

Conway School District
Elementary School Closure Report
January 22, 2024

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Scope of Report

The Conway School Board has discussed the possibility of reducing facilities in recent years. There have been several studies and reports provided with the most recent report summary dated June 2022. There was a recommendation to close one of the current elementary schools and move 6th grade students to the current A. Crosby Kennett Middle School. The report included cost savings, logistics, transportation, class sizes, and curricular and co-curricular programming.

This report replicates and updates many of the details in the June 2022 document.

Guiding Assumptions and Methodology

It should be understood that without determining which school facility is projected to close, there is variability in determining actual student population counts at the two remaining elementary schools. Redistricting based on residency would have to occur and elementary "School Choice" would no longer be an option in order to stabilize student populations at the two remaining schools.

Redistricting to create two kindergarten through grade 5 elementary schools would not only mean that students currently enrolled in the school that is closed would transition to one of the two remaining schools, but students currently in either of the two remaining schools, may also transition to a different school based on their residency.

The cost savings as outlined in this report, are conservative estimates to ensure that the transition to the new configuration is successful.

Cost savings for personnel is consistent with the RIF (Reduction In Force) language within the collective bargaining agreements and personnel policies. The RIF language typically (not always) reflects years of experience within the district as a determining factor for layoffs.

Facility costs are made up in two parts: 1) operational, 2) capital costs. Operational costs consist of utilities, general maintenance and repair, equipment upgrades, snow removal contracts, etc. The capital costs have been outlined throughout the budget process and consist of large ticket items including roofs, windows, heating and mechanical systems and potential security upgrades. The projections in this section of the report are conservative estimates and do not include cost savings in technology, furniture replacement, etc

Enrollment History and Projections

The student enrollment data provided below is historical information reported annually on October 1st of each school year.

updated 1/10/24								
Enrollment October 1, 2018								
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
CES	33	28	31	37	25	29	31	214
JFS	25	20	33	23	30	30	33	194
PTS	35	36	38	39	37	39	43	267
Total	93	84	102	99	92	98	107	675
Enrollment October 1, 2019								
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
CES	35	29	32	32	38	28	29	223
JFS	20	24	18	38	24	29	27	180
PTS	42	35	33	38	41	35	39	263
Total	97	88	83	108	103	92	95	666
Enrollment October 1, 2020								
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
CES	24	35	22	29	31	37	31	209
JFS	25	17	21	19	37	25	32	176
PTS	26	38	35	36	29	37	35	236
Total	75	90	78	84	97	99	98	621
Enrollment October 1, 2021								
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
CES	21	21	37	23	28	30	34	194
JFS	13	24	20	21	21	38	23	160
PTS	33	28	40	34	34	30	38	237

Total	67	73	97	78	83	98	95	591
Enrollment October 1, 2022								
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
CES	21	28	25	40	27	29	31	201
JFS	23	17	27	25	23	23	39	177
PTS	31	29	30	36	33	31	31	221
Totals	75	74	82	101	83	83	101	599

Enrollment October 1, 2023								
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
CES	22	22	28	26	38	25	26	187
JFS	23	23	20	29	28	25	26	174
PTS	24	33	30	30	34	34	30	215
Totals	69	78	78	85	100	84	82	576

Projection for 2025-2026 School Year											
	K	1	2	3	4	5	K-5 Totals	6	7 (incl. SAU13)	8 (incl. SAU13)	Total
CES	25	25	22	22	28	26	148	38			
JFS	22	22	23	23	20	29	139	28			
PTS	30	30	24	33	20	30	167	34			
KMS									108	107	212
Totals	77	77	69	78	68	85	454	100			312
* K # based on 5 year average											

The table below includes SAU 13 current enrollments.

2023	Madison	Freedom	SAU13	Pine Tree	Conway EI	John Fuller	SAU 9	TOTAL	
K	16	4	20	24	22	23	69	89	
1	12	10	22	33	22	23	78	100	
2	14	8	22	30	28	20	78	100	
3	12	2	14	30	26	29	85	99	
4	26	9	35	34	38	28	100	135	
5	16	8	24	34	25	25	84	108	
6	18	7	25	30	26	26	82	107	
Total	114	48	162	215	187	174	576	738	738

Projected 7th grade enrollment at KMS				Projected 8th Grade Enrollment at KMS				
Year	TOTAL	Current Grade		Year	TOTAL	Current Grade		
2030-31	89	K		2030-31	100	1		
2029-30	100	1		2029-30	100	2		
2028-29	100	2		2028-29	99	3		
2027-28	99	3		2027-28	135	4		
2026-27	135	4		2026-27	108	5		
2025-26	108	5		2025-26	107	6		
2024-25	107	6		2024-25	131	7		
			Total Projected Enrollment at KMS					
			2030-31		189			
			2029-30		200			
			2028-29		199			
			2027-28		234			
			2026-27		243			
			2025-26		215			
			2024-25		238			

Configuration Enrollments

(2 elementary schools grades K-5, 1 middle school grades 6-8)

The table below provides a projection for potential class sizes and staffing with an acceptable allowance for variability. It is not as simple as dividing up the number of students that are impacted by the closing of a school. To determine the actual class sizes the following would need to be determined: which school is closing, the physical location of the students, the number of students in each grade within those families.

Projection for 2024-2025 School Year											
	K	1	2	3	4	5	K-5 Totals	6	7 (incl. SAU13)	8 (incl. SAU13)	6-8 Totals
School 1	2 (34-44)	2 (30-40)	2 (35-45)	2 (35-45)	3 (38-48)	3 (45-55)	14 (217-277)				
School 2	2 (34-44)	2 (30-40)	2 (35-45)	2 (35-45)	3 (38-48)	3 (45-55)	14 (217-277)				
KMS								6 (14)	6 (16-20)	6 (16-24)	236
Totals	77	69	78	78	85	100	477	84	107	131	320
* K # based on 5 year average											
Projection for 2025-2026 School Year											
	K	1	2	3	4	5	K-5 Totals	6	7 (incl. SAU13)	8 (incl. SAU13)	6-8 Totals

Staffing Distribution

In closing of one elementary school there will be some reductions to staff due to efficiencies of consolidation. There will be some transfers from the elementary schools to KMS and there may be some additions to balance out programming.

POTENTIAL STAFFING REDUCTIONS/ADDITIONS/SHIFTS

Position	Reduction from Elementary	Shift to Middle School	Addition to Elementary and/or Middle School	Net Change	Notes
Elementary Principal	1.0			-1.0	
Clerical Aide	1.0			-1.0	
Administrative Assistant	1.0			-1.0	
Nurse	1.0			-1.0	
Custodian	2.0			-2.0	
Family Support Liaison	1.0			-1.0	
K-5 Classroom Teachers	1.0 to 2.0			-1.0 to -2.0	There is potential to reduce 1 to 2 classroom teachers due to the reconfiguration. In the first year it is recommended to only reduce one teacher.
Grade 6 Classroom Teachers	6.0	6.0		0	Transfer all 6, 6th grade teachers to KMS. Two 6th grade teachers would be attached to each of the three teams.
Reading Specialist	1.0	1.0		0	To KMS to support Gr 6/other students not yet demonstrating proficiency.
School Counselor	1.0	1.0		0	Minimum Standards for School Approval require a counselor for every 300 students. The increase in enrollment to KMS would create a need for a second school

					counselor.
Library Media Specialist	1.0			-1.0	
Art			0.3	+0.3	Art is currently part time in each elementary school with 1.7 FTE in FY 25 budget. We would recommend providing 1.0 FTE art teachers in each of the remaining elementary schools. Note, this may be more of a budgetary increase, as the current part time positions do not carry benefits.
Music	1.0	0.5		-0.5	Currently there are 3.0 FTE elementary music teachers. If an elementary school closes there is the need for 2.0 FTE. At the same time there will be a need for additional music support at KMS. It is recommended to transfer 0.5 FTE music to KMS and reduce 0.5FTE. Note, this may be more of a budgetary increase, as the current part time positions do not carry benefits.
Physical Education	1.0	1.0		0	There are currently 3.0 FTE PE teachers at the elementary level. If a school is closed there will be the need for 2.0 FTE at the elementary level and it recommended to move 1.0 FTE to KMS
Unified Arts			1.0	+1.0	Moving grade 6 to KMS will create a need for additional Unified Arts programming. The recommendation is to add 1.0 FTE Unified Arts (technology) to KMS.
Special Education Teachers	1.5			-1.5	
Paraprofessionals	4.0			-4.0	
Total				-13.7 to -14.7	

Staffing Cost Savings-Closing One Elementary School

Unit	Account	Position	Reduction	Addition
		Elementary Principal	\$131,115.91	
		Clerical Aide	72,696	
		Admin Assistant	79,573	
		Nurse	88,468	
		Custodian (2 FTE)	138,552	
		Family Support Liaison	78,915	
		K-5 Classroom Teacher	77,229	
		Grade 6 Classroom Teacher	0	
		Library Media Specialist	77,229	
		Music (Elem.5 FTE)	38,664	
		Art (Elem .3 FTE)		23,169
		Tech (KMS 1 FTE)		77,229
		1.5 Sped Teachers	115,843	
		4 @ paraprofessionals	232,000	
		Subtotal	1,130,284	100,398
		Estimated Staff Savings	1,029,886	

School Closing Operational Budget Savings
AVOIDED MAINTENANCE COSTS BY CLOSING AND NOT MAINTAINING A SCHOOL-

2024-2025	Con. El.	John Fuller	Pine Tree
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Utilities Water/Sewer	\$13,000	\$5,236	\$0
Trash	\$12,000	\$9,600	\$9,600
Repairs to equip	\$6,000	\$2,400	\$500
Repairs to Building	\$19,500	\$19,500	\$22,500
Repairs Contracted Svcs	\$42,150	\$52,459	\$86,980*
Telephone	\$15,400	\$14,850	\$16,850
Custodial Travel	\$100	\$100	\$100
Cleaning supplies	\$14,000	\$12,000	\$12,000
Electricity	\$37,964	\$29,107	\$30,180
Propane (Kitchen)	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,200
Propane (Heat)	\$57,500	\$55,854	\$58,750
Replace Equip	\$0	\$21,000*	\$18,000
Replace Furniture	\$0	\$0	\$0
Grounds Cont. Svcs	\$3,000	\$15,000	\$10,000
Grounds Supplies	\$3,500	\$3,000	\$3,500
Replace Equip. Grounds	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>
Annual Avoided Costs	\$225,114	\$241,106	\$270,160

*There may be one time costs in the FY '25 proposed budget that may be deducted once a school is determined to be closed.

School Closing Capital Budget Savings

It is expected that closing a school will realize short and long term savings. The major costs associated with the closing of a school are known maintenance items such roofs and windows repair. Unknown items include full scale security upgrades.

Conway Elementary School projected cost savings if closed:

<u>Capital Costs (20 yrs)</u>	
Windows (will be 50 y.o.)	\$1,000,000
Roofing (Gale Report <5 yrs.)	\$4,836,581
Paving (MS still here)?	\$50,000
Security Upgrades	<u>\$150,000</u>
Total Capital Costs	\$6,036,581

John Fuller Elementary School projected cost savings if closed:

<u>Capital Costs (20 yrs)</u>	
Windows (will be 50 y.o.)	\$1,000,000
Roofing (Gale Report <5 yrs.)	\$6,584,086
Paving?	\$100,000
Security Upgrades	<u>\$150,000</u>
Total Capital Costs	\$7,834,086

Pine Tree Elementary School projected cost savings if closed:

<u>Capital Costs (20 yrs)</u>	
Windows	\$1,000,000
Roofing (Gale Report <5 yrs.)	\$6,407,473
Paving?	\$100,000
Security Upgrades	<u>\$150,000</u>
Total Capital Costs	\$7,657,473

Considerations for Curricular, Co-curricular and Transitioning

Impacts and Configuration for Moving Grade 6 to Kennett Middle School

Considerations of a move for September 2024:

Transition Planning

- While 6th grade students and families are expecting this transition, fifth grade students and families are not. Transition activities for 6th grade students are currently being planned and students typically begin activities in the first week of March. Planning for the current 5th grade will need to begin immediately in order to offer the best possible transition. This will impact the use of professional development time for staff.
- Funds will need to be allocated to cover the costs associated with the move of the 6th grade to the middle school. Likely this will impact the end of this school year in order to complete the transition prior to summer break.
- There will be a need for Unified Arts staff to develop grade level appropriate curriculum. This will require funding for additional summer curriculum work. Budgeted summer curriculum is for planned projects around integrating tenets of the Portrait of a Learner into content areas and further development of units in Literacy, Math and Science.
- Staff development in the coming year will be focused on the integration of the 6th grade at the middle school rather than ongoing current improvements.

Overall Impacts Regardless of Timing:

Changes to Unified Arts Classes

- Currently 6th graders at the elementary schools receive 40-45 minutes of unified arts programming (art, music, library/media, and PE twice/week) every day. Additionally, students in grades 4-6 receive individual or small group instrumental music lessons and weekly in-class guidance lessons. Currently 7th/8th graders receive 110 minutes of unified arts programming (art, music, PE, Health/FACS, tech, world language) each day for 12 weeks on an annual basis. 7th & 8th grade students also receive individual instrumental lessons.
- Currently 6th graders have a Library Media class and a Guidance class. These are areas not currently offered as a class in middle school. Adding instruction in these areas is likely not feasible during Unified Arts time due to scheduling and availability of staff. This instruction could potentially be integrated in other core classes during other parts of the day for the 6th grade.

Loss of Recess for 6th grade

- KMS lacks playground equipment and appropriate outside space for unstructured recess during the winter months.

After-School Programming

- Sixth grade students will no longer have access to Project Succeed at their elementary schools. KMS dismisses at 2:15. While there will be some opportunities for some students related to our co-curricular programming it will not be as integrated as for 7th and 8th grade students. Currently we have not budgeted for the inclusion of additional teams in the coming year. Together this may impact some families.

Programming Summary

Recommended Structure if the 6th grade is moved to Kennett Middle School

Core Academics

The 6th grade curriculum follows the Conway School District Curriculum documents. Moving the 6th grade to Kennett Middle School would not change the Core Academic Curriculum. The team recommended that the 6th grade have six classroom teachers working in pairs. Each pair would be a math/science teacher paired with a Literacy/Social Studies teacher. The recommendation is that two, side-by-side, sixth grade classrooms will be located in each of the three team areas. Hallways and locker space will be shared with 7th and 8th graders. Each pair would align with a 7th & 8th grade team and be considered a part of the team for team level activities and integration. This will provide a transition for students from having one teacher in the lower grades to having two in the 6th grade and then four in grades 7-8. In addition to the six 6th grade classroom teachers we would also add a 1.0 Reading Specialist.

Unified Arts

There would be potential curriculum impacts in the Unified Arts. Currently 6th graders have a Library class and a Guidance class. These are areas not offered as a class in the middle school currently. The middle school offers two additional Unified Arts that 6th graders do not currently take including Health/FACS and Tech. We would add 2.5 UA teachers, 1.0 PE, 1.0 (Tech) and increase the current Instrumental Band position from 0.5 to 1.0. It is not clear yet whether we could offer different UA selections at the 6th grade level.

Social Emotional Integration

Integration is impacted by the layout of the building, the number of students and the inclusion of SAU 13 students in grade 7.

- 6th grade would be attached to each of the three academic teams at KMS.
- Based on the enrollment we would need to increase student support by adding 1.0 School Counselor.
- There would be 3 lunch blocks, one for each grade level, or at least a separate lunch for grade 6.

Impacts and Configurations if one elementary school is closed and two K-5 schools remain

Considerations of a move for September 2024:

Transition Planning

- Alterations to the regular schedule for Kindergarten registration will need to be made and will most likely include a delay in registration/transition activities for incoming students.
- Alterations to the regular schedule for promotion activities will need to be made to include 5th and 6th grade students.
- Funds will need to be allocated to cover the costs associated with the consolidation into two elementary schools. Likely this will impact the end of this school year in order to complete the transition prior to summer break.
- Staff development in the coming year will be focused on developing new school cultures with students, staff and families.
- Families may need to make adjustments to childcare arrangements, before and afterschool programming, etc. if they are to be redistricted over the summer.

Overall Impacts Regardless of Timing:

- Redistricting based on residency would have to occur and elementary “School Choice” would no longer be an option in order to stabilize student populations at the two remaining schools. Current school choice students may be moved based upon redistricting of students to the two schools.
- Redistricting to create two kindergarten through grade 5 elementary schools would not only mean that students currently enrolled in the school that is closed would transition to one of the two remaining schools, but students currently in either of the two remaining schools, may also transition to a different school based on their residency.

- Teachers currently at either of the two schools that remain open may be required to switch schools.
- All students in K-5 will be impacted regardless of whether or not they are being moved to a new school building. Students may be in a different building, with new students, new staff, and while some may stay in their current school, many of their friends may be redistricted.

Transportation

Bus routes have been studied with administration redistricting students based upon past committee recommendations. There is enough room on each of the bus routes to make this adjustment. Grade 6 students would ride the bus with other students in grades 7-12. The bus routes for grades 7-12 would change but not significantly. The transportation calculations might add up to ten minutes to the current bus rides. At this time it is difficult to calculate the approximate number of students on each bus due to the number of families who may need to alter current before and after school plans based on which elementary school is closed.

Co-Curricular

All students would be afforded the opportunity to participate in athletics at either the middle school or Conway Recreation level. Some of the considerations are: the number of students in each of the sports, the specific sport available to students, and the competition level available. Kennett Middle School and the Conway Recreation Department will coordinate efforts to provide developmentally appropriate offerings for grade six students.

Additional After School Programming

Kennett Middle School offers a number of athletic programs for students to participate in. There are also a number of “club” offerings at KMS that are dependent upon volunteers. Project Succeed costs range from \$100,000-\$150,000 per school depending upon each school. This proposal does not include before school programming. This cost covers administrative fees, project director, site coordinator, enrichment providers and certified teacher staff. Whereas the number of students participating would be much less the cost of the program can be reduced.

Projected cost to support KMS afterschool programming **\$70,000-\$80,000**.

Administrative Recommendations

Should the Conway School Board decide to close an elementary school the following recommendations are offered:

- Close an elementary school in anticipation of the start of the school year September 2025.
- The Conway School Board needs to determine which school would be closed.
- Rebrand the two remaining schools and discontinue the names of the current schools.
- Remove the “Elementary School Choice” Policy.
- Develop a budget for FY ‘26 that allows for flexibility in staffing and building reconfiguration.
- Work with parents, teachers, students, and administration to transition all to a new paradigm and configuration.