



How do you expect big “middle schoolers” to fit in little “elementary” buildings/classrooms?

This is a question that comes up a lot--and is the exact question that was asked by our Board of Education. In measuring the current classroom spaces for our 7th and 8th graders and then measuring classroom spaces at Herrick Park and Patterson, there really isn't a difference in the classroom sizes. In fact, the future science rooms for our 7th and 8th graders will be larger than what they currently use in the middle school. Since the new 7th and 8th grade buildings will be schools that will focus on project based learning in the areas of science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics, there will be shared or common spaces throughout the building. The actual time spent in one classroom space will be much less than what currently happens in our configuration.

Were teachers asked for their input in this reconfiguration process?

Yes they were! They have been an invaluable piece to this process. The initial survey was broken up into two different links--one for staff and one for parents/community members. When we reviewed the survey results, the priorities for the staff and the priorities for the parents/community were the same. That is a really good sign in that we are all on the same page and are clear on the vision and mission of our district! Our teachers will continue to be part of this process through committee work as well as professional learning throughout the school year.

How will the Encore classes work?

At the 7th and 8th grade levels, Encore classes are the courses that support the core. These include physical education, health, life skills, band, orchestra, choir and enrichment or support classes for math. While we do not have a specific schedule set up at this time (we will work with a committee on this during the 2016-17 school year), we do know that some of these courses will be offered either at the current middle school or current high school. We will look to have 7th and 8th grade students take these courses either at the start of the school day, or at the end of the school day to reduce transportation time. The district will provide transportation for the students to and from either the middle school or high school, depending on the building holding the course. There are districts in the area who do this already, so we will be contacting them to learn more about the process.

How will middle school sports be handled for the two 7th and 8th grade buildings?

We will be combining our 7th and 8th grade students to have one sports program. There will not be one building vs. another building. All practices will take place in the current middle school facility and transportation will be provided after school for students who need to attend practices/games.



Will students be involved in this process?

Absolutely! There have been initial meetings with students who will be the first classes in our 7th and 8th grade buildings. We are committed to gathering student input and students will play a key role when we begin to look at how the buildings will be structured as well as when we discuss project based learning opportunities.

Have you really thought about other possible configurations?

We have. The district has been working since September gathering feedback from staff, parents and the community on the priorities of any configuration. We have looked at student enrollment projections over the next 6 years and have identified the configuration that puts all of our buildings, with the exception of the high school which is a bit lower, at around 75-85% capacity. This gives the district room to grow without asking the taxpayers to pass a bond for new construction.

Why don't we just build a new building?

That is an excellent question. The district, throughout this school year, has been working with a steering committee consisting of community members, parents, and staff members. We have discussed this question several times, and, at this time, the thought is that we need to look at ways to use our existing buildings since we do have additional space before we would request taxpayers to pass a bond. The reconfiguration plan that will be implemented in the 2017-18 school year allows "room to grow" in each of the 6 buildings. When looking at all of our options, it was determined that we work through this reorganization process as a way not only to utilize building capacity but also improve programming options for our students.

What are the next steps?

All of the feedback that has been gathered these past few months will be shared with the Board of Education. We will review the comments, questions and concerns and see if there are areas of the proposed plan that we would want to adjust. Please know that the Board has spent many months researching and reviewing data and feedback regarding the district reorganization and will make the best decision based on improved programming for all of our students.

How can I get involved?

We would love to have you serve on one of our Reorganization Committees. You can sign up for a committee of your choice by using the form below. If you have problems accessing the form, please contact us at 517.424.7318 and we will be happy to sign you up for a committee.