

2016 Condon School Consolidation Survey Results

Survey Conducted: September 24, 2016 - November 25, 2016

Number of respondents: 126

1. Are you currently registered to vote in south Gilliam County?
93.65% - Yes
4.76% - No
1.59% - I'm not sure
2. Do you own a home and/or property in south Gilliam County?
83.06% - Yes
16.94% - No
3. What is your age?
3.97% - 18-30
23.02% - 31-40
15.08% - 41-50
27.78% - 51-64
25.40% - 65+
4.76% - I'd rather not say
4. Do you *currently* have children/grandchildren attending school in the Condon School District?
52% - Yes
48% - No
5. To better utilize the District's limited staff and building maintenance resources, the Condon School Board is considering consolidating the Grade School and High School onto one campus. Without getting into specific proposals, do you support the idea, generally, of consolidating the Condon School District onto one campus?
23.02% - Definitely Support
23.81% - Probably Support
19.05% - Probably Oppose
21.43% - Definitely Oppose
12.70% - Undecided
6. What are your primary concerns, if any, about the idea to consolidate the Condon School District onto one campus? (check all that apply)
9.68% - I don't have any concerns
50.00% - Younger students mixing with older students in the hallways and/or bathrooms
60.48% - Losing valuable school facilities (i.e. GS playshed, HS shop, etc)
39.52% - My property taxes increasing
30.65% - School District's resources should be spent on other priorities
22.58% - Other (See attached summary)
7. How informed do you feel about the school consolidation proposal currently under consideration?
16.80% - Fully Informed
68.00% - Somewhat Informed
15.20% - Not At All Informed
8. Where do you get your information about school consolidation? (check all that apply)
19.20% - Public Meetings
79.20% - Times-Journal
16.80% - School Website
8.00% - My Child's Teacher / School District Staff
19.20% - School Administration / School Board Members
47.20% - Other Community Members
4.00% - Other
9. Please tell us anything else you'd like to add about school consolidation. (See attached summary)

Volunteer Responses

Question 6: What are your primary concerns, if any, about the idea to consolidate the Condon School District into one campus?

Summary of comments re: the curriculum and lack of electives. Several respondents suggested moving to a 5-day school week:

"That we will have a "good school building" but won't be able to increase programs."

"Consolidated campus would be great if we can have can see some things come back like shop class. I don't like the idea of losing the shop room, I thought the idea was to get that back in the school."

"I would like to see the students attend school 5 days a week and receive a better education, Condon is far behind the rest of the state, offer music, art, and all other extra curriculum, foreign language, etc."

Summary of comments re: school district experiencing future growth:

"Being unable to expand in the event enrollment increases. Planning on continued decreases rather than growth."

"When we experience growth, we will have to build a facility to replace what we are losing."

"Making permanent, expensive alterations that cannot be reversed in the future."

Two comments expressed concern about the Board not including parents and neighboring property owners in the planning process.

A couple of comments noted taxpayers are still paying on a bond and expressed concern about how the consolidation would be paid for.

Individual commenters also raised the following concerns:

Lack of indoor play area for students during cold weather.

Would like to see better maintenance of current buildings and grounds.

Money used to renovate the High School could be better spent elsewhere.

Can't afford to lose the Grade School building.

Board should focus on a county-wide consolidation instead.

Question 9: Please tell us anything else you'd like to add about school consolidation.

Summary of comments in support of consolidation:

"I feel the consolidation would be very beneficial to our community. As we are a small community with limited resources, I feel we could make the most of what we have and what we get by using one campus."

"We need to do what is best for our kids. It makes sense to combine to save money in the long run due to building maintenance."

"I'm sure this has been a difficult decision, and I appreciate the school and board trying to be proactive and realistic about declining numbers."

"It's time for a new building or buildings"

"I think we are at a point where we have to be very realistic. It would be wonderful if we could have a fully staffed, functional, and up to date grade school and high school, but I feel, we do not have the resources for two buildings. In my opinion, we must spend the money we have very wisely for the education of our children, not on an out dated and crumbling building - the grade school. I feel it would take a huge amount of money to bring it up to basic standards and would not include modernization. I understand the high school would require costly improvements but I feel there is a much better result by modernizing the newer building. I support the consolidation for one main reason - to rid the district of a "money pit building". I do so with one hope, that after the initial costs, there will be very needed programs added !!! We cannot continue to strip programs from this school district. We MUST provide our children with a well rounded education...."

"A good school system is the basis, of a healthy community. it not an easy decision, but you either pay now, or pay more later. Our county has been very supportive of other districts (health, fire, etc.) , so why not the school? Hopefully, we move forward with this most important part of our community"

"While I have some reservations, I do believe a consolidation would benefit our district. The population of the school has decreased significantly over the years and we as a community need to recognize that if something doesn't change, we will likely lose our school. We have to look at cutting costs and saving money. The consolidation idea is a long term solution to saving money and keeping our school in the community."

"I have none. this is long overdue."

"Spend that money on programs and upgrading our school to be the best in the state and the kids will come."

"I appreciate the dialogue."

"While it's fair to say I don't relish the idea of my property taxes increasing or seeing a large building sitting vacant or too little money available to offer additional classes/etc to students, I understand that the time has come to commit to infrastructure improvements sufficient to carry us into the coming decades. That is why I indicated I didn't have concerns in one of the questions above."

Summary of comments re: concerns/suggestions about the future of the Grade School building:

"Grade School building MUST NOT be destroyed. It is a beautiful building and part of our history. Tear away the "Wings" but not the playshed. It can be used for athletics with a separate entrance."

"Use the wings at the grade school for other business entity uses."

"The current grade school could be retrofitting and down sized at a fraction of the cost."

"I would like to see the play-shed saved as the structure looks secure and could be utilized. I am not sure how bad the structure of the grade school is at this time. It would be nice to see a report on this."

"I am very concerned about not having 2 gyms if the consolidation takes place. I think it is VERY impractical to use the play shed. Which you will still have to maintain as a separate facility. Using the play shed also limits the use of the surrounding property, which you will still have to maintain if you don't find someone to take it over."

Summary of comments re: providing better educational opportunities and whether the consolidation would aid in that goal:

"Our neighbors are using the Eastern Promise, and cooperating with TVCC, BMCC, CGCC, COCC - and we have never progressed past CGCC. We were told three years ago that Condon SD was going to apply for a CTE grant - has that ever been done?"

"Is the consolidation actually going to improve the quality of education offered by Condon schools? I would like to see resources spent on improving extra curricular activities and bringing back electives rather than new facilities with no improvements to the current bare-bones curriculum."

"Not all kids are going to go to college --- we have lost all our extra classes (shop, welding, home ec., band) kids need these classes as well. Lots of life skills are taught, kids re missing out! Many kids from when I was in high school went to college in something that made them feel successful from he ag. Program & shop. Now kids don't even have that experience. From the four surrounding school three of them have successful shop programs (Ione, Sherman & Arlington) Condon & Fossil don't."

"Consolidation should be pursued only if genuine savings will be realized. I would like to see more, not fewer, elective courses offered at CHS, so would oppose any spending that took away from class offerings."

"Fix what you've got and keep them up. Be more aggressive about finding grants and programs and people who can teach skills."

Summary of comments re: the School District's communication with the public:

"The school administration needs to do a better job of keeping community informed about what's happening with the project. So far the rumor mill is circulating most of the info, and that's not helping the cause."

"Please work with the entire community when it comes time to plan the new campus."

Summary of comments re: suggestions for consolidation plan

"Please make sure the new campus has everything that is needed. Don't skimp on constitution or space...make sure there is adequate room to house different options down the road."

"Has construction of new facility been considered? One that better meets current needs and could be expanded as needed to meet future needs for next Forty/ fifty years. High school building is over fifty years old. Five million dollars would be better spent toward new modern facility rather than trying to make an old building something it cannot be."

"I truly believe that for this last decade, Condon has been evolving and developing important infrastructure which will soon prove attractive towards growth and then we'll be needing to separate the campuses. Perhaps move now to combine but not construct permanent partitioning and structures."

Summary of comments re: county-wide consolidation

"Why not consider consolidation within Gilliam County? You could get feedback from the folks at Sherman County. I just don't like the idea of spending money to save money? The numbers don't make sense to me."

"I would be much more supportive of any effort which included the Arlington School District rather than each District putting forward separate efforts, as is happening now... At the very least the School Board and the School District should be making every effort to bring the Fossil students to Condon. The Fossil school situation is even less tenable than the Condon situation. Bringing those students north would benefit all. That would be a better short-term focus for the School Board and District."

Summary of comments in opposition to consolidation not summarized elsewhere

"Don't do it. The cost to maintain the abandoned building is going to eat into whatever savings you achieved making the original outlay to costly. If going to one campus, I would expect staff reductions and we would lose more community members."

I really believe there are other solutions that need to be weeded through prior to throwing money at joining the two Condon Schools. I agree, something needs to happen but I don't believe this is the correct solution."