



Site Council Meeting

AGENDA

2/1/2011

3:45 PM to 5:15 PM

Lower Brookside School Library

Type of meeting: Monthly Brookside Site Council Meeting

Representatives: Joyce Chartock, Carrie Rohrer, Barbara Davis, Ruth Leader, Marci Trahan, Tracy Smith, Teresa Machado, Mary Kavanaugh, Meg Heimbrodt, Jeanine Dixon, Jennifer Gauna, Eric Dorfman, Holley Shafer

AGENDA TOPICS

5 min	Welcome and administrative items	Jeanine
20 min	Review K-5 and Boundary Study Documents sent out to community at large	Tracy/Marci
20 min	Subcommittee Report: Comments from community input meetings regarding K-5 transition	Tracy/Jeanine
30 min	Discuss ideas & thoughts on how best to transition current students in K-5 reconfiguration	Group
5 minutes	Wrap Up	Jeanine

Ross Valley School District Enrollment Boundaries Determination Process January 2011

Ross Valley School Board Trustees recognize the need to adjust elementary school enrollment boundaries in response to the District's growing population and facility expansion. Specifically, elementary school enrollment boundaries must be adjusted to:

- allocate increased enrollment at our four elementary campuses to support target enrollments of 360-400 per site, and
- support Brookside School's transition into two separate schools from its existing one school, two site configuration.

The Board developed the following process and timeline to complete this objective.

- I. Establish criteria to guide enrollment boundaries determination
January 7, 2011 - During a special public board meeting, Trustees identified the following criteria. Enrollment boundaries will:
 - * Create and maintain four, independent "k-5" schools of similar size.
 - * Prioritize enrollment for residents who live closest to a school site and within its boundary - taking into consideration natural geographic boundaries – to:
 - a. enable and encourage walking and biking to school, and
 - b. minimize the number of people travelling by car.
 - * Align with Safe Routes to School for students who walk or bike to school.
 - * Maintain accessibility to District-wide programs (e.g., MAP and the Learning Center).
 - * Minimize the number of current students who must change schools during the transition phase as a result of these boundary adjustments.
- II. Engage professional advisors to create appropriate scenarios based on this criteria
January 7, 2011 - RVSD hired Schreder & Associates to conduct an enrollment boundary study and develop draft scenarios. Schreder will bring their knowledge of the district, as well as their extensive modeling skills, to ensure these scenarios accurately reflect established criteria. Their preliminary report will be delivered to the Trustees on February 8, 2011.
- III. Communicate criteria and scenario "finalists" to RVSD community (staff, parents, and neighbors)
February 2011 - The Ross Valley community will be asked to provide input, through various forums and communication options (e.g., Roundtable; Parent Clubs; Site Councils; Principal discussions) on the scenarios presented.
- IV. Adopt final enrollment boundaries through formal action
March 2011 - The Ross Valley School Board will consider all information received and make a final decision on district enrollment boundaries and associated guidelines during a public school board meeting.

BROOKSIDE CONFIGURATION CHANGE TWO CAMPUSES TO TWO INDEPENDENT K-5 SCHOOLS FAQs

Questions & Answers

Questions have arisen during the course of discussions around the Brookside transition to two K-5 campuses. The responses herein are the result of a collaborative effort on the part of the Board of Trustees (Chris Carlucci, Board President; Sharon Sagar, Board Clerk; Annelise Bauer; Conn Hickey; and Heidi Kritscher Weller), Superintendent Eileen Rohan, and the Brookside Principals Marci Trahan (Brookside School Lower Campus) and Tracy Smith (Brookside School Upper Campus).

How did the reconfiguration come about?

The concept of returning the two campuses to individual K-5 schools has arisen multiple times over the last 15-20 years. Families, primarily those with more than one child, have expressed frustration trying to split their time between two campuses as well as travel considerations with transporting students between campuses. In addition, the transition between campuses for these younger students has caused some anxiety. Finally, with our enrollment increases and class size reduction, it has become impossible to keep the entire second grade on one campus together. Several meetings were held in 2009-10 to gather input from the Brookside community. In the spring of 2010, the Board of Trustees unanimously voted to transition to two separate K-5 schools. The timing was ideal with the plans to update both campuses to accommodate increasing enrollment, as it allows the District to construct any needed facilities that will meet both needs at once.

When was the decision made to convert the Brookside campuses to two K-5's?

The decision to change the Brookside Campuses from a K-2 and 2-5 configuration to two K-5 campuses was made by the Ross Valley Board of Trustees in the Spring of 2010 in the context of planning for overall increasing enrollment and facilities needs in the District. The Board weighed the pros and cons collected from various community conversations and decided unanimously to transition to two separate K-5 campuses. The decision was based on consideration of a number of critical factors that included planning for equitable enrollment, facilities, and instructional programs.

What opportunities for input were available to the Brookside community (parents and staff) prior to the Ross Valley School District Board making this decision? Was a survey done?

The Board of Trustees directed administrators to work with the Brookside Site Council to develop a plan for gathering input. Staff was surveyed and two separate parent forums (one in the morning and one in the evening) were facilitated to gather perspectives and concerns. The Board of Trustees conducted several conversations in the 2009-2010 school year that included the public. After consideration of multiple factors, including enrollment, facilities and program needs district-wide, and the many comments received during multiple meetings, the Board decided it had enough information to make the decision without taking a survey.

What are some of the pros and cons of the K-5 configuration and how does this relate to the Strategic Plan?

Student/Adult relationships are a strong focus of the Ross Valley School District Strategic Plan. We recognize the importance a strong teaching staff, as well as all of the support staff; have to a successful educational experience.

A K-5 campus provides children the opportunity to attend one school for six years. This stability allows for a cohesive, articulated learning experience for students, parents, and staff. Staff and parents work together over time to foster trust, build confidence, and establish long term relationships which benefit our students.

A split campus configuration creates the need for parents to travel back and forth between the two campuses and divide their time between two different sites if they have more than one child. For younger students, building strong relationships and consistency is very important. Spending three years at one site K-2, and then changing to a new site with many new people and processes to learn, can be difficult for our younger students. Having split campuses also means that children transition through three different schools during their K-8 years.

Each of our other elementary schools, Wade Thomas and Manor, both thrive using the K-5 model.

Does splitting the Brookside campuses necessarily mean that there will be more “split/combo” classes?

Combination classes occur when the number of students in a given grade level determines a need to blend grades. Class size is dependent on many factors such as state compliance for class size reduction in grades K to 3 and teacher contracts. Combination classes are in place currently at Brookside Lower and Brookside Upper as well as other campuses. The decision to create a combination class is evaluated on each campus each year based on the number of children at each grade level in a given year. For example, at Wade Thomas this year there are two fourth grades, two fifth grades, and no 4/5 split classes.

Some wonder about the change and want to know if it doesn't create more problems than it solves?

Some families and members of our community might have preferred to stay with the current model at Brookside. The Ross Valley Board of Trustees has a strong commitment to support the community's conversion from the current model to two K-5 campuses. While final details have yet to be determined, it is the District's goal to avoid any unnecessary transitions for students and families. Our principals will be leading conversations with teachers, parents and community members to talk through these transition plans.

What is the history of the Brookside campuses?

The configuration of Brookside has had a history of change given the enrollment numbers in the District.

Brookside School opened in 1946 and Hidden Valley School opened in 1957. Both schools provided a K-6 program just prior to 1983 when Hidden Valley was closed due to declining enrollment. When enrollment began to increase a few years later, the District decided to reopen the Hidden Valley site as Brookside Upper with grades 4-6, and transitioned Brookside Lower to a K-3 program. The sixth grade program was moved to White Hill in the early 1990s as enrollment continued to climb, and the third grade was moved to Brookside Upper Campus. Due to increased enrollment, over the past three years Brookside's 2nd graders have been divided, and housed at both campuses.

Given all that the District is dealing with right now (i.e.; facilities and bond expenditure limits), why would the District decide to move to a K-5 configuration now? How much money will it cost to make these two K-5 campuses and where will the money come from?

We do not expect additional costs in re-configuration over and above the needs to expand our campuses in general to meet our growing enrollment needs and the demands that come with that such as library books, technology, and play areas.

Would the school make this transition all at once or would they consider phasing in grades?

The principals are having conversations with the Board, superintendent, and staff to create a transition plan. It is anticipated that, at the March 22nd board meeting, the transition plan will be presented to the Board of Trustees in an open session for approval. It is the intention of the school district to minimize the number of transitions for any given child or family and to insure the quality of our teaching and learning environments throughout the transition.

In addition to the classrooms and other construction plans with the Bond funds, will each campus have the same basic features and programs for students?

Yes, it is important that students in each of our schools have equitable educational experiences. We are working to ensure that students have access to all of the same types of materials, facilities, programs and quality staff. We have worked to identify any areas which will require moves of materials, space needs, technology improvements, and additional play spaces or resources. We are currently developing plans to implement these changes.

Will Brookside Lower get a multi-purpose room like Upper Campus as part of this overall transition?

Both Brookside campuses are scheduled to receive *Measure A* funds to meet program and facilities needs. A new multi-purpose room is planned for the Brookside Lower Campus.

How does this new configuration affect our fundraising abilities for each campus (i.e.; YES, Octoberfest)? Would this hinder or enhance our efforts?

All school site parent groups have the ability to provide resources through fund raising for students throughout the District. The two K-5 Brookside campuses will have the same opportunities as all other schools to determine fundraising events such as Octoberfest.

What about families that will be going in their last year at Upper and who happen to fall into the Lower Brookside boundary. Will there be opportunities for these families and others to stay where they are if requested?

The Board has a strong commitment to minimizing the number of transitions for our children and families and to insure the quality of our teaching and learning environments throughout the process.

If we move to two K-5 campuses, would the curriculum offered be equitable, such as: computer labs, science programs, YES enrichment programs, etc.

Yes, the District's goal is to have all elementary campuses comparable in size and curriculum.