Elsmere Elementary Relocation Planning Meeting - Nov. 17, 2026

The Nov. 17, 2026 Elsmere Elementary Relocation Planning Meeting included stakeholders from Elsmere and Bethlehem Central Middle School.

- **Elsmere:** Principal Andrew Baker, teachers Joanne Sericolo and Lindsey Mooney, parents Kate McKenna, Lauren Pierce, and Lisa Decker.
- **BCMS:** Principal Mike Klugman, Asst. Principal Jackie Munro-Pettit, teachers Megan McGinniss and Tom Kearney.
- **District:** Superintendent Jody Monroe, JoEllen Gardner (Communications).

Transportation and arrival/dismissal

- **Kindergarten transportation:** The district is exploring a separate morning bus route for Elsmere kindergarten students attending Slingerlands. In the afternoon, the tentative plan is to pick up kindergarten students at Slingerlands first, then pick up the remaining Elsmere students at the middle school. This would allow siblings to travel together.
- **Preliminary bus plans:** The transportation department expects to have preliminary information by January, giving families a better understanding of schedules and pickup times.
- **Crossing guards and walkers:** The district will contact the Town of Bethlehem to discuss crossing guard coverage and pedestrian safety near the middle school, particularly for younger students crossing Delaware Avenue and Kenwood Avenue.
- **Walking and biking:** Students walking to the middle school will need clear directions to the designated entrance. The possibility of moving Elsmere's bike racks to the middle school was discussed.
- **Students who are driven to school:** For families who have to drop children at two locations (MS and Slingerlands or Eagle) for the same start time, the district will consider providing supervision in the classroom cafeteria for Grade 1-5 students dropped off early at the middle school.
- **Parking:** The middle school believes it can accommodate approximately 30–40 additional staff vehicles. However, parking needs must be coordinated with existing staff, paraprofessionals, food service employees and the Water Department. The district will review parking arrangements and communicate designated areas.

Food service

- **Breakfast:** Most Elsmere students at the MS will pick up breakfast from a designated cart and take it to their classrooms, consistent with current elementary procedures.
- Schools Out students may have the option of eating breakfast in the cafeteria.

- **Lunch:** Elsmere students will pick up lunch in the foyer area (within the Elsmere wing) and eat in a separate space, likely a middle school science classroom that will be repurposed as a cafeteria.
- Elsmere food service staff will have a designated preparation area in the middle school kitchen.
- Additional planning is needed to finalize the serving and dining arrangements.

Special education and Connections program

- The district is exploring housing the Connections program at Eagle Elementary, which appears to have sufficient space for two or three sections.
- The district is also considering whether approximately four older Connections students currently at Elsmere could attend the middle school with their Elsmere peers.
- Keeping those students with their existing peer group and providing access to related services at the middle school are important considerations.
- Staff are evaluating room availability, bathroom access and scheduling for speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy and other related services.
- A decision is still needed about whether Connections students who relocate to Eagle will return to Elsmere when the renovation is complete or remain at Eagle for consistency.

Special-area classes and library

- **Art and music:** The middle school has available spaces for Elsmere students to attend art and music classes outside of their regular classrooms. Younger students, particularly first graders, may need some specials delivered in their classrooms because of furniture limitations..
- **Physical education:** Middle school and Elsmere PE staff will review gym availability and schedules to determine how to accommodate elementary classes.
- **Library/LMC:** A dedicated section for age-appropriate library materials will be set up in the LMC for Elsmere students. Classes could used a section of LMC at certain times during the school day, depending on scheduling and activities.
- Middle school teachers will need to coordinate LMC use in advance to avoid scheduling conflicts.

Schools Out before- and after-school care

- The district is continuing discussions with Schools Out about operating at the middle school.
- The provider believes it could accommodate up to approximately 55 students.
- The cafeteria and available classroom space are being considered for program use.
- Additional planning will address how students transition between Schools Out, breakfast and the regular school day.

Packing, storage and moving

- Approximately 200 empty storage boxes have been delivered to Elsmere.
- Staff will be encouraged to begin boxing materials they no longer need and to clearly label boxes with the teacher's name and contents. Elsmere staff will establish standard labeling instructions.
- Some existing Elsmere classrooms may be available for temporary storage during construction, depending on final renovation plans.
- The district is also exploring using available middle school classrooms to receive materials as they are packed.
- A storage pod may be used to consolidate boxes before they are transported to the middle school.
- June was discussed as a potential timeframe for moving materials, although a more detailed schedule is needed. High school students could volunteer to assist, and/or middle school student leaders.
- Staff raised concerns about having access to instructional materials if the renovation runs beyond the anticipated February 2028 reopening.
- The district will work with the construction team to develop a packing and moving timeline that minimizes multiple moves and disruptions.

Recess and outdoor space

- The district's Director of Operations Nick Insognia is exploring options for providing designated outdoor recess space for Elsmere students at the middle school.
- Options include temporary or movable playground equipment that could potentially be reused at other elementary schools after Elsmere returns.
- Permanent playground structures may be more difficult because they could require additional state approvals and architectural review.
- The district is continuing to investigate appropriate equipment and space for elementary students.

Student supervision and building logistics

- The group discussed the need for additional supervision throughout the middle school during the school day.
- A hall monitor or additional staff member could help students navigate the larger building, including traveling to special-area classes, using bathrooms and visiting the nurse.
- Staff also discussed coordinating Elsmere's schedule with the middle school's bell schedule to reduce congestion in hallways during passing periods.
- The district will explore whether Elsmere could have its own morning announcements through the middle school's television studio.

Technology, communications and data systems

The district will arrange a separate meeting with the Technology Department and Operations & Maintenance to address:

- Classroom technology and equipment needs.
- PA announcements and whether announcements can be directed specifically to Elsmere classrooms.
- Bell schedules and whether bells can be managed separately.
- Radio channels and communication between staff in different parts of the building.
- Access badges and building access.
- Potential use of the middle school's television studio for Elsmere announcements.

Parent communication and building tours

- Parents expressed interest in having an opportunity to tour the middle school and see the spaces Elsmere students will use.
- The group discussed holding a tour in conjunction with the Elsmere PTA meeting scheduled for **January 12**.
- The meeting could take place in the middle school library, followed by a tour of the Elsmere wing, cafeteria, gym, library and special-area spaces.
- This would give families a chance to become familiar with the building before the relocation.

Key follow-up items and next steps

Responsible party	Follow-up
District Admins & Transportation Department	Develop preliminary kindergarten and Elsmere bus-routing plans by January.
District Admins	Meet with the Town of Bethlehem about crossing guards and pedestrian safety.
District Admins / Special Education	Finalize Connections placement plans, including related services and return-to-Elsmere considerations.

Middle school and Elsmere staff	Coordinate art, music, PE and library schedules.
District Admins/ BCMS/Food Service	Finalize breakfast, lunch and food preparation arrangements.
School's Out	Continue planning for before- and after-school care at the middle school.
District Admins/Operations & Maintenance	Develop a detailed packing, storage and moving schedule and explore recess equipment and designated outdoor space.
District Admins/BCMS	Review parking availability and identify staff parking arrangements.
District Admins/Technology Department	Schedule a separate meeting to address technology, communications, announcements and data systems.
District Admins/Elsmere PTA	Coordinate a middle school tour, potentially following the January 12 PTA meeting.

Upcoming meetings

- **December:** The next stakeholder meeting will take place after another meeting with the architects. The district expects to have additional information about the construction timeline, packing and moving logistics.
- **January 12:** Potential opportunity for an Elsmere PTA meeting and middle school tour.
- **Before the next stakeholder meeting:** The district plans to arrange a separate discussion with technology staff and other relevant district personnel on issues outlined above.