

Pig-in-a-poke

Meaning:

An offering or deal that is foolishly accepted without being examined first.

Origin:

refers to a scam originating in the late middle ages, when meat was scarce, but apparently rats and cats were not. The scheme entailed the sale of a "suckling pig", in a "poke" (bag). The wriggling bag actually contained a cat, not particularly prized as a source of meat, which was then sold unopened to the victim.

Pig in a Poke

By Ted Martland, Former Superintendent of Region 14 Schools

The Region 14 Board of Education continues to support a reconfiguration proposal offering little precise data on what will occur and what needs to be done, and at what cost. If one can assume the little definite information offered to date, such as grades k, 1, & 2 with 8 sections each at Bethlehem and grades 3,4, & 5 at Mitchell, also with 8 sections each, along with drawings identifying the current configuration, and identifying other classroom uses are correct, then the following analysis suggests more questions for reconfiguration.

Mitchell Elementary School now has 28 classrooms, 7 temporaries, a library, a gym, and a cafeteria. Current use consists of 23 grade level classrooms and 12 rooms, some divided, used for other purposes (Art, Music, Computer Lab, Special Education, etc.).

The reconfiguration proposed, assumes 8 sections per grade using 24 grade level classrooms, elimination of the 7 temporaries, leaving 4 rooms for the 12 activities currently in separate rooms.

Question: Which 8 of the 12 activities will no longer have a classroom?

Bethlehem Elementary School has 22 classrooms, a library, a gym, and a cafeteria. Current use provides 17 grade level classrooms with 5 rooms, some divided, for other purposes such as art, music, and special education.

Reconfiguration proposes 20 classrooms, (assuming the promised 8 sections) and Kindergarten at ½ day, with two classrooms for the five activities currently using classrooms.

Question: Which 3 of the 5 activities will no longer have a classroom? And will the added Kindergartens have the required amenities?

If the Board of Education kept the current configuration at Mitchell and the temporary classrooms, it could house Woodbury's fifth grade and have 7 rooms for the current 12 activities rather than reconfiguration's 4! And no impact on Bethlehem.

If the Board of Education kept Mitchell's current configuration and kept Woodbury's 5th grade at the Middle School, (which a previous board sold to justify the Middle School addition), and eliminated the

temporary classrooms, it would have 5 rooms for the current 12 activity rooms. One better than reconfiguration, and no impact on Bethlehem.

This analysis of space at the two elementary schools plainly identifies reconfiguration as proposed to have the greatest negative affect on the programs at each school without addressing costs to modify each school's current room usage, not to mention that many children will have less instruction time.

And all of this in addition to the expanded transportation, especially for the youngest of the Region's children. Let's not forget that the addition of buses, once school starts is a decision that the contractor alone may make so if parents complain about a long bus ride, the contractor can easily solve it by adding another vehicle, increasing the cost to all Region 14 taxpayers. If accepting reconfiguration isn't a "pig in a poke" I don't know what is.