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## School restructuring plan nears announcement

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By Matt Rocheleau, Globe Correspondent

A proposal to restructure the Framingham's school system will be presented to the public next month and could include redistricting, or assigning students to schools based on where they live in town.

In a memo sent to parents and posted to the Framingham schools website Monday, superintendent Steven A. Hiersche said the plan, which will be laid out at meetings in January, are the recommendations of a subcommittee that set out to determine whether Framingham can, "gain educational and financial advantages by shifting the way students are assigned to schools."

The subcommittee was formed to continue the work of the District Planning and Review Task Force, which released a 109-page report after a year-long study on restructuring, including a heavy focus on redistricting, in February.

"After reviewing all of the different options and possibilities, the reorganization subcommittee is coming together around a proposal. We are working on many of the details of the plan ... There is a growing amount of speculation and conjecture about the plan. However, at this point, it has not been possible to discuss many of the obvious questions that will be asked," Hiersche said in the memo.

Restructuring or reorganizing, which is how the proposal has been described, could involve redistricting, but the two terms also include many other potential changes such as to the type of programs offered or transportation services.

Currently, Framingham families send their children to the elementary school of their choice.

At Tuesday's school committee meeting, a timeline for announcing the recommendations publicly was determined, but otherwise the plan was not discussed.

- On Jan. 5, the superintendent will brief the school committee on the proposal at their regular meeting. But, the meeting will be held at the high school, instead of at the George P. King Building.
- On Jan. 6 and 7 the superintendent will brief staff.
- On Jan. 11 and 14 there will be public forums held to discuss the proposals. The Jan. 11 meeting at the Fuller Middle School cafeteria and the Jan. 14 meeting will be at the high school auditorium. Both meetings start at 7 p.m.

"There are two goals of the forums: to give concrete information about proposals and to get parent and community feedback about various options. Nothing will be voted on in January, as the district will need to take the feedback and see how proposals can be adjusted," said school committee chair Adam Blumer in an e-mail to the Frambors community list serve, <http://frambors.syslang.net>, Wednesday evening.

"[Communication] is particularly important with such a potentially

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[Communication] is particularly important when such a potentially complicated issue. The committee is trying to make sure people have as easy access to this information as possible," said Blumer in the e-mail.

"Personally, I noted [at the school committee meeting] that I felt the process of giving a timeline, but without content, was a bit of 'pick your poison,'" he added. "We didn't want to get parents stressed by announcing the timeline without the content and risk imaginations run wild ... on the other hand, we realized that life picks up rapidly after the break, and we wanted parents have advanced notice of these dates to throw them on calendars so that they won't miss important information."

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