



“Right Sizing the District” – Frequently Asked Questions

1. How will closing schools increase student achievement?

Closing schools will improve student achievement by allowing the District to place its limited number of staff and resources in fewer buildings. This means the District will combine its very best teachers, technology and taxpayer dollars in fewer areas, enabling students to receive a higher quality of service. This will also eliminate the current challenge of spreading services and staff to a large number of under-utilized schools. Also, school closings will reduce waste and duplication of services, saving precious taxpayer funds that could be better deployed elsewhere.

2. What are the next steps in the Right Sizing process?

The superintendent will present a final recommendation to the Board, and the Board could vote on the plan in early March.

3. The District is proposing creating schools that serve pre-kindergarten through second grade only AND third grade through sixth-grade only. What are the benefits of this versus a school with a pre-kindergarten through sixth grade configuration?

PK-2 and 3-6 buildings allow the District to better focus on the individual learning needs of each student by adding more classrooms at each grade level, thereby reducing number of students per teacher. Schools will also be able to group students of similar skill levels together and provide more immediate help to struggling students. Pre K – 2 buildings will have an intense focus on early literacy and mathematics readiness, transitioning students to 3 – 6 levels when they are grade level ready and have the literacy and math skills to be successful.

4. What is the goal for the level of student achievement this plan will produce?

All students will graduate high school with the skills needed to successfully compete in a 21st century global economy. All students will meet or exceed state targets MAP testing. All students will graduate high school with the competencies required to enter post-secondary schools without requiring remediation.

5. Will the Pre-K program be available throughout the District? Following the right sizing, when and where can I find out more details about this program?

Pre-kindergarten will be available in all Pre-K –2 and Pre-K –6 schools in the District. Complete details about the Pre-K program will be available in Transformation Plan, a road map that will guide the District’s work following the right sizing effort. The plan, along with other information about the Pre-K program, will continue to be provided on the District Web site (www.kcmsd.net), in the community newsletter and through literature at KCMSD schools.

6. I've heard complaints about safety and discipline at many of our schools. How will you ensure a positive learning environment at these new, more populous schools?

Schools will be staffed appropriately to the population they serve. This means there will be enough staff to provide security and intervention whenever a challenge arises. More importantly, a positive learning environment will be maintained by engaging students with meaningful, rigorous work geared toward their individual learning needs. This will be combined with the District's continued use of the state Positive Behavior Support program, which encourages and rewards students who grow to become positive role models among their peers.

7. What is the future of the District's vocational and technical programs?

Vocational and technical programs provided solely by the District will be phased out. Instead, students will be provided opportunities to take part in dual enrollment options at local technical colleges. Other programs more aligned to 21st century skills will be added as high school courses. As part of the right-sizing process, the Manual-East Agriculture program will be integrated into East High School.

8. Following the Right Sizing effort, how long will it take before the District presents a proposed list of school buildings to be sold?

A committee to review the future of closed buildings will be formed shortly after the Right Sizing process is complete. The schools will be placed on the market based on expressed interest and demand. The plan is to market no more than 6 properties for sale at once to avoid flooding the market. The committee will be made up of community and governmental members who are interested and can assist with the transformation of closed schools to properties that contribute to neighborhood growth.

9. Will the Right Sizing recommendations completely eliminate District's estimated \$12 million monthly net income deficit?

As it stands, the District receives about \$12.8 million net monthly less than what that it needs to sustain operations. Fortunately, the District currently has about \$91.2 million in its operating fund to coverage the shortage. The Right Sizing plan will drastically reduce costs and wipe away the \$12 million deficit. As with your personal budget, the District's goal moving forward is to not spend more than the revenue it receives.

10. You mention specific standards that determine progress. Does that mean you are doing away with social promotion in the district?

Students must demonstrate skills (mastery) at their respective grade level before they are promoted to the next level. Mastery will be determined by setting benchmarks (or goals) for proficiency in all subjects. Teachers will teach the skills needed for mastery. Students that are able to demonstrate those skills through tests and other methods will move to the next grade.



11. Do you have a projection for how many staff jobs lost will be due to retirements/non-renewals?

KCMSD has 438 non-tenured teachers currently employed. The process will involve identifying the non-tenured staff and their respective certification areas. Natural attrition (resignations, retirements, etc.) will eliminate some of these employees, but individual certification will dictate if a particular non-tenured teacher should be rehired. The attrition rate for the District is on average 250 certified employees, or approximately 12 percent of the staff.

12. What does research suggest concerning the impact of moving comprehensive middle schools into comprehensive high schools? What adjustments are you anticipating that you'll make to address potential impacts?

The research on grade configurations K – 12 is varied across the nation, with ranges spanning anywhere from 1 to 13 years. Districts use multiple criteria in determining grade configurations including building sizes, travel times and costs, impact on achievement, parent involvement, etc. The most compelling research is not about grade configurations but rather what happens in those grades every day. The District will focus on strong school leadership, a welcoming attitude toward parents and community, increasing the capacity of the teaching staff, a safe learning climate, and strong instruction and materials.

13. How will the Right Sizing plan impact transportation times?

The average transportation time currently is 20 to 25 minutes and the maximum time is 50 minutes. It is the intent of administration to not increase these times.

14. How does the Right Sizing plan move schools marginal performance to high performance? What is your standard for a high performing school?

The entire District's instructional, curricular, leadership, professional development, and interventions are designed to have all schools operate as high performing schools. A concerted effort and consistent attitude among all stakeholders must be built around the belief that all students can succeed and will be prepared to be "fierce competitors on the economic world stage." Standards for high performing schools will be measured against state, national and international targets.

15. Have you considered the considerable amount of disruption the news of these closings will cause?

Yes. District administrators have met with principals several times to discuss the importance of remaining focused on teaching and learning. The importance of being able to communicate with affected stakeholders - including staff, parents, students, and the community - require the current timeline to be followed.