

SHAPING 4J'S FUTURE

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL SIZE

FOCUS GROUP REPORT: DECEMBER 2006

INTRODUCTION

As a part of District 4J's strategic planning process, "Shaping the Future," eight focus groups composed primarily of district staff met the week of November 13 to begin to address several unanswered questions that will have an impact on future decisions about school size, grade configurations, programs, and location of schools.

The **Elementary and Middle School Size** focus group identified a number of implementation options that could be considered by the district and the implications associated with those options. We also reviewed demographic and enrollment information and instructional literature, and identified the key values and beliefs upon which we based our implementation options. Finally we identified a number of issues and questions that we thought should be considered by the school board, a think tank that will be operated by the university, and the community.

Our group was facilitated by **Todd Hamilton**, and **Maureen Russell** was our listener/writer. The listener/writer was responsible for recording what we said and for drafting this report.

The members of our committee were:

Cydney Vandercar, Middle School Principal, Spencer Butte
Jeanne Ruiz, Elementary Alternative School Principal, Corridor and Yujin Gakuen
Kevin Boling, Elementary Regular School Principal, Holt
Alan Merrill, Middle School Teacher, Jefferson
Brian Gulka, Elementary School Teacher, Gilham
Tom Baratta, Special Education Teacher, Kelly
Cheryl Linder, Special Education Administrator, Educational Support Services

ust make a disclaimer: our focus group was asked to focus on a specific topic area, knowing that all of the topics discussed during this process are interrelated and what the district does in one area has implications for the others. The focus group process allowed us to share our discussions with the other focus groups, but each group is submitting an individual report.

A broad based think tank will synthesize the work of our focus group and the other focus groups as it develops a set of integrated alternatives or possibilities for consideration by the school board later in the spring.

4J'S CURRENT PROGRAM MODEL

Marilyn Clotz (Retired 4J Administrator) and Dennis Urso (Program Evaluation Specialist) provided the members of the focus group with a description of the district's current program model. In summary;

Dennis Urso presented two maps illustrating (1) Student Dwelling Units in 4J by Type of Dwelling Units and (2) Location and Migration Patterns to Alternative Schools in 4J. The maps showed distinct concentrations of dwellings with students, and a tendency for folks to stay within their region when choosing a non-language immersion elementary alternative school for their children to attend. While the language immersion schools primarily draw students from within their region, there are more students crossing region boundaries to attend these schools.

Marilyn Clotz presented printed information showing (1) Actual Enrollment by Grade Level from 1987-2006, (2) Actual Enrollment by School from 1987-2006, including information on school closures, and (3) Figures on Elementary and Middle School Transfers for 2006. In addition, she mentioned that enrollment is impacted by over 500 students in 4J that are home schooled. Many of these students return to the system at the Middle School and High School levels.

Ms. Clotz and Mr. Urso also reviewed historic events that have impacted school size. 4J original school boundaries date to about 1943. In 1973 when School Choice began, school boundary attendance lines were maintained and still remain. School Choice under Superintendent Tom Payzant

opened up a number of alternative schools that were small programs with lead teachers. When schools were closed, student populations and boundaries were absorbed into the remaining nearby school or schools.

Forty percent of our 4J students now take advantage of the school choice policy by leaving their neighborhood school or attendance area.

See “Enrollment Data Attachment,” provided by Dennis Urso, for school specific information.

Following our review of the district’s current program, we considered the implications it had for the following issues:

Equity

- There is a disproportionate distribution of high needs students in some schools.
- There is disproportionate access to schools with regards to high need students. School choice is not always available to them.
- We don’t address the needs of the ethnic community for access.
- There is ethnic clustering in some schools.
- We have “selected segregation” in some schools where services are being provided.
- School choice can lead to inequity created by school flight from schools of low SES rankings and high needs students.
- Only students with transportation can enroll outside their neighborhood schools.
- Alternative schools have a capped enrollment, while neighborhood schools must accept all students within their boundaries.
- The centralized school choice lottery has enrollment priorities for siblings and SES (in some cases).
- Schools work harder to retain their neighborhood students at Middle School and tend return transfer students to their neighborhood schools when the placement isn’t working out.

Open Enrollment, Neighborhood Schools, and Alternative Schools

- The burden of providing transportation takes away the reality of school choice for some families.
- We observe, “pooling” of students and a high concentration of high needs students at some schools.
- We observe, “pooling” of resources from others (i.e. parent support, academically able, and some resource dollars that move with students).
- Since all schools do not have kindergarten classes, some schools are unable to reliably forecast student enrollment for 1st grade.
- There is competition between programs.
- Allowing parents to opt for several programs at the same time creates problems, especially for special needs students.

Program Staffing

- Program staffing has resulted in inequitable staffing for schools (music, PE, ELL, librarians, counselors, art, technology).
- There are no vocational programs at the Middle School level.
- Four schools have received “Academy” funding to create special programs to attract students and increase enrollment.
- Due to changes in funding, schools have transitioned from receiving program staffing FTE to ratio staffing. This change has caused schools to identify supplementary staffing from their ratio staffing.
- Our current staffing model to support supplemental staffing may not be the most cost effective.
- Program staffing that supports student services, especially with regards to itinerate staff, changes from year to year and has caused instability of personnel at schools (e.g., some staff will have different building assignments from year to year and this causes disequilibrium at some buildings).

State and Federal Mandates

- Staffing highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals can be a challenge for some schools.
- Some schools are “mis-assigning” teachers to accommodate class schedule/staffing needs. This tends to be an issue at the secondary level.
- Assessment schedules at larger schools can be difficult to accommodate as testing transitions to TESA.
- State and federal mandates can lead to reduced instructional time.
- Special Education identification can be difficult at smaller schools due to limited access to specially trained personnel.
- Smaller schools require more sophisticated transportation planning to accommodate all buildings.

- Neighborhood placement for special needs students—to provide equal access – can be an issue if schools are small and there is not adequate staffing to meet their special needs.

Student Transportation

- Under the current model, Lane Transit District grant supports bus passes for students.
- Boundaries may be outdated.
- Alternative schools do not have transportation provided by the district.
- After school activities are not available for all students due to lack of transportation.
- Special education funding comes with lag time after placement and this cost for transportation is not covered by reimbursement.
- The district does not typically support after-school transportation.

High Schools

- Decreasing elementary enrollment will impact the high schools.
- Open enrollment with no caps impacts high school size.
- Increasing special education numbers will impact the high schools.
- Will decreasing enrollment equally impact all high schools?
- Inconsistent school size can cause a change in athletic classification, and create a two-tiered system within the same district?
- Will the transition at the high school level to small schools and small learning communities trickle down to the middle school level?

Middle Schools

- Decreasing enrollment will impact middle schools.
- Open enrollment with no caps impacts middle school size.
- Increasing special education numbers will impact middle schools.
- Any move to a K-8 model will impact middle schools.
- There is competition to lure students to particular middle school programs.
- There is lack of support for middle school students needing mental health services. This often results in students being re-enrolled in general education classes.
- Inclusion models at the middle level require more training for staff to meet the needs of all students.
- Class offerings vary widely based on school size.

Elementary Schools

- Differentiated funding affects schools of different sizes with regards to programs, staffing, and resources.
- Alternative schools impact enrollment at neighborhood schools.
- Some schools have no kindergartens. Those that do offer different school day configurations (e.g., half-day, extended day, full day).
- Title I funds support a limited number of elementary schools.
- Enrollment determines the FTE and impacts options to staff specialists in the buildings.
- In the language immersion schools. Special Education students tend to be counseled out of the programs.
- Population drives staffing, which drives grade configuration, resulting in last minute changes for schools.

Regional Impact

- Regions are impacted by the changes in high school enrollment created by transfers.
- Housing patterns affect boundaries, which impact enrollment
- Assumptions or perceptions are made about the quality of education in each region.
- Ethnic clustering impacts services and hiring needs in the region where it occurs.

Other (Including impact on other focus group topics)

- Staff hiring needs and practices may need to be evaluated in order to more effectively support programs.
- Lowering of FTE requires hiring staff to cover multiple classroom needs and content specialists.
- School size impacts our whole current regional model.

INSTRUCTIONAL LITERATURE

Prior to the meetings of our focus group, the district asked **Betsy Shepard** to review the literature dealing with **Elementary and Middle School Size**. She summarized recent research and writings in this area. A copy of that full report is attached.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS: ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL SIZE

We were asked to identify a number of implementation options for **Elementary and Middle School Size** based on a range of funding assumptions. First, we were asked to assume that no additional funds would be available, second that some additional funds (\$500,000 per school) would be available, and finally that schools have an additional fund allocation of one million dollars.

We were also asked to comment on what implications there were for a number of key issues in the district.

Our proposed implementation options are described below, along with what we believe the implications to be. We have also summarized the values and beliefs that we, as a focus group, operated by.

<p>TOPIC NAME: Elementary and Middle School Size</p> <p>Our Values and Beliefs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We believe that all students have the right to an opportunity to succeed • We value a safe and productive environment for all students • We value a sense of belonging for all stakeholders • We value rigor and quality in all subject areas with qualified staff (e.g., PE, music, technology, art) • We value collaboration and teamwork among and between students, staff, families, and community <p>A basic assumption that we as a group made in determining Elementary and Middle School Size was that all students in all buildings need access to a continuum of services and informed instruction that provides and fosters individual achievement.</p> <p>We also believe there are some essential foundational needs that contribute to school success regardless of size. The core attributes we considered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Vision • Competent /Accountable Leadership • Investment of Stakeholders • Fidelity of Implementation • Sustained Support for Implementation <p>These principles we believe are important because of the basic assumption that all personnel must be invested and contributing members for successful implementation of any program or policy change. We also believe that informed direction from school leadership and adequate support from district resources are integral components in creating a positive climate for change.</p> <p>While a range of school sizes creates different opportunities and challenges for successful learning environments, without these basic foundations we believe success at schools of any size will be difficult or impossible.</p>	
IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS	IMPLICATIONS
<p>Funding Assumption 1: No additional funds will be available to the District.</p> <p>Implementation Option A – Smaller schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary Level @ 250 students • Middle level @ 350 students • Middle level @ 250 students (co-located with another school) • K-8 level @ 350 students <p>Implementation Option B – within QEM size range:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary Level @ 350 students • Middle level @ 500 students • K-8 level @ 500 students 	<p>IMPLICATIONS FOR ALL FUNDING ASSUMPTION 1 OPTIONS:</p> <p>Equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility to accommodate different needs at different buildings varies and it gets easier with increase in size • Staffing for supplementary programs will vary from building to building as only existing FTE may be used (e.g., staffing, programs, resources) <p><i>(Note: Supplementary staffing refers to: music, PE, library, technology, SAC, nurse, school psych, curriculum coach, curriculum</i></p>

<p>NOTE: The QEM model suggests an elementary school size in the range of 300-400 students, and a middle school size in the range of 400-600 students.</p> <p>Implementation Option C – Larger Schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary Level @ 500 students • Middle level @ 650 students • K-8 level @ 650 students <p>(Note: Enrollment figures above reflect the total number of students attending a school, and each kindergartner is counted as one student.)</p>	<p><i>school psych, curriculum coach, curriculum specialist)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-8: built in service learning opportunities become abundant for middle school level students. • K-8: opportunity for diverse hiring increases due to K-8 classification as an elementary school. (Staff typically hired from elementary pool of candidates.) <p>Open Enrollment, Neighborhood Schools, and Alternative Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrollment guidelines or caps at all levels could provide for stability/predictability for school design and programs, but it could also disrupt current practices and create instability/unpredictability. <p>Student Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-8 may enlarge the boundaries for transportation if school choice is allowed • K-8 and small school start times need to be coordinated <p>Regional Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equitable distribution of buildings? • Potential for new buildings or additions • Number of school choices could be inequitable • Potential to redefine current regional model and boundaries. <hr/> <p>IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OPTION A – SMALLER SCHOOLS:</p> <p>Equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some students could be deprived of opportunity to succeed unless all staff are skilled at differentiation • Comprehensive offerings are limited • Limited or no supplementary staffing (flexibility is lost) • Limited opportunity to experience diverse populations • Better chance to develop school climate/culture connections for all because folks are more adaptable • Middle school size of 250 would require additional funding or co-location with another school to share resources. <p>Open Enrollment, Neighborhood Schools, and Alternative Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open enrollment has a great impact on smaller schools’ abilities to accommodating special needs and TAG students. • Smaller schools may be more attractive to parents/students (“warm huggy thing”) • Movement to decrease choice by limiting
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	<p>numbers could create flight from public system at smaller schools</p> <p>Program Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller schools have fewer opportunities to supplement program staffing • Program staffing by building, not student population, has greater impact on small schools (e.g. 1 FTE Admin.) <p>State and Federal Mandates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small schools will have difficulty providing a continuum of services <p>Student Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible transportation issue across boundaries <hr/> <p>IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OPTION B – WITHIN QEM SIZE RANGE:</p> <p>Equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased flexibility for school configuration • Ability to hire supplemental staff, but not full time • Increased opportunity to experience diverse populations • It becomes more difficult to develop school climate, culture, and connections for all. <hr/> <p>IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OPTION C – LARGER SCHOOLS:</p> <p>Equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant increase in flexibility for school configuration • Supplemental staffing approaches full time and increasing effectiveness • Potentially more diverse population • School-wide culture becomes increasingly difficult to foster or develop, less adaptability and more specialized <p>Open Enrollment, Neighborhood Schools, and Alternative Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger schools may be necessary to meet the needs of all students if there is choice for <u>all</u> (including special needs students) <p>State and Federal Mandates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to collaborate and brainstorm intervention strategies increase at larger schools when there are more teachers at level/specialty • Larger schools more easily accommodate the professional development required by IDEA/NCLB/ (mandates) for all teachers
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment-larger schools absorb disproportionate sub-groups with regards to AYP reporting • Larger schools can hire an assessment coordinator • Larger schools can hire test coordinators /and tech staff to support TESA <p>Student Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger schools with wider boundaries require more transportation of students (more kids=more riding the bus)
<p>NOTE: Our focus group elected to consider the idea of additional funding without regard to the actual dollar amount. We were asked to identify funding assumptions at the \$500,000 and \$1,000,000 levels. Our stand is that both amounts would have significant implications with regards to school size, but that impact would scale accordingly with the additional funds.</p>	
<p>Funding Assumptions 2 and 3: Some additional funds will be available to the District. (\$500,000/\$1,000,000 per school)</p> <p>Implementation Option D – Smaller Schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary Level @ 250 students • Middle level @ 350 students • Middle level @ 250 students (co-located with another school) • K-8 level @ 350 students <p>Implementation Option E – within QEM size range:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary Level @ 350 students • Middle level @ 500 students • K-8 level @ 500 students <p>NOTE: The QEM model suggests an elementary school size in the range of 300-400 students, and a middle school size in the range of 400-600 students.</p> <p>Implementation Option F – Larger Schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary Level @ 500 students • Middle level @ 650 students • K-8 level @ 650 students 	<p>IMPLICATIONS FOR ALL ASSUMPTION 2 AND 3 IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS:</p> <p>Equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for all students to succeed increases • Additional staff leads to increased specialization and difficulty with communication • Larger staff leads to some decreased investment in the team concept • Buildings still make choices on how FTE will be utilized and this might not equitability impact all schools • Increased funding offers the opportunity for more explicit instruction for students needing this • Additional funding will allow full-time FTE supplemental staffing at all levels • As school size increases, additional funding has less impact • Extra funding should include guidelines to address student achievement and build capacity • Add more specific targeted interventions, programs, etc. • Additional opportunities for learning time (e.g. extended day, extended year, service learning, targeted intervention programs...and do them well) • Add extra-curricular opportunities and increase connection with community • Add community liaisons <p>Open Enrollment, Neighborhood Schools, and Alternative Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional funding would ease the impact open enrollment has on smaller schools' abilities to accommodate special needs and TAG students. • Additional funding would allow smaller schools to become more attractive to parents/students. • Additional funding would allow smaller

	<p>schools to meet the needs of all students if there is choice for <u>all</u> (including special needs students)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More \$ would buy staff or professional development to better accommodate student needs • More \$ could enable schools to provide a continuum of services • Additional funds would allow schools to remain smaller and more attractive to public • Attractive buildings draw parents and students to schools <p>Program Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible equity with additional funds • Additional funds could stifle creativity • Changes/moves the tipping point or capacity to take on additional challenges • MS level – after school program staffing (e.g. athletics) supports the coach, but not necessarily the program supplies. So, small schools can more easily support program staff with fewer students but not necessarily helping support the supplies <p>Student Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All after-school and extended day programs could be provided with transportation • Increased boundaries (i.e. larger schools)=increased transportation costs • Transportation for all schools • (Scale changes as dollars increase) <p>Regional Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small schools are more viable and could require more buildings • Potential mobility migration changes
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After further dialogue within the **Elementary and Middle School Size** focus group, individual members have contributed the following statements for consideration:

Cydney Vandercar, Middle School Principal, Spencer Butte

I agree with the Quality Education Model's recommendations regarding school size for elementary and middle schools. Although a small school offers the ability to build strong community, a small school is unable to offer services of a larger school due to FTE challenges. If there is a large infusion of stable money to pay for full services at a small school, we must adjust our enrollments to make services equitable for all. (Examples of services: counseling, librarian time, art, music, nursing, administrative support, etc.)

Jeanne Ruiz, Elementary Alternative School Principal, Corridor and Yujin Gakuen

The school sizes suggested in the Quality Education Model seem to be the most flexible in providing what our group values and believes about education. I do not feel comfortable prioritizing the implementation options generated by our group because there are positive and negative implications to each option that must be carefully considered. I believe each of our proposed ranges of school sizes can work to meet the needs of students and additional money would increase opportunities for all students to succeed. Jeanne Ruiz

Kevin Boling, Elementary Regular School Principal, Holt

When considering the information presented in this report, there are two factors that are most important to me. One is that each school has the ability to serve the needs of all students, with very few exceptions. This notion presents large obstacles if the school is too small because the needed specialized support staff including

special education staff, music, P.E., etc. need to be shared between schools or are part-time which makes for inefficient service and transitory staff. Under current funding, it is really only the very large schools that can support full or nearly full time positions in these roles and thus have consistent plans from year to year.

Another factor that is important to me is the collegial relationships and shared vision among staff members. Small schools have a greater opportunity for this to develop naturally. In the largest schools, a great deal of consistent effort is required to produce these relationships. It is much harder and more time consuming for the leadership.

For the above reasons I think that the QEM got it right. The middle sized schools that were proposed could, with increased funding, be able to maintain services to meet the needs of almost all students, while still maintaining an organization that is modest enough in size to be able to work collaboratively without Herculean effort.

Brian Gulka, Elementary School Teacher, Gilham

I spent 4 days with 7 other educators discussing and deliberating over optimal elementary and middle school size. Although there are many key values (some competing) that must be considered when endorsing a school size proposal I am inclined to endorse a school size that allows for a comprehensive program for all students. Under the current funding model, even the QEM funding model, it is necessary for schools to be the QEM size or larger (elementary @350 students, middle school @ 500 students) in order for them to deliver a comprehensive education to all students. A comprehensive program includes qualified staff to teach music, P.E. technology and art. IDEA and the entire continuum of services for special needs students is part of a comprehensive program.

A major reason why I endorse the QEM size or larger school model is that larger schools can weather funding fluctuations while still maintaining a comprehensive program much better than smaller schools. With the uncertainty of legislative funding over the next 5 to 20 years, larger schools will better maintain their programs.

Tom Baratta, Special Education Teacher, Kelly

The impact of school size, based on student numbers, I believe is only a piece of a larger picture. I am not able to determine a minimum or maximum enrollment number as a guideline for an effective learning environment.

In our discussions, I examined the attributes associated with school size as a method for determining the effectiveness of each school's function. Can a school of any size foster collaboration within staff, create an atmosphere for students in being responsible for their learning, develop an environment for building and strengthening relationships, and bring all stakeholders to the table to work together?

I also realize that in order to create a school that could address the needs of a diverse population, adequate funding for programs must exist. I further realize that current and future funding will limit the ability for smaller schools to meet this need.

Given these questions and the information to be brought forth by the other work groups, I can only say that certain benefits and certain problems are present within each option. And that when attempting to develop a model for school size these benefits and problems be accounted for, and the nature of the learning and working environment to be created becomes paramount and not the number of students who pass through the doors.

QUESTIONS AND ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL BOARD AND UNIVERSITY OPERATED THINK TANK

We have the following questions that we believe the school board and university-operated think tank should consider as it synthesizes our work with the work of the other focus groups.

Questions and Issues to be considered by the Think Tank

- Open enrollment is a given in the 4J culture, yet in some ways is in conflict with providing successful educational services to all students due to inequitable pooling of populations. How do we control size and ameliorate the negative effects of choice?
- Before considering using bussing to enable more access to choice options, should 4J do a thorough study of districts currently using this model?
- What kind of inputs (staff development, coaching support, materials, facilities, etc) will be required to get all schools and/or staff members to the point where they can successfully help all students achieve at high levels?

- What school size is optimal to facilitate this type of staff work (teaming, coaching, flexibility, dual licensure, collaboration, etc.)?
- What additional professional development is needed? What is the cost of such training?
- Is an elementary school with 250 students (plus additional funding to support necessary resources) better than the QEM with 300-400 students? What research would support either model?
- What will be the consequences (negative or positive) on the numbers of home school and private school students? Will some come back? Will more leave?
- What are the implications for different schools and different models? (SPED, SES, ethnic/multicultural, achievement gap, transportation, programs, services)
- Given the work of the focus groups, what is the optimum size to support the changes that may be proposed?
- How does school size affect the alternative (magnet) schools and language immersion programs?
- What would be an appropriate transition time to phase in proposed changes?
- Do we have the facilities to support school size changes? How would possible changes affect the capacity of existing schools? Would we need to have more than one school collocated to support changes?
- Can implemented school size changes be supported long term given uncertainty with the current funding model? What will happen to the schools if funding over time falls below the necessary level to maintain the implemented school size?
- Will the QEM or small school size support a community and/or neighborhood school model?
- What size will provide the safest and most productive environment for all students?
- What size will foster safe and open collaboration among all members of the learning community?
- At what size will students have the right and opportunity to succeed in a rigorous program with highly qualified staff?
- How should middle schools be configured to appropriately accommodate small elementary schools?
- Should we consider redrawing boundaries to accommodate school size, or configure schools to accommodate existing boundaries?
- How would boundary changes affect transportation?
- Will small schools lead to segregation or more openness?
- Who will determine school size? Board, district, region, school? Could this increase competition for enrollment between schools?
- Are our current alternative schools more attractive to parents because the school size is smaller? Are these small school sizes for alternative schools the most appropriate?

We also believe that some stakeholder groups in the district may identify additional issues. We have listed what we believe those issues may be.

Staff

- How will school size affect the student-to-teacher ratio?
- How will new licensing requirements affect staffing at elementary schools? K-8 Schools?
- How will school size affect building FTE for general staffing and specialist staffing?
- How will changes to school size affect current staff composition?
- How will changes to school size affect the current school identify?
- How will school size affect the current Special Education model? High needs students?
- How will school size address equity issues?
- How will school size be affected by grade configurations such as blending and looping?
- Will staff be supported or abandoned if school size changes are implemented?
- Will staff be criticized for inadequate skills?
- Will staff be forced to relocate to other schools?
- Who will decide my placement (location and level)?
- Will I be compensated to support additional time necessary to implement changes?

Students

- Will I be required to change schools during a reconfiguration? Will I be given a choice to stay at my current school?
- How will my programs or choices change?
- Will current grade configurations remain after the change?
- Will I be able to stay in a school with my friends?
- Will I be accepted and welcomed regardless of my level of need for support and/or services?

Parents

- How will school size changes affect transportation?

- What will be the implications for neighborhood school?
- How will open enrollment practices change? What will be the consequences of these changes?
- Will the current lottery process need to change to support the school size changes?
- Will there be more or fewer choices?
- Will my child be better served by changes to school size?
- Will changes to school size offer more opportunities for my TAG student?
- How will grade configurations change to support school size changes? (K-8, full-day kindergarten, year long school, etc.)
- Is my child going to be safe at school?
- How will changes to school size impact me financially?

Community

- How will changes to school size impact me financially?
- What new or additional costs will occur?
- How will changes to school size affect alternative schools
- If there is a movement to support smaller schools, how will we justify past decisions to support larger schools?
- How will school size affect the community identity?
- How will equity issues be addressed during the transition?
 - Distribution of high needs students
 - Choice for all students
 - Ethnic clustering (self-selected segregation)
 - “Flight” away from schools for reasons typically tied to ethnicity, SES, SPED, etc.
 - Transportation
 - Enrollment caps
 - Lottery
- Will boundary changes impact property values?
- Are there resources to support the needs of minority populations at all schools? (Latino population referenced during focus group session.)
- Will it be possible to support a welcoming culture for minority populations at all schools?
- Will neighborhood and/or community schools be supported with changes to school size?
- How will changes to school size be implanted over time? Will there be additional resources allocated to support the transition?

ATTACHMENTS

Include Enrollment Data packet of information provided to group by Dennis Urso and Marilyn Clotz.

ATTACHMENT
IMPLICATIONS DEFINED

- (a) **Equity:** 4J is committed to ensuring that each student receives full services without regard to disability, race, color, gender, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, religion, marital status, socio-economic status, cultural background familial status, physical characteristics, or linguistic characteristics of a national origin group.

4J is also committed to closing the achievement gap between students while ensuring that all students continue to make academic progress. Closing the achievement gap may require the allocation of additional resources to some schools where there are a high number of low achieving students.

What implications, positive or negative, do the implementation options your group identified have for the district as it continues to focus on equity?

- (b) **Open Enrollment, Neighborhood Schools and Alternative Schools:** 4J is committed to ensuring that all students have equal access to all options that are available within the district and that are appropriate to the student's interests and needs.

4J also wants to assure that both neighborhood schools and alternative schools provide an excellent education program and that neither has an unfair advantage over the other.

What implications, positive or negative, do the implementation options your group identified have on neighborhood schools, alternative schools, and the district's open enrollment program?

- (c) **Program Staffing:** Historically, 4J has given schools a great deal of flexibility in how it allocates the resources they receive as long as the schools meet district, state, and federal requirements. As funding becomes more limited and as mandates, especially those mandates dealing with student achievement, increase there is often more and more pressure to consider program staffing. Program staffing is where the district requires that a certain portion of a school's resources be allocated to a certain program whether it is physical education, counseling, or library services. Currently the district program staffs special education and Title 1, certain student support positions at some schools, a portion of elementary music and, through this year, services that qualify for City levy funding. From time-to-time the district will also make additional funds available to a school to focus on a particular need such as closing the achievement gap.

What implications, positive or negative, do the implementation options your group identified have on program staffing?

- (d) **State and Federal Mandates:** 4J assumes that it will continue to comply with state and federal mandates and that those mandates will influence the implementation options your focus groups will identify. The district also assumes that the result of this planning process will not require it to challenge major mandates such as special education and student assessment. There may, however, be questions about whether some of your implementation options are possible under state and federal law.

What implications, positive or negative, do your implementation options have on the ability of the district to continue to comply with state and federal mandates? As you consider these implications you may want to consider if and how state and federal mandates limit your implementation options. Or you may want to consider if it may be reasonable to consider challenging some state mandates? For example, if the district was to implement a full day kindergarten program, the state currently funds only half-day programs, and the district would be required to reallocate funds.

- (e) **Student Transportation:** Student transportation is mandated in certain circumstances: for example the state requires that students who live a certain distance from school be transported and the federal government requires that students with disabilities who are transferred to a school other than their neighborhood because of their disability receive transportation services.

What implications, positive or negative, do your implementation options have on providing student transportation?

- (f) **High Schools:** What implications, positive or negative, do your implementation options have on high schools?

- (g) **Elementary Schools:** What implications, positive or negative, do your implementation options have on elementary schools?
- (h) **Middle Schools:** What implications, positive or negative, do your implementation options have on middle schools?
- (i) **Regional Impact (Churchill, North, Sheldon, and South):** Each region in town has its own feeder system and the schools in that region work together to ensure that students transition between schools. Enrollment at elementary and middle schools affects high school enrollment within a region. The students and their families in each region also have differing expectations of their schools. Changing instructional models, limiting the size of schools, and other issues may have different impacts on different geographic regions of 4J.

What implications, positive or negative, do your implementation options have on each of the four regions?

- (j) **Other Implications (Including implications for other focus group topics):** Are there other implications that your group has identified?