

BOARD AGENDA ITEM
Kalispell Public Schools
Kalispell, MT
September 13, 2011

Title: Elementary Overcrowding options

Situation: This summer we enrolled more students than anticipated K-8. KMS is more than 200 students higher than the original estimate for this school year, made when it opened as a middle school in 2006. Our kindergarten, first and second grade classrooms are all larger than anticipated in the long range plan and even increased over last year enrollment. A combination of factors has created this situation. The unexpected growth in student population is certainly an important factor, but added to that is the fact that we do not have room to house additional teachers in our current k-5 buildings even if we had the funds to hire appropriate certified staffing. We are also unable to provide the aide support to the classrooms, which would help us meet accreditation standards, because we have had to make budget reductions over the last three years and continue to have insufficient funds to increase staff.

We are initiating the process of creating a Long Range Facility Plan that will encompass capital projects; building upgrades and maintenance; technology needs; staffing; and instructional supports. All of these components work closely together and we must examine all options to provide the best setting for our staff and students in both short and long term.

Financial Implications:

During the Budget Reduction process the Board of Trustees indicated that administration could allocate all remaining program retention funds to support instruction in the elementary district. Due to the fact, early enrollment numbers indicated that we might need more personnel support and to err on the side of caution for unexpected 2011-12 financial needs; we did not allocate these funds. In addition, the retirement incentives and job reductions provided us with additional savings in the elementary district so we did not need to use these funds for approved staffing once the board approved budget reductions were completed. At this time we have \$185,000 left in Program Retention funds that could be utilized or held in reserve for future personnel or program needs.

Alternatives and Pros/Cons: In the attached document

Prepared by: Darlene Schottle

Superintendent's Recommendation: Will be provided at the Board meeting following discussion with the Finance Committee.

Summary

We have experienced increased enrollment in our primary grades, particularly in our kindergartens. This increased enrollment has resulted in many overloaded classrooms in our primary grades throughout the district. Due to recent budget reductions and funding availability in the elementary district, we are challenged by our lack of financial resources needed to support the teacher FTE necessary to decrease the enrollment pressures on these classrooms. Additionally, our lack of extra classroom space in our elementary schools limits our ability to secure any additional classrooms even if we were to be able to add teacher FTE.

Steps have already been taken to mitigate the negative effect of large classroom sizes in our primary classrooms. These steps include: creative scheduling, recess adjustments to allow teachers to work with smaller groups of students and the reassignment of para-professionals into primary classrooms with overloaded classrooms. The possible solutions presented are aimed at providing relief for the 2011-2012 school year but it is evident that a permanent, long term solution is needed. The administrative team is looking forward to working with the board and community in crafting a long term solution regarding our district's enrollment, staffing and facilities challenges.

Below is a summary of our student enrollment numbers in Grades K-2 and the teacher FTE we have assigned to each grade level.

Kindergarten Class Sizes (State Accreditation Standards Class Size Limit = 20) 9/7/11

Number of Classes (Teacher FTE)	Number of Students	Average Class Size	Class Size Range
15	366	24.4	23-25

4 FTE additional kindergarten classrooms needed to get within accreditation class size limits

1st Grade Class Sizes (State Accreditation Standards Class Size Limit = 20) 9/7/11

Number of Classes (Teacher FTE)	Number of Students	Average Class Size	Class Size Range
15	333	22.2	19-24

2 FTE additional kindergarten classrooms needed to get within accreditation class size limits

2nd Grade Class Sizes (State Accreditation Standards Class Size Limit = 20) 9/7/11

Number of Classes (Teacher FTE)	Number of Students	Average Class Size	Class Size Range
14	313	22.4	20-24

2 FTE additional kindergarten classrooms needed to get within accreditation class size limits

Potential solutions that would minimize the class size pressure on these classrooms have recently been brainstormed. The following pages outline 4 potential solutions that we would like the board to consider for implementation during the 2011-2012 school year. Included in these solutions are the pros and cons related to their implementation. Also included is an approximate cost for each solution. The following potential solutions have been created through discussion with the board curriculum committee, building administrators, teachers and central office staff.

Pros and Cons of the Four Possible K-1 Class Size Solutions

#1. Additional Aide Time

Possible solution #1 involves the addition of classroom aide FTE into each of our schools. This proposal assumes that an additional .5 FTE would be added to four elementary schools and 1.0 FTE added to Edgerton School. Edgerton would receive more additional FTE than other elementary schools because of their enrollment. Aides would be available to assist classroom teachers as they work to meet the academic and social needs of their students. Individual buildings would determine the placement of the additional FTE based upon identified needs.

Pros	Cons
Additional support to classroom teacher	3.0 aides do not go very far
Greater opportunity for small groups	Non-certified individual providing instruction
Opportunities for enrichment and remediation	Does not solve our accreditation issues in our primary classrooms
Would add 3.0 FTE to instructional staffing at our 5 elementary schools.	
The potential for serving students in grades K-2 is present.	

Budgetary Considerations:

3 FTE Classroom Aides - Range

\$10.16 X 3 FTE X 180 days X 7 hours a day and 16% Benefit costs, + Health Insurance Benefit (Sept-June)	\$49,729 (low)
\$11.19 X 3 FTE X 180 days X 7 hours a day and 16% Benefit costs, + Health Insurance Benefit (Sept-June)	\$54,246 (high)

#2. Additional Kg Classroom

Proposal #2 involves the renting or purchase of a modular classroom that would be placed at Peterson School. Its placement at Peterson would allow us to move Peterson neighborhood students who are now placed in other kindergartens throughout the district back to their neighborhood schools. We have approximately 30 displaced Peterson kindergartners. An additional teacher would be hired to fill teach in this classroom. Additional teacher instructional materials and furniture would also need to be purchased.

Pros	Cons
Decrease class size	Class size not impacted much. Does not solve our accreditation issues in our primary classrooms
Get displaced Kgers back to Peterson	Physical costs are high. This is the most expensive solution
Certified Teacher providing instruction	Stop gap – not a part of long term facilities planning efforts planned for 2011-2012
Job market is favorable for the hire of a new teacher	Need to hire a Kg Teacher – pretty late for this
	Only kindergartners would benefit.
	Changes specialist schedules and lunch schedule

Budgetary Considerations:

Stick Built Modular Classroom – 900 sq ft @ \$200 per sq ft	\$180,000
Materials for Classroom Teacher	\$2,500
Classroom Furniture	\$15,000
Classroom Technology	\$2,500
Approximate Total	<u>\$200,000</u>

#3 Librarian Time increase by .2 per school.

As a part of budget reductions for the 2010-2011 school year, library staffing in our elementary schools was decreased by the equivalent of 1.0 FTE. This resulted in librarians being available for .8 FTE at Elrod, Hedges, Peterson and Russell. It also resulted in 1.4 librarians being available at Edgerton. This represented a .2 FTE elementary librarian reduction at each of our elementary schools. Proposal #3 would return the .2 elementary librarian FTE to each of our elementary schools, making them available to collaborate with classroom teachers and building administration to assist in the delivery of curricular instruction, assessment and program evaluation.

Pros	Cons
Provide opportunities for decreased class size when the librarian is providing instruction	Class size not impacted much
Opportunities for enrichment and remediation which could improve the educational experience provided students	Need to hire a Librarian – pretty late for this
Certified Teacher providing instruction – Literacy Experts	Does not solve our accreditation issues in our primary classrooms
Get our librarians back to fulltime in one building. No travel between sites would be necessary.	Future reduction of the added FTE would be difficult
Librarians and Union are supportive of job description rewrite to focus .2 FTE on curricular instruction in collaboration with teachers and administration	Only .2 additional FTE at each site.
Job market is favorable for the hire of a new librarian	
Additional library time will get us back into accreditation standards for librarians	
Job description adjustment was created jointly between the district and librarians	
The potential for serving students in grades K-2 is present.	

Budgetary Considerations:

One FTE Librarian - Range

BA Step 2 - \$30,451 + 16% benefits + \$518 per month health insurance	\$41,644 (low)
MA Step 9 - \$51,884 + 16% benefits + \$518 per month health insurance	\$66,401 (high)

.5 FTE Aide - Range

\$10.16 X .5 FTE X 180 days X 7 hours a day and 16% Benefit costs + Health Insurance	\$11,568 (low)
\$11.19 X .5 FTE X 180 days X 7 hours a day and 16% Benefit costs + Health Insurance	\$12,322 (high)

Approximate Cost Range \$53,212- \$78,723

#4 Students in School 4 days per week. (½ of students on Monday, all students Tues-Thur, other ½ of students on Friday

Proposal #4 creates much smaller class sizes (10-13) two days per week. Teachers would work with ½ of their student population on Monday, work with all students Tuesday through Thursday and with the other ½ of their students on Friday. Teachers would identify student groupings that would provide the best opportunity to provide smaller class instruction, focused upon identified academic needs on Monday and Friday. On Tuesday-Thursday teachers would work with all of their students.

Pros	Cons
Provide opportunities for decreased class size on Monday and Friday	Class size only impacted 2 days per week
Opportunities for enrichment and remediation on Monday and Friday	Daycare issues for parents – Pretty late to ask them to make adjustments. Not sure our daycares could handle the numbers of kids two days per week.
Certified Teacher providing instruction	Does not solve our accreditation issues in our primary classrooms
No Cost	Rotating schedule would be confusing for parents and students.
Can still count kindergarteners as full time students in the state funding formula	Only kindergartners would benefit.
Monday and Friday groups could be created based upon academic needs giving teachers one whole day to work on specific skills each group needs to succeed in Kindergarten	Kindergarten instructional time is decreased
No Transportation Adjustments Needed	Equity among other primary grades

Budgetary Considerations: None

9/9/11