

# Grade Configuration Committee

## G.C. Status Report to Board of Education

### May 27, 2014

The District Grade Configuration Committee reconvened this year to evaluate the effectiveness of and gather stakeholder feedback on the move of sixth grade from the Intermediate School to the Junior High. Additionally, we wanted to acquire data about increased instructional time as a result of the change from three to two bus dismissal times that accompanied the reconfiguration.

To gather this feedback, we identified the following groups to survey: current sixth grade students; grade 5-8 teachers, grade K-4 teachers; special area teachers affected by the move, parents of current sixth grade students; and cafeteria and transportation staff affected by the change.

Below, please find the survey results and a summary of responses generated from the comment section after each question whenever particular trends emerged.

#### **Grade Six Students...113 responders**

##### **Do you feel students have benefited from this change?**

Yes: 92 (81%)

No: 21 (19%)

##### **Yes because:**

-like the responsibility and freedom of being in the JH (lockers, walking in hallways without teacher, staying 10th or not)

-like the schedule- switching every 40 minutes and having all the subjects' everyday- different teachers and students in classes- have a study hall

##### **No because:**

-for some students it can be hard to fit in with the 7th and 8th graders

##### **Do you think you're able to learn more easily as a student in the JH?**

Yes: 88 (79%)

No: 23 (21%)

**Yes because:**

- having a set routine/schedule everyday makes it easier to learn
- moving around between classes every 40 minutes gives your brain a break
- equal amounts of time for every class make it possible to learn more information each day
- there is the option to stay for extra help during 10th if you need it

**No because:**

- the clocks and bells make it harder to focus at the end of each class period

**Would you have been more comfortable spending your 6th grade year as a part of the Intermediate School?**

Yes: 28 (25%)

No: 84 (75%)

**Yes because:**

- in the Intermediate you get recess and more time for fun activities
- you don't have to worry about switching classes on time and remembering all of your supplies from your locker

**No because:**

- you don't have the bell schedule and equal amounts of time for each class
- you don't get to switch classes or teachers
- you don't get to have 10th period

**Has the new bus system affected you positively, negatively, or not at all?**

Positively: 43 (36%)

Negatively: 19 (16%)

Not at all: 58 (48%)

**Positively because:**

-only one dismissal- no 1st, 2nd, 3rd bussers

-not as crowded as the Intermediate bus

-parents are home in the morning when the bus comes so no need to go to before school program

**Negatively because:**

-10th period bus doesn't go to their house- takes too long

-hard to fit in with the older kids on the bus

**Grade 5-8 Teacher Questions...35 responders**

**Do you feel that bringing 6th graders over to the Junior High has benefited the students?**

Yes: 26 (74%)

No: 9 (26%)

**Because of the reconfiguration, (adding 6th grade to the Junior High and the new bus schedule) have you experienced increased student contact time?**

No increase: 20 (59%)

Some increase: 10 (29%)

Significant increase (12%)

**Because of the reconfiguration, (adding 6th grade to the Junior High and the new bus schedule) have you experienced a change in responsibility and/or workload?**

No increase: 23 (68%)

Some increase: 10 (29%)

Significant increase: 1 (3%)

**Because of the reconfiguration, (adding 6th grade to the Junior High and the new bus schedule) have you been able to work with colleagues to coordinate educational activities between different grade levels?**

No coordination: 19 (56%)

Some coordination: 12 (35%)

Significant coordination: 3 (9%)

**Have you observed the interaction among 6th, 7th and 8th graders to be...**

Positive: 11 (32%)

Negative: 0 (0%)

Both: 9 (26%)

No change: 14 (41%)

## **Grade K-4 Teacher Questions...30 responders**

**Because of the reconfiguration, (adding 6th grade to the Junior High and the new bus schedule) have you experienced increased student contact time?**

No increase: 12 (40%)

Some increase: 16 (53%)

Significant increase: 2 (7%)

**How much instructional time per day? Please comment**

The range varied from as little as 10 minutes to as much as 40 minutes per day. Some of the responders did not consider RtI time to be instructional time so their responses reflected little or no increase in instructional time. A thirty minute block of instructional time for RtI was added as a result of the dismissal adjustment.

**Because of the reconfiguration, (adding 6th grade to the Junior High and the new bus schedule) have you been able to work with colleagues to coordinate educational activities between different grade levels?**

No coordination: 25 (83%)

Some coordination: 5 (17%)

Significant coordination: 0 (0%)

## **Special Area Questions...17 responders**

**Do you feel students have benefited from this change?**

Yes: 13 (68%)

No: 6 (32%)

**In what ways has the addition of the 6th grade to the Junior High had an impact on your academic or extra-curricular program?**

Positive: 4 (22%)

Negative: 8 (44%)

No Impact: 6 (33%)

**Has the change made class scheduling easier or more difficult (school delays, testing, assemblies)?**

One response that has made us take note and consider alternatives is the fact that tenth period was shortened by eight minutes to accommodate the additional minute being put into periods one through nine at the Junior High. We are discussing alternatives to address this concern.

**How has your work load changed this year because of the move of the 6th grade (grading, class size, contact time)?**

The most noteworthy response to this question came from a variety of special area teachers. The increase workload on the guidance department was highlighted by multiple responders. The additional scheduling, counseling needs, and parental contact that is necessary certainly has been problematic. We are discussing alternatives to address this very real concern. One decision that has already been made is to further develop our relationship with Family Counseling Services to increase counseling support from two to three days during the school day in the Junior High.

## **Parents of Current Sixth Graders Questions...38 responders**

**Has it been a positive transition for your child from 5th grade to 6th grade?**

Yes: 31 (82%)

No: 7 (18%)

**Were you able to attend the 6th grade orientation last spring for students and parents entering 6th grade?**

Yes: 30 (78%)

No: 8 (22%)

**Have you felt you received good communication from the school through the transition? (bussing issues, extra-curricular activities, child's schedule, etc.)**

Yes: 34 (85%)

No: 6 (15%)

## **Cafeteria and Transportation Questions...17 responders**

**Do you feel students have benefited from this change?**

Yes: 12 (71%)

No: 5 (29%)

**Were there major changes in your department to accommodate the change in configuration and/or dismissal times?**

Yes: 2 (12%)

No: 15 (88%)

**Have there been significant changes in your area of supervision?**

Yes: 4 (23%)

No: 13 (77%)