



September 10, 2007

For more information, contact:

Ellen Laubhan, PSD Communications (970) 490-3427

Grade Configuration Implementation Planning Underway

PSD is involving schools and staff in extensive planning to assure a smooth transition for students to new grade levels in 2009 or 2010.

The PSD Grade Configuration Implementation Committee (composed of parents, teachers, and administrators) has **two main purposes:**

1) Ensure that all questions, concerns, and issues that must be answered or resolved for successful implementation are brought to the surface. The committee is not responsible for answering all of the questions themselves. Rather, they will recommend who needs to answer them, in what timeframe, and who must be consulted in the process. In this way, the committee helps make sure that no issue, concern, or question is overlooked, ensuring completeness and transparency in the implementation process.

2) Monitor the progress of the implementation to make sure questions, issues, and concerns are being answered completely with the best interests of the students and the district as a whole in mind. The committee will report to the Superintendent's Cabinet on progress.

In August and early September, the PSD Grade Configuration Implementation Committee:

- Agreed on a timeline for its work and is discussing implications of changes and areas of consideration for students, schools and staff.
- Began collecting the issues, questions, and concerns to be resolved. In order to accomplish this, the committee is:
 - reviewing the output of the Implications Wheel Strategic Exploration process
 - reviewing public comments from the grade configuration meetings last spring
 - soliciting input from staff, site-based management committees, parent groups, and
 - brainstorming ideas.
- Began the process of identifying where and how each of those issues, questions, and concerns will be addressed. This is the genesis for the template for the school readiness plans, which will be developed and submitted by each school (for schools ready for implementation in 2009, draft plans due by April 2008; final plans by Nov 2008).
- Began providing feedback to the administration on the draft HR plan and other administrative steps around the grade configuration

The issues list will be posted shortly on the web site along with an email address to which you can send suggestions for additions. In the meantime, feel free to contact any of the committee members to discuss any input you have and the progress of the implementation. All input designed to help ensure a successful implementation is welcome and encouraged!!

Definition Approved for "Atypical Elementary Schools"

The Superintendent's Cabinet approved a definition of atypical elementary schools that may better serve their students as **K-6 grade schools**, instead of K-5 and 6-8 schools. The atypical elementary definition

is: A K-6 elementary school whose unique program or curricular characteristics require that students remain engaged in that program to achieve the full benefits of the curriculum or program. The unique needs of the program will impact student achievement and justify a systemic variation. The unique academic needs served by this program impact student achievement and justify a systemic variation. **In addition, some schools may apply to become K-8 schools, if they believe K-8 may better serve their student population.**

Kevin Hahn, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Schools, and his staff are developing criteria for K-8 schools.

Several meetings with principals at various levels have been held to discuss the challenges and opportunities presented by the grade configuration change and to discuss next steps. By the end of October, schools and feeder systems (elementary schools feeding into junior highs, then the 4 comprehensive high schools) will make final decisions regarding grade levels, taking into consideration the definitions and criteria for atypical elementary schools and for K-8 schools. Schools will either be grades K-5 or K-6 (if atypical) and 6-8, or K-8, and all high schools will be grades 9-12.

Human Resources Planning Underway

PSD's Human Resources (HR) department is planning for the change, and is forming a personnel movement advisory committee of teachers, principals, paraprofessionals and counselors to lead the transition for staff. The advisory committee will begin meeting in October.

HR has shared information about qualifications and licensing for middle school (grades 6-8) teachers, and will assure teachers remain highly qualified to teach. PSD is encouraging voluntary movement for staff to new schools, according to Cathy Smith, executive director of Human Resources.

Next Meeting:

The Grade Configuration Implementation Committee will meet from 4-6 p.m., Sept. 24, Fort Collins High School Library, 3400 Lambkin Way. The public is welcome to attend and observe at all committee meetings.