



Growing Pains

Ottoson Faculty
Expansion Survey
Results

Where we are:

Ottoson is nearly double the recommended middle school size.

5th/6th largest in the state

Over building capacity

No more full-school assemblies

Fully scheduled gym and crowded cafe

How this affects students:

Teachers will have to share classrooms (traveling teachers on carts)

Declining teacher/student relationships

Infrastructure stress- kitchen, plumbing, heat, etc.

Large class sizes mean less one-to-one time for students

Increasing incidents of bullying/misbehavior in crowded halls and cafeteria

What we've been doing:

Following reports from Building Task Force and School Committee Meetings

Many informal lunchtime and hallway conversations throughout process

Faculty meeting presentation and group discussions of options

Individual survey about preferences

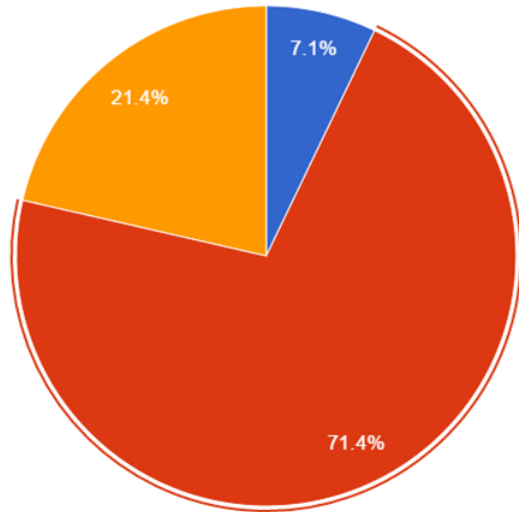
Site visit to High Rock School in Needham (grade 6 only exemplar)

Five teachers and two administrators

Teachers submitted questions which were answered in a shared GoogleDoc

Observational ppt shared with staff and further discussion in the works

6th grade teachers responses :



- Building an addition onto existing OMS structure.
- Renovating the Gibbs to house a single school grade (6th)
- Renovating the Gibbs to house a smaller 6,7,8 middle school.

Positive Aspects of 6th Grade School

Schedule tailored for needs of sixth grade students

Opportunity for smaller clusters and more time with students

Opportunity for 6th grade teachers to take leadership roles in creating and implementing the vision, schedule, etc.

Concerns about a 6/7/8th Grade School

“Separate but equal”

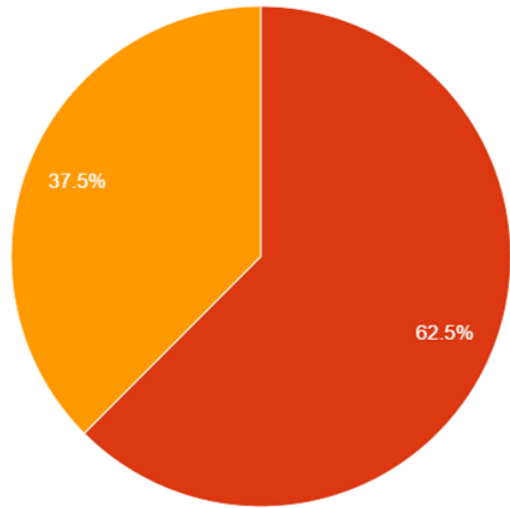
Danger of comparing/contrasting Gibbs vs. OMS

Concerns about expanding OMS

OMS is already too big with too many infrastructure issues

Logistics: removing outdoor space, possible blasting

7th grade teacher responses:

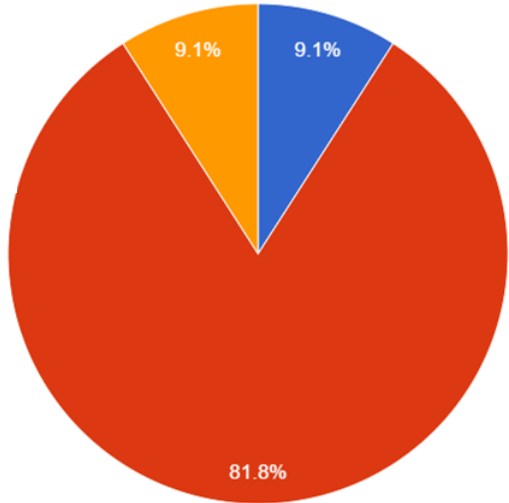


- Building an addition onto existing OMS structure.
- Renovating the Gibbs to house a single school grade (6th)
- Renovating the Gibbs to house a smaller 6,7,8 middle school.

Rationale: sense of community and belonging, strengthened relationships, support for social/emotional needs

Concerns: Impact on cluster classes (including 6th graders who take 7th grade math), impact on staff relationships (particularly the ability to communicate as a department across 6 - 7 - 8)

8th grade teacher responses:

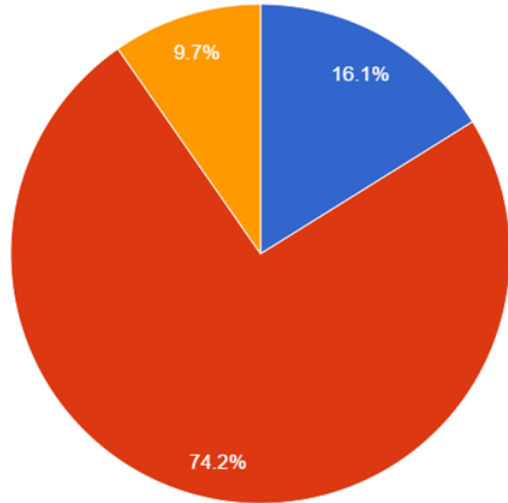


Rationale: most conducive to healthy learning environment, strengthened relationships, support for social/emotional needs

Concerns: Impact on cluster classes, special education, specialists, and extracurricular activities

“Out of Cluster” teacher responses:

Major reasons supporting a 6th grade school at Gibbs
(in order of significance):



- Building an addition onto existing OMS structure.
- Renovating the Gibbs to house a single school grade (6th)
- Renovating the Gibbs to house a smaller 6,7,8 middle school.

Tailoring of program to specific needs of 6th graders

Small environment most conducive to teaching,
learning, and student needs

Strengthening of student/teacher relationships

Support of high quality teaching, innovation and risk-
taking

Engendering a sense of community

Improvement of staff collegiality

Special Ed teacher responses:

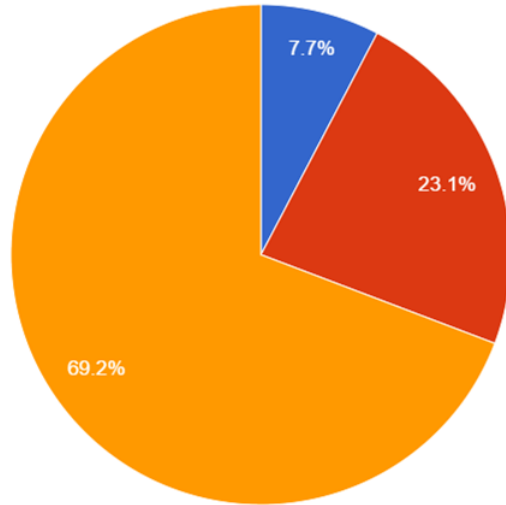
ONLY group to prefer two 6-8 schools

Rationale:

Avoid two transitions in two years, which could be problematic for students with anxiety or other social/emotional challenges
Create a sense of community and belonging, assist vertical integration, provide best environment for learning
Strengthened teacher/student relationships and support for social/emotional needs to have teachers for 3 years
Fear that small numbers of students at 6th grade school might result in programs being combined or watered down

Concerns:

Equitable distribution of resources



- Building an addition onto existing OMS structure.
- Renovating the Gibbs to house a single school grade (6th)
- Renovating the Gibbs to house a smaller 6,7,8 middle school.

Overall recommendations:

Take OMS expansion off the table, please. Not in best interests of students.

Gibbs preference would be a grade 6 school as long as concerns are addressed

If this model, should be a **SIXTH GRADE SCHOOL** not a mini-Ottoson

Smaller clusters with more flexible time in cluster

Sixth grade teachers should drive the change, from earliest stages

Concerns remaining about a 6th grade school at Gibbs :

SPECIAL EDUCATION, esp SLC PROGRAMS

Gibbs would need full slate of programs: ELL, Summit, Compass, Reach, Inclusion, Co-taught

Impact on:

Specialist (“out of cluster”) courses & staffing

Extracurricular programs

Staff relationships

Two transitions over two years -- disproportionately affects students with disabilities

Distribution of resources (technology & engineering, music, art)

Possible need for teachers to commute between Gibbs and OMS

Expansion Committee

Jenna Fernandes, grade 6 English Language Arts

Jack Flood, grade 7 Assistant Principal

Randi Flynn, Special Education Compass Program

Beth Hazzard, grade 6 Mathematics

Julianna Keyes, grade 8 World History

Jason Levy, grade 6 Ancient Civilizations

Heather Mahoney, grade 6 English Language Arts

Judith Packer, grade 8 English Language Arts

Alecia Serafini, grades 6-8 Art

Anne Zachary, grades 6-7 World Languages