

## **ELEMENTARY STRUCTURE / FACILITIES FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

Why is the district looking at these elementary configuration options?

The primary reason the district is looking at different options is to move away from moving children. Each year we have to move children in order to balance classes and grades. Additionally, it would allow the district to be more fiscally responsible.

What is a section?

Typically that word means classrooms (i.e. we have two sections per grade level at Stoddard)

How would the BLAST program work if the district moved to grade level buildings?

All three elementary buildings would continue to have a BLAST program, and each building would serve students K-5.

How would busing work if the district went to grade level buildings?

Currently, all District buses meet at Middle School, students K-12 change buses, and are then shuttled to other buildings. The district would look to shuttle students between Lincoln and Stoddard both at the beginning and end of the day.

How did the district arrive at \$80,000 for the cost savings of one teacher?

When determining costs associated with staff, we look at an average (i.e. total costs for an area divided by the number of staff members). The total cost for a teacher includes both salary and benefits.

Under our current elementary set-up, what is scheduled to happen during the 2018/19 school year?

Based on student numbers, the Board of Education approved the reduction of one elementary teacher for 2018/19. This would happen in third grade because overall student numbers at that grade level are significantly lower. This means that the district will have to move 12-15 students to balance numbers. Additionally, there are seven sections of first grade that need to go into six sections of second grade (again, based on numbers). That means 15-20 students will need to be moved.

Why doesn't the school district just leave two sections of third grade at Lincoln and add a section on second grade at Paddock Lane?

The district could do this. The concerns are that it does not address the inequities in class size by grade / building or efficiency with taxpayers' money.

Why do we have to move children?

Each year the district moves children to: equalize class size across elementary buildings, meet special needs that children have, and meet parental requests when possible.

How will buildings determine which children to move if we proceed under the current system?

Building administrators look at a variety of factors to determine which students will move: grade level numbers, individual family numbers, special needs, movement in the past, attendance center boundaries, and more.

Won't we lose the family feel if we go to grade level buildings?

While Lincoln and Stoddard will not have a K-5 feel, each building will develop its own family atmosphere. Families come in all sizes. Grade level buildings, like other configurations, will give children an opportunity to be the youngest, middle, and oldest in their building.

When will the Board of Education make a decision?

The Board of Education will hear more about the elementary structure options at the March 22<sup>nd</sup> Committee of the Whole meeting, which starts at 6:00 p.m. The intent is for the Board to decide which option to move forward with at the April 9<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

Will Paddock Lane Elementary keep the special education programs it currently has?

Yes, Paddock Lane Elementary will continue housing the special education programs it currently serves.

How does the district know student numbers year to year?

Student numbers, K-12, are reviewed yearly. Incoming kindergarten and preschool numbers are estimated using live birth data for Gage County and Beatrice.

Would busing pick-up and drop-off points be similar to this year?

Bus routes should be similar. The district is working with the transportation provider this summer to take a comprehensive look at bus routes. This will occur no matter which option is selected.

Would elementary starting / ending times be staggered if grade level buildings were implemented?

While it seems like this would have to happen, a final decision has not been made. In the recent past, elementary buildings did not start or end at the same time.

Would playgrounds need to be changed if you went to grade level buildings?

Elementary principals do not think major changes would be needed if grade level buildings were implemented.

Would it be better if all three elementary buildings were grade level buildings?

The district did not look at this option because of the cost to duplicate the special programs at Paddock Lane in other buildings if all three went to a grade level configuration.

Would children stay at the building once they start there?

Other than the natural changes that would occur with a grade level configuration, every effort would be made to keep children in the building where they start.

If the district sold the land out by the high school, could they use the money to pay for an elementary teacher?

The district used funds from the special building fund to purchase the land out by the high school. If the district sold the land, it would have to go back into this fund. These monies cannot be used for staff salaries and benefits.

What is the cost of each option?

**Option 1:** would be a cost savings of \$80,000 and require us to move groups of students to equalize numbers.

**Option 2:** would be an additional cost of \$80,000 and does not address the inequity of class / grade level size.

**Option 3:** would be a cost savings of \$80,000 and require students to move buildings (over time), that would create some single sections and some two section grades.

**Option 4:** would be a cost savings of \$80,000 for a teacher. Preliminary cost estimates on expanding the parking lot at Lincoln Elementary are \$8-12 thousand. This would create grade level buildings at Lincoln and Stoddard. Paddock Lane would stay a K-5 building because of the special needs programs it houses.