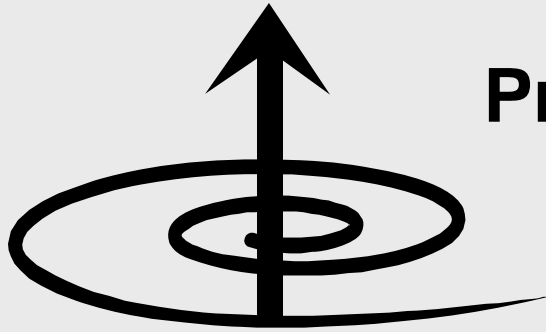


January 25, 2010

# Preliminary Report on Lawrence Public Schools

## Goal 2.1



**Board Goal 2.1** Investigate reconfiguration of schools and schedules to maximize learning opportunities and efficient use of facilities.

Examine models for reconfiguration and specifically investigate all the issues (academic, social, facility, personnel, extra curricular) surrounding the possible movement of 9th graders to the high schools and 6th graders to middle level schools.

# Current LPS School/Grade Configuration

Level	Grades	Number of Schools
Early Childhood	Early Childhood	1
Elementary	K – 6	15
Junior High	7 – 9	4
High School	10 - 12	2
Charter: Virtual School	K - 8	1

# Current Elementary School Enrollment

12-18-2009 (excluding LVS)

Grade Level	Student Enrollment
<i>Early Childhood</i>	195
Kindergarten	756
First Grade	778
Second Grade	748
Third Grade	777
Fourth Grade	693
Fifth Grade	732
Sixth Grade	673
Co-Enrolled	20
<b>Total K - 6</b>	<b>5,177</b>

# Estimated Elementary School Capacity

**Eight 2-section schools:** Broken Arrow, Cordley, Hillcrest, New York, Pinckney, Sunset Hill, Wakarusa Valley, Woodlawn

**Seven 3-section schools:** Deerfield, Kennedy, Langston Hughes, Prairie Park, Quail Run, Schwegler, Sunflower

<b><u>Low Capacity</u></b>	<b><u>High Capacity</u></b>
K – 3rd @ 22 4th – 6th @ 27	K – 3rd @ 26 4th – 6th @ 31
<b>Total = 6,253</b>	<b>Total = 7,289</b>

**Current unused Elementary capacity between 1,076 – 2,112 students**

# Current Junior High School Enrollment

12-18-2009 (excluding LVS)

Grade Level	Student Enrollment
Seventh Grade	719
Eighth Grade	762
Ninth Grade	752
<b>Total 7 - 9</b>	<b>2,233</b>

# Estimated Junior High School Capacity

	Capacity based on 2005 renovation/construction
Central JH	600
South JH	700
Southwest JH	700
West JH	700
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,700</b>

**Current unused Junior High capacity 467 students**

## Current High School School Enrollment

Grade Level		Student Enrollment
Tenth Grade		792
Eleventh Grade		728
Twelfth Grade		764
<b>Total 10 - 12</b>		<b>2,284</b>

# Estimated High School Capacity

	All classrooms in use each period at 75% capacity
Free State HS	1,865
Lawrence HS	1,916
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,781</b>

**Current unused High School capacity 1,497 students**

# Examples of Other KS Districts' School Configurations

## Dodge City USD 443

Elementary Schools K-4  
Intermediate Centers 5-6  
Middle Schools 7-8  
High School 9-12

## Emporia USD 253

Elementary Schools K-4  
5th Grade Center 5  
6th Grade Center 6  
Middle Schools 7-8  
High School 9-12

## Shawnee Mission USD

Elementary Schools K-6  
Middle Schools 7-8  
High Schools 9-12

## Wichita USD 259

Elementary Schools K-5  
Middle Schools 6-8  
High Schools 9-12

# Fewer Transitions is Better

- In general, children fare better with fewer school-to-school transitions.
- Reducing the number of school-to-school transitions has a positive impact on student achievement. (Wren 2003)

# High School Level

- Researchers report fewer drop-outs as the initial grade level in the high school setting is lowered (Alspaugh, 1999).
- Kansas curriculum standards, state assessments, funding and graduation requirements are all based on a four-year high school model.
- N.C.L.B. licensure requirements for highly qualified teachers require 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers to hold high school qualifications.

# Junior / Middle School Level

- At the middle level, Felner (1997) found that student achievement increases proportionately to the number of middle level “best practices” used within a school.
- The organization of the middle school (commonly the grades 6-8) is based on a philosophy of education that is specifically designed to meet the special needs of a preadolescent learner
- Middle schools should incorporate unique curricula to better effect the transition between elementary and high school programs, rather than attempt to approximate one or the other.

- Developmental needs of young adolescents differ from those of elementary school children and older teenagers. (Howley, 2002)
- “Developmentally responsive middle schools must take into account all that is known about young adolescents and the cultural context in which they live.” (Lounsbury, 1996)
- What a middle level school is called or how the grades are configured is not as important as the programs, practices and relationships found within the grades that house the students.

Preliminary Input from LPS  
Administrators, Teachers, Staff,  
Site Council Parents & Students

- Benefits
- Concerns
- Questions
- Facilities Implications
- Key Participants in Design & Planning

## **Benefits: Moving 9th grade to HS**

- Better alignment of 4-year high school curriculum, courses, state standards state program requirements & assessments.
- Increased understanding by ninth grade students that the ninth grade course grades are part of their high school transcript and G.P.A.
- Greater access accelerated, advanced and support courses for ninth grade students
- Access to greater breadth of elective courses for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students
- Access to greater breadth of career education courses and pathways.
- Increased opportunity to intervene with struggling students early in high school career. More options to recover any failed credits/courses.

- Better access to transition planning, functional curriculum and post-secondary programming for students with disabilities.
- Access to high school guidance counseling & college planning
- Ninth grade students could participate in “opportunity to learn” state assessments. This is not allowed for ninth graders in junior high school settings.
- Access to co-curricular activities typically available to 9th – 12th grade high school students in larger districts (e.g. debate, forensics, fine arts)
- Greater student access to a variety of instructional tools and settings (labs, art studios, swimming pools, equipment, greenhouses, etc.)
- Activity and athletic opportunities for students commensurate with most other area school districts. Ninth grade participating in high school athletics is also more cost effective. Upper class students will have increased preparation and experience in high school level competition.

- Enhanced collaboration among high school faculty, within and between departments. May reduce travel for itinerant staff.
- More cost-effective educational programs by reducing duplication of courses & programs at 9th grade (in junior high) & high schools.
- Increased access to Career & Technical Education funding when ninth grade is located in the high school setting
- More cost-effective compliance with No Child Left Behind requirements that ninth grade teachers have deeper content depth and meet “highly qualified” regulations.
- Less confusion for other districts, colleges and universities receiving our high school transcripts.
- Moving high school freshmen out of the junior high schools allows much more flexibility to design effective middle level schools to meet the social, emotional and academic needs of young adolescent students.

## **Benefits: Moving 6th grade to MS**

- Better alignment with current curriculum standards and instruction materials (6th – 8th configuration is common nationally and in published curriculum materials)
- Greater access to advanced, accelerated & support courses.
- Greater access to exploratory courses & clubs
- Greater student access to a variety of instructional tools & settings (science & technology labs, equipment, etc.)
- More time & more cost-effective delivery of instrumental music programs.
- More time in physical education.

- Greater breadth of exploratory classes in a middle level school (e.g. foreign language, technology, career explorations).
- Increased opportunity to participate in academic competitions, athletics, clubs, & leadership activities.
- Opportunity to consider middle school programming (e.g. instructional teams, exploratory classes, smaller learning communities, integrated thematic instruction) to address developmental needs of adolescent learners.
- More flexibility in teaming schedules. May reduce class preparations for teachers. Reduced travel time for itinerant teachers with high school programs at the high school level.
- More cost-effective compliance with No Child Left Behind requirements without having to maintain staff qualified for both high school and middle level education, as we must in our current Grades 7 – 9 model.

# Concerns: Moving 6<sup>th</sup> &/or 9<sup>th</sup> Graders

- Younger students mixing with older students.
- Potential for increased discipline issues with 6<sup>th</sup> graders in middle vs. elementary schools.
- Loss of leadership opportunities as the oldest students at the elementary school or junior high school (transition year only)
- Potential of being “lost” in a larger student body
- 9th graders who currently compete at middle level events in music and athletics may have fewer opportunities in a high school setting.
- Need for additional vocal and instrumental music uniforms
- Possibility of freshmen having access to open lunch.
- Increased traffic at high schools

# Facility Implications

## High Schools

- Space is currently available at each high school to move 9<sup>th</sup> graders
- Common spaces
- Specialized instructional spaces
- Office / planning spaces

# Facilities Implications

## Middle / Junior High Schools

- Space would be available to move 6<sup>th</sup> graders if 9<sup>th</sup> graders are moved to HS
- If 9<sup>th</sup> graders are moved, without moving 6<sup>th</sup> graders, unused junior high capacity would increase by between 752 (current 9<sup>th</sup> grade enrollment) and 900 students.

# Facilities Implications

## Elementary Schools

- Moving 6th grade to the middle level schools will create additional unused capacity between 673 (current enrollment) and 1,116 students.
- Could be addressed through boundary changes, closures, elimination of portables, addition of programs such as full-day kindergarten or early childhood

# Next Steps...

- High School Educational Programming
- Middle Level Educational Programming
- Elementary Educational Programming
- Extra and Co-Curricular Activities
- Student/Parent Preparation & Transitions
- Staff Preparation and Professional Development
- Human Resources (staffing, licensure and transitions)
- Facilities, Boundaries and Transportation
- Communications

- Administrators have begun gathering information from other districts and studying key literature and research to begin the design and planning process.
- Teachers, staff, parents, community members & students need to be involved:
  - Sharing sessions
  - Review and feedback sessions
  - Transition meetings
  - Articles in newsletters and media
  - Submit comments to district web site

Paglin and Fager (1997) concluded that designing a school system to use a particular span of grades in individual schools will not in itself guarantee that students will learn well and be well adjusted.

We recommend allowing a planning year for the design, transition and implementation of effective, quality practices for middle level and four-year high schools.