

Port Angeles School District
Elementary Transition Team
Report 1
September 15, 2006

ELEMENTARY TRANSITION TEAM

The staff and school board are committed to providing a coherent educational experience for every student and a smooth transition of sixth grade programs to the elementary schools. Keeping sixth grade students at the elementary schools, rather than sending them on to middle school, necessitates collaborative planning to build new learning communities with input from staff, students and families.

The elementary schools transition team, chaired by Assistant Superintendent Mary Hebert, is responsible for studying, planning, and implementing the changes needed to maintain high quality K-6 programs, services and operations. To ensure that students are provided aligned programs and opportunities (e.g., music, strings, and band), school site teams, representatives from the district's 6th grade staff, and elementary principals will meet and design strategies.

In addition to other transition issues, the board discussed issues raised by community members and board members, and asked the superintendent to study and report to the board about several program impacts:

- Middle school transportation: will district transportation routing be able to maintain bus routes under the 60 minute maximum used by the district for general routes?
- Grade 6 music delivery: how will the transition of 6th grade instruction to elementary schools impact the band program in particular, and can the district still provide the same amount of music instruction after the transition?
- Middle school athletics: when all of the 7th and 8th grade middle school students are combined on one campus, will there be enough access to athletics programs or will the district reallocate resources to increase the number of teams?
- Adequacy and capacity of science labs at Stevens Middle School: does Stevens have enough science lab space to accommodate the instructional needs of all of the 7th and 8th grade students who will attend there?
- Special education programs remaining at Franklin Elementary School, instead moving the Multi-Age Classroom (MAC) to Roosevelt Middle School: should the MAC be moved to the Roosevelt campus in order to avoid moving the self-contained special education programs that moved after the Monroe closure?
- Counseling needs at elementary and middle schools: should the board require that the new middle school have a certificated counselor on staff, and should one or more counselors be hired to support elementary schools next year?
- Sufficient grade 6 teachers to balance the elementary schools needs: does the district have enough 6th grade teachers to move from Roosevelt and Stevens Middle Schools to the five elementary schools to teach next year's 6th grade students (who are this year's 5th grade students)?

OPTION D PROGRAM IMPLICATIONS

Facilities Efficiency Task Force Option D, that selected by the board of directors on August 28, carries several program implications that the elementary transition team will need to address early on in its deliberations.

- One portable must be moved to Jefferson Elementary School, at a cost to the district's capital budget of \$40,000.
- A group must be identified to address the need to "re-boundary" the district's elementary schools, i.e., redraw the elementary school home attendance areas, to utilize facilities space more efficiently at Dry Creek Elementary School and for the elementary school housed at Roosevelt Middle School.
- The facilities recommendations call for self contained special education programs to move to Hamilton Elementary School and the elementary school at Roosevelt; some movement will be affected by the recommendations about the MAC at Franklin Elementary School.
- Franklin, Dry Creek and Roosevelt are expected to be "3 Unit" schools, i.e., to house three classrooms per grade level (three Kindergartens, three first grades, three second grades, etc.).
- Jefferson, Hamilton and are expected to be "2 Unit" schools, i.e., to house two classrooms per grade level. Hamilton's general education population is expected to be reduced to accommodate more special education students.
- The district plans to provide all-day Kindergarten programs at each elementary school, and the Facility Efficiency Task Force recommendations assumed this; training and materials must be obtained as the planning is done during this year.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The transition team will consider, discuss and recommend program decisions with two district interests in mind. First, decisions that impact program offerings, currently approved by the board, affecting all five elementary schools will be decided with a majority vote and be communicated to the superintendent and school board. This information will inform district leadership of adjustments needed to implement current programs at all schools in accordance with staff and other resources allocated by the district.

A second set of program decisions will arise as a result of grade level alignment and school closure. School site teams will have the latitude to propose these program decisions, created to serve the unique educational needs of their students, for school board of directors consideration through usual policy/program procedures, although accelerated by the superintendent given the complexity and time lines associated with the transition process and needs.

The following is an initial list of program, service and operation decisions to be determined by the district elementary transition team:

Support Services

Transportation planning will be complex, and must be accomplished in consultation with Pupil Transportation Center staff due to its affects on the time and length of the school day.

Elementary schools' attendance areas must be reviewed and home area attendance boundaries re-drawn to accommodate the shift in families' locations in the school district. The superintendent has designed the Parent Leadership Group, comprised of presidents of the districts' PTA, PTO, and parent groups to develop these recommendations.

Programs

Several distinct program offerings, in addition to those identified in the community forums, will need to be considered by the transition team.

- Band
- Strings
- General Music
- Physical Education
- Electives
- Counseling
- Re-boundary (Parent Leadership Group)
- All-day Kindergarten

Teachers/Staff

Daily schedules impact the district's compliance with the Basic Education Act requirements and employee agreements and practices, as does the transportation schedule. The length of school days varies at district elementary schools, and this transition process is an opportunity to determine whether schools' meeting times can be consistent across the district. Major factors to be considered include:

- Basic Education Act Requirements: Kindergarten 450 hours, Grades 1 - 6 1000 hours
- Planning time that maintains or enhances current individual and building collaborative time
- Playground considerations with inclusion of sixth grade students
- Location of Special Education programs: pre-school, self-contained, special needs

Facilities

Elementary school facilities vary in challenges and opportunities by their design. Some schools have a cafeteria, gym, multi-purpose room and additional classrooms for special services (e.g., speech, reading, physical therapy) and other schools are limited by their design. A goal of the transition team is to maintain existing programs and provide program opportunities to maximize student learning. An example suggested by the school board to move the MAC to Roosevelt and maintain special education classes at Franklin.

Availability of space impacts scheduling of meal services and specialist services which are delivered simultaneously at some schools. Strings, general music, band, and physical education classes will need special consideration to avoid a negative impact on classroom instruction due to volume, activity and proximity.

Special education classes have varied needs including: availability of bathroom and changing areas, approved playground facilities, storage of and access to equipment, mobility of students and equipment needs (e.g., wheelchairs, walkers) along with space consideration for the number of adults required for supervision and instruction.

The elementary transition team will visit the five schools so they can clearly identify and balance the feasibility of Team recommendations and classroom implementation for students and staff in general education, music, physical education, and special education.

ELEMENTARY TRANSITION TEAM COMPOSITION

The principals, staff, and parents at elementary schools will contribute to a transition team responsible for studying, planning, and implementing the changes needed to create desirable K-6 programs, services and operations. Communication among the staff of the middle schools, elementary schools, and central services is critical for district alignment.

Communication and input to members of the district transition team is welcome. It is recommended that suggestions and comments are provided to the team through district email, letters, or via the Internet to the Port Angeles School District at info@pasd.wednet.edu.

School and district teams will maintain communication with stakeholders and school board through electronic messaging, newsletters, Continuous School Improvement Plan reports and a district timeline.

The matrix in Appendix A represents the composition of the elementary transition team.

ELEMENTARY TRANSITION TEAM TIME LINE

The elementary transition team will meet twice monthly Wednesday evenings for two hours, 6:00 p.m. to 8:00p.m. until the final determination is made at the board meeting on November 27, 2006. Following the board decision, the transition team calendar schedule will be reduced. The time line in Appendix B illustrates suggested meeting dates, times, locations, topics and district staff guests. The staff guests will be invited to share specialized knowledge/information that will provide the team with background information necessary for their consideration to inform recommendations and decisions.

Meetings following the final determination will be reduced and subject to team/district input as needed to accomplish recommendations remaining in program, operations and services.

Appendix A

Transition Team Membership

	Transition Team Composition	Members
1	Dry Creek Principal	Kate Wenzl
2	Dry Creek Staff Member	Jeanne Wolfley
3	Dry Creek Parent Representative	Michele Haworth (Updated 9/20/06)
4	Fairview Principal	Doug Hayman
5	Fairview Staff Member	Kathy Millar
6	Fairview Parent Representative	LeAnn Johnson
7	Franklin Principal	Nancy Pack
8	Franklin Staff Member	Debra Roos
9	Franklin Parent Representative	Holly Juskevich
10	Hamilton Principal	Loren Engel
11	Hamilton Staff Member	Gunnar Thomason
12	Hamilton Parent Representative	Karen Fox
13	Jefferson Principal	Michelle Olsen
14	Jefferson Staff Member	Theresa Schmid
15	Jefferson Parent Representative	Vicki Helwick
16	Stevens Sixth Grade Staff (2)	Kat Dadd
17		Sarah Jensen
18	Roosevelt Sixth Grade Staff (2)	Leah Bauman
19		Darren Mills
20	Music Staff Member	Ron Jones
21	Special Education Staff Member	Mary Morgan
22	Physical Education Staff Member	Stephanie Gochnour
23	Elementary Para-educator Representative	Theresa Rothweiler
24	Maintenance and Custodial Representative	Nolan Duce
25	Elementary School Secretary Representative	Julie Smith

Appendix B

Transition Time Line

Mtg	Date	Location	Topic	Guest(s)
1	Wednesday, September 20	Central Services	Transition Team Tasks	
2	Wednesday, September 27	Franklin/Roosevelt	Special Education/Kinder.	Pack, Metcalf, Williams
3	Wednesday, October 11	Fairview	Band/Strings	Jones, Marshall, Donohue, Kilzer Woodward, Hayman
	Thursday, October 12	Stevens Middle School	Hearing 1A 6:00 PM Hearing 1B 7:00 PM	
	Tuesday, October 17	Roosevelt Middle School	Hearing 2A 6:00 PM Hearing 2B 7:00 PM	
4	Wednesday, October 25	Dry Creek	General Music, P.E., Electives	Middle School info., Gen. Music Reps, Wenzl
5	Wednesday, November 1	Hamilton	Discussion, decisions, Recommendations-Music	Loren Engel
6	Wednesday, November 8	Jefferson	Discussion, Decisions, Rec. –Special Education	Michelle Olsen
	Monday, November 27	Central Services	School Board Final Determination	
7	Wednesday, November 29	CSB	Review of Determination Next steps	
8	Wednesday, December 6	CSB	Planning Time, Schedules, Collab. time	Barry Burnett
9	Wednesday, January 10	CSB	Length of school day Basic Ed. Requirements	Jerry Eldred
10	Wednesday, January 24	CSB	Discussion, decisions and recommendations	Paraeducator Co-Presidents
11	Wednesday, February 7	CSB	Discussion, decisions and recommendations	
12	Wednesday, March 7	CSB	To be determined	
13	Wednesday, April 11	CSB	To be determined	