIONAL CONSULTANT INPUT

- In February 2024, Dr. Jerome McKibben was hired by the corporation to conduct a comprehensive demographic study.
  - The purpose: Create a scientific report that projects Greenfield-Central enrollment through the next 10 years.
  - The results: Dr. McKibben indicated the corporation should expect a small decrease (2.2%) in student enrollment over the next 10 years.



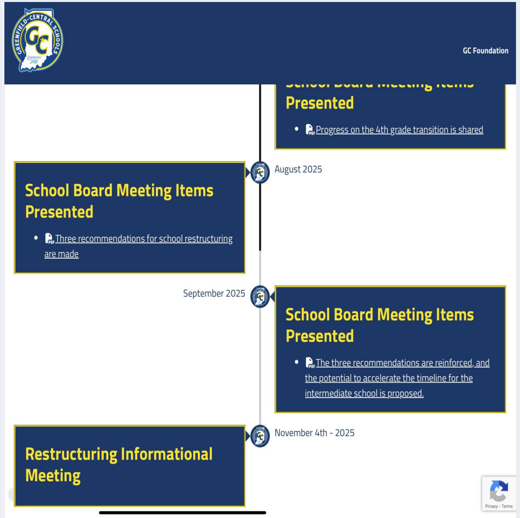


- In February 2025, an educational consulting group, Higher Achievement, toured the corporation and met with our school principals to examine the current buildings and provide options moving forward that would help us become more efficient while maintaining the high levels of achievement that we expect for our students.

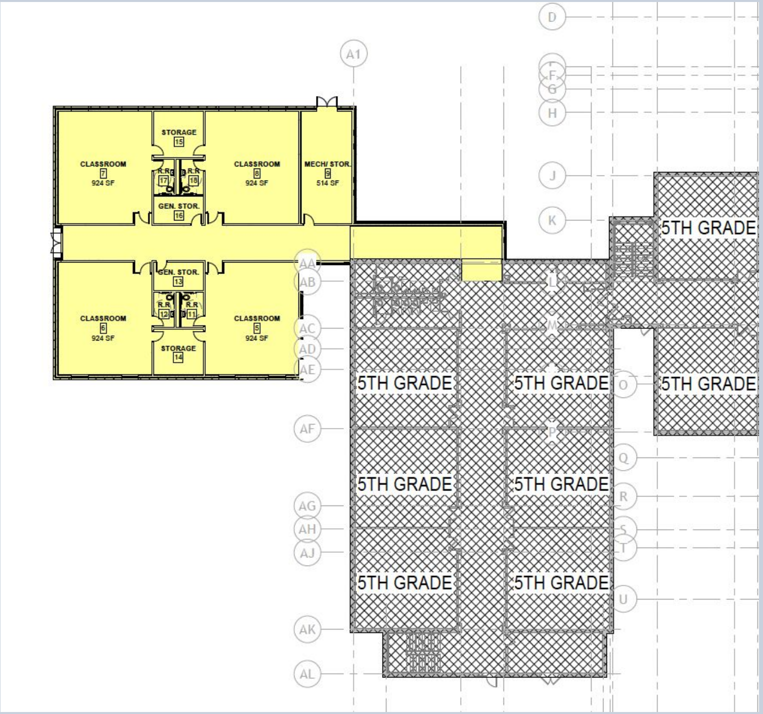
Considering All Feedback from the Consultants

- We have made the recommendation to combine our two intermediate schools, and place all GC 5th and 6th grade students at **Maxwell** no later than the fall of 2027. This move will save the corporation approximately $786,442 each year in salaries and benefits.
- We have made the recommendation to combine Weston and Harris into one larger elementary school (utilizing the combined **Harris/GIS** site) by the fall of 2027. This adjustment would save the school corporation up to an additional $1,001,000 per year in staffing costs.
- We have made the recommendation to relocate all of the corporation's preschool programs at **Weston** in the fall of 2027.

Visit
www.gcsc.k12.in.us



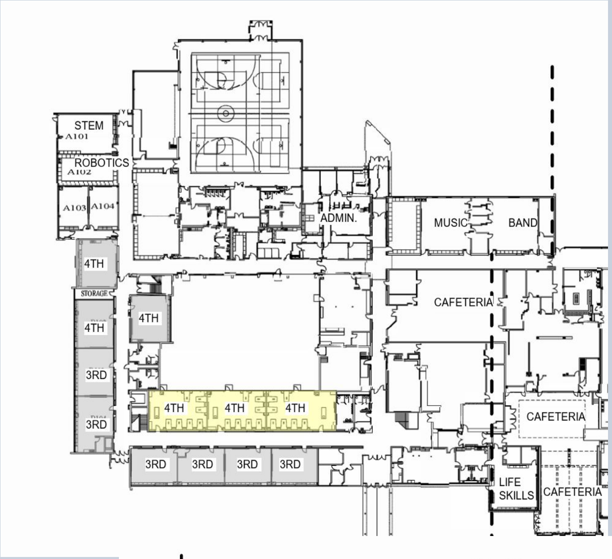
Note: Step One could be achieved by the Fall of 2026.

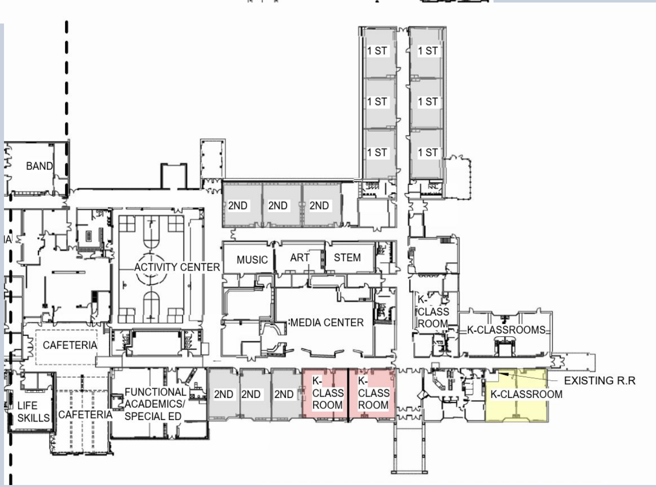


This CAD image shows a (4) classroom addition placed on the northwest side of the school at Maxwell.

WHAT WE KNOW

- We have two intermediate schools now accommodating our 5th and 6th grade students, and the schools are both operating at less than 50% capacity.
- The Maxwell Intermediate School site can accommodate all 5th and 6th GC grade students without any updates.
  - *This move could happen as early as the fall of 2026 with the existing capacity.* The addition of four classrooms, however, will allow more flexibility to better serve all students.





WHAT WE KNOW (cont.)

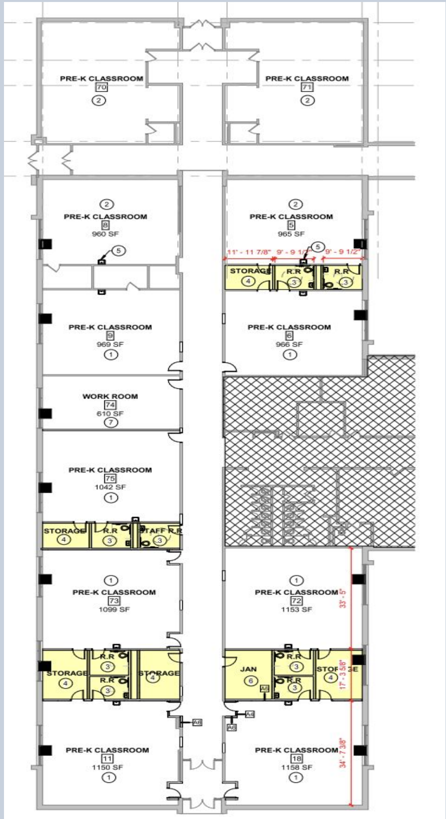
We Could Utilize the Combined Harris/GIS Site for a Larger K-4 School.

- Weston students and staff could be placed at the Harris/Greenfield Intermediate School campus if 5th and 6th grade students from GIS were moved to Maxwell.
- The *larger* Harris Elementary School site has more than enough capacity to accommodate current students from Harris and Weston.
  - In fact, we would not anticipate needing the second floor of the current GIS site in this scenario.

<u>WHAT WE KNOW</u> (cont.)

- We currently have (10) early childhood classrooms spread out across three different buildings in GC.
- The demand for preschool has grown exponentially in our community.
- We would like to have one dedicated building to house the entire program.
- Based on the findings from these studies and conversations we've had with key stakeholders, we believe Weston Elementary is the best location for such an early learning center.
  - *The target for this move is the fall of 2027.*

Potential Footprint for the Early Childhood Center at Weston



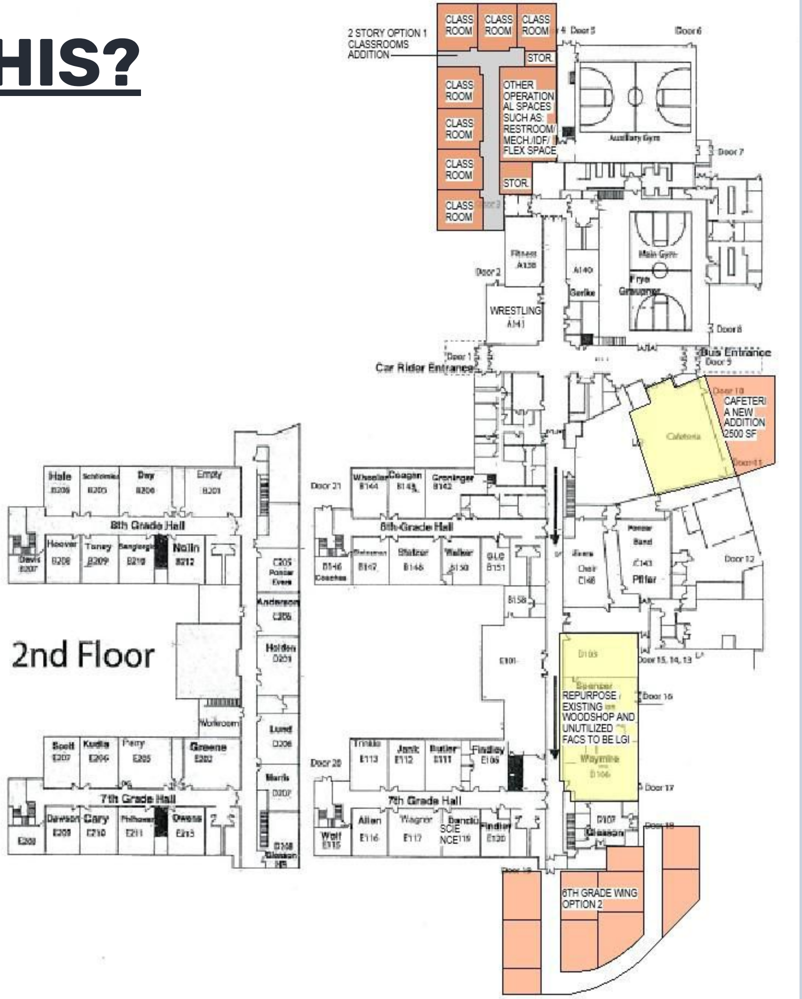
WHAT ELSE WAS CONSIDERED?

- As we worked with the team of consultants, we considered other potential scenarios to achieve or goals:
  - Closing Eden Elementary
  - Turning Maxwell into a K-5 building
  - Utilizing GIS for the combined intermediate school
  - Shifting Harris and JB Stephens to K-5 buildings
  - Utilizing Harris as the Pre-K center
  - Adding a new wing to Greenfield Central Junior High that would allow us to add 6th grade in the school.

WHY WE DIDN'T RECOMMEND THIS?

*Adding 6th Grade to the Jr. High School

- Even though this option would provide more efficiencies and remove a transition for our students, we felt this wasn't the right project for our community at this time.
- This option was considerably more expensive than the aforementioned option we recommended ($23M vs. $8M).
- With all the financial uncertainties related to SEA 1 (2025), we did not think a large bond made sense for our community right now.
- Creating a 6-8 middle school could be GC's best option in the foreseeable future.
- Every element of the current recommendation will remain valuable and applicable, even if the 6-8 middle school option is pursued in the future.



Restating the Recommendations

1. Combine the two intermediate schools, and place all GC 5th and 6th grade students at **Maxwell**.
   *This change could be initiated by the *fall of 2026*.

2. Combine Weston and Harris into one larger elementary school (utilizing the combined **Harris/GIS** site).
   *This change could be made for the *fall of 2027*.

3. Locate all preschool programs at **Weston.**
   *This change could be made for the *fall of 2027*.

Results of Reconfiguring

1. Reconfiguring will allow GC to realize significant financial **efficiencies** that will create net savings of ~$1.78 million annually in the EF and OF.

2. This will enable us to provide more **equitable & expanded** programming for all of our preschool students.

3. Reconfiguring will structure GC to **expand** educational opportunities for our intermediate school students.
   a. Curricular: High Ability programming and Special Education programming
   b. Co-curricular: Instrumental Music, Choral Music, STEM
   c. Extracurricular: Inter-school athletics, intramural sports, and clubs

4. This will allow us to maintain current high quality programming for all GC students (P-12) and avoid the consequences of inaction.

Next Steps

- Comments from Members of the GC Community
  - What would you like the board and administrative team to know related to the restructuring recommendation that has been outlined?
    - QR Code
    - Microphone

Next Steps (Continued)

Community member comments from this setting will be collected and shared with Board Members in an electronic format.

The Greenfield-Central School Board has upcoming meetings scheduled for the following dates in 2025:

- November 10; Regular Board Meeting
- November 18; Special Board Meeting
- December 8; Regular Board Meeting

You may contact Dr. Olin at holin@gcsc.k12.in.us

or

Members of the Board at board@gcsc.k12.in.us

RECENT CHANGES

- As we explored our options for efficiency and improved achievement and opportunities, most plausible scenarios included moving fourth grade students back into our elementary schools.

- We surveyed our parents in the spring of 2025, and the vast majority indicated that they wanted their children to receive 4th grade instruction in an elementary setting.

- Therefore, in the spring of 2025, we made the decision to move our fourth grade students back into our elementary schools.

Early draft of the proposed footprint for the combined intermediate school at Maxwell.

**This shows 14 sections per grade vs. the 12 sections we need.*

Looking at current enrollment, we have the rooms to make the transition now.

The rise of Online Schools and Vouchers

- Voucher Usage
  - Since Fall 2017, vouchers have increased from 61 to 204. We experienced large jumps in Fall of 2021, Fall of 2023 and Fall of 2024 as the state legislature moved toward universal vouchers. However, we do not see an increase in enrollment at private schools. These are primarily families who were paying for private school and were able to claim a voucher as the program expanded.
- Online School
  - Since Fall 2017, online school enrollments have increased from 42 to 96. We experienced large jumps as 2 public schools (Cloverdale and Clarksville) created online schools. We also saw most of the increase post Covid. In 2025, the legislature closed one of the largest public school players in Union (Randolph County). They will no longer be able to enroll students starting in 2027.

Open Enrollment and Voucher Touch Points

- Here are some peer comparisons when we talk about Open Enrolment and Vouchers
  - Peer Group #3 - County/Conference Schools
    - GC and MV are both net negative
    - 5 of the 9 conference schools are net negative: GC, MV, Shelbyville, New Castle and Delta
  - Peer Group #4 - Demographically Similar Schools
    - Using a data analytics tool, we find 4-5 schools that are similar to us on terms of ADM, Free/Reduced Lunch % and Special Ed Population %.
    - 4 of the 6 schools are net negative: GC, Franklin Community, Whitley County, and Mooresville
    - The 2 who are positive are South Madison (+70) and Middlebury (+90)