

Moscow School District Configuration Panel Presentation

February 10, 2011

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At the beginning of the 2010-11 school year, I announced to our district staff and parent support groups that the administration would begin the large project of determining the feasibility of a configuration shift in the Moscow School District. Their task was to develop answers to the barriers of any type of shift and also to identify and define the benefits to the students of the Moscow School District. My task was to gather information, listen to their concerns, and make a preliminary recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

- It has been proven that the curricular and academic needs of our students are designed to fit into a 9-12 high school model. Our middle level students are now facing a conflicted instructional model that requires middle level credits and high school transcribed credits in one building.
- As we have seen first-hand during our facilities tours this fall, some of our elementary schools are overcrowded with teachers serving students in areas not designed for instruction. Students are placed in hallways, doorways, and other locations that are not appropriate.
- The results of the study show that we could move from our current configuration to a 6-8 and 9-12 configuration. I recommended to the trustees in December that any configuration adjustments directed by the Board of Trustees take place at the beginning of the 2012-13 school year to give time for staffing and classrooms to be adjusted in a dignified and respectful manner.
- Many staff members, parents, and patrons have already provided very valuable input over the past several months that was crucial to the initial Configuration Feasibility Study. Input included questions, comments, and concerns have begun to be addressed. A complete list of "*Frequently Asked Questions*" is now posted to the MSD website along with important timelines and other related information.

Public Configuration Presentations

Two community panel presentations were held on February 10 at the MHS Auditorium that marked the beginning of multiple planning opportunities. Administrators will continue to meet with all of the stakeholders to gather additional input, ideas, and expertise as we move through this process. At the end of the planning process, I will make a recommendation to the Trustees. If the recommendation is to move forward, and the trustees resolve to do so, a district-wide planning effort will move into high gear, with teacher, administrator, and parent teams working together to form the best educational model possible for the students, teachers, families, and patrons of the Moscow School District.

Russell West Park Configuration

Based on the following initial recommendation for Russell and West Park Schools, it is of vital importance that parent and teacher input continue to be taken in order to provide the best opportunity for all students and families before considering configuration adjustments to be made at the two schools. Following additional time for input, the administration will make a final recommendation to the Superintendent to forward to the Board of Trustees later this spring.

After completing an analysis of multiple options, it became clear that a very robust teaming atmosphere is currently available for all students at Russell and West Park. If two K-5 schools were to be formed, one of the schools would have only one teacher for each grade level and attendance zone lines would have to be redrawn in the process. Currently students have three teachers per grade level and student learning is optimized with the three teachers teaming each and every day. Multiple teacher teaming expertise is a benefit to the students in the current configuration. In addition, classroom balancing is much better served when there are multiple classrooms in each grade level. A school with only one grade level classroom has a more defined space limit and students over and above that limit would be transferred to other district schools with room instead of remaining in the same school. It is also important to consider the cost of additional staffing needed in a configuration with two K-5 schools. Additional staff such as specialists, support personnel, and bussing would need to be provided along with the need to rezone the two elementary schools. We will continue to meet and gather input from the Russell and West Park constituencies before making a final recommendation.

Elementary Space Considerations

It is important to note that even though some of our elementary schools have room for their current enrollment, we now serve many of our elementary students in seven mobile classrooms. All but one of the mobile classrooms are very old and do not have appropriate insulation, heating systems, lighting, and emergency systems. In addition, electrical and other infrastructure elements in all of the buildings are strained for their current populations. Reducing the number of students in the buildings will provide some relief and also will provide space to grow. There is a need for additional K-Plus programming in the district. Each year, multiple families are denied the opportunity because of current space limitations. Additional space in each school would provide this needed programming in the student's home school without bussing to different buildings as is done now.

District-wide Configuration points

Obviously if a configuration change is approved, some teachers would move to a new building based on student need. Multiple teachers moved between buildings with their classrooms in 2002, and many lessons were learned from that move. The move was not staged correctly, it was done without detailed planning, and there was not appropriate assistance for teachers who moved. It is anticipated that the teachers who will move to their new buildings would receive extra time after school releases in 2012 to pack and extra time in the fall of 2012 before school begins to unpack. Extra packing/unpacking assistance for the teachers would be available and teacher rooms would be moved professionally during the summer and aligned with our

summer cleaning process. Costs would be budgeted in two years over the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school year.

At the outset of the Feasibility Study, the administrators were directed to come up with a plan that did not add on-going staffing expenses. No extra staffing is necessary and no additional ongoing personnel costs will be incurred. In fact, the district will save money by reducing the number of teachers who now move from building to building.

Finding a way to reduce the number of teachers who travel between buildings was a priority during the initial Feasibility Study. Currently, eight classroom teachers move between the junior high and the high school each day. Initial plans include a major reduction of roving teachers which will be a cost-savings to the district. Almost one complete teaching position is lost for every six teachers who have to move between buildings. All of our specialists are needed in each of our schools and we strongly believe that a well-balanced education is one of the district's cornerstones, and current programming is crucial for our students. In addition, our district-wide School Improvement Plan will call on every teacher and specialist to assist with an added emphasis on achievement efforts for all children in grades K-12.

There will obviously be some assignment adjustments for building aides, nutrition staff and other non-certified personnel. Our support services staffing have always, and will continue to be allocated in the best manner possible to meet the needs of our student population. It will be necessary to review and re-define some staffing to provide the best service we can give. It is our intent to use the year ahead to plan with all components of our support staff to define and meet student needs in a responsible manner.

Many specific staffing questions will not be able to be answered until specific plans are in place. In addition, the current legislative session has proposals that will also impact staffing decisions that will need to be defined. It is important to remember that the plan presented at the February Panel Presentation was a basic outline that will continue to be defined and developed throughout the next school year. Specific details will be developed using Board policy, committee work, input, and listening sessions if the proposals are ratified by the Board of Trustees.