

Notes From 5/18/2022 Conversation with Maxine Minkoff, former NRHS Principal

These notes were jotted down by F. Luft and then edited by Ms. Minkoff for sharing.

- Maxine can't speak to the complexities introduced by Covid, but during her tenure as Principal, prior to Covid, the Nauset Regional School District was very open about sharing building space during non-school hours. In fact, the school district viewed itself as an integral part of the community and encouraged the community to use its space. In fact, its current Strategic Plan speaks to the importance of community engagement and school-community partnerships with the schools. It is her understanding that the following continues to be true, but this should be checked with the Brooke Clenchy, Nauset Regional School District's Superintendent:
 - There may be security and custodial issues to be worked out for various requests for use of the schools, especially if the requests involve expanding hours of building access and the use of various spaces and particular school equipment. However, the willingness to share space is there.
 - In addition to making the gym available, NRMS has provided space for numerous continuing education classes, including art classes.
 - Use of the auditorium is possible so long as it doesn't interfere with normal school activities.
 - [Supplemental comment by Fritz: The school has a published menu of facility rental options and rates, which specify different rates for the Town and for non-profits.]
- Maxine noted the following challenges and limitations:
 - Building access must be monitored. This may require time and dollars.
 - Most of the school's gym equipment is limited to school use, as is equipment storage space. Family free play time may require equipment that needs to be supplied by outside users.
 - Children need supervision. Programming would have to reflect and include provisions for this.
 - Adults also need to understand the appropriate use of various spaces and the limits of its use.
 - In the past, after-hour activities and classes sponsored by outside sources occasionally failed to follow rules regarding materials and equipment that could be used (e.g., use of technology without permission) or clean-up after use of the space. The district and any outside parties would have to reach a clear agreement on expectations regarding use of space, use of any school materials and equipment, and expectations for clean-up. After activities, things need to be in order proper for classes so as not to add to school staff workload.

- Maxine's take on using existing school building in place of building a community center:
 - School buildings play a useful role in offering programming space but of a different nature than a community center could provide.
 - School buildings are good for organized classes and events but not good for unstructured activities (either adult or child) or just hanging out.
 - A community center would allow people to pursue their passions more casually and on a flexible basis.
 - The kids need a place to go after school. There is currently nowhere like that. The Snow Library mezzanine has been serving that function but poorly and inappropriately as it is an open, public space used by all community members and not designed to be a space for active adolescents, nor can, or should, the library have to provide supervision.
 - Spending additional hours in the school isn't good either. Students need to be able to get out of the building. School is school and personal time is personal time.

Interesting NRMS Experiences Described by Maxine:

1. As for the intergenerational program -- it was a program that occurred during the school day in Grade 8 English classes when the students were doing a unit on the Holocaust. In fact, the theme for the entire year for 8th grade English was Human Rights. The teachers assigned students a book to read (e.g., *The Giver* was one), and asked adults who volunteered from senior centers to also read the book. They came in during classes when this unit was being taught and met with students in small groups to discuss the book. As I mentioned, while the students loved this -- as did the volunteers -- we were not able to get enough volunteers for each small group.
2. In terms of the after-school program, I believe you are referring to the various school clubs offered to students. During the time I was at the Middle School we had between 20 and 35 clubs offered before or after school. These were offered by teachers who received a small stipend. Each club met once or twice a week, usually for an hour so that kids could catch a late bus to get home. The offerings depended on what the teacher wanted to offer -- and varied from a chess club, games club, dog training club (with the school's therapy dog), drama club (which met for longer periods), cheerleading club, Dr. Who Club, Harry Potter Club, Rubik's Cube club, Photography club, etc. These were always supervised by a teacher. In addition, students could opt for band practice, chorus practice, orchestra practice, or intramural sports. Music practices were before school, sports were after school and went until after 5:00. Parents were expected to pick up those students as another bus was not available.