



Chairperson Lunt, School Board Members and Superintendent Maguire.

I'm Kim Riesgraf, Assistant Superintendent of Administration and I'm privileged to be serving as the project manager for our grade span change.

Tonight is the 4th monthly school board update on grade configuration.

Over the last month, we have focused on three things in our work to implement new grade spans.

- (1) The detailed planning, including the financing, for the facility changes at the three comprehensive high schools is nearing completion,
- (2) Leaders and key staff have received updates on our grade configuration work and had an opportunity to practice answering questions using the district communication plan key messages, and
- (3) Directors and principals have received information to help them in the planning for their school or department transition plan.

Priority Result

Beginning the 2015-16 school year, the grade spans for the school district will be:

- elementary PreK/K-5,
- middle school grades 6-8, and
- high school grades 9-12.

Grade Configuration Update

8/19/2014

Grade configuration will be preK/K-5, 6-8, 9-12, effective Fall 2015.

We have identified several key strategies that we'll use to accomplish our district's bold mission for all students, and one of them is to create transformational system change to ensure equitable student achievement. Transformational changes will be necessary to accomplish our goal of improving achievement for all students and accelerating growth of underperforming students in order to close the racial achievement gap.

This strategy provides important context for the conversation about grade configuration because all-day kindergarten programming is one of the changes that we know can transform early learning. That's why expanding access to all-day kindergarten has been a school board-approved priority goal since 2007. Early learning is a proven accelerator to close learning gaps.

The priority goal is this: A preK/K-5, 6-8, 9-12 grade configuration plan has been implemented that incorporates middle level design and meets World's Best Workforce requirements, such as literacy by grade three and career and college readiness.

Board considered community and staff feedback



Grade Configuration Update

8/19/2014


The board's work last year to gather and consider community and staff feedback provides important context.

In order to implement All-Day Kindergarten and maintain our current programming in the areas of early childhood education, gifted education, intervention services and other special programs, additional space is needed at the elementary level. During the 2013-2014 school year, administrators and the School Board considered various options for creating space and presented those ideas for staff and community feedback. After considering feedback, the board approved a plan that would create the needed space at the elementary level through a change in grade spans.

To accommodate 9th graders at the high school level, space will be added and repurposed at each of our three comprehensive high schools. This means that while changing grade spans will not result in boundary changes at any level, it does not mean that the district will never change school boundaries. Staff constantly monitors student enrollment and housing development. Periodic adjustments to school boundaries will continue to be necessary as populations shift in our communities and schools.

Key message: In the long term, the new grade configuration will provide benefits to students at all levels (e.g., potential expansion of early learning opportunities; more flexibility with space at elementary schools; new opportunities to meet the social/academic needs of adolescents at middle level; a more coherent high school program with all courses required for graduation under one roof; and alignment with state K-12 academic standards).

Using project management lifecycle



Project Initiation	Project Planning - High Level	Project Planning - Detail Level	Project Execution and Control	Project Closeout
Develop rationale	Develop Project Initiation Plan	Develop detail baseline project schedule	Manage constraints	Conduct post implementation review
Evaluate rationale		Risk assessment	Monitor and control risks	Perform Administrative Closeout
Select project priorities		Refine management Plans		

Grade Configuration Update

8/19/2014

A comprehensive project management plan is in place that includes multiple perspectives in the planning and implementation of new grade spans. The plan includes areas such as middle level design, student transitions, staffing, technology, facility additions/repurposing, and operational logistics.

We are using the Cornell Project Management Methodology for our grade span change. This methodology has five phases shown here. At this point, most of our project teams are engaged in detail level planning. Several of our project team leaders are completing their work schedules and beginning work on refining the management plans for their project area.

Communication is key

- District communication plan key messages
- Project team communication plans
- School/Department communication planning

Grade Configuration Update

8/19/2014

Clear and consistent communication is critical for a smooth change to occur for 2015-16. The district communication plan key messages are included in the Project Initiation Plan that can be found on our district website in the Project Management Documents section.

In addition to the district communication plan, each project team is developing a separate project-specific communication plan that will be integrated with the overall communication plan. It is the project team leader's responsibility to ensure the communication plan is implemented effectively.

The school and department transition plans are a third layer of communication planning. As part of the transition plan, each school and department will identify specific communication needs and objectives for their school or department and include these in their action plan.

Month in Review

- July Steering Committee
- August Leadership Meeting
 - System Leaders
 - Site Secretaries
 - Resource and Business Managers
- Project Team Leaders

Grade Configuration Update

8/19/2014

The Steering Committee is made up of 29 key stakeholders from across the district. Labor leaders, school board members, cabinet, principals, directors, coordinators, teachers and education support professionals are represented. The steering committee's purpose is to advise the superintendent and project manager on the work to implement grade configuration.

Our most recent steering committee meeting took place on July 29 (25 of 29 members attended).

At the meeting, steering committee members provided feedback to inform next steps in coordinating grade configuration project team work and generated key messages to stakeholders. The next meeting takes place on August 21st. The outcomes will focus on high school programming and detailed high school facilities planning.

Leaders and key staff have received updates on our grade configuration work. At our August leadership meetings, system leaders, site secretaries, and resource and business managers had an opportunity to practice answering questions about the grade span changes.

Project Team Leaders have continued their work.

- Several had meetings this month with project teams
- Leaders met July 28 and will be meeting Aug 20, then will meet every 2nd and 4th Friday of the month

Middle Level Design



Grade Configuration Update

8/19/2014

The Middle School Design Team led by Wendy Biallas-Odell, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Educational Standards is doing detailed planning.

Based on the research that was conducted in April, May and June on effective middle school models and philosophy, it was determined that our middle schools will use grade-level interdisciplinary teams (grade 6, grade 7 and grade 8) for instruction in math, science, social studies, and language arts (“house model” in which a team of teachers works with the same group of students), and a daily advisory with structured curriculum around college/career planning, social/emotional learning, and academic oversight.

The next phase for the Middle Level Design team will be to collaborate with the High School Programming Team on department curriculum vertical alignment and possible curriculum adjustments. This work is starting this month and will continue through October.

High School Programming



Grade Configuration Update

8/19/2014

The High School Programming Team is led by Astein Osei, our Division of Leadership, Teaching and Learning Principal.

The team is in the process of looking at 9th grade course options, including required courses, electives, health/life fitness, and 9th/10th grade physical education requirements, and engaging grade 6-12 content teams to look at course sequence in collaboration with the Middle Level Design team.

The team met once in August with the outcome focused on determining a registration timeline and a daily schedule that considers digital learning, social & emotional learning and college and career readiness.

High School Facilities



Grade Configuration Update

8/19/2014

To accommodate grade configuration, additions will be built at each of the three comprehensive high schools. The high schools were built over a 50-year period and have unique needs, so the space additions/repurposing will not be identical at each school. The overall investment at each school, however, will be about the same.

The High School Facilities Team led by Dale Carlstrom, Director of Facilities and Transportation Operations, is doing detailed planning. The financing plan includes Lease Levy, Alternative Facilities, and Capital Lease. The financing plan has been refined and the details will be considered at the September 9th, 2014 school board work session.

In partnership with ATS&R, our architectural consultant, design consultants planning meetings have taken place at each high school with the high school leadership teams and staff to gather input and ideas for reconfiguration, repurposing, remodeling and constructing spaces necessary to serve the new grade configuration. These meetings have included sharing cost estimates for the proposed improvements and working with site teams to reduce costs to meet budget parameters, presenting preliminary drawings based on suggestions and feedback from teaching staff and administration.

Finally, meetings were held with each department at each school to review all the design details. The team is just about ready to complete the final draft of the design documents in preparation for a January start to the construction process.

Human Resources Staffing



Grade Configuration Update

8/19/2014

We are using the district's staffing process and collaborating with labor leaders to support staff and help ensure a smooth transition to new grade spans.

The human resources staffing project team is led by Janet Thomas-Bouyer, Human Resources Director. The team is engaged in high level planning. So far there are two teams (one for teachers and one for educational support professionals). One team will make recommendations related to the teacher transfer process and the other team will make recommendations to the ESP staffing process.

The teacher staffing team consists of principals, Education Minnesota Osseo leaders, and representatives from K-12 operations, special education, teachers, and HR. Teachers want to know if there will be changes to the staffing process, what the licensure requirements will be for teaching 6th grade in the middle school, and information about programmatic decisions as the work is evolving.

Here's what we know about teacher licensure. The Minnesota department of Education does not require 6th grade teachers in a middle school to have middle school endorsement. This means that a K-6/1-6 licensed teacher is properly licensed to teach 6th grade in a middle school. As a result, Osseo will not require a middle school endorsement for current ISD 279 teachers to teach 6th grade at the middle school. This means that the focus for 2015-16 can be on getting teachers placed. The team will now discuss requirements for 6th grade middle school teachers new to the system in 2015-16 and beyond.

It was determined that the teacher transfer process will begin after January 1, 2015. Earlier, there had some discussion about implementing the teacher transfer process by the time school started, but we determined that such an early teacher transfer process would not be feasible. Communication Planning for the project team is underway with the goal is to deliver the first communication during workshop week.

The Educational Support Professional team has also been meeting since June. The team consists of Education Minnesota-Osseo labor leaders and representation from special education, K-12 operations, business managers and human resources. The focus has been around communication and staff development.

Technology



Grade Configuration Update

8/19/2014

The Technology Project team, led by Tim Wilson, Chief Technology Officer is engaged in High Level Planning.

The team has started developing a comprehensive list of databases, scripts, and other technology systems that rely on fixed grade span definitions or site abbreviations (e.g., grade promotion processes, report cards, and health forms). All of those systems will need updates to reflect new grade level spans.



School/Department Plan
Principal/director responsible for plan

Include staff, families and students in needs analysis and planning

Grade Configuration Update 8/19/2014

The planning at the School/Department level is just beginning.

All ISD 279 leaders have a shared responsibility for a smooth transition to the new grade spans. Principals and directors are responsible to ensure that a transition plan is developed for their school or department. The plan must include a needs assessment that has involved staff, families and students in the analysis of needs and in action planning for the transition.

Planning will be required throughout the year to address needs for 2014-15 and 2015-16. The plan will need to be updated as new needs emerge.

Stay informed

Monthly board meeting updates

Grade configuration section of website

Grade Configuration Update

8/19/2014

Here's how you can stay informed. I will continue to provide monthly updates at school board meetings, and you can find more information about the change to new grade spans on the district website.