



Central Noble Board of Education Work Session Information Review Sheet

March 30, 2026

5:00pm

Central Noble Jr/Sr High Testing Center
302 Cougar Court, Albion, IN 46701

The following summaries were generated using AI tools and are based on the actual responses and input provided by participants during the public work session.

All answers were recorded anonymously to encourage open and honest feedback. Recordings and detailed notes from each session are available upon request.

TOPIC 1: CONSOLIDATION OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Question 1: In what ways could combining resources improve opportunities for students (i.e. academics, extracurriculars, support services, etc...)?

1. Expanded Access to Academic and Support Services

A consistent theme among participants was that combining resources could strengthen academic and student support services. Specifically, stakeholders noted the potential for improved access to specialized staff, including licensed special education teachers, ensuring that student needs are more consistently met. Some also expressed that consolidation could enhance overall student support by centralizing services within one location.

2. Increased Collaboration Among Staff

Many participants identified staff collaboration as a key benefit of consolidation. Bringing educators together in a single building was seen as an opportunity to share instructional strategies, align practices across grade levels, and improve continuity in student learning. Current limitations—such as staff primarily collaborating within individual buildings—were noted as an area that could be improved through consolidation.

3. Broader Student Opportunities and Programming

Participants highlighted the potential for expanded opportunities for students, including cross-grade mentorship (e.g., older students supporting younger students through programs like cadet teaching), as well as increased access to extracurriculars and enrichment activities. A unified campus was viewed as a way to create more cohesive programming and student experiences.

4. Operational Efficiency and Resource Allocation

Several comments reflected the belief that consolidation could lead to more efficient use of

financial and human resources. This includes potential cost savings in operations, more strategic staffing, and the possibility of reinvesting resources into student programming and services. Some also noted potential long-term financial benefits, such as repurposing or selling existing facilities.

5. Family Convenience and Transportation Benefits

From a parent perspective, having all elementary-aged students in one location was seen as a significant advantage. Participants noted that this could simplify transportation, reduce travel time, and increase instructional time for students. Consolidation was viewed as a way to make daily logistics more manageable for families.

Common Concerns and Considerations

6. Class Size and Individualized Attention

A major concern centered on the potential for increased class sizes and the impact on student learning. While some participants believed class sizes would remain manageable, others expressed concern—particularly at the kindergarten level—that larger groups could limit individualized attention and negatively affect early learning experiences.

7. Developmental Appropriateness and Student Interactions

Participants raised concerns about younger students being in close proximity to older students, citing potential issues such as exposure to inappropriate behaviors or increased risk of bullying. Suggestions included maintaining clear separation between grade levels within a shared building to mitigate these concerns.

8. Capacity and Facilities

Questions were raised about whether existing facilities could adequately accommodate all students without overcrowding. While some participants believed space would be sufficient based on past configurations, others remained concerned about building capacity and the logistics of shared spaces such as lunch and recess.

9. Impact on School Identity and Community

There was acknowledgment of the emotional and community impact of closing or consolidating schools, particularly the loss of a “local” elementary identity. While some expressed sadness about this possibility, others noted that difficult decisions may be necessary if they ultimately benefit students.

10. Staffing Implications

Concerns were also expressed regarding the potential impact on staff, particularly support personnel. While there was reassurance that teaching positions would likely be maintained, uncertainty remains about how staffing adjustments would be managed and communicated.

Summary

Overall, public feedback reflects a balance of cautious optimism and concern. Stakeholders generally recognize the potential for improved student opportunities through enhanced collaboration, expanded services, and operational efficiencies. At the same time, they emphasize the importance of carefully addressing class size, facility capacity, developmental considerations, and community impact to ensure that any consolidation effort effectively supports student success.

Question 2: What challenges should we anticipate with consolidation?

1. Potential Enrollment Decline

A primary concern expressed was the possibility of losing students and families as a result of consolidation. Participants noted that some families may choose to enroll in neighboring districts—particularly those geographically closer—if local school options are reduced. Additionally, there is concern that staffing changes could indirectly impact enrollment if affected employees choose to relocate their children.

2. Class Size and Student-to-Teacher Ratios

Class size emerged as one of the most significant concerns. While some acknowledged that larger class sizes may be manageable in upper elementary grades, many emphasized that younger students require smaller, more individualized learning environments. Questions were also raised about how retirements or staffing reductions might further impact class sizes and student support.

3. Facility Capacity and Space Limitations

Many participants questioned whether existing facilities—particularly the elementary campus—have adequate space to accommodate all students. Concerns included the availability of classrooms, differences in room sizes, and the potential need to repurpose shared spaces such as libraries or common areas. The overall ability to maintain an effective learning environment within existing infrastructure was a key consideration.

4. Logistical and Operational Challenges

Stakeholders identified several logistical concerns associated with consolidation, including:

- Transportation, bus loading, and parent pick-up congestion
- Scheduling for lunch and recess with increased student populations
- Daily building operations and transitions between activities

Participants emphasized the importance of thoughtful planning to ensure efficiency and minimize disruptions to the school day.

5. Impact on Early Childhood and Childcare Services

Questions were raised about the future of preschool, daycare, and early childhood

programming (e.g., YMCA services). Concerns included where these programs would be relocated, whether access would be reduced for families, and how changes might affect staff and community members who rely on these services.

6. Staffing Implications and Workforce Stability

Public comments reflected concerns about how consolidation may affect staffing levels, including potential reductions in instructional assistants and support staff. Additionally, uncertainty around retirements and whether positions would be refilled contributed to concerns about maintaining appropriate levels of student support.

7. Transition Planning and Communication

Several participants highlighted the importance of clear, proactive communication and adequate transition time. Past experiences—such as short timelines for classroom moves—were cited as challenges that should be avoided. Stakeholders emphasized the need for advance notice, structured planning, and support for staff during any transition.

8. Future Flexibility and Enrollment Changes

Concerns were expressed about long-term sustainability, particularly if enrollment trends shift. Some participants questioned whether consolidation could lead to future disruptions if student numbers increase again, potentially requiring additional moves or reopening of facilities.

9. Use and Value of Existing Facilities

Participants questioned what would happen to vacated buildings, including whether they would be sold, repurposed, or remain unused. There were concerns about losing valuable community assets and whether repurposing buildings could offset anticipated savings.

10. Financial Considerations and Hidden Costs

While consolidation is often associated with cost savings, participants noted potential additional expenses, such as building modifications, classroom reconfiguration, and operational adjustments needed to support a larger student population in a single location. Clarification around these costs was identified as an important need.

Summary

Overall, stakeholders identified a range of practical and strategic challenges associated with consolidation. While many concerns centered on class size, space, and logistics, broader themes also included enrollment stability, staffing impacts, and the long-term use of district facilities. Participants emphasized the importance of careful planning, transparent communication, and maintaining a focus on student-centered outcomes when considering any consolidation efforts.

Question 3: How can we best utilize the time and resources to prepare for a successful transition (i.e classroom setup, staffing, student supports, etc...)?

1. Importance of Early Decision-Making and Communication

The most consistent theme was the need for timely, transparent decision-making. Staff and families emphasized that the sooner a decision is made, the more effectively they can prepare. Clear and proactive communication with both employees and parents was identified as critical, particularly to avoid past situations where students and families were unaware of building changes until late in the process.

2. Adequate Time for Planning and Classroom Transitions

Teachers expressed significant concern about the time required to pack, move, and set up classrooms. Many noted that even with a delayed timeline (e.g., implementation in a future school year), the actual window for physical moves remains limited to the summer months. Providing ample notice and structured time for preparation was viewed as essential to a smooth transition.

3. Phased or Staggered Implementation Approach

Some participants suggested that a phased transition—potentially spread over multiple summers—could reduce strain on staff and resources. This approach was seen as a way to make the process more manageable, especially given the scale of moving entire grade levels and classrooms.

4. Staffing Capacity and Operational Support

Concerns were raised about having sufficient personnel to manage both the transition and ongoing operational responsibilities. Custodial teams, in particular, were noted as already being stretched thin during summer months. Additional manpower or support systems may be necessary to successfully execute a large-scale move.

5. Leveraging Volunteers and Community Resources

Participants identified an opportunity to engage community members, including parents, student groups, and local organizations, to support the transition. Suggestions included utilizing high school groups, clubs, and service organizations to assist with moving and setup efforts. However, it was noted that volunteer engagement has declined in recent years, and more intentional outreach may be needed.

6. Consideration of Scheduling Constraints

Summer school, ongoing maintenance projects, and other scheduled activities were identified as potential barriers to an efficient transition timeline. Participants emphasized the need for a clearly defined and realistic timeline that accounts for these competing demands.

7. Impact on Student Programs and Supports

Questions were raised about how existing programs—such as specialized instructional models (e.g., KIPS), early childhood programming, and student supports—would be affected during and after the transition. Ensuring continuity of services for students was identified as a key priority.

8. Enrollment and Community Response Considerations

Participants reiterated concerns about how consolidation decisions and timelines could impact enrollment. Families may make decisions about where to enroll their children based on how clearly and quickly information is communicated. Early clarity allows families to plan accordingly and may help mitigate potential enrollment loss.

9. Ongoing Community Engagement

There was strong support for continued opportunities for public input and discussion. Community members expressed appreciation for being included in the conversation and encouraged the district to maintain open lines of communication throughout the decision-making and transition process.

Summary

Overall, stakeholders emphasized that a successful transition depends on early decision-making, clear communication, and intentional planning. Key priorities include providing adequate time for staff preparation, ensuring sufficient operational support, engaging community resources, and maintaining transparency with families. A thoughtful, well-communicated approach—potentially including phased implementation—will be critical to minimizing disruption and supporting both staff and students throughout the process.

TOPIC 2: PURSUING A REFERENDUM

Question 1: What information does the community need to make an informed decision, and how can the district clearly communicate the purpose, impact and use of referendum funds?

1. Need for Clear, Transparent “Why”

A dominant theme was the importance of clearly explaining the purpose behind both consolidation considerations and any future referendum. Community members expressed a need to better understand the “why” behind financial decisions, including what is driving the district’s current situation and why additional funding may be necessary. There was also a desire to see clear comparisons between available options and the consequences of inaction.

2. Addressing Perception and Trust

Some participants indicated a perception that prior decisions—such as closing a school—may

have already been made, or that the district's financial challenges may be overstated. This highlights a need to build trust through consistent, honest communication and to clearly demonstrate that financial challenges are not the result of mismanagement, but broader systemic factors.

3. Timing and Proactive Communication

Stakeholders emphasized that communication must begin earlier and be more consistent. Feedback suggested that previous messaging came too late in the process, limiting the community's ability to fully understand and engage. Early, ongoing outreach—well in advance of any referendum—was strongly encouraged.

4. Clarity on Financial Information and Impact

There was a strong desire for simplified, accessible financial information. While detailed financial presentations are important, participants noted that overly complex data may not resonate with the broader public. Instead, the community wants clear explanations of:

- How funds are currently being used
- What cost-saving measures have already been implemented
- What new funds would specifically support
- How mechanisms like debt roll-off impact taxpayers

5. Personalizing the Impact

Participants emphasized the importance of making the message personal and locally relevant. This includes illustrating how schools impact property values, community vitality, and local identity. Communicating how decisions affect individual taxpayers—as well as students and families—was seen as critical to building understanding and support.

6. Community-Wide Outreach Beyond Current Families

Feedback highlighted the need to engage all community members, not just current parents or staff. This includes residents without children in the school system, who still play a key role in referendum outcomes. Tailoring messaging to different audiences and helping them understand their stake in the school system was identified as an important strategy.

7. Improved Communication Methods and Accessibility

Participants encouraged the district to diversify communication strategies, including:

- Direct mailings to households
- Video content and digital platforms (e.g., short informational videos)
- Public meetings and small group discussions

There was a strong preference for clear, concise, and engaging formats that are easy for the public to access and understand.

8. Size, Scope, and Structure of a Referendum

Some stakeholders expressed concern about the size or timing of a potential referendum, suggesting that a smaller or more targeted request may be more publicly acceptable. Others

raised questions about whether the referendum would address short-term needs or represent a long-term funding solution.

9. External Factors and Broader Context

Participants noted that local decisions are influenced by broader factors, including state funding structures and other local projects that may impact taxpayer perception. Clarifying how school funding fits within this larger context—and separating it from unrelated projects—was seen as important to avoid confusion.

10. Continued Engagement and Broader Representation

There was strong support for expanding community involvement in the planning and communication process. Suggestions included forming larger committees, hosting more public forums, and creating opportunities for ongoing dialogue to ensure a wide range of perspectives are considered.

Summary

Overall, stakeholders emphasized that successful communication around a referendum requires clarity, transparency, and early engagement. The community is seeking straightforward explanations of need, impact, and financial implications, along with consistent efforts to build trust and understanding. By making the message accessible, personal, and inclusive of the broader community, the district can better position itself to support informed decision-making and meaningful public engagement.

Question 2: What specific academic needs should be prioritized if a referendum is pursued again (i.e. teacher quality, class sizes, instructional supports, etc...)?

1. Maintaining Reasonable Class Sizes

Class size was consistently identified as a top priority. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of maintaining smaller class sizes—particularly in early grades such as kindergarten—where individualized attention is critical. Many participants suggested establishing clear targets (e.g., approximately 25 students per class or fewer) and clearly communicating the rationale behind these thresholds to the community.

2. Investment in Instructional Support Staff

There was strong support for increasing instructional support, including instructional assistants and additional teaching staff. Participants noted that student needs have become more complex, and additional adult support is necessary to effectively meet diverse academic and behavioral needs within the classroom.

3. Teacher Quality and Retention

Ensuring high-quality educators remains a key priority. Comments reflected the importance of

attracting and retaining teachers who are committed to the district and capable of making a meaningful impact on student learning. Participants also noted that class size and working conditions directly influence teacher effectiveness and retention.

4. Clear Communication of Staffing Needs

Stakeholders expressed a need for better communication on how staffing decisions are made, particularly the relationship between class size, funding, and the number of teachers required. Clearly explaining why certain staffing levels are necessary was seen as essential to building public understanding and support.

5. Supporting Diverse Student Needs

Participants acknowledged that student needs vary widely due to differences in academic readiness, home environments, and social-emotional factors. As a result, there was strong support for maintaining flexibility in staffing and programming to ensure all students receive appropriate support.

6. Sustaining and Expanding Academic Programming

At the secondary level, stakeholders emphasized the importance of maintaining a wide range of course offerings, including Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways and courses required for graduation tracks. Ensuring that the district can staff and sustain these programs was viewed as critical to student success and postsecondary readiness.

7. Exploring Innovative Educational Options

Some participants suggested exploring alternative or supplemental learning models, such as microscooling, outdoor-based early learning (e.g., “forest kindergarten”), and online learning opportunities for students who may benefit from non-traditional environments. These options were viewed as potential ways to meet diverse learner needs and attract families.

8. Enrollment Growth and District Attractiveness

A recurring theme was the need to position the district as an attractive option for families. Participants suggested gathering feedback through community surveys to better understand what draws families to the district and what improvements could increase enrollment. The overall “look and feel” of the district, as well as program offerings, were seen as influential factors.

9. Balancing Community Financial Concerns

While academic needs were emphasized, participants also acknowledged the challenge of aligning these priorities with community willingness to fund them. Many noted that residents weigh school funding decisions against personal financial pressures, reinforcing the need for clear, compelling communication about the value and impact of proposed investments.

10. Planning for Future Growth

Some stakeholders raised concerns about long-term planning, particularly how the district would respond to potential enrollment growth if facilities are reduced. Ensuring that academic planning aligns with future capacity needs was identified as an important consideration.

Summary

Overall, stakeholders emphasized that any future referendum should prioritize maintaining manageable class sizes, strengthening instructional support, and ensuring high-quality teaching. In addition, sustaining diverse academic programming and clearly communicating the connection between funding and student outcomes will be essential. Balancing these priorities with community expectations and long-term planning will be critical to both educational success and public support.

Question 3: Would this community support a referendum in 2026? Because?

1. General Sentiment: Limited Support for 2026

The prevailing sentiment among participants was that community support for a referendum in 2026 would be unlikely at this time. Many expressed that, given the recent failed referendum, pursuing another request too soon may not be well received without significant changes in approach and communication.

2. Need for Improved Communication and Clarity

A consistent theme was that the previous referendum effort was not clearly communicated. Participants cited confusion on the ballot language, lack of accessible information, and delayed outreach. There was strong agreement that any future referendum would require clearer, simpler messaging that effectively explains the purpose, need, and impact.

3. Importance of Timing and Election Context

Stakeholders noted that timing plays a critical role in voter turnout and support. Suggestions included aligning a future referendum with a general election cycle to increase participation and considering whether additional items on the ballot might motivate broader voter engagement.

4. Demonstrating Progress and Accountability

Participants emphasized the need for the district to clearly outline what has changed since the previous referendum attempt. This includes demonstrating cost-saving measures already implemented, progress made, and why a referendum is still necessary despite those efforts. Transparency in this area was viewed as essential to rebuilding trust.

5. Clear Explanation of Financial Structures

There was notable confusion about how school funding works, particularly the distinction between property taxes, operational funding, and bond-related revenues. Participants indicated that improving public understanding of these financial mechanisms would be critical to gaining support.

6. Adjusting the Scope and Size of the Request

Some participants suggested that a smaller, more targeted referendum request may be more

acceptable to the community. Concerns were raised about the perceived size of the previous ask, with recommendations to explore more incremental or phased funding approaches.

7. Voter Engagement and Awareness

Questions were raised about voter turnout during the previous referendum, including whether some community members did not vote due to assumptions about the outcome or lack of awareness. Increasing voter education and engagement was identified as a key factor in any future effort.

8. Balancing Community Perspectives

Participants acknowledged differing perspectives within the community, particularly between those with children in the district and those without. There is a perception that households without direct school involvement may be less inclined to support a referendum, reinforcing the need for broader community-focused messaging.

9. External Economic and Legislative Factors

Community support may be influenced by external factors such as potential property tax changes or state legislation. Some participants indicated that shifts in the tax landscape could impact willingness to support a referendum in the future.

10. Messaging Strategy and Tone

Feedback suggested that prior messaging may have been perceived as overly negative or urgent. Participants recommended a more balanced approach that highlights both the positive outcomes of a successful referendum and the realistic consequences of inaction. Emphasizing student success, program strengths, and community impact may resonate more effectively.

11. Cost of Running a Referendum

Concerns were also raised about the cost of conducting another referendum, including expenses related to outreach and communication. Participants questioned whether these costs are justified without a strong likelihood of success.

Summary

Overall, public feedback suggests that a 2026 referendum would face significant challenges without a revised strategy. While there is not broad support at this time, participants indicated that support could increase with clearer communication, improved timing, greater transparency, and a more targeted approach. Building community understanding, trust, and engagement will be essential to improving the likelihood of future success.

OTHER

1. Staffing Considerations and Communication

Participants raised questions about how consolidation may impact office and support staff. While it was acknowledged that no decisions have been finalized, there is an understanding that

any staffing changes would be handled thoughtfully and communicated directly with affected employees before being shared publicly. It was also noted that no reductions in certified teaching staff are anticipated, though some efficiencies may occur in non-certified or duplicate roles.

2. Commitment to Transparency

A strong theme across comments was the expectation for full transparency from district leadership. Community members emphasized the importance of clear, honest, and timely communication throughout the decision-making process, with a preference for not withholding information or allowing uncertainty to persist.

3. Clarification of Funding Sources (Bonds vs. Operations)

There was a need to clearly distinguish between different funding sources, particularly regarding ongoing projects such as the bus garage. Participants noted the importance of communicating that bond-funded projects are separate from operational funding and do not impact the district's general fund in the same way. Improved understanding of these distinctions is critical to avoiding confusion and building trust.

4. Addressing Financial Concerns and Misinformation

An unrelated but notable public question referenced concerns from a past audit involving unaccounted funds. While not directly tied to the consolidation or referendum discussion, it reflects a broader need for the district to address financial concerns openly and reinforce confidence in its financial oversight and accountability practices.

Summary

In addition to the primary discussion topics, stakeholders expressed a desire for clarity over staffing implications, funding sources, and financial accountability. Across all comments, transparency and proactive communication remain central expectations. Addressing these areas directly and consistently will be important in maintaining public trust and supporting informed community engagement moving forward.