

TO: Board of Education

FROM: Randall Booker, Superintendent

SUBJECT: **ELEMENTARY PROGRAM DESIGN PROCESS**

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I. **SUPPORT INFORMATION**

In support of Shaping Our Future 2.0, and to prepare and best serve our 21st century Learners, the Tri-School Site Council identified the need to evaluate how we can optimize our efficiency and effectiveness to support our elementary age students. By examining the various components of the elementary instructional program (math, literacy, science, technology, music, library, art, PE, etc.), as well as the time required to appropriately address each component and their corresponding standards, we aim to develop a daily instructional schedule that can best provide the needed coherent blocks of time for instruction.

To gain an understanding of the most valuable and effective approach to guide the redesign, a core Design Team of Tri-School principals, school staff, and parents has participated in a facilitated process that utilizes a Design Thinking approach. Design Thinking is a process that focuses on the needs of end users: our students. This facilitated process, beginning in the 14-15 school year, has continued over the past several months. Ultimately, with the support and input from all stakeholders, the goal is to develop a new daily instructional schedule for the three elementary schools.

This elementary Design Team has conducted observations and engaged in interviews with teachers, students, administrators, and parents to define our strengths and identify any potential needs and priorities. They also researched best practices within and beyond the school district and reviewed scholarly research that best supports student learning.

The team has developed six guiding principles that have provided direction for the next phase of work—creating schedule prototypes. These principles have stayed front-and-center during the elementary Design Team's discussions. The guiding principles are as follows:

- **Create Opportunities for Integration of Curriculum:** Provide opportunities to integrate a variety of content and subject matter into core curriculum.
- **Support Flexibility and Creativity:** Create structures that support flexibility with how we use our learning spaces, and time to foster exploration and creativity for our students.

- **Minimize Transitions:** Design our schedule thoughtfully to minimize the impact of transitions and/or eliminate them when possible.
- **Attend to Well-Being of Students and Staff:** Be thoughtful and supportive of the whole person (academic, emotional, social, psychological, physical) to optimize learning and teaching.
- **Create Uninterrupted Instructional Blocks:** Create uninterrupted blocks of time that are developmentally and grade appropriate.
- **Integrate Collaboration Time Within the School Day:** Create additional opportunities for teachers to collaborate with grade level teams, specialists, enrichment teachers and support staff.

### **Prototypes**

The elementary program design team shared three schedule prototypes with elementary site councils, parent club leadership, and staff to provide information and also obtain feedback. New iterations of the prototypes will be created by the design team in response to feedback gathered from all stakeholder groups and their expectation is that a final recommendation for a Tri-School schedule will be made in the spring of 2016. Once a final schedule is developed and recommended, the Superintendent will present the educational rationale, student benefits, and fiscal impact to the Board.

## **II. RECOMMENDATION: REVIEW**

Review the Elementary Program Design Process