

**Ad hoc KMS Facility Use Committee
Grade 6 to KMS Subcommittee
Summary of Work
Presented to the Conway School Board May 9, 2016**

Committee Members:

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What would be the purpose of moving grade 6 to KMS?

- ***If the purpose is to use space at KMS, then it is a viable option.*** Moving grade 6 would use some of the available space at KMS. The space created in each of the elementary schools could be used for innovative programs and other needs, such as moving music classes out of the portable at CES and off the stage at PTS.
- ***If the purpose is to use the space at KMS and close an elementary school, just moving grade 6 would not provide the space needed to close one of the buildings.*** Additional changes would be needed as described below.
- ***If the purpose is to improve the instructional experience and potential outcomes, then moving grade 6 is not recommended.*** Under our current model, sixth grade students are receiving a high quality education. Instruction is differentiated. Academic and social emotional needs are being met. Moving the sixth grade to Kennett Middle School would not improve these factors. In fact, research indicates the potential for increases in behavioral concerns and decreases in academic achievement. Following is a summary of potential benefits, challenges and research findings.

Summary of Work

- The committee created a chart to summarize perceived benefits and drawbacks to moving grade 6 to KMS. Data from similar committee studies in 2009 and 2013 was reviewed. Later, data from research studies on the topic was added. The committee is working on the assumption that Madison and Freedom would continue to educate their sixth grade students in their local schools.

BENEFITS	DRAWBACKS (student-centered)	DRAWBACKS (not student-centered)
Fewer transitions- sixth graders at KMS for longer duration	Kids forced to grow up sooner; developmentally ready?	Potential financial drawback-increase to Conway taxpayer annually (2013 study had an estimated cost of

		\$300,000-\$400,000)
More collaboration between 6th grade teachers	Potential misalignment of entry of 7th grade Madison and Freedom students	Tuition contracts with sending towns
6th grade curriculums are more aligned to a middle school model	Community feel at KMS- Will 6th graders be included if they are stand alone and not integrated with the 7 th and 8 th grades?	Addition of non-teaching staff
Developmentally appropriate for some students – allows for more student independence	Research has shown sixth graders have more behavioral issues when housed in middle school (Terry Sanford Institute of Duke University Study)	
Potential benefits if joined with Rec Center- teen center, sports, etc.	Students go from role modeling social behavior for younger children to mimicking older children’s behavior	
More opportunities for student groupings- class make-up dynamics, bigger pool of students	6th grade in middle school reduces academic performance that year and subsequent years (Florida Center for Reading Research)	
Potential greater access to extracurricular activities	Perform significantly worse on standardized tests (Jake Vigdor - Professor of Public Policy and Economics, Duke University)	
	Increased misuse of social media among 11 - 14 year olds	

- The committee reviewed enrollment projections for the elementary schools. Attached is a summary of the data. Numbers used are based upon October 1, 2015 reports as well as the NHSBA study from November, 2015. The functional capacity of each elementary school based upon NH class-size guidelines is 371 students, based upon the report from the NHSBA. That same report states the functional capacity based upon local guidelines as 266 students. Local capacity reflects class sizes of less than 25 students per class.
 - The functional capacity of each building based upon local guidelines is 266 students. Moving grade 6 would remove approximately 40 students from each

building. That would leave 226 students to be placed at the other two elementary schools. If those students were relocated to create two schools of equal size, there would be 320 students per building. That number is greater than the local identified capacity.

- Having 320 students at either John Fuller or Conway Elementary, is within NH guidelines. There would not be enough full-sized classrooms to accommodate those students and keep class sizes within local guidelines while maintaining neighborhood schools.
- To accommodate the students within the 16 full-sized classrooms in two elementary schools would require a move to a K-2 school and a grade 3-5 school. Under that model, if class sizes moved to an average of 20-23 students per class and sixth grade moved to Kennett Middle School, it would be possible to fit in two schools, using all of the available classrooms at the elementary schools.
- Moving sixth grade to KMS would increase its enrollment from approximately 277 students to 375-400 students. This would necessitate additional staffing there, including an additional part-time counselor, possible administration, and unified arts teachers. While we could transfer sixth grade teachers to accommodate for classroom teachers, we would have certification concerns if they taught only one subject a day. Also, the addition of approximately 120 students may require additional administration, but the reduction of only 40 students at an elementary school would not allow for the reduction of administration to cover that cost. It would also be difficult to identify potential reductions of unified arts staff as they would only be losing two classes at each school, yet the unified arts teachers at KMS would be increasing their schedules by up to six classes.
- Much of the research on configurations that benefit students points to K-8 schools. A 2004 report by the Rand Corporation shows that students in K-8 schools do better both academically and socially than their peers who attend 6th-8th grade middle schools.
- If the decision is made to move grade 6 to KMS, the administrators strongly recommend creating a comprehensive grade 6-8 program, and not having the sixth grade as a stand-alone entity.

References and Resources

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