

REVERE EDUCATOR
LEADERSHIP BOARD

SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MEETING

OCTOBER 15, 2014

Organizational Structure Council

Council Members

- Deborah Larson, PRE Math Coach– Co-chair
- Lisa Consolo, GES 3rd Grade – Co-chair
- Kristen Ferraro, SBA 7TH Grade Inclusion
- Richard Norris, GMS 6th Grade Math
- Andrea Tufo, GMS 6th Grade Science
- Donna Grieco, GMS 6th Grade Science
- Adam Deleidi, SBA Assistant Principal
- Maria Russomando, RMA Assistant Principal
- Kathy Liakos, RMA Social Worker
- Nada Cuvalo, RMA 6th and 7th ELA
- Michael Walpole, GES 5TH Grade Inclusion
- Candace Conley, GES Math Coach
- Brandon Pezzuto, SBA 6th and 7th Grade Science

Essential Question

How can the Revere Public School District reorganize the current middle school model to increase 6th grade student achievement and community satisfaction?

The Council's Work

- Discussed challenges regarding the current middle school selection process
- Developed and distributed surveys to middle school and 5th grade parents
- Analyzed survey data
- Researched other districts' middle school selection processes
- Gathered demographic and academic data on all three middle schools
- Developed and analyzed 3 possible middle school models. Recommended one model to the school committee.
- Per the request of the school committee and superintendent, gathered more community input and conducted further research on potential middle school models.
- Facilitated district-wide professional development to gather feedback from RPS faculty and staff.

The G6 Model

- All sixth grade students in the Revere Public School District will attend Garfield Middle School
- 7th and 8th graders will attend either Rumney Marsh or Susan B. Anthony

G6: Notable Findings

- The 5-8 grouping is growing in popularity as research is becoming more supportive of this configuration based on the constantly changing needs of the students
 - <http://www.edulink.org/msconfig.htm>
- 6th grade academies have evolved into a means of easing the transition into middle school, and providing more individual attention to the maturing age group they serve
 - The Atlanta Journal-Constitution: <http://blogs.ajc.com/get-schooled-blog/2010/11/22/sixth-grade-academies-fad-or-fix-for-our-schools/>

G6: Notable Findings (cont.)

- In a research article by H. Jurgen Combs it is suggested that a 7-8 combination is the least successful configuration available based on the current research
 - <http://www.edulink.org/msconfig.htm>
- The 6-8 combination is the most common configuration at this time, as supported by current research
 - <http://www.edulink.org/msconfig.htm>

RPS Faculty and Staff Perspectives

Pros

- Fair and equitable: All students attend GMS
- Continuity in curriculum for 6th graders
- Easier social transition for 6th grade peers

Cons

- Additional transitions: (5th to 6th and then again 6th to 7th)
- Current GMS 7th grade students will also have to transition elsewhere
- Potential Grievances:
 - ▣ Current 7th and 8th grade GMS teachers would either need to change grade levels or transfer
 - ▣ Flexible schedules may need to be instituted to accommodate need for more grade 6 teachers at Garfield

The G8 Model

- All 8th grade students in the Revere Public School District will attend Garfield Middle School
- 6th and 7th graders will attend either Rumney Marsh or Susan B. Anthony

G8: Notable Findings

- An increase in transition preparedness activities in 8th grade allowed for a smooth transition for students into 9th grade
 - Akos & Galassi, 2004

- Roanoke Rapids City School District: Due to the implementation of an 8th grade transition academy, Roanoke Rapids cut the 9th grade failure rate in half (57% of Freshman were failing one or more classes now only 28% are failing)

- Roanoke Transition Academy helped decrease drop out rates
 - <http://www.every1graduates.org/>

G8: Notable Findings (cont.)

- Research shows that ninth grade retention rates and failure rates are higher than any other grade.
 - Smith, J. S. (2006). Research summary: Transition from Middle School to High School

- A ninth grade student is three to five times more likely to fail a class than students in any other grade.
 - Southern Regional Educational Board (2002)., Opening Doors to the Future: Preparing Low-achieving Middle Grades Students to Succeed in High School

RPS Faculty and Staff Perspectives

Pros

- ❑ Everyone will attend GMS (it will not be a choice)
- ❑ Preparation and ease of transition for High School enhanced (extended day)
- ❑ Continuity in curriculum for 8th graders
- ❑ Preparation for social transitions to high school (readiness academy)

Cons

- ❑ Increase in school transitions
- ❑ Does not impact 6th grade scores
- ❑ Lottery is still in place for students in grade 5
- ❑ 8th graders will have difficulty participating in extra curricular activities due to extended day

The 5-8 Model

- A middle grade school configuration which encompasses grades 5-8
- An elementary school will need to be converted into an additional middle school
- Students from converted elementary school will need to be distributed amongst the other elementary schools

5-8 Model: Notable Findings

- Few comparable public school districts in the area follow this model: Chelsea, Lawrence, Lowell
 - <http://www.doe.mass.edu>
- Texas study: 5th graders who attended a traditional K-5 elementary school scored higher on math and reading achievement tests than their counterparts who attended intermediate schools (grade 5 only or grade 5 and 6)
 - Combs, J.P., Clark, D., Moore, G.W., Onwuegbuzie, A.K., Edmonson, S.L., & Slate, J.R (2011). Academic Achievement for Fifth-Grade Students in Elementary and Intermediate School Settings: Grade Span Configurations. *Current Issues in Education*, 14 (1). Retrieved from <http://cie.asu.edu>.

5-8 Model: Notable Findings (cont.)

- New York City compared math and English achievement scores of students who attended a K-8 elementary model to those who transitioned to a middle school in either grade 6 or grade 7
- Students who transitioned into a middle school model consistently scored lower on math and English tests during the transition year compared to students in the K-8 school
- Students' individual achievement scores slipped in the transition years
 - Rockoff, J.E, & Lockwood, B.B. (2010). Stuck in the Middle: How and why middle schools harm student achievement. *Educationnext*, 10(4). Retrieved from <http://educationnext.org>

RPS Faculty and Staff Perspectives

Pros

- Higher achievement scores when cohort size is smaller
- Greater exposure to encore and theme classes as well as more time to develop a sense of school community
- Possibility to group within the structure (5/6 and 7/8)

Cons

- Lower achievement scores during transition years
- Students need to adjust to new building, teachers, peers, staff, etc...at a younger age
- Low amount of RPS teachers prefer this model
- Licensure issues (K-6 vs. 5-8)
- Age difference between 5th and 8th graders
- 5th graders may not be emotionally and socially prepared to enter middle school
- Does not solve lottery issue
- Displacement of teachers

The 5-6/7-8 Model

- An elementary school will need to be converted into a fourth middle school
- Two schools for grades 5-6 and two schools for grades 7-8

5-6/7-8 Model: Notable Findings

- As measured by international comparisons, such as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), the achievement of U.S. students begins to plummet in middle school.
 - *Mayhem in the Middle: Why We Should Shift to K–8* By Cheri Pierson Yecke

- Divide a middle school into age-appropriate sections—a lower middle school comprised of grades five and six and an upper middle school of grades seven and eight.

- *Lower Middle School (Grades 5/6)*: The lower middle school eases the transition between elementary and middle school programs.

- *Upper Middle School (Grades 7/8)*: Will have a different teacher for each course and an emphasis upon students becoming more independent, will more closely resemble a high school.

RPS Faculty and Staff Perspectives

Pros

- Age groupings are appropriate
- Improved scores in 6th grade
- Helps foster community/culture
- Easier test prep
- 5th and 6th better prepared for 7th and 8th
- More focused on student needs
- Better academic transitions
- Content/curriculum collaboration

Cons

- Too many transitions
- Only one ELT school
- Doesn't change the perception of GMS
- Lottery still exists
- Impacts ELT grants and contracts
- Transportation issue
- Losing an elementary school
- Less vertical communication

In Summary

- There is not an overwhelming amount of data that supports one middle school model over another.
- The district may wish to identify a model that best suits our student population and improves the districts current challenges