

## **K-6 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

**Q. We passed Proposition E to accommodate our growth, so why are we discussing going to K-6 before the Proposition E projects are completed?**

**A.** The passing of Proposition E provided funds for a new elementary school, Phase II of Liberty High School, additional classrooms at Discovery Ridge, Duello, Lakeview elementary schools and Holt High School. It also provided for updates at Wentzville Middle School, security upgrades throughout the District and funds to purchase land for future school sites.

As the WSD continues to add between 500-600 new students each year, the BOE recognizes that the next impending need for the District is additional space at our three middle schools which are all at or near capacity. The BOE also understands that WSD stakeholders are looking for a long-range plan that does not include a tax increase every two years.

In the summer of 2015, the BOE held multiple open work sessions to discuss long-range plans to accommodate growth. The BOE discussed year-round school, cycles and building an additional elementary school partially from reserves and moving to a K-6 model across all elementary schools to provide much-needed space at the middle schools. The BOE determined that year-round school and cycles were not viable options for the WSD at this time and focused on building the additional elementary school and moving to K-6, which would provide much-needed space at our three middle schools and postpone the need to ask taxpayers for funds to build another school.

**Q. Will K-6 be at every elementary school? When will that start?**

**A.** Yes, every WSD elementary school will become K-6 beginning with the 2017-2018 school year.

**Q. Our elementary school is already near capacity, where will you fit 6th graders?**

**A.** This plan is only made possible with the construction of two new elementary buildings and redistricting the boundaries for all elementary schools. Each building will be addressed and boundaries altered so there is not only room for sixth graders now, but room for growth over the next 3-5 years as well.

**Q. How will the District pay to build another elementary school, and doesn't that require voter approval?**

**A.** The WSD currently has over 33% in operating fund reserves and the BOE is looking to pay cash for a portion of the building. The BOE does have the means to borrow some funds as well without voter approval.

**Q. Why did the District ask for a tax increase to build a new elementary school if we had enough money in reserves to build one?**

**A.** Proposition E was much more than a request for one elementary school. Prop E provided \$50 million dollars for an elementary school, the expansion of four schools, Phase II of Liberty High School and updates at other schools across the District.

The K-6 option would not even be a possibility had Proposition E not passed. At the same time, assessment values are up across the District, allowing us to pay down our debt and free up our ability to borrow money. Additionally, thanks to our fiscal responsibility, our reserves are at extremely healthy levels, affording us the opportunity to build another elementary school simultaneously with the one passed by voters which makes the K-6 option even possible, delaying the need for a fourth middle school.

**Q. Why not use reserves to build a new middle school?**

**A.** The cost of a new elementary school is approximately \$15-20 million While the cost of a new middle school is approximately \$30-40 million, which the District could not afford to fund and still have healthy reserves.

**Q. Why did we not go with year-round school?**

**A.** The Board and Administration examined the cost as well as the impact on families and staff and felt the K-6 plan was the best plan at this time for the WSD.

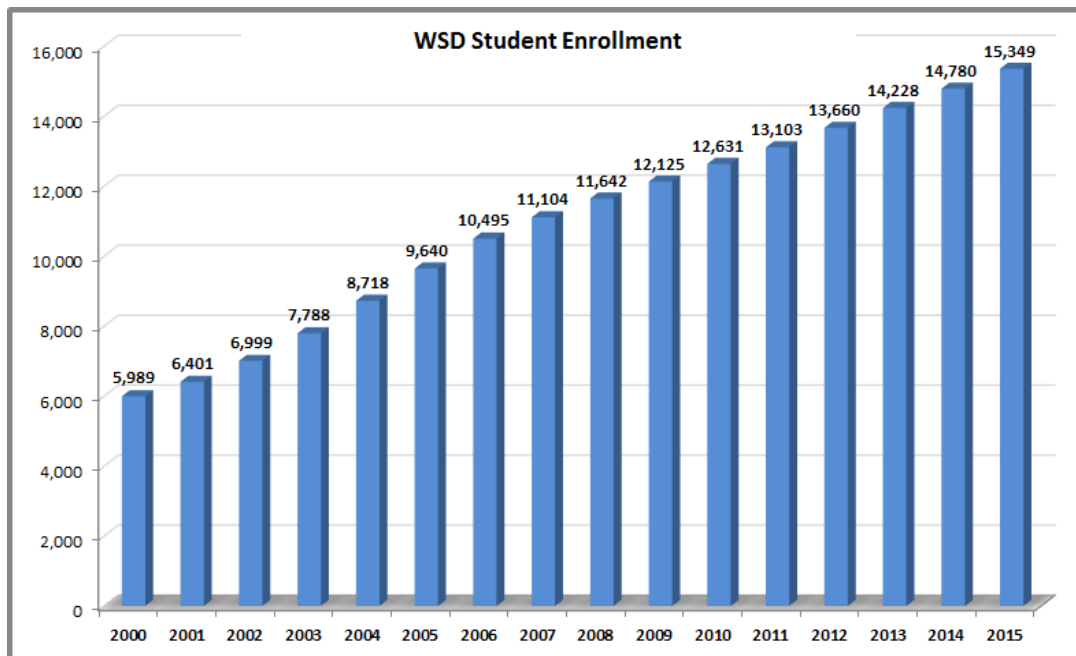
**Q. Why do we need to build more schools and classrooms?**

**A.** According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the City of Wentzville added over 22,000 people between 2001-2010, growing by a whopping 322%, the largest percentage increase of any city in the state. In fact, the five communities that make up the WSD (Wentzville, Lake St. Louis, O'Fallon, Foristell and Dardenne Prairie) were all in the top 50 fastest growing cities (out of 637) in Missouri.

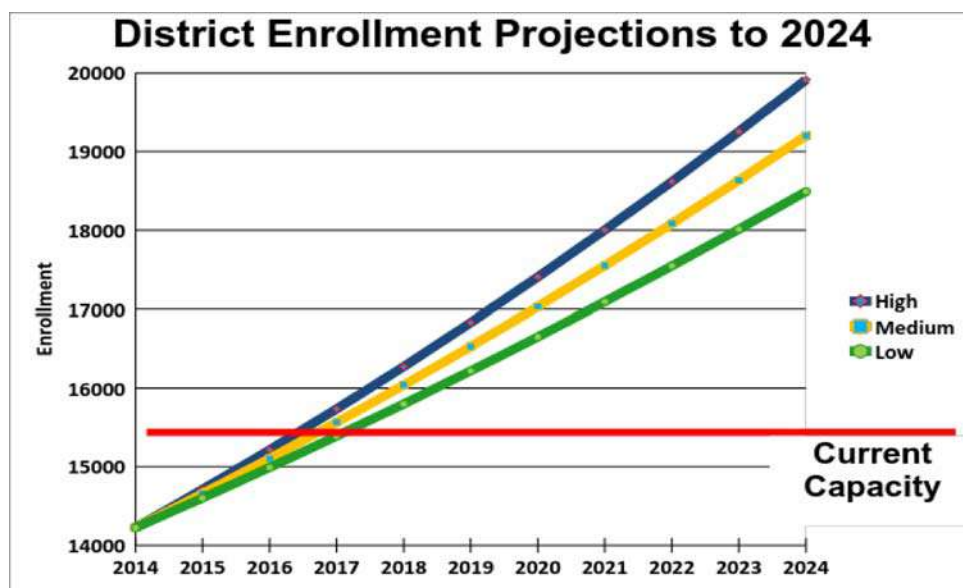
The Wentzville School District is the fastest growing school district in the state of Missouri, with enrollment more than doubling in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Over the past 14 years, the District has averaged more than 600 new students every year and we are now the 11th largest school district in the state. We ADD more students every year than are enrolled in an average elementary school!

We know about our history of growth, but will it continue? To help us find out, the WSD commissioned Business Information Services, LLC to provide a comprehensive demographic survey that was released in early 2014.

That report stated that “a primary concern in our analysis is the District’s ability to house the anticipated number of students. By 2018, the District’s enrollment could be 16,832 in buildings designed to hold only 15,583 students.”



The report goes on to say that “an academically strong school district, plentiful affordable housing and easy access to the St. Louis metro area has caused some of the most explosive student enrollment growth in the country. Three statistical models project that the WSD enrollment will be between 18,493 and 19,915 by 2023-24. This is assuming an annual enrollment growth of between 2.7% and 3.4%. For the last 10 years, the growth rate has been 6.4%.” What’s even more unsettling about the report, is that for the last two years since it was released, WSD enrollment has been above the highest projections for both years.



**Q. How many schools will be affected by new boundaries?**

**A.** Given that we will be adding two new elementary schools in opposite ends of the District and bringing 6<sup>th</sup> graders to each of the 11 WSD elementary schools, we anticipate every building in the District will potentially be affected by boundary changes.

**Q. Where would the additional new elementary school be located?**

**A.** The District is moving forward on a land purchase for the additional elementary school and will share the location as soon as the transaction is complete.

**Q. Didn't the District previously share that it was going to use land the WSD already owns on Duenke Road?**

**A.** Yes, that was the original plan until the District's due diligence and cost estimates of bringing utilities to that piece of property made it clear that plan was cost prohibitive. The District determined it would be more cost effective to purchase a different piece of land that already has utility access for the new elementary school.

**Q. When will a boundary committee be formed and who will be on it?**

**A.** The District will form a boundary committee in February of 2016 with the first meeting tentatively planned for March. The Board of Education has approved hiring Business Solutions, LLC as a consultant on the redistricting process and the basis of the committee's work will be a new demographic study conducted by that firm between January and March. The committee will consist of parents, staff and community members.

**Q. When will the new boundaries be disclosed to the public?**

**A.** The timeline calls for the new boundaries to be presented to the Board of Education for approval at the December, 2016 Board Meeting.

**Q. Will grandfathering be allowed with respect to boundaries?**

**A.** Grandfathering would present additional challenges and layers of complexity to an already difficult process, but the Boundary Committee will make a recommendation and the Board will ultimately make that decision.

**Q. What happens after 3-5 years of K-6 buildings? Will 6th grade return then to the middle schools?**

**A.** We do not know. The plan estimates that with 4% growth across the District, we should have adequate space for 3-5 years and then a decision will need to be made based on enrollment at that time about continuing K-6 and the possibility of an additional school. The plan and hope is that by then we will be in a position to ask voters to approve a no-tax-increase bond issue to build the next building.

**Q. I understand how this will free up space at the middle schools, but eventually those students will be at the high schools. Is there enough room for them there?**

**A.** Thanks to the passing of Proposition 3 in 2008, Liberty High School was built and has relieved overcrowding at the high school level. That is not to say, given our growth, the WSD will not need a fourth high school down the road.

**Q. Will the boundary change affect middle and high school students?**

**A.** We do not want to tie the hands of the committee before it is even formed, so yes, at this time, we would have to say that is a possibility.

**Q. Will 6th graders still change classrooms?**

**A.** Yes. The team concept will follow the 6th graders to the elementary setting. Courses for 6<sup>th</sup> graders will be structured like a middle school - just at the elementary building. Dr. Cain is recommending that the current 6th grade electives still be offered at the elementary schools.

**Q. How will band work for sixth graders?**

**A.** There are a number of logistics that will need to be worked out prior to the start of the 2017-18 school year. Again, it will be Dr. Cain's recommendation to the Board of Education that all electives that are currently offered to 6th grade students will still be offered, including band. How, where, and when they would meet has yet to be determined.

**Q. How will there be room for computers and other specials?**

**A.** The need for space will vary by building and will be addressed building by building, but it is probable some specials will need to be on carts as WSD schools have had to do in the past.

**Q. Will Pre-Algebra still be an option for qualified 6th graders?**

**A.** Dr. Cain will recommend to the Board of Education that all current electives available to 6th graders, including advanced courses like Pre-Algebra, should continue to be offered to 6th graders following the transition to K-6 buildings.

**Q. Will you create science labs in the elementary buildings?**

**A.** We know we will need eyewash stations and water, as well as equipment at the very least. Again, we will not allow science equipment to be the barrier to K-6 working for our students.

**Q. How will this affect Horizons?**

**A.** We do not have an answer for that at this time. The logistics for Horizons will be worked out as well.

**Q. Will 6th graders have recess?**

**A.** The plan is to have the 6th grade experience resemble what 6th graders currently have now in the middle school setting. Sixth graders do not currently have recess, so we do not anticipate them having recess in the elementary setting.

**Q. Will 6th graders have access to appropriate reading materials in the library?**

**A.** Absolutely. We will not allow books, or other 6th grade needs be the barrier to K-6 working effectively.

**Q. Will additional teachers need to be hired?**

**A.** Yes, we anticipate additional teachers will need to be hired for K-6 to work and we have taken that cost into consideration.

**Q. Will activities buses come to the elementary buildings?**

**A.** That is something we are looking at and we will examine the feasibility.

**Q. Will 6th graders be on the same time schedule as the elementary school?**

**A.** Yes, their start and end time would be the same for the school day, however with the team concept, 6th graders will have periods and change classes as they currently do in the middle school setting.



**Q. How will passing periods work for the 6th graders? Won't that be disruptive to the rest of the school?**

**A.** We had this combination (and concern) at Frontier Middle School during the 2015-16 school year with the Discovery Ridge 5th graders and passing periods for other students in the building did not result in a disruption for those 5th grade students.

**Q. What will clubs and extracurriculars look like for 6th graders?**

**A.** They will be based on student interest as they currently are.

**Q. How will you fit an extra lunch period into the day?**

**A.** Because of redistricting, enrollment at the elementary buildings will be similar for most schools even with the addition of the 6th graders.

**Q. What about lockers?**

**A.** We do not plan to add lockers to the elementary schools. It would be costly given we don't know how long the District will remain K-6. We will devise a plan for 6th graders however so they won't have to carry all their subject books to each class.

**Q. With the additional space at the middle schools, will this allow for additional curriculum like foreign language?**

**A.** That is certainly a possibility we will examine.

**Q. What about the needs of special education students? Will additional SPED teachers be hired?**

**A.** Staffing will be determined by enrollment and need as it is currently.

**Q. What about WEB (Where Everyone Belongs)? Will it be continued?**

**A.** WEB is an excellent program and resource for transitioning students and we will certainly be looking at it following the change to K-6 for 6th graders transitioning to 7th grade.

**Q. Will the change affect class sizes?**

**A.** We don't anticipate a significant change in our class sizes. Reducing class sizes is always on our radar, but our rapid growth and immediate need to have enough classrooms for our students prevents us from reducing class sizes at this time.

**Q. Are there other Missouri school districts that have K-6 elementary buildings?**

**A.** Lee's Summit is an example of another district with K-6 elementary buildings.

**Q. What will K-6 look like at Heritage?**

**A.** Heritage is certainly a unique campus and we don't have an answer to that as of yet.

**Q. Currently Intra-District Transfers are frozen for five buildings. Will this change?**

**A.** The Board of Education has voted to suspend all intra-district transfers (with the exception of children of employees and other special circumstances that pertain to the welfare of a student) beginning with the 2017-18 school year.

**Q. Sixth graders currently dress out (change clothing) for PE. Will that be possible in elementary buildings?**

**A.** Sixth graders will likely not be changing clothes for PE class.

**Q. Will Chautauqua (Before and After Care) be offered for 6th graders?**

**A.** That would make sense and we are examining the feasibility of that.

**Q. Where can we find updates on the K-6 transition?**

**A.** The District website is always the best source of updated information. In addition, updates will be shared via the WSD app and social media sites on a regular basis.