

Sachem Central School District

January, 2016

To the Sachem Family,

I am writing on behalf of our Board of Education to present an overview of the process regarding the decision to close school buildings in the Sachem Central School District. There have been many Board of Education meetings, forums and committee meetings since 2013 regarding this topic. As we have published and noticed, the final hearing and decision regarding the proposed closure of Gatelot Elementary, Tecumseh Elementary and Sequoya Middle School will be held in the Samoset Middle School auditorium on January 20, 2016 at 7:30 pm.

Unfortunately, no decision to close any school building is going to be accepted equally among the entire district. An argument for or against the closing of any particular building could in many cases be made for all. It is also true that reasonable people can look at the same data in a situation like this and arrive at different conclusions about the appropriate course of action. There is no perfect formula to give a perfect result that would be satisfactory to all of the members of our Sachem family. I can assure you, however, that the District has been thorough and transparent as this process has moved forward over the past 2 ½ years and engaged in each step of this process with the intention of making this difficult but necessary decision with the best interest of the entire Sachem family in mind.

As part of the process in which the district has engaged, we have solicited and considered a massive amount of data as well as the recommendations resulting from the hard work of a citizens' committee, professionals who specialize in the analysis of data relating to school closings, District administration and employees, and the public at large. The District has been fully transparent in each and every step of this 2 ½ year process. Based upon information obtained from our District Clerk, we have had more than forty public meetings wherein the process, analysis, data and input from constituencies has been discussed. This is in addition to the personal time invested by all those individuals and the Board in gathering, collating, reading and analyzing the relevant information. The Board of Education, Administration, Facilities Study Committee and professionals retained to assist in this process considered relevant factors relating to each and every school building in the District as a part of this process.

The Board of Education greatly respects the time and effort which the Facilities Committee and every person involved in this process spent on putting together their reports, data and recommendations. They also respect all of the opinions of every member of the

Sachem Central School District

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community who has weighed in on this issue. Ultimately the final decision rests with the Board of Education. This is not a responsibility that we can or would delegate. Again, we assure you that while reasonable people can have a difference of opinion even when provided with a great deal of empirical data, each Board member has the best interests of the children of this school district and the community at large as the primary concern in their hearts and minds. Together with the District administration, faculty, and staff we have all agreed to take the positive steps necessary to make this transition as respectful as possible for the Sachem family.

Please be advised that while the Board of Education welcomes and will consider all comments from the public at the scheduled hearing, it will not engage in debate or permit the interrogation of the Board or administration at the hearing. The Board respectfully states that the public comment section is for the purpose of allowing interested parties to make the Board aware of their concerns, and for those parties to identify to the Board issues that they believe should be considered in its final vote on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James J. Nolan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James J. Nolan
Superintendent of Schools

JJN:ct

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