

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: District K-8 Team

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Re: K-8 Final Report and Recommendations

Date: February 16, 2006

**K-8 Schools
Exploring Choices for the Future**

The Process

On behalf of the SLCSB Board of Education, district leadership met with principals in August, 2005 to launch the exploration of the K-8 concept in the Hillside feeder schools. We began working with school teams and developed a K-8 website. Later, Clayton feeder schools entered into a parallel process. Through a shared governance process at each of eleven schools, communities conducted an extensive exploration of the K-8 concept. Upon completion of this comprehensive task, each team submitted a report of their findings and conclusions summarized below.

Common Elements of School Team Exploration

Schools designed their own processes; however, many elements of the explorations were common. Examples of team activities follow:

- Formed school teams that met regularly
- Involved community, faculty, and staff
- Studied research
- Developed survey(s) and analyzed school level data
- Conducted community meetings attended by Board members and other interested stakeholders
- Disseminated information to communities, i.e. letters; newsletters; agenda items on SIC, PTA and SCC meetings; informal conversations; and school websites
- Visited K-8 schools
- Drew conclusions from data and discussions

School teams reported, both formally and informally, positive outcomes that came from their explorations. The elementary and middle schools had an opportunity to share positive stories with their communities, celebrate successes, and renew commitment to their programs.

District K-8 Team Recommendations

The district K-8 team endorses each of the following school recommendations and proposes that the Board of Education take the following actions:

- Launch the design, planning and implementation of the K-8 model at Whittier and Nibley Park Schools
- Form design committees for the rebuilding of Hillside and Clayton Middle Schools

By directing this work to begin as soon as possible, the Board can demonstrate a continued commitment to these communities and the established facilities plan. SLCS D has the necessary resources and capacity to move forward on both of these endeavors.

The K-8 team can coordinate the K-8 design efforts and will give timely updates to the Board as to their progress and needs.

Proposed Timeline and Next Steps

March 7, 2006

Board Consideration of Recommendations

- Convene design committees at Clayton and Hillside
- Launch planning phase for K-8 at Nibley Park, Whittier and in the Open Classroom which has been previously approved for expansion

April, 2006 – March, 2007

Periodic updates from district and school K-8 teams

- Professional development
- Focus of curriculum and instruction
- Staffing and endorsements
- Facility design

April, 2007

Final Implementation Plan for Nibley Park and Whittier

July/August, 2007

Implementation of K-8 Plans

Potential K-8 Schools Initial Requests for Support

If approved, Nibley Park and Whittier need additional assistance and district commitments to implement the K-8 model. We support their requests as follows:

Nibley Park

- Give counsel regarding implementation or phase-in of new grades
- Provide library with ample media and facilities age appropriate for all students
- Commit adequate funding to incorporate two new grades and associated athletic, music and academic curricula
- Offer recommendations for curriculum and facilities for new 7th and 8th grades

Whittier

- Keep magnet ELP program at Whittier
- Fund needs for additional faculty such as teachers, counselors, and administration
- Maintain year round calendar
- Provide funding for physical facility associated with athletic, music, science, and other academic curricula determined by the design of the Whittier K-8 program
- Retain current principal

Conclusion

We appreciate the Board of Education's commitment to Essential 6, Choice Initiatives, in the Student Achievement Plan. Exploring options and offering choices to our community is valuable and helps us improve our services while enhancing education for students and their families.

**Summary of School Team Recommendations
Elementary Schools**

Beacon Heights Recommendation: No

Summary of team findings:

- Value transition between elementary and middle school
- Concern about decreased number of electives
- Bad influence of older students on younger students

Bonneville Recommendation: No

Summary of team findings:

- Concern about wide range of ages
- Benefit of new setting after sixth grade
- Limited options for upper grade students in K-8
- Facility and site restrictions

Dilworth Recommendation: No

Summary of team findings:

- Value transition between elementary and middle school
- Continue effective implementation of middle school philosophy in SLCS
- Maintain 500-550 elementary enrollment and new boundaries
- Concerns for special education and ELL students
- Rebuild Hillside Middle School

Emerson Recommendation: No

Summary of team findings:

- Strong interest for K-8 from parents, staff and students
- Unique school population: neighborhood, International Pathways and special education programs offered
- Neighborhood school is small at approximately 300 students, with too few students in upper grades to support K-8
- When rebuilt, consider developing possibilities such as a world language academy or a math, science and technology magnet

Hawthorne Recommendation: No

Summary of team findings:

- Concerns for current structure of middle schools
- Concern about physical set-up of grade levels in K-8
- Limited electives
- Facility and site restrictions
- Complexity of three distinct choices : Neighborhood, ELP and C&A
- Too few students in upper grades to support K-8
- Strong support for K-8 from C&A Lab parents

Summary of School Team Recommendations
Elementary Schools, continued

Highland Park Recommendation: No

Summary of team findings:

- Initial committee consensus on K-8 as a valuable option
- Lack of community support for K-8; need time to heal, rebuild and reclaim trust
- Focus energy on creating best K-6 possible

Indian Hills Recommendation: No

Summary of team findings:

- Appreciation to the Board of Education for allowing a variety of school and/or program choices in the district
- Rebuild/retrofit two middle schools while offering additional choices for students, families and staff
- Continue work on local school improvement plan

Lincoln Recommendation: No

Summary of team findings:

- Facility and site restrictions
- Limited electives, itinerant and part-time teachers not ideal
- Community supportive of K-8 at Lincoln
- Equity - K-8 would segregate Lincoln's multicultural students from other socioeconomic groups and cultures at the middle school
- Access - Some families lack transportation to attend school functions at Clayton
- Families may be uncomfortable or intimidated at Clayton
- Integrated middle school located in the central city area is ideal

Nibley Park Recommendation: Yes

Summary of team findings:

- Safety issues minimized with proper planning, building structure and implementation
- Adequate space exists for sports, music and electives
- Additional students bring funds to support additional faculty
- Concerns about negative influence of older students on younger students mitigated by productive discipline, comfortable environment, and students well-known by teachers
- Positive effects of eliminating transition to middle school
- Strengthen student relationships
- Students stay close to home
- Build on popular after-school program
- Familiar faculty and administration during adolescent years

**Summary of School Team Recommendations
Elementary Schools, continued**

Uintah Recommendation: No

Summary of team findings:

- Concerns with current structure of 7th and 8th grade education in our district
- Develop clear 7th and 8th grade improvement plan regardless of K-8 outcomes
- Facility and site restrictions, i.e. rebuilding, having trailers, boundary changes
- Question whether or not K-8 would significantly improve student achievement

Whittier Recommendation: Yes

Summary of team findings:

- Initial parent concerns adequately addressed, i.e. keeping ELP, younger student exposure to adolescent behavior, overall age differences among students, and adequate electives
- Confidence that future concerns will have adequate solutions
- Teacher desire to retain magnet ELP program at Whittier
- Focus on student progress and needs for all students K through 8

**Summary of Findings
Middle Schools**

Clayton

Summary of findings:

- Not enough evidence in articles to support a K-8 model
- Parents do not believe K-8 is an effective model
- Each department has a variety of strengths
- After school programs are successful
- Informational Open House for perspective parents held in January

Hillside

Hillside's school strengths include:

- Middle school philosophy practiced
- High expectations for all students
- Varied teaching and learning approaches
- High quality teaching and student work
- Collaborative Learning Communities and SIOP
- Advisory period in place
- Assist students through transition into 7th grade
- Plan to increase teaming (four houses)