

LINCOLN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Full-Day Kindergarten & School Reconfiguration Recommendation

Subject to approval by LCSD Board of Directors at next regular Board meeting
7 PM – Tuesday, Jan. 13, 2014 – Sam Case Elementary School (459 NE 12th St., Newport)

LCSD Superintendent Steve Boynton recommends that the School Board approve the implementation of full-day kindergarten at all district schools, and approve the reconfiguration of grade levels in the Lincoln City and Newport schools, beginning with the 2015/16 school year.

BACKGROUND: The state of Oregon is strongly encouraging all public schools to implement full-day kindergarten. LCSD administrators agree that a well-designed full-day kindergarten program can provide essential early learning skills for young children. The extra academic and social/emotional learning provided in a full-day kindergarten classroom will increase school readiness, encourage regular student attendance, and lead to greater academic achievement in the higher grades. In short, a full-day kindergarten program can build a strong foundation for children’s future success.

By moving from half-day kindergarten to full-day kindergarten, the number of students served in Lincoln County School District would remain roughly the same (approx. 370). However, these children will be in the school building full time so additional teachers, resources, and classrooms are needed. The schools in Toledo and Waldport have classroom space available to meet this additional need; the schools in Lincoln City and Newport do not. The Newport schools are facing an additional challenge, with a high school that is at capacity with no room to expand.

District administrators have been reviewing options and their impacts for the past several months and have received public input at community meetings held in Lincoln City on Oct. 29, Nov. 4 and Nov. 13; and in Newport on Oct. 29, Nov. 12 and Dec. 15. The recommendation is below.

NORTH AREA PROPOSAL

The recommendation is to reconfigure schools in Lincoln City as follows:

- Oceanlake Elementary School----- change from grades K-6 to grades K-2
- Taft Elementary School----- change from grades K-6 to grades 3-6
- Taft High School ----- unchanged with grades 7-12

JUSTIFICATION

Full-day kindergarten will require the addition of five or six classrooms in the North Area. Additional classrooms can be obtained by realigning grade bands in the two existing elementary schools, as listed above. The grade split between second and third grade is a natural division between students who are “learning to read” and students who are “reading to learn.” In addition, the consolidation of grade bands will provide more targeted and directed resources specific to the educational priorities of the school. Another benefit of the reconfiguration is the elimination of school rivalry and building a sense of unified school community pride by having one primary school, one elementary school, and one middle school/high school.

NORTH AREA / LINCOLN CITY, CONT.

ADDRESSING AREAS OF CONCERN

The top areas of concern expressed by North Area community members:

- *Bus Transportation* – Students may have longer bus rides to and from school because there is a distance of four miles between the Oceanlake school and the Taft schools.
Answer – Mid Columbia Bus Company is evaluating and reorganizing bus routes, adding additional bus routes, and exploring express bus routes with the intent that no child is on the bus any longer than they currently are.
 - *Parent Transportation* – With the proposed grade split, families may have children at one, two or all three schools making it difficult to pick up/drop off children in a timely fashion.
Answer: District administrators are thoughtfully evaluating staggered school start times and dismissals to allow for travel time between the schools.
 - *Meeting Students’ Needs* – The grade level split may make it more difficult to offer advanced coursework.
Answer: Students will continue to be presented with content and materials appropriate to their rate and level of learning – whether they require acceleration, maintenance, or enrichment – so that each child’s individual academic, social and emotional needs are met. There will be an additional emphasis on physical education, music and art at all schools, with resources to be shared among schools. Teachers in the same grade level will have more opportunity to collaborate and focus on teaching because they will be located in the same building.
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WEST AREA PROPOSAL

The recommendation is to reconfigure schools in Newport as follows:

- Yaquina View School----- reopen to grades K-2
- Sam Case Elementary School ----- change from grades K-3 to grades 3-5
- Newport Intermediate School & Isaac Newton Magnet School -----combine as grades 6-8 and rename as Newport Middle School
- Newport Prep Academy----- close to allow Newport High to expand into west campus
- Newport High School ----- unchanged with grades 9-12

JUSTIFICATION

There are two issues in the West Area: the need to add five to six additional kindergarten classrooms and the fact that Newport High School is at capacity with more than 620 students and no available space for expansion. Additional classrooms to address both needs can be obtained by making the changes listed above. The grade split between second and third grade is a natural division between students who are “learning to read” and students who are “reading to learn.” Also, the split between grades 5 and 6 represent the move away from a general education setting to a more diversified setting which includes student choice in academic endeavors. Another benefit of the reconfiguration is the elimination of school rivalry and building a sense of unified school community pride by having one primary school, one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school.

WEST AREA / NEWPORT, CONT.

ADDRESSING AREAS OF CONCERN

The top areas of concern expressed by West Area community members:

- *Academic Progress* –The absorption of INMS and NPA into the middle school may limit higher level learning.
Answer: The successful attributes of INMS and NPA – including project-based learning, emphasis on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM learning), collaborative learning, a close and caring school culture – can be replicated and enhanced at the middle school and also allow for many more class offerings.
 - *Meeting Students’ Needs* – The grade level split may make it more difficult to offer advanced coursework.
Answer: Students will continue to be presented with content and materials appropriate to their rate and level of learning – whether they require acceleration, maintenance, or enrichment – so that each child’s individual academic, social and emotional needs are met. There will be an additional emphasis on physical education, music and art at all schools, with resources to be shared among schools. Teachers in the same grade level will have more opportunity to collaborate and focus on teaching because they will be located in the same building.
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EAST AREA & SOUTH AREA

- **WALDPORT** – Full-day kindergarten will require the addition of one classroom at Crestview Heights School in Waldport (grades K-8). Existing space is available to meet this need.
- **TOLEDO** – Full-day kindergarten will require the addition of one or two classrooms at Toledo Elementary School (grades K-6). Existing space, with minor remodeling, is available to meet this need.