



MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Olin and Board of School Trustees
FROM: Mrs. Robin LeClaire, Director of Student Services
Mr. Jason Cary, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Devon Marine, Director of Elementary Curriculum
DATE: Monday, April 14th, 2025

April 8th eLearning Day

The third of three eLearning days in the 2024-2025 school year occurred on Tuesday, April 8th. As a reminder, these days allow our faculty to engage in professional development in the areas related to our school corporation priorities.

Greenfield-Central educators engaged in meaningful professional development across the district in several academic areas. K-5 reading teachers participated in the official launch of our new reading curricular materials, *Wit & Wisdom*. Additionally, our 6th-8th grade English/language arts teachers had their initial introduction to *Into Literature*. We are excited to begin this journey with our new reading/ELA materials.

In addition to reading/ELA, our 4th-6th math teachers worked collaboratively on standards alignment to *Reveal* and *EnVision*, 6th-grade science teachers and STEM teachers met together to discuss Next Generation Science Standards and computer science instruction, and the K-3rd grade interventionists received professional development from reading specialist, Dr. Chris Rauscher, on best practices in progress monitoring and tiered instruction alignment. Lastly, the K-6 related arts teachers met to discuss the vertical alignment of their programs.

Greenfield-Central Junior High collaborated with Amy Abell on TBRI training, as well as professional development for the upcoming ILEARN assessment. This training was targeted specifically to address weaknesses in the building, and it built on previous training at GCJH.

The high school met as a group to talk about the new high school diploma and how that will affect classes and programming moving forward. Initially, they met as a building to go over the implications for the entire staff. Then, they broke into their PLC's to discuss how their departments will be affected - and how they could be proactive with their course offerings and supports. This was incredibly beneficial to create consistency throughout the building and prepare teachers for the changes on the horizon.

Recommendation: Information only; no further action needed at this time.

Elementary School Restructuring Conversation

Last month, we continued the conversation about potentially changing the structure of our elementary schools, particularly looking at the grade levels that are served in both our elementary schools and intermediate schools.

We have continued to focus on three primary questions as the foundation of our discussion.

1. How do we create more effective and efficient space for preschool students in our school corporation?
2. Is there a better way to serve our students, particularly as we look at students in grades 4-6?
3. Are there operational efficiencies that can be achieved while also meeting our educational goals identified in questions 1 and 2?

During the discussion that took place in March, members of the board asked for more feedback from our community. Therefore, since our last meeting on March 10th, we have had conversations about the potential change with parents of third grade students, fourth grade teachers, and both elementary school and intermediate school principals. Furthermore, we collected survey data for the board to review and consider. Summaries of these surveys and conversations are listed below.

Specific to parents of current third grade students in Greenfield-Central, we asked one main question and also allowed an opportunity for parents to share factors that led to their preference. The question in the survey asked, [“In what setting would you prefer to see your child attend fourth grade?”](#). In total, 294 families were asked to reply to the survey, and 150 families responded.

- 76.6% of our families indicated they would like their child to attend fourth grade in their current elementary school.
- 16.6% indicated they would like to see their child attend an intermediate school for fourth grade.
- 6.6% indicated that they did not have a preference.

Although parents were provided with an open forum to share their thoughts that led them to this decision, very few comments were made in the actual survey.

Targeting our fourth grade teacher audience, we held an informational meeting with all fourth grade teachers on Wednesday, February 26th. This included fourteen general education teachers and two special education teachers. In that setting, teachers were provided with an opportunity to ask questions and/or share concerns after Dr. Olin detailed quite a bit of information about Greenfield-Central's elementary structure over the last twenty years. A few questions were asked in that setting, though most teachers appeared to want some time to reflect on the information.

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Six days later, we followed up with these teachers by sending a short survey that allowed them to share their input about structure and potential thoughts and/or concerns related to a change. Sixteen teachers were given the survey, and all of these professionals provided feedback.

The specific question asked, “From an educational perspective, what setting do you believe is best for fourth-grade students?”.

- 62.5% of the teachers surveyed indicated that an intermediate school was the best setting.
- 25% of the teachers surveyed indicated that an elementary school was the best setting.
- 12.5% indicated that they did not have a preference.

Unlike the survey that was sent to parents, our teachers did provide a lot of information regarding why they chose the option they did. In summary, there were four major themes in their comments:

1. The timeline for the potential change seems quick.
2. Concern that fourth grade students would lose some ECA opportunities.
3. Concern that teachers would be asked to teach all subjects to a homeroom group of 25 students as opposed to “departmentalizing” (teaching only ELA or only Math to approximately 50 students).
4. General discomfort with the idea of moving from a school facility and structure they know and peers with whom they have strong professional relationships.

Lastly, we held meetings with all six of our K-6 principals in individual settings. Our principals have had almost a year to wrap their heads around the possible transition. Despite the amount of time they have all had to contemplate the change, there was certainly a broad range of input shared by our school leaders (from support to hesitation). Most of them acknowledged that fourth grade students would likely be better served in an elementary school setting, yet the logistics involved in such a change have created some anxiety for a couple members of the leadership team.

As we continue to talk through the potential obstacles in this journey, we believe we can work through all of them in a short period of time. The corporation leadership team acknowledges that change is difficult for many people. Some people need more time than others to work through the perceived and real barriers that exist. Regardless of the time it takes to help all stakeholders with the transition, the leadership team members are committed to investing the time and resources necessary to make change as seamless as possible. In the end, we want to run all of our structural decisions through the lens of “what is best for the students we serve?”. With that filter in mind, you will see an unwavering commitment from our leadership team to be responsive to the needs of our students.

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As you reflect on all the information we have provided to you over the last year, I encourage you to consider the following synopsis:

- Educational research is consistent in showing that 4th grade students perform better (academics, behavior, and attendance) in elementary settings when compared to their performance in middle school settings.
- Greenfield-Central has ample space in our current elementary school facilities to accommodate 4th grade students.
- Parents of current 3rd grade students have shared a strong indication that they prefer the idea of their children receiving 4th grade instruction in an elementary setting.
- Though our current 4th grade teachers have shared some apprehension about moving 4th grade back into elementary schools, there are very few of their concerns that cannot be resolved.

We continue to investigate a few different options that will help us achieve the initial three goals listed at the top of the cover sheet. All of the options we are currently considering have us eventually moving 4th grade students back to our elementary schools. From the perspective of the corporation's administrative team, it really comes down to determining the right timing for such a move. From a logistical standpoint, we could make the change happen as early as next fall.

Recommendation:
