

**Bethlehem Township School District
Virtual Town Hall Meeting**



May 13, 2020 - 6:30 pm-Zoom opens at 6:15 pm

If you cannot join our Zoom, you may email

questions to gfarley@btschools.org

[Click here to Join Zoom Meeting](#)

**Presented by Dr. Gregory C. Farley, Chief School Administrator/Hoppock Principal and
Ms. Jane Smith, Conley School Principal**

The configuration for the school buildings for 2020-2021 school year is proposed:

Thomas B. Conley Elementary School: Grades Pre-K-6

Ethel Hoppock Middle School: Grades 7-8

This change in location of the 6th grade addresses three major issues:

1. Efficient use of teachers and staff with a savings of approximately \$205,000
2. Declining enrollment since 2004-2005
3. Preparing for the loss of \$480,000 in state funding in 2022 and 2023 - There was a reduction of approximately \$500,000 over the past three years for a total over five years of nearly \$1 million dollars

Immediate and future benefits of configuration change:

- Preserving teaching jobs through an efficient staffing array
- Savings of over \$200k for 20-21
- Possible future reductions of the tax levy
- Less stressful transition for our grade 6 students

Due to the budget reduction over the next two fiscal years, our district must determine to:

1. Combine all grades into Conley School with a modular addition - or:
2. Regionalize our Middle School Grades (6-8) with other area school districts

It is our school district's obligation to present a responsible budget to our citizens. Structural reductions are the only means to offset the loss of nearly \$1 million in state aid over five years (2018-2023). This decrease is a reflection of our declining enrollment and cannot be equalized with a large increase to the tax levy.

The eventual savings by closing Ethel Hoppock Middle School is significant and yearly, and the building can be used by the Township or for potential rentals by other organizations.

If COVID-19 requires social distancing or other mitigation in August we will adhere to state and local health recommendations. When our Governor opens our schools in August our district will follow guidelines to keep our students and staff healthy. Occupancy at Conley School will be well under capacity even if our entire district population was in the building.

Our larger context is providing the best education for our children with a fiscally responsible budget. Maintaining two buildings with a student population of under 340 students is not cost effective within our current operating budget. These difficult decisions are in the best interest of our educational community that have seen the student population decline by nearly 50% since 2005.