

Elementary Redistricting Committee

Nov. 1, 2011 Meeting Summary

Thirty-two parents, teachers, administrators and school board members met on Nov. 1st to continue the work of the Elementary Redistricting Committee.

The charge of the committee is to:

- Review current and projected enrollment trends as well as classroom space available in each elementary school
- Consider the various elementary grade configurations that could work with our enrollment numbers and available physical space
- Review the pros / cons of various configurations to best support our educational programs
- Present our findings to the Board of School Directors along with recommended attendance boundary adjustments needed for each configuration

During this meeting the committee received answers to some of the questions posed at the Oct. 18 meeting (see Nov. 1 PowerPoint Presentation to Committee). The committee discussed the pros and cons of the current K - 5 configuration (see table below). Following this discussion, the committee received information regarding the potential educational benefits of moving to a K-2 and 3-5 configuration (see Nov. 1 PowerPoint Presentation to Committee).

Following the presentation by administration the committee was asked to generate a list of questions that they had as well as identify additional information that would be needed at future meetings.

Questions:

- Is there data that shows that we will provide a better education and increase our test scores in a centers-type school?
- Can a member of a neighboring school district with a centers-type school talk to us about how their center works and results?
- What is the primary focus of the District- Save money? Increase scores and rigor? Balance population?
- What is the projected kindergarten enrollment?
- When will the decision be made? Will it be made before budget decisions need to be made?
- When will teachers be notified of this change? Will they have time to work together to learn the new system?

- When would families be notified if they would be moving to a different building? Would they have an opportunity to visit while school is in session (not just in summer)?
- Will Ringing Rocks teachers be told if they need to move again?
- Is the administration and board leaning towards moving to centers?
- How will the three schools come together to select classrooms?
- Are the four Plus/Delta categories weighted the same? If not, please share the weighting distribution.
- Is implementing a K-2 and 3-5 configuration the only way we can institute full day kindergarten?
- How will K-2 Centers at Rocks and West correct the population issues/enrollment for lower grades already in existence?
- Does it make sense to transition Pottsgrove into Centers if the predicted growth of elementary enrollment over the next 10 years is only 100 students?
- Will parents in the district be notified of the dates of the vote by the board regarding this matter?
- How will Pottsgrove be affected in terms of funding with K-2 Centers?
- How many children currently participate in band and strings?
- Is looping also being considered for Centers?
- How would Kid Writing be impacted at a K-2 Center? Who would be available to help?
- How would distribution of K-2 staff be handled when going to a Center model?
- What would you do about safeties monitoring the younger children?
- Do special education bus costs bringing students back outweigh bussing needed to the Centers configuration?
- Where is the con presentation for Centers?
- Won't the transition from 2nd to 3rd be as much of a challenge as 5th to 6th?
- Is the charge of the committee to discuss/analyze possible line changes if the decision is made to keep the current configuration?
- Is there research out there that shows the positive impact of full day kindergarten leveling off around 3rd grade?
- Where and how would geographic lines be drawn between two potential K-2 Centers?
- What are the estimated costs of signage and school name changing?
- How will the schedule work in the 3-5 Center?
- What will the demographics of the K-2 buildings be and how will they compare?

Additional Information Needed:

- We need to see if the current enrollment can actually fit into the three schools in a centers configuration.
- How will the overflow in the 3-5 Center be handled?
- Survey of parents on their preference.
- Research-based “pros” for both considerations. What are/were the resources?
- Numerical examples to provide the group more concrete, understandable arguments for the centers configuration.
- Ballpark numbers for all of the “pros” presented under the budgeting impact for the K-2 & 3-5 Centers.

Table of Pros and Cons of the Current K-5 Elementary Configuration

Current Configuration	PLUS (pro)	Delta (con)
Family Impact	<p>Comfort level with known configuration</p> <p>Keeps siblings together</p> <p>Neighborhood school</p> <p>After-school care transitioning</p> <p>Bus travel time remains as is</p> <p>No change in PTO structure</p> <p>Family history at school</p> <p>Familiarity with instructional staff and school policies</p>	
Instructional Impact	<p>Smaller teacher teams makes collaboration easier to facilitate</p> <p>Greater opportunities to “connect” with students in a “neighborhood” school</p> <p>Access to a variety of grade level materials</p> <p>Older “buddies” for tutoring</p>	<p>Disparity in class size across buildings</p> <p>Loss of instructional time for district-wide curriculum initiatives (need to use substitutes since same grade teachers in 3 different buildings)</p> <p>Instruction may not be as consistent</p>
Budgetary Impact	<p>No increase in transportation costs</p>	<p>Inefficient use of professional and support staff</p> <p>Unequal resources distribution, e.g., band equipment</p>
Behavior / Emotional Impact	<p>Older “buddies” working with younger students</p> <p>Safety Patrol program in each building</p> <p>School Pride</p> <p>Students have a level of comfort and familiarity with school</p>	<p>Older kids can be a negative influence on younger kids</p>