

Elementary Reconfiguration Teacher Survey Results

We met with all district staff on Friday, February 1st to provide an overview of the proposed Elementary Reconfiguration Plan. During this presentation we identified the rationale for the proposal and solicited teacher feedback by culminating with a teacher questionnaire that was completed by elementary staff in groups. The feedback provided by the staff is summarized below. Additionally, administration feedback is provided as appropriate.

Staff Identified Program Benefits to Reconfiguration:

- Easier staff collaboration between grade levels/ subject area teachers (3-6 ELA/Math)
- Greater collaboration between Specials...cross curricular opportunities
- More balanced class sizes
- Easier transition when together since Kindergarten
- Collaboration between some age groups increases
- Better age tailored school events, assemblies
- Programming appropriate for grade levels...greater opportunity for grade-level-targeted special guests or programs
- High School blowouts without bussing (Winter Wonderland all bussing)
- Students will know each other outside of their youth sports
- Special education students would attend their neighborhood schools
- Greater chance for all students to interact with all types of special education students
- Special education students could be dispersed into general education classes at a lower ratio

Staff Identified Logistics Benefits to Reconfiguration:

- Change in start/end times
- Better age group bussing
- Bussing will now be available for Mayfield Borough
- Consolidation of supplies

Administration Feedback:

These are all great points for the benefits of reconfiguration. Programming appropriate to grade levels will greatly benefit our students. It will also be beneficial to administrators because their scope of supervision will be narrowed to 3-4 grade levels as opposed to the current 7 grade levels. Five sections of a grade in the same building will likely result in smaller, more balanced class sizes. Smaller student ratios will benefit all students, and having all students of a grade level in the same building will make it easier for staff to group students with similar needs and provide differentiated instruction. Having all students attend their neighborhood schools, including our special education students, results in equity for all. Narrowed age span bussing will likely result in fewer bus related discipline issues. Providing an opportunity for students to interact with their same age peers both in school and outside activities will likely result in lifelong friendships being formed. Altering our start and end times may provide us with an opportunity to more closely align with the recommendations provided by the American Pediatric Association for all students.

Staff Identified Program Concerns to Reconfiguration:

- Transitions for students (2 versus 1)
- Peer tutoring/mentors 3-6 for K-1
- One counselor being responsible for all PSSA testing 3-6
- Title I impact- funding and programming
- Teaching Shuffling- Students losing out on quality education from knowledgeable teachers to those filling in for just a year
- Losing departmentalization
- Special schedule- student overload
- Will common planning be possible
- A need for more special education staff (aides) to allow students to be included
- Teacher awareness and use of modifications/accommodations for students in varied programs, ie Life Skills

Staff Identified Logistics Concerns to Reconfiguration:

- Cost of bussing
- Kids on bus too long
- Taxes going up
- Start and end times
- Space availability: classrooms, bathrooms, storage, lunch, etc
- Lack of bathrooms/sinks for Kindergarten
- Redistribution of materials: art supplies, musical instruments, P.E. equipment, library books being sorted and catalogued

Administration Feedback:

Adding an additional transition for students in terms of a location change is a reality of reconfiguration. Because students will already know each other, being provided the same experiences in terms of programming and behavioral expectations, we feel these changes will be less impactful than the current reality where students change their location, peer group, programming and behavioral expectations all at once. The Association for Middle Level Education states that many middle school transition programs fail because they ignore student social concerns at a time when many students are undergoing physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and moral changes (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006; Eccles & Wigfield, 1997; Jackson & Davis, 2000; Schexnaildre, 2012; U.S. Department of Education, 2008). In our current model, rising 7th graders are not only merging with new peers in their grade level, but new peers in a 7-12 setting. Having all of these students together on one campus since kindergarten will greatly reduce the social transition anxiety for many students. Peer tutoring/ student mentors are great. In the new proposed configuration, 2nd graders can serve as mentors for primary students, 5th and 6th graders can serve as mentors for our 3rd graders, and proximity to the junior-senior high school can allow opportunities for upperclassmen to serve as mentors for our 5th and 6th graders. This can actually strengthen the student mentoring opportunities for all. One counselor being responsible for all of the PSSAs is a valid point, and we one that will be planned for. We are adding this to the list of things to consider to ensure a smooth transition that we asked you to identify, and will address possible solutions later in this document. We contacted Don McCrone regarding Title I. Funding allocations will not be impacted. As a result of the reconfiguration, both Mayfield and Scott Campuses will be Title I eligible. It will be up to the district to decide which buildings are identified and how supports are allocated based on student need. Teacher shuffling and

maintaining departmentalization is a priority of ours as well. The current 3rd grade class at Scott campus only has two sections which will make departmentalization in 4th grade next year difficult to plan for in our current structure. Increasing the number of students at each grade level in one building will result in more consistent class sizes at each grade resulting in more consistent programming, including departmentalization. Common planning time is again a priority for administration as much as it is for teachers. Some good suggestions in terms of common planning by subject area in addition to grade level teams have been suggested. These opportunities will be considered, planned for, and reviewed with staff to determine optimal common plan configurations.

Providing the Least Restrictive Environment for students is a requirement per IDEA. Student placement decisions are decided through the IEP process and identification of student needs. All teachers are highly qualified and professionally certificated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. They are bound by state and Federal IDEA laws to make required modifications/accommodations listed in each student's IEP regardless of what building they teach in. Additional training will be provided to teachers in need. This is a professional requirement, not a choice.

Staff identified Building and Technological Concerns

- Update in technological readiness of Mayfield Campus to a comparable level as the Scott Building. Technology is outdated, need more., white boards, - we need promethean boards, smartboards and chromebooks for reading. Technology - to carry out expectations of the curriculum. Need equal amount of technology per teacher and per building.
- Roof, Bathrooms and ceiling repairs, along with structural and health concerns at Mayfield.
- Furniture/equipment at Mayfield is 30 years old and most needs to be replaced.
- Space for extra services is needed.
- Need for bathrooms and sinks in Kindergartens at Mayfield building without making rooms smaller.
- Lack of playground room in Mayfield.
- Classrooms are set up in 4's not 5's. (lack of collaboration)
- Most beneficial would be to move all students to Scott Campus (with additional or new structure). This would best create unity in district.

Administration Feedback:

The Lakeland School District purchased 300 chromebooks during the fall of 2018, 180 went to the Jr/Sr High School, 60 went to Scott Campus and 60 went to the Mayfield Campus. Should the reconfiguration plan be approved, additional grade level incorporation of technology will be considered by grade level for all 3 buildings. The Mayfield Building is in need of some maintenance updates and renovations. Any current maintenance issues/concerns will need to be addressed, including improvements to the playground, regardless of whether we re-configure or not. There was a concern about the ceiling in one second floor classroom at Mayfield, however, our Engineers checked on this issue and have declared the ceiling/roof to be structurally sound. The LSD is currently waiting for the estimate to add two bathrooms to two classrooms at Mayfield for Kindergarten classes that will have minimal impact on the size of the classroom. Any outdated and/or unuseable furniture will have to be replaced and/or repaired, regardless of whether we re-configure or not. There will be more than enough room for each class, including special education, art, music and conference rooms in each building.

Staff Identified Considerations to ensure a smooth transition:

- Adequate time to transition/move/prepare/plan
- Bus schedule in advance
- Supports for Counselor charged with overseeing all PSSA administration
- In-Service days at the start of the year, free to set-up and move classrooms
- Time, after the decision is made to work out logistical details
- Making sure technology that has been purchased with Special Education funds goes with Special Education Classrooms
- Giving faculty, parents, and students the opportunity to spend time getting used to the new building set up.
- Very detailed plans/ schedule/ lunch schedules/common planning time
- Staggered schedule to accommodate parents who have children in different buildings
- Plan for how staff will be moved
- Need IT support for cataloguing library
- A mock schedule would be beneficial to generate additional questions/concerns including proposed lunch/recess/I/E, specials time

Administration Feedback:

Bus schedules will be drafted ahead of time, and dry runs will be conducted. Bus plans/routes will be revised as needed to make sure the most optimal plan for all is created. Administrators are also scheduled to ride current buses to identify the time span between the first child being picked up, and/or dropped off and the last student. The current times will be utilized as a lens to discuss and review proposed routes. Mock schedules for instruction, lunches, common planning times, etc will be drafted and reviewed with staff for feedback, just as they are now. These schedules will be created to maintain the teacher and district identified priorities of common planning time and maintaining departmentalization to the maximum extent possible, just as they are now. For PSSA testing, a plan of support will be developed with the counseling team. This will include supports from the counselor at the K-2 campus, building principal at the 3-6 campus, and the curriculum director. The district will provide tech support to ensure the re-cataloging of library books goes smoothly and efficiently. Our LSD maintenance staff will be responsible for the bulk of the moving of desks, equipments, and supplies. Teachers will be given time to box up and mark their boxes for the maintenance staff to move their equipment to their new buildings and/or classrooms. Administration is working to identify solutions to allow this time, and has already identified one possible solution by moving a currently scheduled in-service day to the end of the school year to allow for this time. There will be open houses scheduled so that students and parents have plenty of time to tour the schools prior to the start of the new school year.

Other Staff Comments:

- Collaboration opportunities among grade level staff. Will collaboration actually happen?
- Mayfield only has one way in and out. More busses would be a problem
- We as a team talk frequently. We collaborate by phone and email. We talk to each other.

- What are the Board's reasoning for why they are so passionate about this?
- Our district borders are bigger than other schools so comparing ours to theirs doesn't really make sense when reconfiguring
- We already have the same programs
- If you want us together make us one building
- Current Curriculum programs are working- let them be
- Some people are thinking we have two different curriculums. We DO NOT, and if two different programs are being taught, isn't that the responsibility of the Curriculum Director to fix?
- New curriculum was bought- departmentalized in many grades. Can't we give this time to see if those changes have a positive effect before we make more changes?

Administration Feedback:

Collaboration does currently happen between buildings both through district scheduled events and individual teacher choice. The format and frequency of individual teacher communication varies by team and individuals. Yes, both elementary schools do have the same programs/ curriculums. The idea that the schools do not is a misconception that has been shared by some people in the community. While it is true that at one time, both buildings were utilizing different programs and materials, this is no longer the case. Curriculum committees have been formed to identify needs at each building and common programs have been adopted at all grades. Teacher craft (delivery of instruction) will differ from classroom to classroom and grade to grade, but this is the case regardless of school configurations. It is actually these differences, not the curriculum materials, that is one of the reasons we believe the reconfiguration to be beneficial. Creating a structure that allows for all of our teachers who share a common grade level or subject goal to work in the same building and talk and plan together on a daily basis will result in stronger teacher practice and better experiences for students because teachers will share their differing strengths. It will be substantially easier for grade level and subject area teachers to collaborate when they are in the same building, rather than being 5 miles apart. The LSD is looking at the costs associated with putting an addition onto the Scott Campus to house all K-6 students in the district. We are waiting for our Engineers to get back to us with the cost estimates and then we will figure out what the impact would be on our local taxpayers.